

NORTHERN TIOGA SCHOOL DISTRICT
110 Ellison Road
Elkland, PA 16920

Minutes – Work Session
February 24, 2025

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 Superintendent Kristopher Kaufman at 6:02 PM.

Board Attendance: Board Members Present: Greg Cummings, Craig Stage, Rod Butler, James Moyer, Kim Strauser, Allison D’Haene, and Julie Preston (Via Phone). Absent: Denice Mack and Ed Bonham.

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

2025/2026 Budget Update

Act 1 Budget Timeline

- May 31, 2025 – Adopt Proposed Final Budget
- June 30, 2025 – Adopt Final Budget

Preliminary Budget Revenue Information

- No Tax Increase---\$111,000 in new money
- Adjusted Index is 5.9% for Northern Tioga which equates to 0.5579 mills or approximately \$642,561.00 in increased tax revenue

- 2018/19 - Increase was 2.69%. Less than adjusted Act 1 Index of 3.5%
- 2019/20 - Increase was at the adjusted Act 1 Index of 3.4%
- 2020/21 – No Tax Increase
- 2021/22 – No Tax Increase
- 2022/23 – Increase was 4.0%. Less than the adjusted Act 1 Index of 5%
- 2023/24 – Increase was 3.211%. Less than the adjusted Act 1 Index of 6.1%
- 2024/25 – No Tax Increase
- This is an average increase in real estate taxes of 1.9% over the past 7 years.

State Budget for 2025/26

- Governor Shapiro presented his proposed budget on February 4, 2025. Included in his proposal:
- \$75 million increase for the BEF formula
- \$526 million increase in New Adequacy
- \$40 million increase for Special Education
- \$100 million proposed for Physical & Mental Health/Targeted Grants through PCCD
- \$125 million for school facilities improvements grants via Commonwealth Financing Authority
- \$109 million for Universal Free Breakfast
- \$40 million for Student Teacher Stipend Program
- \$7.5 million for Professional Development of Educators

- Statewide Cyber Charter Tuition Rate of \$8,000/student for regular ed
- Increase to the Minimum Wage from \$7.25 to \$15.00/hour for non-tipped workers
- What does the PROPOSED budget equate to for Northern Tioga?
 - Basic Education Funding increase of \$143,907 over 2024/25 allocation
 - Special Education Funding increase of \$48,380 over 2024/25 allocation
 - New Adequacy Investment increase of \$920,940 over 2024/25 allocation
 - Vocational Educational Funding – NTSD no longer qualifies for, decrease in revenue of \$97,621.00

Important to remember that this is a PROPOSED budget.

Federal Revenue

- No projections for 2025/26 yet

Expenditure Information – that is known at this time.

- PSERS Retirement Rate is 34.00%, up from 33.9% last year. Please note that employer contribution rates are projected to increase in the following fiscal year and beyond. Estimated projections are listed below:
 - 2026/2027 – 34.72%
 - 2027/2028 – 35.26%
 - 2028/2029 – 35.85%
 - 2029/2030 – 36.49%
 - 2030/2031 – 37.10%
 - 2031/2032 – 37.59%
- Support Staff Salary Increases \$200,750
- Professional Staff Salary Increases \$748,716
- Act 93 & Administrators Salary Increases \$67,757
- BC/BS Health Insurance Tentative Increase of 8.2% average is \$457,575. Rate will be finalized at the February 26th meeting.

Next Steps

- Continue to review expenditures and revenues and update projections
- Review 2025/26 Equipment Requests with Board at Next Work Session

Staffing Needs

- Mr. Kaufman presented the following staff needs to be considered for the 25/26 budget:
 - Overview:
 - Addressing larger class sizes K-3
 - Addressing areas of concern with support staff coverage
 - Addressing concerns with special education services-staffing vs student needs
 - Carry-over from 24/25
 - Class size reduction:
 - Additional position – WAES.
 - \$116,552.61 impact to 25/26 budget
 - Make permanent position – CWES.

- Budgeted position for 24/25
- Special Education Services:
- Add full-time learning support aide-primary grade level-RBW
 - \$62,421.16
 - Fill remaining positions from 24-25
 - Currently three remaining positions

Update on Athletic Facility/RACP Grant Process

Superintendent Kaufman informed the board that Commissioner Marc Rice and State Representative Clint Owlett have shown interest in wanting to assist the district with the RACP grant process. Mr. Kaufman also shared that within the start-up meeting with Delta Development Group (DDG) they brought to his attention that we cannot start the actual process of construction prior to the approval of the RACP grant application. DDG stated that Senator Yaw recommended the project be completed in two phases with two separate RACP applications. This would potentially put the district in a position to receive more RACP funds. DDG has requested additional information from the district to prepare a two-phase project. Craig Stage expressed his concern that we ensure the community that no matter what the district will complete both phases and suggested that the Board could possibly adopt a Resolution confirming this. As well, Greg Cummings does not want to lose momentum by postponing part of the project. Lastly, Kim Strauser mentioned that she wants to ensure we have someone overseeing the project management, so we do not run into issues down the road.

WAES Garage

Mr. Kaufman stated that the garage at Westfield Area Elementary School was damaged in the August 2024 flood and the recommendation from the structural engineer is that it be demolished and reconstructed. HUNT Engineering has been to the location and is working on a project scope to replace the current garage and possibly replace it with a larger garage due to storage concerns at the school. Mr. Kaufman also informed the board there are still funds from the insurance company that have not been allocated yet.

Girls Wrestling Impact Statement

Mr. Butterfield provided an impact statement for the board regarding adding Girls Wrestling as an offered sport for the district. Mr. Kaufman let the board know this will be presented for approval at the March Board Meeting.

WHS/RBW Kitchen Project

Mr. Kaufman noted that he had also met with Hunt Engineering regarding the drain issues at the R.B. Walter Elementary/Williamson High School kitchen and that Hunt is in the process of preparing a project scope for this as well. Due to several factors involved in the project including the scale of the project, the timing needed to advertise for bids, etc., it is recommended that the project be put off until Summer 2026.

Open Forum

Steve Spencer, Cowanesque Valley High School

Mr. Spencer wanted to thank the board and administration for the lunch provided on professional development days, that the staff genuinely appreciate the effort.

The board adjourned the work session at 6:45 PM.

Brittany Mondock
Board Secretary