

MINUTES OF THE BUDGET RETREAT
OF THE TENAFLY BOARD OF EDUCATION
WEDNESDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 22, 2017
HELD AT THE HEGELEIN BUILDING, 500 TENAFLY ROAD, TENAFLY, NJ

DATE 3/18/17

APPROVED 

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In Ms. Stewart's absence, the meeting was called to order at 6:26 p.m. by Board Vice President Eileen D. Pleva 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:

Mark Aronson	Sherri Rothstein
Natalie Barbanel	Edward J. Salaski
Sam A. Bruno	Jocelyn Schwarz
Janet I. Horan	Eileen D. Pleva

The following Board member was absent:

Lynne W. Stewart

The following staff members were present:

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

Ms. Pleva opened the meeting.

Mr. Aronson addressed the Board and Administration about the Finance Committee meeting he attended the previous day. He indicated that the budget was developed with a 2.0% tax levy increase and that new budget items were included; however, some were not. He mentioned that the specifics of the 2017-2018 budget would be addressed at the retreat. He also reviewed the Budget Retreat process for the benefit of the new trustees.

The 2017-2018 Budget Ideas were presented by the administrative team. The budget supports:

Increased Support for At-Risk Students - The budget includes a .5 FTE psychologist at the High School to help alleviate the case load of the Child Study Team. The original request was for 1.0 FTE with benefits. The budget could not support that request. The administration is exploring the possibility of a Walk-In Center for Middle and High School students. Ms. Suzanne Bassett has spearheaded this effort. She

has had discussions with Care Plus, a non-profit organization. The Walk-In Center would be available five days a week from 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm, and during the unit lunch at the High School. Care Plus also offered to the district the same services that our existing provider does, the Walk-In Center and school clearance evaluations at a lower cost than the district currently pays without the Walk-In Center and school clearance. It is also believed that some funds from the SAMHSA Grant may be applied to this initiative.

Next Generation Science Standard (NGSS) – Curriculum Alignment - \$35,000 budgeted for textbooks for Grade 5 to support the NGSS. Grade 4 textbooks will be purchased in 2016-2017.

Increased Nursing Support – A 15-hour health paraprofessional is budgeted at \$28,674 to assist the Middle School where there is one nurse for over 900 students. The district nurses recommended that this position and the 30-hour health paraprofessional at the High School could, in addition, fill-in as a substitute nurse throughout the district as needed. Thus, there would not be a need to budget substitute nurses.

Staffing for Class Size at the High School – The budget supports an additional .6 FTE from the original 1.4 FTE request. Currently, areas covered will be ELL and World Languages for a total of \$46,783. However, the subjects may change after students sign up for classes.

New High School Courses and Textbooks – There is no additional staffing needed for the courses. However, new textbooks are needed for Sociology, Journalism, Graphic Novels, Grade 12 Math, and Marketing. There is \$18,427 budgeted for new textbooks.

Enhance the Business Academy - \$1,500 is budgeted for a Business Academy Advisor who would handle the event applications and the arrangements of the events and transportation among other responsibilities. The original request was for \$2,000.

Creation of Curriculum Cycles – There were many replacement textbook requests. The implementation of a 5-year curriculum cycle will alleviate requests coming all at once. The cycle had been in place some years ago; however, the state kept mandating specific subjects to be aligned annually. The cycle will support instruction and assist in planning for budget needs.

Technology Mentors – The budget includes \$18,900 for four technology mentors at the High School and three at the Middle School. These mentors will assist in supporting the Chromebook and laptop use in the classroom. Teachers will be able to visit a colleague to receive support on how to access/use a program for classroom instruction.

Support for New High School Schedule – There is a .5 FTE in physical education budgeted at \$58,176. This includes benefits. There is a .4 FTE physical education teacher at the Middle School who may assume the additional .5 FTE. Two .5 FTE custodians budgeted at \$41,692 are included to set up and clean up for the single unit lunch. There is \$7,200 budgeted for hall monitors to assist students during the single unit lunch. The original request was for \$14,400.

Treasurer of School Monies – A salary increase from \$5,000 to \$5,500 a year. This will be the first increase since the person was hired in 2014-2015.

Bus Driver – an increase in the hourly rate from \$19.50 per hour to \$21.00 per hour. This will align the hourly rate to the district courier. This will be approximately a \$750 increase to the budget.

Continuation of Four-Year Plan – In 2017-2018, this includes staffing and programs that have been mentioned; the High School tennis court replacement (\$585,000); the main exterior door replacement at Maugham (\$78,000); and security system update (\$40,000), specifically door locking system at all buildings except the High School, which is presently being completed. In addition, the district will continue with VDI software and hardware lease of \$551,000; purchase and installation of Smart Boards of \$18,000; purchase of iPads and carts for Kindergarten of \$56,416; purchase of laptops for teachers of \$260,000; and upgrade of lockdown notification and alert system (cost to be determined).

HSA vs. District Funding – Discussion about what type of purchases should be funded by the schools/district versus the HSA or other organizations. It depends on need. Sometimes principals would like something but do not have funds, or funds are earmarked for something else. Other times principals may feel that the need is more parent-driven. Ms. Trager indicated that the district tries to accommodate requests depending on the budget.

State Aid – We had not received State Aid at the time of the meeting. Our assumption was flat State Aid, which was reflected in the budget. If necessary, the Board would meet in a special meeting if State Aid were to be significantly higher or lower than anticipated. State Aid in 2016-2017 is \$1,443,845.

Anticipated Revenues – A large majority will come from tax levy of \$62,514,216, which represents a 2.0% increase from 2016-2017. Other revenues include: Fund balance \$2,392,774; Capital Reserve Withdrawal \$576,000; Maintenance Reserve Withdrawal \$350,000; Tuition from Alpine \$1,135,200; IT support to Borough of Tenafly \$108,232; IT Support to Cresskill Board of Education \$81,000; Use of Facilities \$45,000; Summer School \$135,000; Demand Response (energy curtailment) \$14,000; E-rate (communications rebate) \$35,000; Maintenance Agreement with Alpine \$6,000; Interest from investment \$33,000; Interest from Capital Reserve \$4,000; Interest from Maintenance Reserve \$1,400; Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI) reimbursement \$19,763; and Anticipated State Aid \$1,443,845.

Capital Projects – Projects mentioned previously will be funded with Capital Reserve. A total of \$576,000 in 2017-2018 budget, and a withdrawal of \$87,000 in 2016-2017 to cover soft costs (non-construction).

Budgeted Health Care Costs – The health care consultant is projecting a 12%-15% increase in 2018 premiums. We have budgeted a 13% increase. The projected cost is \$11,082,513, with a projected employee contribution of \$2,549,575 for a budgeted cost of \$8,532,938.

2017 Tax Impact – Assuming flat State Aid and Debt Service Aid, and a 2.0% tax levy increase, the 2017 tax increase on an average assessed property of \$785,000 is \$232. At the time, State Aid and Debt Service Aid figures had not been released.

The Board was in agreement to keep the tax levy increase at 2.0% for the 2017-2018 budget.

The Board discussed the process for the discussion on Air Conditioning at the April 5 public meeting. In addition to the cost of the referendum, the Board agreed to provide information on the operating cost of air conditioning and the potential impact to the operating budget.

A motion was made by Mr. Edward J. Salaski and seconded by Ms. Jocelyn Schwarz to adjourn the meeting.

The motion was approved by those present. Ms. Lynne W. Stewart was absent from the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Yas Usami
Business Administrator/
Board Secretary