

NORTHERN TIOGA SCHOOL DISTRICT

110 Ellison Road  
Elkland, PA 16920

Minutes – Work Session  
March 25, 2024

The Northern Tioga School District Board of Directors met for a work session in the Board Room at 110 Ellison Road, Elkland, PA. The session was called to order by Board Vice President Ed Bonham at 6:02 PM.

Board Attendance: Board Members Present: Ed Bonham, Greg Cummings, Glen Hallead, Craig Stage, and Julie Preston. Absent: Daniel Costley, James Moyer, Aaron Smith, and Kim Strauser.

Administrators Present: Superintendent Kaufman, Kathy VanSchaick, Daren Bryant, Cheryl Sottolano, Dan Fie, Kathryn Slavinski, Jess Millard, Daren Bryant, Rebecca Koehler, Bill Butterfield, and Matt Sottolano.

2024/2025 Equipment Requests

Kathy VanSchaick, Business Manager, reviewed the 2024/2025 Equipment Requests by building, which after some adjustments the total was \$261,595.00. Also, there is roughly \$173,316.00 in technology requests.

2024/2025 Budget Update

Kathy VanSchaick, Business Manager, presented a handout and reviewed information regarding the proposed 2024/2025 Budget. Kathy went over where the district started, mentioning that last year, due to unknown state and federal revenues, the district budgeted 2022/23 allocations and increased taxes by 3.211%, which was less than the Act 1 Index of 6.1%.

There were several projects the district was able to schedule and/or complete during the 2023/24 school year, such as:

- ▶ HVAC Project – in the final completion stage
- ▶ Update the District Clock Systems
- ▶ Westfield Area Elementary School
  - Replace Music Room Carpet
  - Replace Gang Bathroom Sinks and Mirrors
- ▶ Clark Wood Elementary School/Administration Building
  - Repair playground fence and install gates.
  - Extend Roof Warranty by five years.
  - Install Signage above entrances.
  - Install reheat VAV in RTU over Clark Wood Offices
- ▶ Williamson High School
  - Replace train gas rail on boilers.

Some of the 2024-2025 Budget Expenditures include:

- ▶ Support Staff and Act 93 Salaries updated.
- ▶ Health Insurance increase of 6.5%
- ▶ Adding Nurse Aide in WAES/CVHS and Medical Needs at WHS
- ▶ Adding 4 Special Education Teacher Positions
- ▶ Adding LTS Elementary Teacher at Clark Wood
- ▶ Increasing all Special Education Teacher Aids to 5.75 hours/day

- ▶ Increasing part time custodian at RBW.WHS to full time
- ▶ Building Automation Control Project at WHS
- ▶ Increase legal service, technology, game help, dental insurance, estimate for professional contract increase, transportation, custodial, maintenance, shop call supplies, utilities, newsletter, staff insurance elections, etc.
- ▶ Savings from not filling a retirement.
- ▶ 2024/25 Equipment Request Total—reviewed by Board in March—will be funded by carryover from 2023/24 budget, if any.
- ▶ 2024/25 Technology Equipment— reviewed by Board in March – will be funded by Technology Reserve.

Some 24/25 Revenues include:

- ▶ County re-Assessment Requires equalized millage rate of 9.4551.
- ▶ Increasing taxes to the Act 1 Index (6.1%) If the board raises to the index.
- ▶ Increase of Revenues from EIT and Real Estate Transfer Tax Collections
- ▶ Increase investment interest.
- ▶ Increase retirement reimbursement.
- ▶ Increase IDEA Funding
- ▶ Level Basic Ed and Special Ed Subsidy to 2023/2024 allocations.
- ▶ Level Special Ed Subsidy to 2023/2024 allocations.
- ▶ Increase Plan Con reimbursement and social security.
- ▶ Decrease transportation and miscellaneous revenue.
- ▶ Current Deficit of \$489,323.00

How to Close the Deficit:

- ▶ Reduce the addition of Special Education Teachers from 4 position to 2.
- ▶ Raise Taxes
- ▶ Use reserves to balance the budget.
- ▶ Increase anticipated state revenue allocations.

Kathy provided a list of examples of 2024/25 Revenue Generation from Possible Real Estate Tax increases ranging from the Act 1 Index of 6.1% (0.7568 mills) to 1% (0.0946 mills). She also reviewed with the Board some of the median assessed values of these and the impact on taxpayers if the Board were to raise taxes. Kathy reminded the Board the deadline to adopt a Proposed Final Budget is May 13, 2024, with a Final Budget Adoption of June 12, 2024.

After much discussion of a possible tax increase and/or the use of reserves to help balance the budget, as well as the effect of a tax increase to local taxpayers, the recommendation is to not increase taxes, reduce the Special Education Teacher positions from 4 to 2 with the possibility of adding them back in once the Governor’s Final budget is approved, and to increase anticipated state revenues to cover the current deficit.

### Sunday Gym Use

The Adult Valley Basketball League posed the request to utilize the gym earlier in the day on Sundays to help with attendance for their league. As currently there is a regulation not allowing use before 1pm on Sundays. The Board has agreed that adult leagues may utilize district facilities prior to 1pm on Sundays.

### MTSS Interventionist Pilot Presentation

Kathryn Slavinski, Principal at R.B. Walter Elementary School, presented a pilot program from an MTSS Interventionist. The goal of this position is to strengthen our primary foundational skills in a purposeful manner, to improve our student reading achievement and better prepare our students for the next level. Based on the data Kate presented, the past several years shows stagnant proficiency levels in DIBELS. However, by targeting the “bubble” students, we can break through the stagnant trend. Overall, this position will work to support the classroom instruction, while focusing on individual students learning gaps/deficits, ultimately promoting our students on to the next level better prepared. This program is using current teaching staff and would not require additional staffing.

#### April 8, 2024- Solar Eclipse

Superintendent Kaufman addressed the board regarding the concerns encompassing the Solar Eclipse occurring on April 8. Several schools have already declared they would be letting out early due to this event. The board agrees to support Mr. Kaufman in his decision on how to proceed.

#### Open Forum

Bob Goodrich, Osceola, PA

Mr. Goodrich greeted the Board and thanked Mr. Kaufman and Kathy VanSchaik for their work regarding the 2024/2025 budget. He also expressed his thankfulness for the outlook of a 0% tax increase. He concluded with a prayer.

The board adjourned the work session at 7:13 PM.

Brittan Mondock  
Board Secretary