

**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
LEVITTOWN UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
LEVITTOWN, NY**

**DATE: MARCH 9, 2022**

**BUDGET MEETING**

**MINUTES**

**THE BUDGET MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**, was duly called and held on Wednesday, March 9, 2022 in the Board Meeting Room of the Levittown Memorial Education Center.

**CERTIFICATION:**

The District Clerk certified that pursuant to Section 104, Open Meetings Law, notice of meeting was sent to the local newspapers, the Public Library and posted on the district's website. Further, all members of the Board of Education had due notice of said meeting.

**CALL TO ORDER**

**Board of Education:**

Ms. Peggy Marenghi, President  
Ms. Jennifer Messina, Vice-President  
Mr. James Moran, Secretary  
Ms. Marianne Adrian, Trustee (Excused Absence)  
Mr. Dillon Cain, Trustee  
Ms. Christina Lang, Trustee  
Mr. Michael Pappas, Trustee (Excused Absence)

**Administration:**

Dr. Tonie McDonald, Superintendent  
Dr. Christopher Dillon, Assistant Superintendent  
Ms. Debbie Rifkin, Assistant Superintendent  
Mr. Todd Winch, Assistant Superintendent

**Others:**

Mr. Robert Cohen, Attorney  
Ms. Suzanne Mallozzi, District Clerk

Ms. Marenghi called the budget meeting to order at 8:22pm.

|                  |                                      |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>MOTION CARRIED [5-0]</b>          |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Jennifer Messina, Vice-President     |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Dillon Cain, Trustee                 |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Moran, Cain, Marenghi, Lang, Messina |
| <b>ABSENT:</b>   | Pappas, Adrian                       |

**II. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

**A. Draft Budget:**

Dr. Dillon updated the Board with new budget numbers including the tax levy that has been filed, personnel numbers, impacts of TRS, ERC, Health insurance, Transportation, Capital money, materials and supplies and unfunded mandates associated with state testing and state mandated curriculum changes as well as COVID 19 related expenses. Budget change of 2.95% was presented and final discussion will take place at March 23 budget meeting.

i. Curriculum and Instruction - T. Winch:

Mr. Winch was happy to say that the District's goal to return to in person instruction for all students, the restoration of as many suspended programs as possible and utilization of Chromebooks and Google classroom to continue to enhance our instruction programs is moving forward. This all is happening as we move past COVID and get back to as "normal" as possible. In addition, the district created the following:

- K-2 Math and ELA academies, MS and HS Math and ELA academies and help centers, inclusion of additional reading and math support programs and enhanced collaboration with our Pre-K programs.

Points of pride:

- Digital citizenship instruction K-8, additional full-day UPK openings, Erin's Law implementation, expansion of LEADD program, Teacher induction program, Red Trunk project and the transition to Google classroom.

Planned initiatives for 2022-2023

- updating to Envision 2020, piloting new ELA programs, implementation of foundations K-2 as core phonics programs.

Q - Ms. Marengi asked if the new envision program that is being updated is it the content that is being switched or the context of which they're presenting it? Mr. Winch responded that it is primarily the latter.

- red-watch band project which provides training for HS students' knowledge, awareness and skills to prevent toxic deaths. Continued focus on college credit courses, continuing to provide professional development on leveraging devices to enhance instruction. Seal of Civic Readiness, HS technology programs, Offering online unofficial transcripts, technology curriculum.

In conclusion, the District we will be offering a new summer enrichment program (heavily subsidized) and the celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Levittown.

ii. Computer Department – Todd Connell

Mr. Connell pointed out several points of pride accomplished by the computer department this past year:

- Kindergarten chromebooks, paying for them through the smartschool bond, upgraded internet bandwidth due to remote schooling, internet filter upgrade, updated website to be mobile user friendly. New purchases of computers which are smaller, more energy efficient small form factor computers.

Planned Initiatives for 2022-2023

- Utilizing energy virtualization software, transition to lower energy use printers, Chromebook one-to-one, desktop refresh, laptop refresh, antivirus enhancement, Lexmark MFP refresh and implementation of goGuardian Teacher.

Total Budget increase of 4% expected for 2022-2023. Library budget for periodicals for schools will increase .43%. Each library will get a portion based on enrollment.

