

## **WATERTOWN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**May 4, 2021**

The Public Hearing on the proposed budget and the regular meeting of the Watertown City School District's Board of Education was held on May 4, 2021, in the District Office Conference Room at HT Wiley School for the board members and was streamed live for the public to view virtually via a link on the district website. The Public Hearing was opened by the Board President, Maria Mesires, opened at 6:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Mesires then turned the hearing over to Mr. Joshua Hartshorne, School Business Manager.

Members Present: Maria T Mesires  
Michael R. Struchen  
Culley T. Gosier  
Jason B. Harrington  
Nancy C. Henry  
Beth A. Linderman  
Suzanne C. Renzi-Falge

Officers Present: Patricia B. LaBarr, Superintendent of Schools  
Michelle R. Gravelle, District Clerk

Administrators: Stacey J. Eger-Converse, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction  
Tina M. Lane, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Student Services  
Joshua W. Hartshorne, School Business Administrator

There were 3 visitors.

### **Public Hearing on the Proposed 2021-22 School Budget**

Mr. Hartshorne presented by PowerPoint. Mr. Hartshorne reiterated the 2021-22 Budget Goals:

- Expand safety initiatives including social-emotional supports for students.
- Maintain current academic programming and continue to expand educational opportunities.
- Connect with parent and families about attendance and at-risk factors.
- Update and maintain physical and IT infrastructure.

He went on to introduce the district's Revenues. The State sources are at 65%, just under 1 million dollars. The State Sources 45.5 Million is comprised of basic formula state aid, there was an increase in foundation aid. Real Property Taxes at 21.7% at \$17 Million; Appropriated Fund Balance at 11.78%, \$9,233,770; Federal Sources at 0.51%, \$400,000; Other Revenues at 0.7% at \$602,949; and Reserves at 0.20% at \$160,000.

A slide showing the Revenue Variance Year Over Year showed that State Sources are up 4.3 Million dollars, largely from the increase in foundation aid coupled with the pandemic adjustment. Property taxes are up \$300,000 which reflects the 1.8% increase. Other revenues and reserves are down slightly. Federal sources are down, \$2.35 Million, reflecting the fact that the CARES Act funding has still not been dispersed.

He then continued on to highlight the District's Appropriations. The bulk of the expenses for the district is through Instruction, which is at 43.07%, \$33,757,074. Employee benefits also make up a large portion of the appropriations at 26.6%, \$20,901,395. Remaining appropriations include

Debt Services, BOCES cost, Transportation, Operations & Maintenance, Interfund Transfers, and General Support. He drilled down into more specifics in a few of these areas. Instruction is at a Year Over Year increase of over \$900 thousand. Instruction Regular School is the largest increase with after school programs being re-implemented, additional aides, the addition of a School Resource Office, & Smart Board replacements. Programs for Students with Disabilities is the next highest increase, largely due to BOCES services tied to anticipated enrollment and corresponding teacher numbers. The Year Over Year increase for Transportation is \$212,511. He is hopeful for some return to normalcy as we see an increase in runs for summer school, field trips, and sporting events. Additionally, he highlighted Employee Benefits. The Year Over Year increase is over \$1.8 million from last year. There was a 1% health insurance increase along with an increase of 2% for Employees Retirement System and Teachers Retirement System is up .3% plus reserve contributions. Medicare reimbursements are up 3%.

The Budget postcard was in the mail to households in the city today. Mr. Hartshorne has updated the district website with all of the pertinent information on the school budget.

- ❖ 21-22 Proposed Budget \$78,377,057
- ❖ Budget Increase: \$1,371,048
- ❖ Tax Levy Increase: 1.8%

Suzanne Renzi-Falge made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Michael Struchen; all voting aye. Maria Mesires declared the public hearing closed at 6:52p.m.

At this point, The Board of Education continued with their regularly scheduled meeting.

**Agenda Changes:** There was one addition to the Personnel report, the board members were given an updated copy of the report.

**Public Comments:** None

**Communications:** The District Clerk reminded the members of the upcoming Jefferson-Lewis School Boards Association Virtual Presentation/Annual Meeting on Wednesday, May 26. Members are asked to notify the District Clerk if they have interest in participating.

**Board and Staff Reports:**

**Mr. Chad Fairchild, Principal and Ms. Erin King, Assistant Principal, Watertown High School—Graduation 2021 Preparations.**

Mr. Fairchild and Ms. King presented on some of the end of the year upcoming events that will take place at Watertown High School along with a complete update on the vision of the Graduation ceremony. Currently, they report 230 graduating seniors.

