

**GREENE CENTRAL SCHOOL
GREENE, NEW YORK
ANNUAL PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING
MONDAY, MAY 7, 2018**

The Board of Education Annual Public Budget Hearing was called to order at 6:35 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
Mr. Scott Youngs, Vice-President
Mrs. Tammie McCauley
Mr. Seth Barrows
Mr. Jason Burghardt
Mr. Douglas Markham
Mr. Nicholas Drew

ROLL CALL

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF PRESENT:

Mr. Gordon Daniels, Interim Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Mark Rubitski, Business Manager
Mr. James Walters, High School Principal
Mr. Timothy Calice, Middle School Principal
Mr. Bryan Ayres, Director of PE & Athletics, Intermediate School Principal
Mrs. January Pratt, Primary School Principal
Mrs. Michelle Hasselbarth

OFFICERS PRESENT:

Mrs. Donna Utter, District Clerk

- Also present were 30 residents of the Greene Central School District.

- The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Interim Superintendent Gordon Daniels welcomed everyone to the presentation of the 2018-2019 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.

- Board member Markham commented that none of the Board members were happy with the cuts that had to be made and to please take that into consideration.

- Mark Rubitski, Business Manager, began the presentation with a review of the budget development roles and process:

- The Business Manager facilitates the budget development and collects and reports financial information.
- The Administrative Team (Superintendent, Building Principals & Department Supervisors) develop and propose respective budgets based on needs, district goals and objectives.
- The Budget Committee & Superintendent review the complete budget doing a line by line analysis (over 300 lines) to balance the interests of all Greene stakeholders and make a final recommendation to the entire Board of Education.
- This year an Executive Session meeting was held with Board members and the Administrative Team to review the final budget recommendations.

NOTICE OF MEETING

INTRO. OF BOARD MEMBERS

BOARD BUDGET COMMENTS

2018-2019 BUDGET PRESENTATION

- While the budget is a one-year budget, it takes into account a multi-year financial forecast.

- The power point used for the presentation will be placed on the website as requested by the community members present.

- Mr. Rubitski then reviewed the two types of New York State Aid which the district receives:

- Foundation Aid – Operating aid that is allocated to all districts, generally based on wealth and need factors. Greene is considered a low wealth – high needs district, as are most districts in our area. This is Greene’s largest aid line item.
- Expense Driven Aid – based on eligible expenditures which receive a reimbursement the year after the expense is incurred. Some examples given: Building Aid – 90% of eligible expenses; BOCES – 77% but does have exclusions and limits; Transportation – 90% of eligible expenses; Special Education – reimbursement after \$35,000 threshold has been met.
- A slide comparing foundation aid trends versus budget trends for the past 8 years shows that we are spending more than we are receiving in aid and this progression is not sustainable. During the 6 year GAP elimination period, the State took back (reduced) 5.2 million dollars in state aid from Greene.
- A projection for the upcoming 5 years and the estimated gap between expenses and revenue was shared. The gap which begins in year 2018-2019 of \$930,000 is projected to increase to \$2,183,000 in 2022-2023. Budget reductions of \$450,000 this year will help with expenses over the next 5 years.

- Mark Rubitski, Business Manager, presented the specifics of the 2018-2019 school budget in the amount of \$26,448,955 with an estimated tax levy increase of 1.07%. The 2018-2019 budget represents a 1.578% increase over the 2017-2018 budget. He reviewed the 3 major components of the budget and highlighted specific areas with a significant increase:

Administration:

- Board of Education – increase of \$5,900 due to fees associated with the Superintendent search process.
- Chief School Administrator – increase of 20,150 due to Superintendent search and a salary correction.
- Business Administrator – increase of \$13,693 due to adding BOCES human resources services.
- Supervision Regular School – increase of \$56,638 expanding professional development to include services from BT BOCES and test scoring and analysis through BOCES.
- Transfer to School Lunch – increase of \$15,000 due to the need to supplement the program which was previously self-supportive due to rises in expenses and flat revenue.

Program:

- Programs - Students w/disabilities – decrease of \$122,304 due to number of students and program placements.

