

**GREENE CENTRAL SCHOOL
GREENE, NEW YORK
ANNUAL PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING
MONDAY, MAY 13, 2019**

The Board of Education Annual Public Budget Hearing was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman and Interim Superintendent Gordon Daniels, in the Auditorium, Middle School/High School Building, South Canal Street, Greene, NY.

CALL TO ORDER

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Brian Milk, President
Mrs. Tammie McCauley
Mr. Seth Barrows
Mr. Jason Burghardt
Mr. Douglas Markham
Mr. Nicholas Drew

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Scott Youngs, Vice-President

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF PRESENT:

Mr. Gordon Daniels, Interim Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Mark Rubitski, Business Manager
Mr. Timothy Calice, Middle School Principal
Mr. Bryan Ayres, Director of PE & Athletics, Intermediate School Principal
Mrs. January Pratt, Primary School Principal
Mrs. Kimberly Matthews, Director of Special Programs

OFFICERS PRESENT:

Mrs. Donna Utter, District Clerk

- Also present were 15 residents of the Greene Central School District.

- Interim Superintendent Gordon Daniels welcomed everyone to the presentation of the 2019-2020 school year budget.

- District Clerk, Donna M. Utter, read the Notice of the meeting.

- Chairman and Interim Superintendent Gordon Daniels, introduced Board of Education members present.

- None.

- Mark Rubitski, Business Manager, presented the 2019-2020 budget and highlighted the following:

- Thank you to the Board Budget Committee and Administration for their input into the budget process. The process continues to be stressful as there are no easy fixes and continue to be a challenge year after year.
- The development of the budget is a 5 month long process where the Business Administrator facilitates the budget development and provides financial information. The Administrative Team reviews their individual budgets and needs for the upcoming year and present their budget proposals to the Superintendent and Business Manager. The Board Budget Committee met with each Administrator to review their budgets and then reviewed the entire budget line by line balancing interests of all Greene stakeholders. Final budget decisions are made after NY State passes the state budget on April 1st, and the exact amount of state aid to be received is known.

NOTICE OF MEETING

INTRO. OF BOARD MEMBERS

BOARD BUDGET COMMENTS

2019-2020 BUDGET PRESENTATION

- The budget is developed yearly within a multi-year financial forecast of 5 years out. Each year the budget is developed based on budget expectations which include the best possible programs for all students, staying within the allowable tax levy limit, and limit the amount of reserves used to balance the budget.
- The tax levy limit is calculated using a multi-step state Mandated formula. While the tax levy limit (cap) is advertised as 2%, it varies from district to district depending on the outcome of the multi-step formula. Greene's this year is 3.07% (\$211,102). Property taxes represent 26% of current revenue budget. The estimated increase for town and village residents would be 54 cents per \$1,000.
- The 2019-2020 budget represents a 2.13% increase over the 2018-2019 budget. The budget maintains all student programs and services, extra-curricular activities and staff development opportunities. Spending was reduced by \$402,000 from 13 line items across the budget. Savings from 8 retirements/resignations allowed the district to restructure some program and services at a savings. A 3rd grade teaching position will be added back into the budget.
- If the budget does not pass, the Board will have three options: 1) present the same budget a 2nd time; 2) present a revised budget; or 3) adopt a contingent budget. If the budget is defeated a 2nd time, the Board must adopt a contingency budget based which would maintain our current tax levy limit and result in a \$211,000 shortfall. A contingency budget would also prohibit the free use of school district buildings by community groups, and cut increases in the following areas: student supplies, non-essential maintenance, support of the cafeteria program, new athletic uniforms, new equipment, and no student transportation within a 3 mile radius as well as any other expenses required to meet the mandated limit.
- **Administrative Expenditure Highlights:**
 - Chief School Administrator – Increase due to budget amounts for a new Superintendent were in place before the Board finalized the search and were estimated on the high side.
 - Auditing Services – Increase due to a Request For Proposals for a new auditor and associated fees.
 - Labor Relations – Increase due to a new BOCES service the district will use which should reduce some current attorney's fees and will be aidable the following year.
 - Employee Benefits – Increase due to health insurance increases.
 - Transfer to School Lunch Fund – Increase due to the school lunch fund no longer being capable of operating self-funded. Increases in food costs and employee benefits contribute to the need to supplement the program.
- **Program Expenditure Highlights:**
 - Legal-Program – Decrease due to the BOCES Labor Relations Services.
 - Instruction – Increase due to contractual obligations.
 - Programs – Students w/Disabilities – Decrease due to fewer student placements.
 - Guidance Services – Decrease due to shifting some costs to a federal grant. The District receives over 1 million dollars in federal grants which provide funding for educational support services for students.