**Senior focused events:**

- Twenty-six volunteers from Watertown High will deliver yard signs to each senior to display on their yard in front of their home.
- Senior weekend will be June 12. A class trip to Six Flags Darien Lake is planned. Transportation and a meal will be provided to the students using the funds that the class has raised. June 14 is a class day celebration. All seniors will gather for outside games and

activities. During class day the class day video will be presented in the auditorium to just the senior class. There are still some preparations to do something with the class in the evening as well.

#### Graduation Ceremony:

Recent guidelines indicate that if the graduating students are seated on the turf away from the spectators then they don't factor in as the quota of 500 people per gathering. In addition to that new guidelines indicate that the testing protocol has been lifted for outdoor venue events.

Graduation will be on Friday, June 25, which is different than traditionally in the past. The graduates will be divided into two separate groups in which they'll enter the ceremony. The procession is alphabetically this year. The evening starts with the parade much like last year. All graduates will be in a vehicle with the four (4) invited family members. Additional family members and spectators are welcome to line the parade route. The graduates will proceed to the entrance of the turf where there will be dropped off. The administration is hoping to have a red carpet awaiting them. They will be seated on the turf for the ceremony; family members will be in the bleachers. The Valedictorian and Salutatorian will deliver their speeches as they reach the stage alphabetically.

Running board trucks will be located in the parking lot streaming the ceremony for spectators and families.

National Honor Society Induction will be on June 9. The students from last year that were to be inducted will join this year's group for a total of 100 students. An in house celebration will take place and will be recorded. Jr. Scholarship winners will be announced at that time as well.

Summer school will be offered at the high school. It will be in-person. Parents will get a message via ParentSquare soon in order to recruit students that would be interested in participating. Summer school will run from July 6 for 30 days, 2- 15 day sessions, 8a.m. until 2:30p.m.

#### **Mrs. Rachel Marston— Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) update**

Mrs. Marston is the Alternative Education Coordinator at Watertown High. She updated the board members on the names of the teachers that are teaching the various subjects in the program.

- There are currently twelve students enrolled.
- Ten students are 17-20 years of age and two are 16 years of age and out of the twelve enrolled ten students have IEP's.
- One student recently graduated due to a new regular NYS put in place. Mrs. Marston is hoping to have a few more students fall under this regulation.
- Sixteen students have dropped out for various reasons.
- Two students have tested and passed this year. Due to COVID the testing center locally has been shut down, which has forced the students to go out of the county in order to test.
- The program has a method of doing a subject a day. This has worked well for the students.
- Due to the location and group size the program has been able to hold in person classes for five days per week.

Looking ahead into the next school year Mrs. Marston is hopeful that the local testing center will be open. She anticipates an increase in enrollment numbers next school year.

#### **Items for Consent Agenda:**

Resolution Offered by Michael Struchen.

**RESOLVED**, that Consent Agenda Items A, B, C, D, E and F are hereby approved.

- A. Approval of the Minutes of Board of Education Meeting on April 13, 2021 and April 21, 2021.
- B. Approval of the Monthly Treasurer's Report for March 2021.
- C. Approval of the Monthly Financial Report for March 2021.
- D. Approval of the Extra-Curricular Classroom Activity Reports for WHS, Case, and Wiley for February 2021 and March 2021.
- E. Approval of the Minutes of the Committee on Pre-School Education.
- F. Approval of the Minutes of the Committee on Special Education.

Seconded by Jason Harrington and carried; all voting aye.

**Items for Board Action:**

Resolution Offered by Culley Gosier.

**WHEREAS**, in recognition of Staff Appreciation Week, and

**WHEREAS**, The Watertown City School District would like to recognize all of our staff for their service in creating an environment that is safe, supportive, and helping our students navigate the endless challenges and changes associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, and

**WHEREAS**, our staff have continued to encourage and support students in developing skills that will help them continue to adjust and thrive in an ever-changing world, and

**WHEREAS**, our staff have worked relentlessly to make students and families feel safe, comfortable, connected, and reassured,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this Resolution be formally presented to all Watertown City School District Staff.

Seconded by Suzanne Renzi-Falge and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution Offered by Jason Harrington.

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT**, the Board of Education for the Watertown City School has determined and finds that Patricia LaBarr, Tina Lane, and Stacey Eger-Converse, are hereby certified as Qualified Lead Evaluators of Principals having successfully completed the following training requirements prescribed in 8 NYCRR §30-2.9 (b):

1. The New York State Teaching Standards and their related elements and performance indicators and the Leadership Standards and their related functions.
2. Evidence-based observation techniques that are grounded in research.
3. Application and use of the student growth percentile model and the value-added growth model as defined in 8 NYCRR §30-2/2.

