

The **BUDGET AND SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETING** of the Board of Education West Hempstead Union Free School District was called to order in the High School Video Conference Room on March 9, 2010 at 7:30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Mr. Whelpley, who presided, and five other members of the Board: Mr. Brita, Mr. Ejnes, Mr. Kaye, Mr. Mariano and Ms. Rilling were present. Ms. Lotito was absent. Also present were Mr. Hogan, Ms. Peluso, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Bryant and members of the staff and community.

Mr. Whelpley welcomed residents and staff and stated that this was the second budget meeting and that the Instructional portion of the budget would be discussed. He said that the Board would have the opportunity to ask questions after each section. He then turned the meeting over to Mr. Hogan.

Mr. Hogan read a prepared statement. He said that if the state somehow adopts a budget prior to our Board adopting the West Hempstead budget, we would make the necessary adjustments. At present, the proposed budget called for a 5.46% budget-to-budget increase and carries the fiscal realities of lost revenues and tax levy increases that many school districts are facing. What makes our situation more challenging is that West Hempstead has no real industrial or business base to count on. As a result 75% of the burden of supporting the schools falls on our homeowners. Mr. Hogan said that he would be meeting with Senator Skelos and, hopefully, Assemblyman Alfano to express to them the realities of West Hempstead. Mr. Hogan assured all that the district was doing its best to present a fiscally sound budget while addressing the needs of the students. He then turned the meeting over to Mr. Cunningham.

Mr. Cunningham gave an overview of what was discussed at last week's meeting and then turned the meeting over to Mrs. Peluso who presented the Instructional portion of the budget.

Under **BUDGET ITEMS** – Ms. Peluso began by thanking the directors, principals and district office staff for their input and work on the budget. She discussed instructional account code series 2000s (administration and improvement), 2100s (regular school program), 2200s (special apportionment programs), 2300s (teaching other special schools), 2600s (instructional media) and 2800s (pupil services.) Copies of the 2010 – 2011 Proposed Budget were given to all present at the meeting.

In the series 2000, Ms. Peluso stated that the district was continuing its commitment to the Strategic Plan. She explained that the district was actively pursuing grant money to supplement the budget. Ms. Rilling asked who wrote the grants. Mrs. Peluso explained that it was a collaborative effort – many employees were involved (teachers, directors, principals and administration.) Mr. Ejnes asked how much revenue we received in grants for this year. Mr. Cunningham replied that it was approximately \$1.3 million. Mr. Ejnes also noted that there was a substantial drop in the BOCES Staff Development line. Mr. Cunningham said that it was because of stimulus funds. Mr. Brita inquired about the different clerks listed in the 2000 series. Ms. Peluso explained that some were actually principals' secretaries. It was explained that the textbook clerk worked four hours a day at Administration and that she coordinates the textbooks for the private school. She also serves as the Deputy Treasurer.

Ms. Peluso referred to the series 2100 as the heart and soul of the budget. She said that the supply codes for different subjects vary because the district was alternating years for the purchase of textbooks and supplies. For example, this year the district was focusing on replacing Social Studies textbooks and so there was an increase in that line. Mr. Kaye wanted to be certain

that there was enough money in the lines for extra-curricular functions, such as exhibits and fairs. Mr. Cunningham assured him that historically there has been enough. Mr. Ejnes inquired about line A2110.490-00-1000 (BOCES Data Warehouse), wanting to know why it wasn't budgeted for last year. Mr. Cunningham explained that this year the district was trying to be more specific about where the funds were going. Mr. Ejnes asked questions about line A2110.473 (Charter School tuition) and when the district would be notified about how many students would be attending them. Mr. Cunningham replied that we should know sometime in April or May. However, this year we were surprised with an additional two students over the summer. Mrs. Rilling wanted to know what the tuition was for these students. Mr. Cunningham replied that the tuition was set by the state and that it was approximately \$14,000 per student.

Series 2200 – had an increase in appropriations for special education services through BOCES and other providers that are not currently available in the District. There was an increase in students requesting to go to BOCES for Occupational Education. Mr. Ejnes inquired about the decrease in line A2250.430 (Special Ed Services.) It was explained that there was a drop in need because some students aged out. He also inquired about the increase in line A2250.400 (Contract Expense Hearings Evaluations.) Mr. Cunningham and Mrs. Loewy explained that it may be necessary to contract services out as required by IEPs. Mr. Brita inquired about the increase in line A2250.470 (Tuition-Handicapped Contract.) Mr. Cunningham explained that this was for students with very specific needs and that we could not provide an appropriate program for them. Mr. Kaye inquired about the zero budget for home tutoring. Mr. Cunningham explained that we would transfer funds from the Special Education Services code if there was a need.

Series 2300 – topics discussed were the Senior Citizens Program and the elimination of the Adult Education Program.

Series 2600 – included the expansion of access to technology to include netbook carts, interactive whiteboards, LCD projectors and Elmo projectors, continued upgrade of infrastructures, the new district website and the establishment of an automated library media center in the Kindergarten Center. Mr. Ejnes had several questions concerning the upgrade of computers and the purchase of software for computers. Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Fleck responded that the computers are being updated every five years and that there was money in the budget for software.

Series 2800 – key points included an increased focus on post-secondary career and college planning, maintenance of equipment and supplies for athletic teams and the continued support of intramural programs.

Mr. Cunningham then covered the Revenues portion of the budget stating that before any changes, today's draft proposed budget carries a budget-to-budget increase of 5.46% over the 2009-2010 voter approved budget. This amounts to almost \$3,275,000 above a contingent budget. He stressed that this is where we were at today and gave an overall of what would be cut if we were to go on a contingent budget. He stated that revenue sources, such as state aid and tuition from Island Park were decreasing. The Reserves and Fund Balance were also being used. For the average homeowner, the current draft budget would mean an increase of approximately \$580.00 per year, or \$48.35 a month, or \$1.60 a day.

At this point, Mr. Cunningham discussed the Transportation Referendum. He explained that residents of West Hempstead have placed a proposition on the May ballot requesting an increase in transportation services for students in grades K-5. They were seeking the broadening of transportation mileage from 0.75 miles from school to 0.3 miles from school at an estimated cost of over \$608,000. Mr. Cunningham stressed that this was not included in the proposed

budget. If this referendum passed, it would be added to the budget and would have to be incorporated into any future budget adopted by the Board of Education.

At this point in the meeting, the community posed their questions to the Board.

At 9:55 p.m., upon the motion of Ms. Rilling, seconded by Mr. Ejnes, and carried by six, the Board adjourned the Business Meeting to Executive Session, which ended at 10:45 p.m.

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Theresa Bryant, Deputy District Clerk