- District Transportation & Garage Building – Increase due to contractual costs and fuel increases.
 - Employee Benefits – Increase due to health insurance costs.
 - **Capital Expenditure Highlights:**
 - Operation of Plant & Maintenance – Increase due to maintenance costs to keep building systems up and running.
 - Employee Benefits – Increase due to health insurance increases.
 - Bus Purchase Notes – Increase due to the bus purchase approved by voters last month which allows the District to replace dated vehicles.
 - **Revenue Highlights:**
 - State Aid – Increase of \$423,000 or a 2.3% increase. This increase is not keeping pace with increases in expenses.
 - Property taxes – Increase of 3.07% (tax levy limit) which represents 26% of budget revenue.
 - Other Revenues – Received from interest earnings and Stillwater Residential facility.
 - Inter-fund Transfer - \$311,614 from reserves to help balance the budget.

**QUESTIONS &
ANSWERS:
STEVE KOERTS**

- Steve Koerts asked how the district can justify a \$32,000 in the Chief School Administrator in one year.

MARK RUBITSKI

- Mark Rubitski responded that the new Superintendent that the new Superintendent hired will not be at that level, but the Board had no idea who the new Superintendent would be or the costs associated with that individual at the time of the budget development. Any amount in that line item unspent will become part of the fund balance.

STEVE KOERTS

- Steve Koerts asked how the District will save money by not paying attorney fees, but paying an increase for BOCES Labor Relations services.

MARK RUBITSKI

- Mark Rubitski responded that it is a net cost savings. The district will receive 74% back on every dollar spent for BOCES services. BOCES operates conservatively and are required to spend every dollar, so any funds leftover at the end of the year are refunded back to participating districts as a refund the following year. Next year the same \$25,000 expense for labor relations will show as an expenditure, but on the revenue side the district will receive \$20,000 for a net cost for the service of \$5,000. It is more cost effective for districts to purchase such services from BOCES rather than fund those services in-house.

KATE SPANN

- Kate Spann asked about the spending historical trend information on provided on page 7 of the budget brochure and how much each of those years the district operated under budget and how much money was returned to the fund balance. This would be good information to know as it would show how well the district does staying within the budget parameters.

MARK RUBITSKI

- Mark Rubitski responded that the 2018-19 year has not been closed out yet. For 2017-18 the district had a fund balance of \$87,000.

KEVIN MCCAULEY

- Kevin McCauley asked about the 8 retirements/resignations and what is meant by restructuring.

MARK RUBITSKI

- Mark Rubitski responded that as an example, 2 LTA's are retiring and the district is looking at replacing them with a library media specialist to provide a different level of service in our libraries

- and technology programs. The district is also looking at possibly consolidating math and physics. With smaller class sizes, the district needs to look at hiring individuals who have multiple skill sets.

KEVIN MCCAULEY

- Kevin McCauley asked if the \$350,000 increase in program instruction is for hiring new people.

MARK RUBITSKI

- Mark Rubitski stated that the \$350,000 increase is across all campuses and includes contractual salary increases for 80-85 staff members. All 8 retirement positions are being replaced.

STEVE KOERTS

- Steve Koets asked how many classroom aides there are and why so many classroom aides are needed now, but not years ago, when he was in school.

MARK RUBITSKI

- Mark Rubitski responded there are 30 aides, some are classroom aides and some are one-on-one aides for students with special needs.

GORDON DANIELS

- Interim Superintendent Gordon Daniels stated that many students entering Kindergarten have needs that require the assistance and therefore, all Kindergarten classes have one classroom aide to assist the teacher. Parenting has changed over the years with a lot more single parents and situations where both parents work as well as increased requirements on students at younger ages, which create students with a variety of needs that need to be addressed.

STEVE KOERTS

- Steve Koerts asked if there are any capital projects on the horizon.

MARK RUBITSKI

- Mark Rubitski responded that the district is currently identifying scope items for a project in 2021. Infrastructure roofs and paving are some possible items.

ELIZABETH SHAEFER

- Elizabeth Shaefer asked about the art and music programs. She expressed concern about the loss of one music position last year, which was brought partially back, and the need to continue to support the art and music programs. In light of retirements in the area of art, she asked if those positions

GORDON DANIELS

- Interim Superintendent Daniels stated that both art teachers will be replaced and that the district has worked hard to recruit very talented individuals with the hope that their talent and enthusiasm will help grow the programs. Music numbers at the intermediate level are not as strong right now, but the hope is that the program will continue to grow which will allow for additional staff.

