

Synopsis of Budget Sunday with the Superintendent January 31, 2015

Ms. Pinsak opened the meeting with the introduction of Budget Sunday and introduced Dr. Frohnapfel, Interim Business Administrator, who is presenting the budget overview and answer any questions that the parents/residents may have at the end of the presentation.

Dr. Frohnapfel introduced the **2016/17 Budget Calendar** as follows:

- ▶ **Wednesday, February 10, 2016** – First Preliminary Budget discussion with the Board at the Regular Public Meeting
- ▶ **Wednesday, March 2, 2016** – Second Preliminary Budget discussion with the Board at the Workshop Meeting
- ▶ **Wednesday, March 16, 2016** - Preliminary Budget approved by the Board at Regular Public Meeting
- ▶ **Tuesday, March 22** – Submit budget to Executive County Superintendent
- ▶ **Thursday, April 21** – Last day to advertise Public Hearing
- ▶ **Monday, April 25** – Last day for Executive County Superintendent to approve budget (budget must be approved by the ECS prior to advertisement)
- ▶ **Wednesday, May 4, 2016** – Public Budget Hearing
Final Budget approved by the Board

Ms. Pinsak requested that Dr. Frohnapfel explain to the audience the process of the Board Finance Committee.

Dr. Frohnapfel explained that the Finance Committee has discussions regarding expenditures and if cuts need to be made to budget. These discussions include the Business Administrator, Superintendent with the Superintendent's recommendations brought to the committee to move the budget forward. The Finance Committee consists of three or four members of the Board. If five Board Members are in attendance, it is considered a Quorum and the Board would have to have that discussion in public. Dr. Frohnapfel continued that the District operates on committees.

Parents inquired about what is the difference in prescription plans?

Dr. Frohnapfel responded that currently the BOE plan is self-funded and the district must cover the cost if we exceed the annual per person fee. If we change to the State plan, there is a flat rate for each employee covered and the district would not incur additional expenses.

Parents inquired about the transfer of funds to the Charter Schools.

Ms. Pinsak responded that the Board supports the Charter School. It is rare in a town of Teaneck's size to have a Charter School. The funds follow the student to any charter school. We budget over \$5 million dollars to the charter schools. The per pupil cost reported spent on our students is not spent on Public School students. Dr. Frohnapfel responded that we can see two different numbers when we break out all of the costs. In speaking of escalating costs, Ms. Pinsak responded that it is as if we are this perfect storm of expenses.

Parents inquired about non-public transportation aid.

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Dr. Frohnapfel responded that Teaneck buses 2,250 non-public students by code and provide either transportation or aid in lieu of transportation when we don't have enough students going to a school to warrant a bus. The rate is set by the State Department at \$884. Teaneck currently has over 50 routes to non-public schools. Aid in lieu is provided for families where not enough students to route a bus. By State Law in codes 18A and 6A entitles residents more than two miles for elementary students and 2.5 miles for high school students.

Parents stated that 2.5 miles seems like a long distance. Are there particular state committees or group of legislators that back this mileage? To give parents a roadmap to the source where parents need to go to contest it before it is a crisis for the district.

Ms. Pinsak responded that we could post a link to the National School Boards site at www.njsba.org and to the Garden State Coalition at www.gscschools.org Ms. Pinsak continued that if parents sign up for alerts on the website they would receive a notification when items are posted to the website.

Parents inquired about what parents could do to advocate for the interest of their public school children with concerns about the students' needs for next year. What would you suggest the best approach?

Dr. Frohnapfel responded that at Board Meetings there are two sessions of public comment and the Board listens to suggestions to take back for discussion to the committees.

Ms. Pinsak stated that is why it is important for the public to attend the Board Meetings to give their input to the Board. The Board represents the Public. We cannot have it all with a 2% cap and the focus is for programs for students and maintaining class size. In 2009-10 the budget cut by the state (\$9 million) and Town Council (\$3 million) was disastrous. Things like utilities, insurance and out of district tuitions have no caps and have increased but the District's budget is capped at 2%.

Parents stated that it is almost because the District got the budget balanced in spite of the decrease in state aid and township budget cuts that now the district will never receive that amount of aid again in the future.

Dr. Frohnapfel continued that the 2% cap occurred when the election was moved to November by the State. If a program is not funded in the budget, a question could be placed on the ballot for a vote in November. However, the program wouldn't begin until January. The challenge is to maintain the integrity of the educational program.

Ms. Pinsak stated that the Board has discussed a full district Pre-K program. The residents would vote on a ballot question in November but if it fails the Board couldn't fund it. Ms. Pinsak continued that last year programs were cut at the middle schools and one grade increased in class size at the middle schools. We would like to maintain the programs, extracurricular activities, Advanced Placement and Honors classes and would hope to add more classes.

Parents inquired about what was the District savings by outsourcing?

Dr. Frohnapfel responded that the savings were over \$1 million. He continued that in the budget process if cuts are recommended, the savings would be included in the budget presentation.

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Parents inquired about the Special Education budget and cost of out of district programs which seems to be 27.2% of the total budget and if grants are available to fund.

Ms. Pinsak responded that you are dealing with student confidentiality. Some of the funding we receive are grants from the state, however, there are few opportunities for grants for this purpose.

Dr. Frohnapfel stated that in the budget there is a breakdown of the Special Education state aid. The only other avenue is extraordinary aid.

Parents inquired about a District grant writer?

Dr. Frohnapfel responded that the district doesn't have a grant writer but staff submit grants for approval to the Board.

Ms. Pinsak responded that grants have been received for curriculum, emergency management and for outreach people in the schools but when the grant period was over we had to let some outreach staff go and funded others ourselves. You need to sustain the program/staffing so we have to be careful what we go for in grants. We have 30 to 40 percent of free and reduced lunch but we still don't have the numbers of free and reduced to go for the large grant funds.

Parents stated that there are talented retired Teaneck residents and alumni who do this type of work and may be interested in volunteering their services.

Ms. Pinsak responded that we could do something with the volunteer program. The high school scoreboard was donated by some alums. She continued that construction is being completed at the high school for transition students in-district by Operations and Maintenance. The furnishings were donated through Mr. Heck's connections. Ms. Pinsak continued that the TOPS (Teaneck Organization for Public Schools) program is a opportunity and vehicle for fundraising. Mrs. Rappoport is looking for volunteers for TOPS. Ms. Pinsak concluded that the PTO/PTA deserve credit for their fundraising efforts.

Parents inquired about budget presentations to PTO/PTA and PTO Council.

Dr. Frohnapfel responded that he would be happy to present the budget and review reporting procedures with the PTO Council.

Ms. Pinsak stated that in conclusion, please know, that the Board will take the budget presentation on the road to present the information to PTO/PTA parents. Please consider inviting the Board when the PTA/PTO meet.

Next Meeting – February 21, 2016 at 2pm

Respectfully submitted by Linda Kuhran

Attachment: Budget Sunday PowerPoint Presentation