



**RYE NECK UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
300 HORNIDGE ROAD  
MAMARONECK, NEW YORK 10543  
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING  
MARCH 15, 2023**

Present: President Gloria Golle  
Trustee Rebecca Mansell  
Trustee Patty Nashelsky  
Trustee Jennifer Rubin  
Trustee Devina O'Reilly  
Trustee Elizabeth Yong  
Dr. Eric Lutinski, Superintendent of Schools  
Carolyn Mahar, Assistant Superintendent for Business  
Corinne Ryan, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction  
Mary Ellen Chiera, District Clerk

**I. Budget Presentation**

Dr. Lutinski and Mrs. Mahar presented the proposed budget for the 2023-2024 school year. Dr. Lutinski started the presentation by noting the dates of the remaining budget discussions and the date of the budget vote and trustee election, May 16th. He advised that the goals of the budget are to maintain favorable class sizes; maximize efficiencies in scheduling and personnel; continue with breadth and depth of core course offerings; ensure access to mental wellness and social emotional resources for all students; offer extracurricular opportunities that support a comprehensive educational program; and propose a tax cap compliant budget for the 12th year in a row. He stated that the proposed budget is \$49,722,709, which is a \$2,152,570 or 4.53% increase over this year's budget. The 2.18% tax levy increase will be at the tax levy cap.

Mrs. Mahar reviewed proposed revenues, the bulk of which come from property taxes, Westchester County sales tax, and State Aid, in addition to funding from the appropriated fund balance, interfund transfers and a few other miscellaneous sources. She stated that this is the 12th consecutive year of a tax cap compliance budget, reviewed the tax cap components and draft tax cap calculation which is calculated at 2.180%). She then reviewed State Aid estimates which total \$5,046,358, the bulk of which is from foundation aid, and grant funding for the 2022-23 school year which totaled \$516,708.

Next, Mrs. Mahar reviewed proposed expenses. Salaries (\$24,874,449) and benefits (\$12,025,421) make up 74.21% of the budget. These numbers represent a 3.69% increase in salaries and 6.64% increase in benefits. Other expenses consist of instruction, special education, instructional support, operations/maintenance/security, and debt service.

Dr. Lutinski then reviewed expense changes in the budget. He explained that there is an allocation of \$300,000 for capital improvements, renovations and upgrades to the high school entrance, a temporary parking lot and a bike/walking path at the Middle/High School campus. There has been an increase in utilities costs driven by rate increases in electricity, gas and water., and an increase in custodial and grounds services and supplies. There will be an increase in special education staffing as well as the addition of an in-house therapeutic support program at the Middle/ High School. There has been an increase in benefits with health insurance rates increasing 8%, ERS contributions increasing 1.5%, and the social security wage base increase which increases the employer's share of FICA 9% in 2023. Additionally, there will be 4.7 new staff members district wide.

Mrs. Mahar then reviewed Rye Neck's foundation aid history, next year's estimate being \$3,634,382, and the results of the October 2022 foundation aid survey. 22.9% of responses favored the money going towards buildings/infrastructure/fields; 20% favored extracurricular/sports/other activities; 18.6% favored academics, mental wellness/social emotional resources, and personnel/staffing; 15.7% favored student support/tutoring/AIS; 11.4% favored food service/food security. Others thought the money should be spent on security/safety, special education, college prep, language programs and technology to name a few.

Dr. Lutinski reported that the District plans to use the Foundation Aid funding for high-impact tutoring, new staffing, an in-house therapeutic support program, mental wellness presentations, a new elementary math curriculum, a High School summer credit recovery program, and more funding for Middle/High School extracurriculars. In addition, some of the funds will be transferred to capital to fund the High School entrance and Middle/High School temporary parking lot and bike/walking path.

Next, Mrs. Mahar reviewed the change in tax levy (+2.18%) and the estimated tax rate change for Rye Town (-6.88%) and Rye City (+5.34%). She advised that the factors which influence the tax rate change are changes in the budget, changes in equalization and changes in assessments. Community members can calculate their estimated school taxes using the 2023-24 Tax Rate Calculator located in the budget presentation on the District website.