4. Application and use of the New York State-approved rubrics selected by the Watertown City School District for use in the evaluation of Teachers, including training on the effective application of such rubric to observe building principals practice.
5. Application and use of the assessment tools that the Watertown City School District utilizes to evaluate its building principals.
6. Application and use of the New York State-approved, locally selected measures of student achievement used by the Watertown City School District to evaluate its principals/teachers.
7. The scoring methodology utilized by the State Education Department and the Watertown City School District to evaluate principals under 8 NYCRR §30-2 including:
  - i. How scores are generated for each subcomponent and the composite effectiveness score of principals/teachers, and
  - ii. Application and use of the scoring ranges prescribed by the Commissioner for the four designated rating categories used for the overall rating of principals/teachers and their subcomponent ratings.
8. Specific considerations in evaluating principals of English language learners and students with disabilities.

Training on the use of the Statewide Instructional Reporting System, also required by 8 NYCRR §30-2.9 (b), will be provided once the New York State Education Department makes available the information required for such training. This certification has been issued in accordance with the process for certifying lead evaluators in accordance with the Watertown City School District's Annual Professional Performance Review Plan.

Seconded by Suzanne Renzi-Falge and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution offered by Michael Struchen.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Board of Education for the Watertown City School has determined and finds that the following employees (as per the attached), are hereby certified as Qualified Lead Evaluators of Teachers having successfully completed the following training requirements prescribed in 8 NYCRR §30-2.9 (b):

1. The New York State Teaching Standards and their related elements and performance indicators and the Leadership Standards and their related functions.
2. Evidence-based observation techniques that are grounded in research.
3. Application and use of the student growth percentile model and the value-added growth model as defined in 8 NYCRR §30-2/2.
4. Application and use of the New York State-approved rubrics selected by the Watertown City School District for use in the evaluation of Teachers, including training on the effective application of such rubric to observe building principals/teachers practice.
5. Application and use of the assessment tools that the Watertown City School District utilizes to evaluate its building principals.

6. Application and use of the New York State-approved, locally selected measures of student achievement used by the Watertown City School District to evaluate its principals/teachers.
7. The scoring methodology utilized by the State Education Department and the Watertown City School District to evaluate principals/teachers under 8 NYCRR §30-2 including:
  - i. How scores are generated for each subcomponent and the composite effectiveness score of principals/teachers, and
  - ii. Application and use of the scoring ranges prescribed by the Commissioner for the four designated rating categories used for the overall rating of principals/teachers and their subcomponent ratings.
8. Specific considerations in evaluating principals/teachers of English language learners and students with disabilities.

Training on the use of the Statewide Instructional Reporting System, also required by 8 NYCRR §30-2.9 (b), will be provided once the New York State Education Department makes available the information required for such training. This certification has been issued in accordance with the process for certifying lead evaluators in accordance with the Watertown City School District's Annual Professional Performance Review Plan.

Seconded by Beth Linderman and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution Offered by Beth Linderman.

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Education of the Watertown City School District desires to enter into a 4 year contract with the Madison-Oneida BOCES in order for the Regional Information Center to furnish certain services to the District pursuant to Education Law 1950(4)(jj), those services being: CoSer 602-7710 Administrative Computer Services.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, it is

**RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education of the Watertown City School District agrees to enter into a contract with the Madison-Oneida BOCES for the provision of said services to the District not to exceed \$197,205.00 plus related borrowing fees, plus yearly Regional Information Center support during the term of this contract, finalized by the Superintendent, subject to the approval of the Commissioner of Education, for a period of 4 year(s); 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25.

Seconded by Michael Struchen and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution Offered by Culley Gosier.

**RESOLVED**, That the Watertown City School District Board of Education amends the 2020-21 school calendar as follows:

May 28, 2021 is a giveback day, per WEA Contract, as the district has three or more unused emergency days remaining.

Seconded By Nancy Henry and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution Offered by Jason Harrington.

**RESOLVED** that the following person be and are hereby appointed Inspectors of Election to serve in the respective school election districts for the School Budget and Board of Education Vote to be held on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of May 2021, and the Clerk of the Board shall give written notice of the appointment to each person as required by law.

**North Elementary School**  
**Deborah Cavallario**

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that, in the event of the inability of any of the foregoing to serve, the Clerk of the Board is hereby authorized to obtain and appoint a replacement.