Questions:

- Ms. Messina: Are you utilizing read and write for google chrome for all students? Mr. Connell responded that it was just for certain students, working with Jamie Spencer, OT recommendations. .
- Ms. Lang thanked the whole computer team and noted that it is a big undertaking especially since technology changes so rapidly. She asked if there is a place on the website for teachers to be made aware of all the software that is available to maximize access? Mr. Connell responded that there is a page under staff of more resources that they can click on.
- Ms. Lang: What the District is doing with the Microsoft tablets after the 3 years (10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade) user are finished with them? Mr. Connell's response was that the tablets from graduating seniors will have 2 more years of the surface go devices so by the time those students leave, they will be 4 years old, so we could either repurpose it but at 4-5 years old, that's when the battery stops charging so they are almost at their end of life. All attempts will be made to collect these devices.
- Ms. Lang: Do the chromebooks have a longer shelf life? Mr. Connell answered that Google says they are supposed to and have a life-span of about 6 years from the date of purchase. That's how long Google will update/support that hardware. Doesn't mean the battery will last that long.
- Ms. Lang - With this amount of technology, what are plans for teacher development in technology? Mr. Connell – We formed a tech committee this year with teachers to survey the teachers to find out what areas they need help and to get those teachers to do training in the buildings. Idea is to have those in the buildings who are proficient in the technology to be able to guide those who may need assistance.

iii. Fine Arts – Frank Creter

Mr. Creter began his presentation with department goals which are to:

- enhance, develop and promote educational and creative experiences for students and staff in the classroom and beyond. Create art and music shared spaces. Increase musical instrument inventory and lessen the need for rental equipment. Enhance our outreach efforts so that more students register for Music Instruction. Implement the NYS Media Arts Standards for Middle Schools.
- 45.66% of enrollment of eligible students are in music. K-2 numbers are not included as they will have their opportunity in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

Points of pride:

- Annual arts shows at Division and MacArthur were held, with a special emphasis on social distancing. Resumption of district concerts, holiday tree lighting performance, competitive march band competition (top 5 score for division) & public library art exhibit.

Planned initiatives:

- Continuum of Middle to High School enrollment, grow enrollment in AP art as well as in College Graphic Design. Create a Fine Arts Technology Committee.

- Continue the professional development opportunities and Cultural Experiences through performances, galleries, college, and workshops such as Solfege, Kodaly, Orff and Dalcroze.

Budget Drivers:

- Rising Costs, purchasing of instruments vs. renting, music textbooks, ILaptops at MacArthur & plan to refurbish Abbey Lane Art Room

In summary, Music department requests an increase of 89%, primarily due to purchase of 174 instruments in lieu of rentals. Instruments are defined as “student grade” for elementary schools but as we transition to High Schools, the “Grade” of instrument is a higher quality, therefore costing more. BOCES prices are considered. Chart of instrument purchases can be found in the budget book

Questions:

- Ms. Lang - Total yearly rental cost is what the parents pay? Mr. Creter responded that the District rents the equipment and the parents pay a “Yearly Maintenance Fee” of \$78 to rent that piece of equipment.
- Ms. Lang: so what is the difference between total yearly rental cost and total cost to purchase? Mr. Creter: the slide shows that what it would cost to rent the instrument yearly and then another column shows the BOCES purchase price for the piece of equipment. The final column shows how long it would take to recoup the cost of the purchase. Purchasing instruments lessens our reliance on rentals and will make financial sense in the long run.
- Ms. Lang also noted that her children have been in the music programs in the District since third grade and the programs are amazing. During the pandemic, remembering watching the video of all students singing and it bringing such joy to all and is grateful to all students who continue to do art and music and to teachers all those who supported them during such tough times and to have that joy was a blessing.

The Board thanked Mr. Creter for his presentation.

- iv. Athletic Department – J. Keith Snyder: Thanked Dr. McDonald for all her support throughout the years.

Department goals include:

- Continue to offer a quality Physical Education and Athletic program for all students in the District, continue to upgrade and improve facilities and equipment. Continue to employ and retain quality teachers and coaches. Keep a good working relationship with County and State athletic agencies. Instill the values of good Citizenship in our students/athlete. Always encourage Sportsmanship, Compassion and Empathy in all endeavors

Points of Pride:

- Congratulations to Division Varsity Football for their first playoff appearance in 10 years under the direction of Head Coach Rob McNamara, Conference champs for MacArthur Girls Basketball, MacArthur Girls Soccer, MacArthur Girls Volleyball, MacArthur Football were Nassau County Finalist, MacArthur Varsity Cheer – NYS Champs for the first time. Division Varsity Cheer placed 11<sup>th</sup> in the Nation at Nationals in Orlando. Division Bowler Brillian Sodermaster was named Nassau County Outstanding Bowler.

MacArthur Track, 4x400 relay team Alexandra Coloma, Summer Looney, Sofia Migliore and Alyssa Rotondo – NYSPHSAA Section VIII Champs. Overall, Levittown School District received 96 post season awards which includes September – February, including 4 scholar athlete teams.

