

APPROVED MINUTES of the Elmont Board of Education

BUDGET WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 25, 2009

VOLUME XXVIII, PAGE 156
ELMONT, NEW YORK

BOARD OF EDUCATION

BUDGET WORK SESSION

Minutes of the Budget Work Session of the Board of Education of the Elmont Union Free School District, Town of Hempstead, Nassau County, New York, held at the Elmont Road School on Wednesday, February 25, 2009.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Frank Ragona, President
Lorraine Ferrigno, Vice President
Pamela Byer
Michael A. Jaime
Anthony S. Maffea Sr.
Carol Parker-Duncanson
Deniece Walker

ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT:

Mr. Albert Harper,	Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Robert Geras,	Director of Business and Facilities
Colum P. Nugent,	School Attorney

CONSULTANT PRESENT: Mr. Thomas W. Galante

Mr. Ragona called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM

Mr. Harper thanked and welcomed everyone in the audience for taking the time to come out to the workshop. He then stated the purpose which was to get input from the community on the proposed budget. He then asked everyone to stand for the pledge of allegiance.

BUDGET
PRESENTATION

Mr. Harper then gave an overview of budget listing the dates of upcoming events concerning the budget:

- March 5, 2009 –Workshop
- April 21, 2009 - Adoption of Budget
- April 22, 2009 - Property Tax Report Card
- April 28, 2009 - Distribution of “Required Information to Schools”
- May 1, 2009 - Budget Edition of Dialogue Distribution
- May 12, 2009 - Budget Hearing - Presentation to the Public
- May 13, 2009 - Budget Notice Card Reminder

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BUDGET
PRESENTATION

He went further to say the current document is a work in progress and there is a long way to go; that is what this evening is about. A 3.9 % increase is what we are looking at, as it is right now but that is with losing 1.7 million of State Aide, one classroom teacher, 1 Speech teacher, .2 (PT) Psychologist, Capital Projects funding and School Lunch program remains unchanged.

Our Science text books are eight (8) years old and can be taken out of 2009/10 budget. We are currently in the process of selecting the replacements.

Questions raised by the Board were:

What is the amount of time before books are deemed outdated? 6 years (Mr. Harper)

What is the consensus of the teachers? They were the ones who presented the situation to me (Mr. Harper).

What is the cost going to be? We are in the selection process we have met with one company and will meet with another next week. It has not been determined. Our goal is to maintain and enhance our children's education while keeping cost down.

Mr. Harper continued to say there are three items we could discuss that would decrease the budget and tax levy: Defer replacement of one transportation van, extend our planned efficiency of in and out of district transportation, and defer the planned replacement of administrative and instructional technology.

Questions raised by Board:

What is in need of being replaced? Our computers, for Administrative staff (Mr. Harper).

Why? They are outdate to the point where we do not have and are not able to add Microsoft 2007, However, we can make do with what we currently have in place (Mr. Harper).

Mr. Ragona then stated that the Board feels that there is definitely room for improvement to make the increase a little more feasible for the community and the Board is in process of setting a meeting next week to go over the budget line by line.

Mr. Harper then stated that the State Aid cuts are a huge concern throughout the county amongst all the Superintendents. As a matter fact, it was the key issue at the Superintendents meeting he just attended and received a conference call as recent as today discussing the 15% cut in preschool funding. This 15% would amount to \$400,000 in reduced aid.

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Both Mr. Harper and Mr. Ragona, on behalf of the Board, pointed out our goal is to make sure that our children are supplied with an outstanding educational program but also a minimum burden on the community.

Then Mr. Harper said a questionnaire was sent to every PTA and Civic Association asking for input from the community on the budget and to-date we have only received two back, one of which came from East End Civic. At that point Mr. Harper offered the forms to everyone in the audience, as well as, those in attendance taking and informing the various groups and individuals in the community that we very much so would appreciate their input.

AUDIENCE
QUESTIONS

Mr. John Smith asked about the percentage of healthcare the District pays for employees. Mr. Galante responded it varies. For instance, the teachers are at 85%, but each unit varies. There was further dialogue concerning this matter with Mr. Smith stating that he is aware that this has a large impact on the budget.

Ms. Barbara Reynolds asked if we were aware of how much the Federal Stimulus/Grant would be and when we would receive it. She was informed that it was still too early to tell. However, we were aware that President Obama had signed it and it was in effect but have not received a definitive answer as to when it would be received and if it would be distributed through the state or directly to the District. Also, that the portion allocated for IDEA/Title 1 would be distributed directly to us but we have not received those monies and unaware of we will be in receipt of it.

It was asked what can be cut and what is our biggest cost? Pension. Social Security Debt Service

Mr. Nicolosi asked about consolidation, he was informed that we currently have done so with transportation routes and looking into other areas. Mr. Nicolosi also stated that we can't fund schools off of Property Tax because over an eight year span taxes have gone up 72% and right now we are looking at 3.9% Property Tax and an additional 2.9 Energy Tax.

ADJOURNMENT

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Board adjourned the meeting at 8:30 PM on a motion by Mr. Jaime, seconded by Ms. Ferrigno.

Yes	7
No	0
Abstain	0

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Motion Carried Unanimously

Submitted by,

March 17, 2009

Date Approved

Celestine L. Lloyd

District Clerk

Minutes of meeting was typed from notes taken by Ms. Walker