Finally, Mrs. Mahar gave a capital reserve fund update. She stated that as of June 30, 2022, \$1,360,359 was transferred to the fund.

## **II. Opening of Meeting**

President Golle called the meeting to order at 7:25 p.m

## **III. President's Report**

President Golle began by informing the community that Rye Neck's communications are consistently being updated and improving under the leadership of Mary Lanza, the Director of Technology and Communications. The District has increased its social media presence by adding an Instagram page, in addition to our already active Twitter and Facebook pages. The Twitter account will move toward more announcement-based posts; Facebook will include announcements and pictures; and Instagram will primarily

be used to share pictures and videos and is home to the Weekly Wrap Up, which provides a snapshot of the students' week in pictures. This is posted every Friday afternoon. In addition, reminders about Board of Education meetings are being posted to all social media accounts the day before the regular monthly meeting. The links to all the social media accounts are posted on the website.

Next, Mrs. Golle stated that the District is looking at ways to improve its app, and suggested that community members bookmark the website, download the app and like/follow the District on social media.

Finally, Mrs. Golle reminded the community of the several ways to communicate with the Board - via email or at office hours which are held once a month prior to the planning sessions.

#### **IV. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Lutinski began by announcing that tonight we would be celebrating the accomplishments of our student athletes for their successes during the winter season. He recognized track Coaches Scalise, Soohoo and Golden, and the following student athletes:

- Ayla Felenstein, a member of the East Green Wave Girls Ice Hockey team that captured the Section 1 Girls Ice Hockey Championship
- The Class C, Section 1 Indoor Track Champions, who won in four events:
  - Ilias Alradi, Eli Goldman, Liam Saltus & Alex Boreland - the 4 x 200 meter relay team
  - Ilias Alradi - Long Jump
  - Joe Lavelle - 3200 meter
  - Ainara Schube Barriola - 1500 meter

Next, he congratulated Phoebe Carmel and Ainara Schube Barriola for qualifying as members of the Section 1 Intersectional Distance Medley Relay team that competed at the state championships on March 4th in Staten Island. Their relay team ran a strong race and placed 3rd.

Finally, he congratulated Joe Lavelle who won the prestigious Con Edison Scholastic Sports Award. The program recognizes one athlete a week from Westchester and Putnam Counties who excel in their respective sport and in the classroom, and who is a positive member of the community. He is the 62nd Rye Neck athlete to win this prestigious award since the 1950s.

#### **V. Approval of Consent Agenda**

Upon Motion duly made by Trustee O'Reilly and seconded by Trustee Nashelsky, it was

**RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District

approves the following consent agenda:

1. Approval of the Minutes of the March 1, 2023 Planning Session
2. Approval of Personnel Appointments, Leaves and Retirement
3. Approval of Change to the List of Impartial Hearing Officers
4. Approval of Agreement to Participate in the Southern Westchester BOCES Joint Bidding Cooperative
5. Approval of Awarding of Bid for Construction Work
6. Approval of Ratification of Clerical Memorandum of Agreement
7. Approval of Athletic Mergers
8. Approval of Updated District Consultant List
9. Approval of Disposal of Furniture
10. Approval of CSE Recommendations
11. Approval of Homebound Instruction
12. Approval of Budget Transfers
13. Approval of Financial Reports

**AYES: All Present**

**NAYES: None**

**VI. Financial Reports for Information**

The Board was presented with the Warrant Schedule - All Funds for information Purposes.

**VII. Communications to the Board**

President Golle reported that the Board has received 3 communications since the last Meeting, two regarding scholarships and one regarding student identification cards.

**VIII. Citizens' Privilege of the Floor**

There were no comments made by the public.

**IX. Reports - Community and School Groups**

**Student Senate**

Student Senate President Tomas Fernandez reported that students were issued new ID badges on Monday which must now be worn around their necks to make it easier to identify them as Rye Neck students. The badges no longer open the outside doors and only the main High School entrance is being opened for students to enter the building.