- MacArthur hosted the Duke vs. Upenn Lacrosse game which was attended by 3500 people, thanks to John Nessler’s diligence and hard work. Proceeds to go to local lacrosse programs in Levittown.
- 2 county wrestling champs – Killian Foy (MacArthur) and Shane Moore (Division). Congratulations to both.
- Kudos to the Physical Education teachers to do all their classes in the gym and in classrooms. Using space as best they can.
- Congratulations to 2022 Outstanding Physical Education Students Maggie McCabe & Chris Powers from Division and Patrick DeGennaro & Thomasine Weber from MacArthur.

#### Ongoing projects:

- New Guest Bleacher at Division Avenue Football Field, new bleachers at MacArthur softball field, wind screen additions to both high schools, new scoreboards to be installed at both high schools, new uniforms for soccer, basketball and lacrosse. In addition, stadium padding was added, weight room improvements. Sound systems are being installed at both softball fields. Glass backboards being stalled at middle schools. Each HS has some new rugs with the appropriate logo’s, branding of decals, benches, rugs. End zone cameras added and new cheer mat is on the way.

#### Planned Initiatives:

- Safety netting at Mac Softball field, safety enclosure for Discus at high schools, seating bleachers for MacArthur Softball, resurfacing of tennis courts at MacArthur, Solar Scoreboards at middle schools and fix drainage at MacArthur baseball field bleacher area.

In summary, budget change of 13.89% is anticipated for the 2022-2023 school year.

#### v. Department of Pupil Services – Dr. Susan Farber.

Classification rate increased slightly in 2020, but is still below the Nassau County and NYS rate of 14% and 17% respectively. Increases that we are seeing are similar to other districts. There was a significant backlog of referrals during COVID and more students are being referred this year. Levittown is a wonderful school district and community and we have robust special education programs which has led to a significant number of families moving to the District over the Summer and during the school year and have students with IEP’s and significant needs. Home instruction numbers had a slight dip during COVID but have increased this year due to students with medical needs and suspended students who require it. Disciplinary infractions have increased as we ebb out of the COVID restrictions due to social and emotional deficits. Homeless and Hospitalization numbers are expected to rise due to moratorium on evictions expiring and increased hospitalizations due to mental health issues.

Question: Ms. Marengi: Do we have breakdown of hospitalizations due to psychiatric vs. physical placements? Dr. Farber responded that the numbers on the slide were strictly related to mental health, not physical ailments.

Out of District placements have increased slightly because of students who require more instruction than a public school setting can afford. Currently approximately 16 students

require placement in an out of public school placement as their needs are greater than we can provide. Dr. Farber thanked all the members of the Special Education department, Mrs. Dawn Wang and Dr. Jurgens, the Assistant Directors, for their passion, compassion and attention to detail, Thank you to Special Education Chairpersons Dr. Margaret Ippolito as well as Miss. Julia Joshua-Kutty and Mrs. Stephanie Addona and Dr. Edel McCarville for ensuring our secondary students receive their special education supports and all their help supporting our students and families as they pursue post high school endeavors. Last but not least, thanks to all our related the service providers, psychologists, social workers, speech therapists, teachers, TA's and aides who are out in the buildings and in the classrooms working tirelessly with our families and students to support each student in meeting with success.

Points of Pride:

- Even with COVID going on, our students were still able to get out in the community to enhance their consumer skills, continue with IEP goals. In addition, with grant money, we were able to order cricut machines at some of the secondary schools. Students have been crafting and creating projects that they are selling. Also highlighting the ESL (Extended Services Learning) program that we started last year.

Planned Initiatives:

- Continue to partner with community resources to help provide support for our students and families (Yes/Northwell/South Oaks). LEADD, Nassau County Blueprint for Mental Health & Wellness, Continue building level crisis team training. Responsive Classroom, continue to expand transition assessment for HS students to help support their post-secondary endeavors. Increase Professional Development for Special Education teachers in the area of reading (Ortin Gillingham).

Budget Drivers:

- Include Classification increases (Autism/OHI/ED/LD/Speech & Language). High needs students, new entrants (4201/Hope for Youth/NYC), Increase in 6:1:2 classes. Changes in State regulations (Ageing out exceptions, McKinney Vento).

In Summary: Change in budget for 2022-2023 is 4.67%

### III. MOTION TO ADJOURN

|                  |                                      |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>MOTION CARRIED [5-0]</b>          |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Christina Lang, Trustee              |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Jennifer Messina, Vice-President     |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Moran, Cain, Marenghi, Lang, Messina |
| <b>ABSENT:</b>   | Pappas, Adrian                       |