

<p style="text-align: center;">BUDGET ADVISORY COUNCIL Meeting Minutes - Monday, January 24, 2022</p>

Members Present: Andrea Catena, Lisa Clar, Kathryn DeLaVergne, Maria Hamilton, Dan Hentschel, Paul Hoak, Dan Knapp, Nichole LaPlaca, Bob Logel, Cheryl Lomedico, Jessica Mattice, Suzanne Maxim, Ken Nelson, Lauren Purvee, Pam Reinhardt, Millie Sefranek

Members Absent: Chuck Allan, Karen Arthmann, Regina Decarr, Clay Harris, Baldish Kaur, Nancy Kula, Molly McLaughlin, Jim Schultz, Dina Stathopoulos, Brian Usselman

Ex-Officio Members: Scott Adair, Mary Ann Exler, Andy Whitmore and Lawrence "Bo" Wright

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

WELCOME, CHARGE TO THE COUNCIL, SCHEDULE AND AGENDAS

Andy Whitmore, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and School Operations, welcomed the members of the BAC, and reviewed the charge to the council. He also explained the schedule and agendas for this year's meetings.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

Andy gave the members of the council an overview of the budget development process for the 2022-23 budget. We are focused on prudently spending our funds including the funds provided by the federal stimulus packages.

The goal of the budget process is to develop a school budget that is educationally sound, equitable, and fiscally responsible. This involves maintaining existing programs/services and advancing the district priorities of Equity and Inclusion, Mental Wellness, Instruction and Special Education. In addition, additional support will be provided for learning recovery required due to the impacts of the pandemic. Incremental resources will be provided to areas of need to ensure similar learning outcomes. The budget increase will be reasonable based on enrollment changes, inflation, state and federal mandates, and the state of the economy. The property tax levy increase will not exceed the state's property tax levy cap.

The current fiscal environment includes an influx of federal stimulus funds as well as the pandemic-related costs of additional academic support for learning recovery, extra cleaning and disinfecting efforts, purchase of PPE and disinfecting equipment/supplies, wage escalation driven by labor shortages, and increases in staff for providing in-person and remote learning models.

The guiding principles for the budget development process will be to develop a base budget that provides for all pre-pandemic programs/services and aligns with the format of NYS Transparency Reporting. Consideration will be given to additional funding support for on-going remote learning and federal stimulus funds will be utilized for academic and SEL services. Minimizing the impact on taxpayers and development of reserves will continue to inform the budget development process.

FEDERAL STIMULUS FUNDS PLAN

Andy presented information regarding the district's plans for use of the federal stimulus funds allocated to the district. The funds are provided thru an increase in Foundation Aid, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriation Act (CRRSA), and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP). These financial packages provide several tranches each having specific multi-year timeframes and requirements for their use such as improving student performance, addressing areas of need, providing remote learning, retaining staff, safely returning to in-person instruction, improving use of technology, increasing social/emotional learning (SEL) and addressing learning loss. Plans include support for remote learning, tutoring, summer learning programs, social/emotional support services, wage increases, and additional faculty and staff positions.

PROGRAM & SERVICE REVIEW

Andy took the members through the format of the new Program & Service Review. New sections for school-based costs have been added. He explained that numerous budget lines were removed from central budget centers like, Special Education, and distributed across the schools. To aid in the comparison of the schools, information regarding enrollment, the percentage of students qualifying for free/reduced lunch, and the number of students per teacher have been added. Andy gave explanations for the areas of the base budget that increased or decreased more than 6% compared to the 2021-22 budget. He encouraged the members to review the Program & Service Review further and email him with any questions. The questions will be reviewed and answered at the next meeting of the council.

TOPICS FROM THE COUNCIL

The following topics were brought up by members of the council during the meeting:

How will we deal with the potential funding cliff that will occur after the additional funds are no longer available?

What grade levels will be supported by the Summer Learning Program and will transportation be provided?

The returning members will need some time to acclimate to the format changes in the Program & Service Review and the availability of funds from federal stimulus.

Why is the level of funding different between the primary schools?

Why are there fewer Academic Intervention Teachers budgeted for at the Senior High School?

Is the percentage of free/reduced lunch recipients affected by lunches being free for all?

Is the level of Title funds received by the district affected by the percentage of free/reduced lunch recipients?

Will free lunches continue next year?

How many positions are open across the district?

Why is there a large increase in the budget line for Contract Transportation?

What changes can we expect from the new Governor of NYS?

The pandemic led to new costs (RLA, PPE) and labor shortages. What is the outlook for these issues and additional issues caused by the pandemic?

How is the Test-To-Stay lab being funded?

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

The next meeting will be on Monday, February 28, 2022 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Ann Exler, Budget Technician