ELIZABETH SHAEFER

- Elizabeth Shaefer asked about library spending and why it is not being increased proportionately as other areas.

MARK RUBITSKI

- Mark Rubitski responded that the libraries have the same resources and everything that was requested for those programs they will receive.

**ANNUAL PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING
MONDAY, MAY 13, 2019**

PAGE 5

- Elizabeth Shaefer commented that the band needs a tuba for next year and she asked if the district will be purchasing that instrument or if the Band Boosters will need to raise funds for it.

ELIZABETH SHAEFER

- Mark Rubitski responded that he does not recall seeing a request come through for a tuba. Staff was directed to let their building administrator know if they had budget requests that were in addition to the usual purchases.

MARK RUBITSKI

- Bryan Ayres, Intermediate School Principal, commented that he had a request for a tuba at a cost of \$1400.

BRYAN AYRES

- Elizabeth Shaefer asked about what resources the district has employed to help with mental health issues since the cut of the Social Worker position last year.

ELIZABETH SHAEFER

- Timothy Calice, Middle School Principal, responded that the district has partnered with Chenango County Mental Health and they have a representative at the district 5 days a week. Three days at the middle/high school campus, 1 day at the intermediate, and 1 day at the primary campus. The program is funded through grant monies.

TIMOTHY CALICE

- Beth Koerts commented that victories such as the mental health partnership should be shared with the public. She thanked everyone for their hard work in preparing the budget and realizes that things are extremely tight. She asked that the district consider needs versus wants when looking at capital projects. Also it is great that aid back is received on BOCES Services purchased, that should not be the only consideration when deciding on how to meet the needs of the district and she feels there is some fat in the BOCES services budget.

BETH KOERTS

- Mark Rubitski commented that the BOCES Services budget is reviewed line by line as other parts of the budget.

MARK RUBITSKI

- Richard Boeltz asked how the fund balance level is and whether staffing is going up or down for next year.

RICHARD BOELTZ

- Mark Rubitski responded that the district is in compliance with a 4% fund balance. Staffing is remaining level, although there may be some adjustments at the start of the school year based on student needs.

MARK RUBITSKI

- Richard Boeltz commented that grants are a separate section of the budget and if grant money goes away, those items supported by grants will need to be funded through the budget.

RICHARD BOELTZ

- Kim Boeltz asked if any support staff were being layed off.

KIM BOELTZ

- Mark Rubitski responded that there could be a couple of of aides, but no bus monitors.

MARK RUBITSKI

- Kim Boeltz asked if Greene is a high needs district, how come our school lunch program needs to be subsidized by the district. How do other districts qualify for free lunches for all students.

KIM BOELTZ

- Mark Rubitski stated that Greene has looked into that program and Greene is not eligible.

MARK RUBITSKI

- TIMOTHY CALICE** - Timothy Calice, Middle School Principal, commented that the Administrators have been looking into ways to get more eligible families to complete applications for free lunch. We currently have 50% participation.
- BETH KOERTS** - Beth Koerts asked if the district has a grant writer, and if not, it would be a beneficial position to have.
- GORDON DANIELS** - Interim Superintendent Daniels stated that the district does not have a grant writer and it is very difficult to find one. He has been at districts that have one and their salary is paid out of what grants they bring in. The district has tried in the past to use inside individuals for that purpose, but was not real successful.
- BETH KOERTS** - Beth Koerts asked if the Board is going to continue meeting just once a month.
- BRIAN MILK** - Board President, Brian Milk, stated that Board meeting dates are set at the Reorganizational meeting in July. the Board will continue to discuss, but the feeling is to leave the meetings scheduled for twice a month and if the second meeting is not needed, it would be cancelled.
- NICHOLAS DREW** - Board member, Nicholas Drew, commented that presentations regarding the mental health program, capital project, and other accomplishments are made at Board meetings. Unfortunately, attendance at Board meetings is up only when there is a matter that upsets the community.
- KEVIN MCCAULEY** - Kevin McCauley commented that Board presentations could be loaded as a PDF document to the website for availability to the community.
- INTRODUCTION OF SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES** - Interim Superintendent Gordon Daniels announced and recognized those Board Candidates that were present:
Mr. Andrew Briguel, II
Mr. Michael Ketzak
Mr. John Fish (present)
Mr. Jason Burghardt (present)
Mr. Seth Barrows (present)
- ADJOURNMENT** - Chairman and Interim Superintendent Gordon Daniels adjourned the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Marie Utter
District Clerk