Next, he reported that the JCK Foundation will be returning to Rye Neck to speak to students regarding mental health awareness; the High School musical *Anastasia* was a huge success; and Varsity and JV spring sports begin on Monday.

**Student Athletic Council**

SAC representative Clare Picone reported that since the March celebrates reading, each SAC member will be visiting an elementary classroom and their favorite book to the students. With March Madness just around the corner, there will be a life size bracket in

the main hallway that will be updated throughout the tournament. In addition, a spring pep rally is being planned in conjunction with the Student Senate.

### **PTSA**

PTSA President Megan McFarland reported that there were many activities at all four schools in March. Irish dancers performed at Daniel Warren and the Shakespeare Theater of New Jersey performed *Macbeth* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Middle and High School students. The Sundog theater will perform *Ellis Island: Gateway to Dream* for 4th graders next week, and 97 year old Judith Altmann will share her story of survival of the Holocaust for 8th and 10th graders via Zoom. Winter after-school clubs are ending at the elementary schools, and spring clubs start on April 11th. In addition, the elementary school Environmental Committee is sponsoring a First Week of Spring Recycling Challenge where students can bring in bottles and cans to be recycled for funds. The Daniel Warren Used Book Drive, which donates books collected to the Darien Book Air, will end this week.

Next, Mrs. McFarland advised that the Elementary Theater Club will be performing the *Little Mermaid, Jr.* this year, and sign ups start tonight. Students will have two and a half weeks of after-school rehearsals prior to their performance on June 10th.

In addition, the PTSA Panther Party will take place at Daniel Warren on Saturday, April 29th from 12 noon to 3 p.m. There will be food trucks, raffles, crafts, a DJ and games and activities. Panther Party merchandise is on sale now through March 27th. The Fun Run will kick off the event that morning starting at F.E. Bellows and ending at Daniel Warren. The deadline to register for the Fun Run is March 27th.

Lastly, Mrs. McFarland announced that due to a successful fundraising year, this year's PTSA EOY grant to the District has been increased to \$40,000, which is double the amount given last year. They are working with the principals, Mr. Ceglia and Mr. Siegel on wish lists.

### **Booster Club**

Booster Club President Patrick West announced that spring sports have begun, and the Booster Club is seeking team liaisons to help act as ambassadors for parents and to support the coaches and teams. The March Madness parents-night-out fundraiser will take place on Friday, March 24th, and they are coordinating with the Athletic Department to host a Spring Barbeque for all student-athletes and coaches in early May. In addition, planning has begun for Pantherpalooza, a major track meet hosted by Rye Neck on April 22nd.

Lastly, Mr. West reported that the Booster Club will be giving out 7 or 8 scholarships totaling \$5,000 to seniors who participate in athletics or the theater. The application process will open soon and end in early May.

### **RNTA**

RNTA Representative Linda Costelloe reported that the schools are busy places. The High School winter performances have finished and the Middle School is working on their musical production. Senior Exit Interviews are taking place, and seniors are finalizing their internship plans. Daniel Warren just finished their science fair and the

F.E. Bellows Science Expo will take place tomorrow night. The staff district-wide will have professional development on Friday, March 24th, Superintendent's Conference Day.

Finally, Mrs. Costelloe announced that the RNTA is in full support of Rye Neck's 2023-24 proposed budget, and stated that they are proud to be part of the district's efforts to continue their important work.

**X. Reports - Board of Education**

**Office Hours**

Trustees Rubin and O'Reilly will represent the Board at the next Office Hours, March 29, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. Please call the District Clerk by Friday, March 24th to make an appointment and state your topic of interest.

**West/Put Report**

Trustee Mansell reported that she and a few other trustees attended West Put's Community Conversation at which they discussed school budgeting and the role of boards with regard to preparation of budgets.

**Audit Committee**

Trustee Nashelsky reported that later in the meeting, the Board will be approving the report from the Office of State Comptroller's Health Insurance Cost Savings audit and the District's Corrective Action plan in response thereto.

The next Audit Committee meeting is scheduled for May 24th.

**Policy Committee**

Trustee Rubin reported that there will be a first reading of certain policies later in the meeting.

