

Budget Advisory Team

Meeting Minutes

March 4, 2015

Present: Sandy Anzalone, Thomas Murphy, Brenda Burgstahler, Mike Breeden, Mike Byrnes, Rose Heckathorn, Scott Henderson, Barb Henry, Jennifer Horschel, Shawn Johnson, Kathy Klopp, Lucinda Karstedt, Nicole Lauer, Paul Shephard

Next meeting: Wednesday, March 18, 2015, 5:45 p.m., Jr./Sr. High School Cafeteria

I. Called to Order 5:50 p.m.

II. Budget Advisory Team Meeting

A. Opening Remarks – Mr. Thomas Murphy

- ♣ Mrs. Johnson will present the Pupil Personnel Services budget. The BOCES budget, which after salaries is the next largest expenditure for the District, will have an increase. Areas for possible cuts have been looked at. The beginning of the budget deficit for 2015-2016 will also be presented.

B. Pupil Personnel Services – Mrs. Shawn Johnson

- ♣ PPS is more than Special Education and 504's. 504's are accommodation plans for students that have a disability, which do not require Special Education services. It is an accommodation in the classroom, i.e. braille for a blind student, or other plans in the classroom that teachers can do. It is not direct service. PPS is also all health services, the Nurses, sports physicals, English as a Second Language, sports services, McKinney-Vento (homeless students), free and reduced lunch, Medicaid, health insurance for students, or anything that has to do with students and their needs. There are about 329 students in the Eden District receiving services. About 175 of them are Special Education. There are 16 Special Education Teachers, two Speech Teachers, one Occupational Therapist, one contracted Physical Therapist, and 15 Teacher Aides. There is one self-contained classroom at the GLP and one at the Elementary School for children with multiple needs.
- ♣ The State is currently auditing the Special Education Department. This District has never been audited. We are the only District in Western New York that has not been audited, because there have not been any Commissioner's complaints or lawsuits against our Special Education Department.
- ♣ Most of the Special Education Aides are 1:1, assigned to a student with severe behavior or academic or physical needs. The other aides are in the self-contained classrooms.
- ♣ Nine other students from four other districts pay tuition to have their students attend the Eden program. Those districts pay \$264,270 to send their students to our program. This does not affect our district's rankings. They are included in their home district.
- ♣ All K-6 Special Education Teachers and one High School Special Education Teacher have SMART Boards, because of a grant. There are also 38 i-pads for the Special Education students, thanks to the money raised through the Autism Walk.
- ♣ The Autism Walk and the All Sports Booster Club will combine forces to raise money together on June 13th. Some of the funds will allow Special Education students to attend SABAH.
- ♣ There is very little change in the Special Education budget. The 2250-472 code for Tuition to All Other – is for private placement kids – i.e. Falk, Gateway, Summit, and Randolph Academy. That has been reduced from \$227,000 to \$139,000, because it was re-directed to BOCES. It is difficult to get students to these locations. The least restrictive setting is utilized as much as possible, such as the BOCES program at North Collins. In addition, changes in regulations have led to no personal aides in the private settings.

- ♣ Code 2815 is for Nurses, physicals, and student exams. We have to pay a portion of the Nurse's salary at any non-public school where Eden residents are attending.
- ♣ From the 2014-2015 to 2015-2016 school year, the Special Education budget decreased from \$359,000 to \$271,000 with an increased number of students.

C. Discussion

- ♣ Jen Horschel asked about the state maximum of Special Education students. Mrs. Johnson said because of changing demographics, the State doesn't put "clamps" on a district's percentages. We are probably at 12 or 13%. They do look at ethnicity, suspensions, and whether or not those students are getting the right services.
- ♣ Mr. Murphy stated that we will see more pressure put on the budget, because students with special needs cost two to three times more to educate. As services for students with special needs keeps increasing, other areas will have to be cut.