- School Library & Media – increase of \$16,042 due to adding needed resources, additional instructional media, and supply money.
- Computer Instruction – increase of \$43,505 due to a district approved Installment Purchase Agreement for technology equipment of \$210,000 over 5 years.
- Guidance Services – increase of \$61,355 due to mandated additional guidance staff.
- District Transportation – increase of \$48,522 due to increased fuel costs.

Capital:

- Operation of Plant – increase of \$85,120 due to increase in heating and fuel costs and maintenance of our HVAC system.
- Mr. Rubitski then reviewed the district reserve account balances and the increases and decreases over the past 10 years. The district currently has 6.5 million dollars in reserves with approximately 2.1 million in available or liquid reserves to be used. He explained that many of the reserve accounts have restrictions as to what they can be used for and how to access those funds whether it be through require board action, voter approval, or state/federal approval. He further explained that when the district closes its books at the end of the year, if there is a large fund balance (unspent monies), they typically are transferred into reserve accounts. To meet budget gaps, funds are withdrawn from these accounts in amounts fiscally responsible for long term planning for the district. Last year there was a large \$657,000 refund from BOCES from their fund balance which is required to be returned to districts, therefore we had a large deposit into the reserve accounts.
- Mr. Rubitski closed the presentation by showing the past 10 year history of the tax levy. The average for the 10 year period was 1.7%.
- Elizabeth Shaffer asked what Greene’s enrollment is and she commented that Oxford’s state aid is similar to Greene’s. She also asked how much tax revenue the school receives from Raymond.
- Mr. Rubitski stated that Greene’s enrollment is around 995 students. GCS receives approximately \$300,000 to \$400,000 in taxes.
- Steven Bentley asked what the student population is for next year.
- Mr. Rubitski stated that Greene has lost approximately 300 students over the last 10-12 years, but enrollment has leveled off.
- Steven Bentley asked if student enrollment is down, why the need for another counselor?
- Interim Superintendent Daniels stated that state regulations have changed requiring a counselor for every 150-200 students which will now require another counselor at the elementary level.
- Sarah Tanzini, a student, commented that she attended a meeting regarding protecting our schools at Senator Akshar’s office. He discussed a mental health service bill which would reimburse district’s for offering mental health services based on

**QUESTION & ANSWER
PERIOD:
ELIZABETH SHAEFER**

MARK RUBITSKI

STEVEN BENTLEY

MARK RUBITSKI

STEVEN BENTLEY

**INTERIM SUPT.
DANIELS**

SARAH TANZINI

- enrollment. If Greene receives a reimbursement for mental health services through this bill, would we be able to reinstate the School Social Worker being cut?

**INTERIM SUPT.
DANIELS**

- Interim Superintendent Daniels stated that he heard that Senator Akshar was discussing that bill, however, not official notice has been received from the state at this point. This may be another unfunded mandate. He stated that he would look into where the bill is at in legislation. This is similar to School Resource Officers which are being discussed, but no funding from the state yet.

JEN FOWLER

- Jen Fowler ask if there will be a budget deficit for the next 5 years, is the assumption that additional positions will be eliminated in the future?

**INTERIM SUPT.
DANIELS**

- Interim Superintendent Daniels stated that the district is very very concerned that next year we will again be looking at cuts. If the current trend with state aid continues, the gap will continue to grow. A lot of time was spent agonizing over what to cut in order to balance the budget. He also commented that this is the most difficult part of his job.

JEN FOWLER

- What are the repercussions if a district does not follow unfunded mandates? She commented that she wished districts could decide what their district needs educationally based on the needs of its students.

**INTERIM SUPT.
DANIELS**

- Interim Superintendent Daniels stated that Superintendents are constantly talking to the state regarding unfunded mandates. In many cases if state mandates aren't met, they can and will take away state aid.

MARK RUBITSKI

- Mr. Rubitski commented that when you finish a capital project there are reporting deadlines and he is aware of a couple of schools who did not meet those deadlines, and the state has withheld their state aid. Greene can't take those chances because we are so dependent on state aid.

JOHN CLARK

- John Clark commented that the Administrative budget is going up due to BOCES increased fees. He asked how they can justify increasing their fees when our revenue increase is only 1.7% and can't we ask that they cap all expenses?