**XI. New Business**

**Approval of OSC Health Insurance Cost Savings Audit and Corrective Action Plan**

Upon motion duly made by Trustee Rubin and seconded by Trustee Yong, it was

**RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District accepts the Office of the State Comptroller Health Insurance Cost Savings Audit #2022M-164 dated February 2023; and it was

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District approves the attached Corrective Action Plan prepared in response to the Audit.

**AYES: All Present**

**NAYES: None**

**First Reading - Amendment to Policy 2350 - Board of Education Meetings**

Trustee Rubin explained that this policy is part of the District's Code of Conduct. Amendments were made to incorporate Policies 2310, 2340, 2351 and 2360, and a virtual meetings policy. Since the Public Officers Law requires a public hearing before the Board can pass a resolution authorizing the use of videoconferencing during meetings,

there will be a public hearing to provide members of the public with an opportunity to provide comments on this Policy and the Board's Hybrid Meeting Procedures before it is approved by the Board at the April 19th meeting.

**First Reading - Amendment to Policy 9645 - Disclosure of Wrongful Conduct (Whistleblower Policy)**

Trustee Rubin explained that this policy is part of the District's Code of Conduct. Amendments were made to address changes to Civil Service Law Section 75-B, which removed the requirement for employees to notify their employer of alleged wrongdoing before bringing their concerns to a higher authority.

**First Reading - Amendment to Policy 4321.12 - Use of Time Out Rooms and Physical Restraints**

Trustee Rubin explained that this policy is part of the District's Code of Conduct. Amendments were made to address changes to Education Law Section 4402(9), which requires same day parent notification when time out rooms and physical or mechanical restraints are utilized.

**First Reading - Removal of Policies 2310, 2340, 2351 and 2360 - All Being Incorporated into Policy 2350**

Trustee Rubin explained that the Policy Committee is continuing to perform an audit of the District's policies. During this audit process, it has come to the attention of the Committee that the District is legally required to have certain policies, which add up to approximately 40 required policies. However, in addition to these 40 legally required policies, the District currently has dozens of policies that are not legally required. In an effort to reduce unnecessary duplication and to retire outdated policies, the Board will continue the process of removing certain policies. This does not relieve the District of any responsibility or legal obligations since any requirements will continue to be set forth in Federal law, New York State law, collective bargaining agreements, or other documents.

Policy 2310 - Regular Meetings - is not a legally required policy, and the contents thereof will be incorporated into Policy 2350.

Policy 2340 - Notice of Meetings - is not a legally required policy, and the contents thereof will be incorporated into Policy 2350.

Policy 2351 - Quorum - is not a legally required policy, and the contents thereof will be incorporated into Policy 2350.

Policy 2360 - Minutes - is not a legally required policy, and the contents thereof will be incorporated into Policy 2350.

**Acceptance of Donation of Scholarship**

Upon motion duly made by Trustee Mansell and seconded by Trustee O'Reilly, it was

**RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District hereby accept the donation of The Cindy C. Gutierrez-Fasolino Scholarship which will be

awarded annually to a graduating Rye Neck senior beginning with the 2022-2023 school year in accordance with the criteria established.

**AYES: All Present**  
**NAYES: None**

**XII. Public Comments Concerning Above**

There were no comments made by the public.

**XIII. Executive Session**

Upon Motion duly made by Trustee Rubin and seconded by Trustee Nashelsky, it was

**RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District hereby agrees to move into executive session to discuss a particular person.

**AYES: All Present**  
**NAYES: None**

**XIV. Adjournment of Executive Session, Reopening of Public Meeting and Adjournment of Public Meeting**

Upon motion duly made by Trustee Mansell and seconded by Trustee Yong, it was

**RESOLVED**, that the executive session be adjourned and the Public Meeting be reopened; and it was

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that there being no further business before the Board and upon motion duly made by Trustee Rubin and seconded by Trustee Yong, it was

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education Meeting of March 15, 2023 be adjourned.

**AYES: All Present**  
**NAYES: None**

President Golle adjourned the meeting at 9:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Mary Ellen Chiera  
District Clerk