D. BOCES – Mr. Thomas Murphy

- ♣ We examined the BOCES budget and related services. BOCES is used for students, staff, administrators, and training, support and computer functions – a wide range of services. Started in 1948, BOCES was designed to save money by being a shared program of service.
- ♣ The cost is generally lower than if a district were to provide their own services.
- ♣ Districts will select services for the year, and a portion of the cost is returned to the district by New York State through BOCES aid the following year. Not all services are aidable. An administrative fee must be paid.
- ♣ Services included are: Career and Technical Education, Special Education services, Technology services and integration of Technology – both student and staff based, technical assistance, mainframe, mini- and micro-based services, board policy services, labor relations, literacy programs, student workforce training, and professional development for all staff.
- ♣ BOCES puts services out to bid for the best pricing.
- ♣ Contract negotiations are now being handled by BOCES, so there is a decrease in cost vs. an outside law firm.
- ♣ The administrative cost is a shared fee for being part of BOCES.
- ♣ A special cost of \$93,000 is in the BOCES budget for a small capital project. BOCES is looking at a large capital project for the future. All schools in the Erie 2 BOCES are responsible for contributing toward the cost.
- ♣ Curriculum and Instruction has decreased slightly. This line includes workshops, training, research, GASB 45 (accounting standards), finance and legislation, in-service instruction training, teaching, and Special Education.
- ♣ Occupational Education, School Library, and Computer Assisted Instruction have an increase in their lines. Interscholastic Athletics (Section VI) goes through BOCES, as well.
- ♣ P-Tech, a new program, will be starting next year. Students will be able to take Career and Tech and college mixed together, which will enable them to obtain an Associate's Degree when they leave high school. It is a six-year program.
- ♣ The hardware line is for replacing existing equipment. It was moved from the district wide budget to the BOCES line, as most of the equipment comes through BOCES.
- ♣ Power Schools, Finance Manager, central data processing, 504 scoring, Data Warehouse, School Messenger, Global Connect, Lotus Notes and the phone service all go through BOCES.

E. Budget Process as a Whole – Mr. Thomas Murphy

- ♣ After we have examined all the individual parts, what does this mean in terms of bringing it all together? We know our revenues will not be as high as our expenses will be. Last year, we started looking at what the district needed to do to move forward. What needs to be

done to improve instruction for students? When attempting certain projects for \$100,000 or less, the State will not make you jump the hurdles of going through a full capital project for the State. The amount spent will be aided at about 74%. The aid ratio changes a bit each year. With the potential upcoming capital project, everything we want done won't be able to be done. The voice system (VOIP) probably will not last until a capital project starts.

- ♣ Because we have more students with special needs now, additional aides and a .5 teacher are needed.
- ♣ The State Aid and GEA are frozen.
- ♣ Spending for this year was \$26.3 million. Next year's proposal, before adjustments, is \$28 million and is broken out into these categories: salaries, equipment, BOCES, materials and supplies, benefits and debt service. Salaries increase about 4% for next year. The big increases are in salaries, equipment, BOCES (the largest increase), materials and supplies, and benefits. Debt service remains flat.
- ♣ The capital outlay project is included in the general fund. The capital fund has a debt service schedule.
- ♣ Debt spending is \$28.4 million. Revenues for the coming year are flat. There is a slight increase with the tax cap. The State Aid line is flat. The initial deficit was \$2.7 million, before looking at fund balance, reserves, and any changes to spending plans or revenues.
- ♣ There was a reduction in the BOCES line. It will be looked at for further reductions. There are two teacher retirements. Those teachers will not be replaced. With those retirements will be reductions in associated special areas, i.e. – Music, Art, P.E., Computers. Sports programs and a controlled use of fund balance and reserves will be considered.
- ♣ There will be a Reserve Presentation in August.

III. Closing Remarks –

- ♣ At the Community Forum on Saturday, March 14th, we will look at where we are and where we have to go. Where do we want to start? The administrators will work as a group to see how to lower the deficit.
- ♣ Next year, we are looking at a proposition to stabilize the bus fleet. Long-range, what should the bus replacement plan look like? Two companies have been submitting proposals for a bus replacement plan.

IV. Meeting Adjourned at 6:48.