MARK RUBITSKI

- Mr. Rubitski stated that Greene is purchasing new services for staff as well as other items to support education from BOCES.

**INTERIM SUPT.
DANIELS**

- Interim Superintendent Daniels stated that BOCES has kept their overall increase at 2% which is commendable.

MARK RUBITSKI

- Mr. Rubitski stated that BOCES provides great resources which the district could not financially support alone due to the reimbursements received. When looking at services, the district weighs the pros and cons to make sure it is cost effective.

MOLLY NOLAN

- If Greene is funneling more services through BOCES, how come no cuts are being made in administration? She commented that the music position is the last thing that should have been cut. In this digital age, there have to be other areas where expenses could be cut. She also asked if there are community members on

- the budget committee. She also questioned the salary portion of the Administrative budget.

- Interim Superintendent Daniels responded that there are no community members on the Board budget committee. He also stated that the salary line includes support staff salaries also, so it is for 3 people not just one.

**INTERIM SUPT.
DANIELS**

- Elizabeth Shaefer commented that Greene is rightfully proud of its programs, but cutting 3 teaching positions will have a direct impact on student programs. She asked what the plan is for students in the music, health and physics programs.

ELIZABETH SHAEFER

- Interim Superintendent Daniels responded that Physics will be taught by another teacher who taught Physics before. The music position was very difficult as he knows personally how valuable it is as his son continued on after high school into a musical career. The elementary music program will go to a four day cycle instead of three. He also stated that elementary music staff are certified and trained in both instrumental and vocal music. As for Health, staff can teach one class outside their certification area and we have staff available to do that. Administrative staff discussed and came to an agreement on what positions could be cut and still continue the programs.

**INTERIM SUPT.
DANIELS**

- Karen Roe commented that cutting a school social worker and health position while hiring an additional guidance counselor will place more mental health issues and identification on the counselors.

KAREN ROE

- Karen Clark commented that as a parent of a senior who is continuing on her music education she is concerned with the number of students who will be able to receive regular individual instrumental instruction on a 4 day cycle.

KAREN CLARK

- Mr. Bryan Ayres, Intermediate School Principal, stated that he is still working out a plan for the music department based on skill sets within the department. He commented that he shares the same concerns as mentioned.

BRYAN AYRES

- Steven Bentley asked in the Administrative budget, what is "unallocated insurance"?

STEVEN BENTLEY

- Mr. Rubitski responded that it is the district's standard general liability insurance on district buildings and contents.

MARK RUBITSKI

- Steven Bentley asked who the members of the budget committee were.

STEVEN BENTLEY

- Mr. Rubitski responded that Seth Barrows, Tammie McCauley, and Jason Burghardt are on the Board Budget Committee.

MARK RUBITSKI

- Steven Bentley asked what other increases make up the \$56,000 increase in the budget category – supervision regular School?

STEVEN BENTLEY

- Mr. Rubitski responded that there is also clerical staff within each of the offices with a 7-8% salary increase.

MARK RUBITSKI

- STEVEN BENTLEY** - Steven Bentley also asked how many Principals in the district?
- INTERIM SUPT. DANIELS** - Interim Superintendent Daniels responded that there are currently 4 Principals. The state mandate is currently one Principal for each building.
- STEVEN BENTLEY** - Steven Bentley commented that \$340,000 was made in program cuts, but he only came up with \$250,000 and asked what the additional cuts were.
- MARK RUBITSKI** - Mr. Rubitski stated that the program area had a \$113,000 increase prior to the program cuts of \$450,000.
- STEVEN BENTLEY** - Steven Bentley commented that it seemed backwards to him to make cuts prior to the budget vote, because if the budget doesn't pass you will need to make more cuts.
- KEVIN MCCAULEY** - Kevin McCauley asked what the consequences are of not passing the budget.
- INTERIM SUPT. DANIELS** - Interim Superintendent Daniels stated that if the budget does not pass, the Board will have to decide what to do – put the budget back up for a vote or go to a contingency budget, which will require additional cuts.
- MARK RUBITSKI** - Mr. Rubitski stated that the budget post card will go out tomorrow and it has the contingency budget amount on it which is slightly lower than the proposed budget.
- QUESTION** - What positions are being added, instructional and/or staff support?
- INTERIM SUPT. DANIELS** - Interim Superintendent Daniels answered that only a guidance counselor position at the elementary level is being added.
- BRYAN AYRES** - Bryan Ayres, Director of Athletics & PE, stated that an Athletic Trainer 3 days a week is being added to the athletic budget using money from the supply budget. The individual is not a Greene employee, but is contracted through Lourdes.
- MERYT ALLMENDINGER** - Meryt Allmendinger expressed her concern for the loss of the social worker position when there is such a need for mental health care. She expressed the lack of justification for adding staff, no matter how minor, to athletics, yet cutting mental health staff. She went on to state that there are many families in the district who do not have the resources to access outside mental health services.
- JOE ROOSA** - Joe Roosa thanked the Board for serving as he understands how difficult it can be. He commented that he agrees that mental health is a big problem and one that trickles down to make teaching and life in school more difficult. He commented that he is a physics department chair at a neighboring district and is astounded that Greene's numbers are so low that it only requires one section of physics. He stated that STEM is a big part of engineering and receiving only one year of physics is difficult for students looking to pursue a career in a STEM field.

