

MINUTES OF THE BUDGET RETREAT
OF THE TENAFLY BOARD OF EDUCATION
THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 26, 2015
HELD AT THE HEGELEIN BUILDING, 500 TENAFLY ROAD, TENAFLY, NJ

DATE 3/3/15

APPROVED [Signature]

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The meeting was called to order at 6:36 p.m. by Board President Edward J. Salaski who read the following statement:

“The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to insure the right to the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interest is discussed or acted upon.”

In accordance with provisions of this act, the Tenafly Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be publicized by having the date, time and place thereof posted at the Borough office, Tenafly Public Library, administrative building, in the local press and on the district’s web site.

On roll call, the following Board members answered present:

Stephanie Addison-Fontaine	Eileen D. Pleva
Mark Aronson	April Uram
Sam A. Bruno	Lynne W. Stewart *
Janet I. Horan **	Edward J. Salaski

* Arrived at 6:37 p.m.

** Arrived at 7:41 p.m.

The following Board member was absent:

Richard H. Press

The following staff members were present:

Ms. Lynn Trager, Superintendent
Ms. Barbara Laudicina, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Yas Usami, Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Board President Salaski opened the meeting. The following topics were discussed:

Budget Calendar

The budget process was reviewed according to the 2015-2016 Budget Calendar.

Budget Ideas for 2015-2016

The 2015-2016 Budget Ideas were presented by the administrative team. The budget supports the following:

- Next Generation Science Standards Mandated by the state which will be phased in over the next 3 years.
- Expand STEM Projects and Instruction to the Elementary Level.
- Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) – A virtual 1:1 technology project to be phased in over 3 years. The first year includes software, hardware, Chromebooks, and Chromebook Carts. In addition, the district will not be replacing laptops and desktops, but instead will replace batteries and parts that will prolong the use of the existing technology. The budget for the VDI transition will be \$923,500.
- Change Literacy Staff Developer Position to a Vice Principal Position for the Elementary Schools with a Focus on Literacy – The person in the position will perform teacher observations at the elementary schools and continue with staff development in literacy. The budgeted cost increase is \$45,643. The Board was concerned that there would be less staff development in literacy. One suggestion was to hire a part-time administrator to perform the observations. A decision was pending job descriptions of the current position and the new proposed position.
- Change Supervisor of Athletics Position back to Athletic Director – This would result in an \$8,000 increase to the position. The Athletic Director position was changed to Supervisor when the district lost all its State Aid. The rationale is that State Aid has been restored to some level and the position requires night hours as well as weekends. Some believed that this is the lifestyle of this position and that there are coaches, advisors and teachers who work nights and weekends. The Board was in favor 5-3 with the position change and the increase.
- Staffing for Middle School – A new reading program for 6th grade will add 2 new teachers with benefits, and additional staffing for increased enrollment to reduce class size in special education and integrated arts. The budgeted cost is \$201,762.
- New High School Courses Without Increasing Staff – Contemporary Issues & Leadership, Contemporary Issues & Leadership Honors I & II, Advanced Placement Environmental Science, AP Economics.
- The Continuation of the 4-Year Plan has Middle School Roof Replacement and New Phone system with Panic Button Capability – These projects are eligible for ROD Grants through the SDA and will reimburse the district 40% of the eligible costs of the projects. The total estimated cost for the roof replacement is \$2,548,320, and the total estimated cost for the phone system is \$960,600. Total cost less the 40% grant reimbursement is \$2,122,392. There will be withdrawal of \$1,798,868 from Capital Reserve to fund the projects, while the remaining \$323,524 will be drawn from the regular operating budget.

The phone system is on hold until a presentation on a needs assessment by a phone consultant is presented at the March 3 meeting. The 4-Year plan will maintain class sizes, and 16 Smart Boards will be purchased for interactive learning. The Smart Boards are budgeted at \$96,000.

- Special Education will Continue with the Program for Students with Autism for Grades 3-5 and Expand the Transition Program at the High School – The grades 3-5 program will include a new teacher with benefits, 2 additional sections of Speech, and 2 teachers for K-5 summer program. The budgeted cost is \$127,346. The High School Transitional Program will include a new teacher with benefits, a section for a Structured Learning Experience Coordinator, and 2 additional sections for Academic Support. The budgeted cost is \$155,285.
- Special Education Tuition for our Out-of-District Placements will Decrease Since there will be Fewer Students Sent Out of District – The budgeted cost savings is \$387,699.
- The 4 Elementary Schools will Each Add a Lunch Aide – The budgeted cost is \$24,064.
- Health Insurance Premium Increase in January 2016 is Estimated at an 18% Increase – The estimated increase from the previous budget is \$6,207, due to an anticipated 22% premium increase in January 2015. The 2015-2016 health insurance contribution by employees will be at the full phase-in Year 4. Thus, the 18% premium increase in January 2016 is an estimated net increase of a little over 10%.
- State Aid for 2015-2016 is the Same Amount as in 2014-2015 – The total is \$1,400,568, with \$40,082 subtracted for the Assessment for Debt Service on SDA funding. The net aid is \$1,360,486. In addition, the Debt Service Aid is \$365,000 for 2015-2016 which is \$767 less than 2014-2015.
- The 2015-2016 Budget Includes \$491,382 from Bank Cap – Bank Cap is an amount under the 2% tax levy increase in a previous year and/or the unused amount of an Automatic Waiver, such as health insurance increase above 4%. The district may budget any portion of their Bank Cap in any given year to raise the tax levy above 2%. Availability of Bank Cap is on a 3-year rolling basis. The Bank Cap is a total of \$1,136,944. There is \$491,382 of Bank Cap available from the 2012-2013 Budget. Thus, that amount or any unused amount in the 2015-2016 Budget will be lost and unavailable to use in subsequent budget years. The recommendation to use the \$491,382 Bank Cap is to take advantage of the SDA ROD Grants. The grants reimburse 40% of the total eligible cost of the projects. 2015-2016 is the last year of the ROD Grants. The state has not announced any future facilities grants.
- The Tax Impact with the Additional \$491,382 is a Tax Levy Increase of 2.85% – With the inclusion of Debt Service, the 2015 tax increase is \$231 or \$19.25 per month on an average assessed home of \$811,180. A 2% increase would result in an increase of \$179 or \$14.92 per month. The difference is \$52 or \$4.33 per month. The tax impact for using the entire \$1,136,944 of Bank Cap would result in a 3.98% tax levy increase, and a \$298 increase in taxes or \$24.83 per month. The Board did not see the need to go beyond the 2.85% increase. There could be future financial burden placed on school districts if the Governor's plan to freeze the pension plan comes to fruition.

A motion was made by Ms. Stephanie Addison-Fontaine and seconded by Ms. Lynne W. Stewart to adjourn the meeting.

The motion was approved by those present. Mr. Richard H. Press was absent from the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Yas Usami', written in black ink.

Yas Usami
Business Administrator/
Board Secretary