Seconded By Nancy Henry and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution Offered by Michael Struchen.

**RESOLVED**, that Olivia Roggie is hereby approved for an educational administrative internship in the district for the 2021-22 school year.

Seconded by Culley Gosier and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution Offered by Jason Harrington.

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, Patricia B. LaBarr, the Board of Education hereby approves the following:

**RETIREMENTS**

A	Name	Title	Effective Date	Years
1	Augustus, Janet	Account Clerk	7/1/2021	20
2	Bauter, Kristen	Elementary Teacher	11/8/2021	31
3	Tenney, Valerie	School Bus Attendant	6/24/2021	23

**RESIGNATION**

B	Name	Title	Effective Date	Years
1	Papin, Ricky	Noon Monitor	4/30/2021	8 months

**APPOINTMENTS – PERMANENT**

C	Name	Title	Effective Date	Salary
1	Calhoun, Roseanne	Teacher Aide	5/6/2021	\$15.15/hr
2	Morgia, Allison	Teacher Aide	5/6/2021	\$15.15/hr
3	Morgia, Lynda	Teacher Aide	5/10/2021	\$17.18/hr
4	Raleigh, Michelle	Teacher Aide	5/6/2021	\$15.15/hr
5	Sullivan, Abigail	Teacher Aide	5/6/2021	\$15.15/hr

**APPOINTMENT – PERMANENT – PART TIME**

D	Name	Title	Effective Date	Salary
1	Slate, Eila	Noon Monitor	5/5/2021	\$12.50/hr

**APPOINTMENT – SPRING COACHING – GIRLS**

E	Name	Sport	Salary
1	Peters, Lori	JV Softball	Unpaid/volunteer

Seconded by Nancy Henry and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution Offered by Suzanne Renzi-Falge.

**RESOLVED**, That an Agreement between the Watertown City School District and Magellan Federal, Inc., for certain Military & Family Life Counseling services for the 2020-2021 school year is hereby approved.

Seconded by Jason Harrington and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution Offered by Michael Struchen.

**RESOLVED**, that an Agreement, as per the attached, by and between the Rensselaer, Columbia, and Greene Counties BOCES, also known as QUESTAR III, for certain internal audit services for the 2021-2022 school year is hereby approved.

Seconded by Jason Harrington and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution Offered by Suzanne Renzi-Falge.

**RESOLVED**, that a donation of Save Around Coupon books has been made to faculty and staff at Case Middle School, North Elementary, Ohio Elementary, Sherman Elementary, Starbuck Elementary, and Knickerbocker Elementary, HT Wiley, and Watertown High School. This donation is in honor of Teacher Appreciation week and is gratefully accepted and approved and will be acknowledged in writing.

Seconded By Beth Linderman and carried; all voting aye.

**Items for Discussion/Information:**

**Superintendent of Schools Report: Patricia B. LaBarr**

- ❖ Superintendent LaBarr began by thanking Mr. Fairchild, Ms. King and Mrs. Marston for their presentation and updates. She also echoed the resolution read this evening in regards to her appreciation to all staff in the district. She looks forward to the K-6 hybrid students returning to five-day instruction on Thursday.
- ❖ She thanked the board members for approving May 28 as a snow day give back. The final calendar change will be presented on June 1. If the district doesn't have any further emergency days then June 15 will be the last full day at WHS. Regents will run June 17,22,23,24, and 25 (Staff Development). K-8 student's last day will be June 21. The last day for staff will be June 25 (Staff Development).
- ❖ The Superintendent, along with both Assistant Superintendents, held a community information meeting on the K-6 hybrid return via ZOOM on April 22. There were a few questions and they have been responded to.