- Molly Nolan commented that the community knows that we are still paying Mr. Lilley and we are paying two men to do his job. She asked how much longer money is going to go to him instead of a position and that it speaks volumes that we are getting an athletic trainer and still paying Mr. Lilley. **MOLLY NOLAN**

- Interim Superintendent Daniels stated that the Lilley matter is still in the courts and we are doing everything we can to expedite the matter. He stated that everyone needs to go to our legislative representatives and let them know that the current situation is not sustainable. Districts only have so much money to spend. **INTERIM SUPT. DANIELS**

- Shannon Clark asked how the number of \$351,163 used from reserves was decided? Why not more or less? **SHANNON CLARK**

- Mr. Rubitski stated that reserves are the last piece of the equation to fill. The reserve accounts are like our savings account and we try to use it judiciously by first looking at all other areas to close the gap. **MARK RUBITSKI**

- Board member Nicholas Drew commented that the budget was looked at by a lot of people. While we could have taken more money out of reserves to save a position, we have to look at the 5 year plan and what may be required of reserves in the future. **NICHOLAS DREW**

- Shannon Clark thanked the Board for what they do. **SHANNON CLARK**

- Meryt Allmendinger commented that she called a bunch of Representatives and Senator Akshar was the only one to get back to her. She also thanked the Board realizing that they have a difficult job. **MERYT ALLMENDINGER**

- Maggie Roosa asked if it is true that the district is not recycling. **MAGGIE ROOSA**

- Interim Superintendent Daniels stated that he knows the issue has been discussed a few time and he is unsure whether we are or not, but he will check into it. **INTERIM SUPT. DANIELS**

- Board member Nicholas Drew commented that spending less in expense driven aid areas results in less state aid received and aid reimbursements are a key factor that affects the budget. **NICHOLAS DREW**

- Mr. Rubitski stated that it is largely in BOCES services. While not a lot less, but if you spend less there is a decrease in the reimbursement received. As an example if you spend \$100,000 less that results in \$77,000 less being received. **MARK RUBITSKI**

- Mikaela Sepulveda-Kiefer commented that while music and athletics are important, the district is bringing in a trainer for athletics and taking away a trainer for music. She asked if there were discussions about cutting any sports programs? **MIKAELA SEPULVEDA KIEFER**

- Bryan Ayres, Director of Athletics & PE, stated that due to dropping enrollment numbers, some teams cut themselves as they do not have enough athletes to field a team. He stated that \$7500.00 is being spent on an athletic trainer that will service 500 student athletes as well as students who are injured in gym classes. **BRYAN AYRES**

**PRESENTATION OF
PETITIONS & INTRO.
OF SCHOOL BOARD
CANDIDATES**

- District Clerk Donna M. Utter announced that three Petitions have been received for 2 vacant board member seats. She announced the candidates in the order they will appear on the ballot:

- Kenneth Pickard
- Brian Milk
- Scott Youngs

ADJOURNMENT

- Chairman and Interim Superintendent Gordon Daniels adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Marie Utter
District Clerk