

NORTHERN TIOGA SCHOOL DISTRICT

110 Ellison Road
Elkland, PA 16920

Minutes – Work Session
April 25, 2022

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 President Julie Preston at 6:00 PM.

Board Attendance: Board Members Present: Ed Bonham, Jean Kohut, Ben Howe, Jolene Meisner, Kim Strauser, and Julie Preston. James Moyer arrived at 6:03. Absent: Greg Cummings and Jim Neal.

Administrators Present: Superintendent Barnes, Kathy VanSchaick, Jeremy Freeman, Kris Kaufman, Jess Millard, Dan Fie, Christina Fry, Matt Sottolano, Christina Sheeley, Bill Butterfield. Absent: Cheryl Sottolano

2022/2023 Budget

Kathy VanSchaick, Business Manager, presented a handout and reviewed information regarding the proposed 2022/2023 Budget. Kathy went over where the District started, stating \$1.3 million of reserves were used to balance the 2021/22 budget with no tax increase, adding increases of salaries, health insurance, PSERS, Cyber School, staffing updates, debt service, athletics, and other updates increased the deficit to approximately \$2,452,043.00. Updating State allocations to the 21/22 levels for Basic Education by \$455,064.00; and Special Education by \$81,319.00 and decreasing Federal Revenues to 21/22 levels in the amount of \$10,754.00 decreased the deficit to approximately \$1,926,414.00. The 2022/23 Equipment Request Total of \$218,507.00, which was reviewed by the Board in March, and will be funded by carryover from 2021/22 budget, if available. Kathy continued to review budget updates, which listed the following items to decrease the deficit: Revenues from % of EIT, Real Estate Transfer collections, and Social Security and PSERS Reimbursement, Miscellaneous Income of \$581,481.00; Update Retirements with new staff savings of \$213,003.00; Update insurance rates with Final Rate Increase of 4.5% is a savings of \$57,412.00; update Assessed Tax Base \$49,472.00. These additional updates to current staff, and other expenditures reduces the deficit to \$966,618.00. This does not include the Act 93 Agreements that expire June 30, 2022, which will increase the deficit. It was noted that the district's current Cyber School Bill is approximately \$1.2 million. Information was also provided to indicate revenue that could be generated with a tax increase from going to the Act 1 Index of 5.0% to 1.0% as well as the cost to taxpayers as the various percentage levels. Ed Bonham asked if the principals and administration had been asked for ideas on how to decrease the deficit. Dr. Barnes stated she would be willing to meet and discuss with the principals and administration on any possible suggestions. After much discussion of a possible tax increase to help balance the budget, and the effect to local taxpayers, the Board directed Kathy to continue moving forward with the proposed budget to include a 4.0% real estate tax increase, which would generate approximately \$455,752.00 in revenue, and to balance the budget with unassigned reserve funds. It was noted that the district has not raised taxes in the past two years. Dr. Barnes and Kathy reminded the Board that this is a proposed budget and that changes can still be made after the May 9, 2022 meeting. Kathy noted a state budget is expected to be passed and an increase in state revenues is anticipated, but at this time, both are unknown. The proposed final budget needs to be adopted at the May 9, 2022 Board Meeting, and needs to be displayed to the public. The Final Budget is scheduled to be adopted by June 13, 2022.

Update on Outdoor Learning Space

Christina Fry, Principal at R.B. Walter Elementary School, announced R.B. Walter Elementary School was awarded \$17,000.00 through the Krieger foundation grant to implement Phase I of the Outdoor Learning Space. As a result, all of the ground work will be completed during the summer of 2022, and Mr. Martin's building and construction group will be able to start building the structures (classrooms and bridges) in the Fall of 2022 and Spring of 2023. Christina also stated the school is in the process of seeking donations for materials to see the building stage (Phase II) through. Christina expressed her sincere gratitude and was excited to share the good news.

Overseas Trips

Dr. Barnes brought to the Board's attention she had received a few concerns from parents with students planning to travel overseas to Austria, Germany, and Switzerland on a school trip with the Ukraine War occurring, and invited Jordan Collum, Social Studies Teacher and History Club Advisor at Williamson Jr/Sr High School, to speak to the Board Members. Jordan stated he has received a few concerns from parents as well. There are approximately 20 parents/students committed to this trip. If the travel company (EF Tours) decides to cancel the trip due to safety concerns, they have stated to Jordan the trip would be refunded 100%, however, that decision has not been made to date. If the parent/student decides on their own to not attend the trip, there will be a 50% refund or a travel voucher issued. The Board Members advised it will be an individual's decision on whether the student/parent will still go or cancel their portion of their trip.

Student Conference Day

Karen Knaus and Peggy Williams, teachers at Cowanesque Valley High School, gave a slide show presentation on the Student Conference Day held at the school on March 28, 2022. A lot of positive feedback was received from the students, including one who stated, "Best day ever". There were 288 students who participated, 33 workshops offered, 9 different school organizations at the pep rally, 6 "Awesome Adults" panel, and even 1 student-led workshop. Matt Sottolano, principal at Cowanesque Valley High School, expressed his appreciation towards the faculty for all of the time put in to make this a successful day for everyone, and said this was an awesome day for everyone.

Impact Statement

Kris Kaufman, Principal of Academic Affairs, handed out an impact statement requesting the Board Members consider moving the part-time administrative assistant position in the curriculum office to a full-time position. Currently, there is not a Human Resources department in the school district, and this position, by moving to full time, would allow for time to absorb some Human Resources duties, such as clearance tracking and mandated trainings, and also more effective and efficient attention to the accounting, monitoring, and compliance of PIMS, federal programs and homeschool program. The Board requested a job description be created, listing specific job duties, and detailing who would be in charge, and presenting at the May 9, 2022 Board Meeting.

Open Forum

No one from the public wished to address the board at this time.

The board adjourned the work session at 7:51 PM.

Kelly Sherman
Board Secretary