- ❖ She reports that she continues the *Blindspot* book study with 11 WCSD employees. In addition to that, she continues a book study with Syracuse University on *Leadership for Increasingly Diverse Schools*. The author, George Theorharis, will be a keynote speaker at an upcoming district staff development day on May 21 from 12:00p.m.—1:15p.m.
- ❖ James Huber has finished Phase 2 of the Special Education Audit. After a review of his information today, he's been asked to prioritize a list of recommendations for the district.
- ❖ Superintendent LaBarr and the district clerk sat through a demonstration on BoardDocs. This is a platform that would be integrated into the district website for board members and the public to be able to access Board of Education materials.
- ❖ The district is working on launching a new website through Finalsite on July 1.
- ❖ The Wellness Committee is focusing on multiple events to promote student and staff wellness.
- ❖ Sports are doing well. The Superintendent mentioned that George Emrich has been approached by Immaculate Heart Central in hopes of combining wrestling teams. Mr. Emrich will attend the next board meeting to further this conversation and give his athletic director report.
- ❖ The Superintendent, along with Mr. Hartshorne and Mr. Brian Arias, is working with representatives from King & King Architects along with Construction Associates on finalizing the details of the Capital Project.
- ❖ The emergency project for the hot water heater for Case Middle School is expected to be started on May 5.
- ❖ The Hall of Achievement Committee is making progress. The verbiage for the biographical statements is being finalized to order the plaques.
- ❖ Additionally, the Superintendent has participated in three meetings with BOCES to explore Post-Pandemic Collaborative Educational programming, STEM Opportunity with Fort Drum, and Community Resources to Support Schools.
- ❖ The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee is working in small breakout rooms virtually to work on enhancing the strategic plan goals through an equity lens.
- ❖ She reports that she's continuing to do tenure classroom visits with teachers that are receiving tenure in June. Some of these meetings are via Zoom and some are right in the classroom.
- ❖ She finished by mentioning that following last week's tragedy the district is supporting the students, staff, community and each other during a very difficult time.

#### **Assistant Superintendent for Instruction Report—Stacey Eger-Converse**

- ❖ Mrs. Eger-Converse reports that the district finished day two of NYS Math Assessments. She shared some data from the ELA assessment. The opt out test refusals this year was 51 students which is down from 146 students two years ago.
- ❖ The launch of Sora through the North Country Library System has taken place. Sora by Overdrive gives students the ability to browse and borrow age-appropriate eBooks and audiobooks from their local library's digital collection. Students have been trained on how to access it. Mrs. Eger-Converse reports that the Watertown City School District already has a very high participation rate with this service.
- ❖ The District Comprehensive Plan renewal will need to be submitted for 2021-22. She is looking for a board member to serve on the committee. Materials should be in mid to late May and the turnaround time is July 15.
- ❖ Mrs. Eger-Converse and Ms. Lane have been working with Mr. Matt Burdick, Special Education Co-Coordinator, along with Mrs. Misty Wekar and Mrs. Holly LaFex to discuss the

possibility of a testing center or learning centers at Watertown High School. These options would help students with academic needs.

**Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Student Services Report—Ms. Tina Lane**

- ❖ Ms. Lane reports that she and Mrs. Eger-Converse have met with the district's tutors. The meeting consisted of a conversation about the tutoring services in the future. In the past the tutors were housed at the Massey St. location and students would come to them at this location. The tutors are now currently dispersed amongst the buildings and this is projected to remain the same for next year. The goal in this is to reintegrate students into the school setting along with alleviating any transportation challenges that arose in the past when the tutors were housed at Massey St.
- ❖ She reiterated this staff appreciation week specifically mentioning how much she appreciates the nurses and all of their hard work in the district. The nurses played a key part in the successful re-entry of the K-6 hybrid students.

**School Business Manager Report—Mr. Joshua Hartshorne**

- ❖ Mr. Hartshorne has been preparing for the budget hearing that was held this evening, just prior to the start of the regular Board of Education meeting. In addition to that, he's preparing the mailings that will be going out to the voters soon and he's also updating the website with the most up to date budget information.
- ❖ Mr. Hartshorne has been getting the prep work done for the Smart Schools re-bid.
- ❖ He's working with Questar on the upcoming internal audit.
- ❖ He regrets to inform the Board that yesterday he received some disappointing news in the State Ed guidance regarding transportation aid from when the district was shut down during the pandemic last year. He learned that Standby costs are not eligible for aid after May 7 through the end of the 2019-20 school year. It's a deficit of \$359,000, which results in a loss of \$323,000 in aid for the district.

**Upcoming Dates**

President Mesires reviewed a few upcoming dates and meetings.

**Executive Session:**

At 7:09p.m., the President asked for a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss the employment of an employee. A motion was made by Jason Harrington and seconded by Michael Struchen and carried; all voting aye.

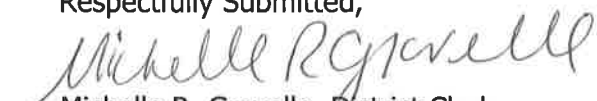
**Open Session:**

At 7:40p.m. Executive Session ended with a motion from Beth Linderman and a second from Culley Gosier; all voting aye.

**Adjournment:**

With no further business, President Mesires asked for a motion to adjourn at 7:42p.m. A motion was made by Suzanne Renzi-Falge and seconded by Jason Harrington and carried; all voting aye.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Michelle R. Gravelle, District Clerk