

Boarding Meeting 3/25/20 via ZOOM-Transcription

Present: Patrick McCabe, Cynthia Tretter, Roxanne Rebmann, Heather Cayea, Jody Brege, Phil Kenline, Bob Masse, Jim Grant, Erik Polkowski, Debbie Forrestel

Jim - 7:05 meeting called to order. Passed on the Pledge to the Flag. We will proceed directly to Cindy's presentation on the budget.

Cindy – Pat is there anything you want to start with or do you want me to just jump in?

Pat - by means of an introduction, I just want to say that despite the uncertainty of these time that currently exist across the nation the primary and overarching objectives of our budget have remained constant and those are to insure that the missions of the district can be realized to be fiscally responsible to our tax payers and to really think over a 5-year plan despite the changes that have occurred within the last month. I appreciate the board's willingness to adjust the date of the meeting in response to the number of things that have occurred. We have had to as an administrative team, really circle the wagons and do a detailed analysis of the budget recognizing that our revenue resources are likely to be compromised by COVID-19. As such we engaged in a very thoughtful and deliberate plan to really deeply analyze what we had initially put into the budget and had been discussed with you in the various presentations and to look at everything through a critical lens and to really identify the primary objectives of meeting the educational needs of our kids. That did result in us identifying the likelihood that our revenues would be reduced through the tax levy, through state aid and then make some adjustments in spending that I would be happy to explain as Cindy walks us through the budget. I did want to let you know that we did engage in the process to remain fiscally solvent. There has been talk of budget votes being pushed back but all of that is just talk right now. We have to plan with what is known so what we're intending to share with you tonight is our preliminary draft but we also intend to keep to the timeline of adopting the budget next week. We do have some time to make adjustments after Cindy's presentation but we want to maintain the commitment to meet all of our timelines for notification and public vote.

Cindy – Before we talk through the handouts that were posted today, we have been so busy keeping up with all of the changes and requirements due to COVID-19 that we were making changes up through and into today, but I did want to give the board an update on where we are in the current year. If you would have asked 3 weeks ago I would have said we were having a great year. From a revenue standpoint, we have collected almost all of our tax revenue. We have even collected our unpaids from the Erie County tax collections. We still have Genesee and Niagara County outstanding but it's just a small amount that primarily, we're almost 100% there. In terms of state aid, we did receive 1 of our March payment – to date we've received \$10.1 million of the \$16.8 million that the state owes us. So we still are owed \$6.7 million from the state. We're supposed to get \$1.27 million by the end of March, \$1 million end of April, \$2.2 million end of May, \$2.2 million end of June. We do know that the governor is now making statements and using the phrase that the payments will likely be delayed. He's not saying cut, but saying delayed. So, when we'll get this, if we get this, is anybody's guess. From an Erie County sales tax perspective, we generally get \$1.2 million for the year so basically \$100,000/month, remitted in quarters. We received \$571,000 of the 1.2 so we still have 628K to receive. We are expecting a payment in April and that would be paying us for the months of December, January & Feb so I suspect that that will be a full payment because those amounts will already have been remitted, however in our July payment, that will incorporate the months of Mar, Apr, May and then we kind of estimate a June amount so we can get a full fiscal year and do a journal entry for June I suspect those amounts will be severely impacted because obviously the economy has been shut down. So sales tax I don't expect to get our full 1.2.

Our Native American tuition, this has been an interesting year in the current year. We budgeted \$1.5 million and have been paid \$1.4 million. for those who have lived this with me, they are always a year behind. This was the year that they paid us what they owed us for last year and promised us that they would pay us what they owed us for this year before June 30<sup>th</sup>. However, they're no longer returning our phone calls and I don't know if that is going to be part of the payments delayed from the state.

It's very difficult for me to estimate where we're going to land at the end this year. I suspect we will still be okay, we may even have a surplus, maybe, depending on delay of payments, how much sales tax we get, if they remit the Native American Aid.

Our expenditures are in good shape. We're going to be implementing a spending freeze at some point in April so that will allow us to close the books on spending and we'll have a very good picture on where we stand from an expenditure standpoint.

I just want to kind of start the conversation with where we are in the current year given the state of affairs. As we look toward next year I think the challenge is what do we anticipate (I can see Phil Kenline in my screen and I know he lived this with me back in 2009-2010) and the one lesson we learned back in 09-10 was that if we had just adjusted a little bit sooner and not taken so long to react, we would have been able to save positions. When we spoke about this as a cabinet we talked about the fact that the upside is to read the tea leaves, so to speak, understand that it is likely that we're going to have less state aid coming in. The NYS Comptroller has posted multiple times over the last few days that he estimates there is between a \$4 billion - \$7 billion additional deficit. Now he's estimating that it is likely the deficit will exceed \$7 billion. I'm sure you've heard the governor's conversations, press releases and web casts. It doesn't seem like we're going to get what he thought he would be able to give us.

That being said, we took the approach to modify our revenue. The 1<sup>st</sup> handout is the proposed revenues. You can see our 18-19 actuals

19-20 adopted

20-21 proposed

The 1<sup>st</sup> adjustment I proposed is that I increased our property tax revenue to a 1.95% tax levy. Originally I had estimated that we would go with a 1.5% tax levy. The tax cap calculation said that we could levy up to 3.2% so we are not even close to the tax cap. So I increased the levy to 1.95%. That's a combination of the real property taxes and Star reimbursements, those two numbers combined. The non-property tax distribution. That number went from \$1.2 million to \$800k. We're estimating that we're going to have a real tough 3-6 months before the economy ramps up again. We're hoping that that is a best estimate, but we feel like that is conservative but still providing some revenue to the district.

Our interest in earnings is likely at risk given the rate cuts that we've experienced. So I don't expect to generate \$220k of interest in earnings. However, we've kept that number whole in the budget.

We did adjust our state aid projections. So originally, our state budget utilized the executive proposal that the governor sent out, estimated our state aid originally at \$17.186 mil. In conversation w/ Pat, we talked about the fact that that executive proposal utilized foundation aid based on inflated BOCES numbers. That's because BOCES has to estimate our contract for the state early on in the process. They tend to overestimate rather than underestimate, so unfortunately the governor bases his foundation aid that was estimated on overinflated BOCES values. So we knew that was a bit suspect.

In addition, I spent time with Tim Dunham. And he and I sat down and really flushed out our public excess cost aid and private excess cost aid and that's the aid that's generated for placement of our special ed students. We felt that those 2 aids and the Governor's budget were estimated about \$70k too high. And then we took a look at our transportation aid which is generally estimated about \$100k higher than it comes in each year. So with that in mind, the Governor's proposal gave a state aid of \$17.186 million. We originally put \$16.986 million, we brought it down a couple \$100k in our original budget. In this budget we brought it down another \$500k. We're anticipating, given all the things that have happened recently, all the statements from the Governor and what the NYS Comptroller is publishing, we felt that we should reduce that by half a million dollars. We don't know if the State's going to react quite as quickly as we would like them to. They might just put a budget in place and give us a mid-year cut, which is very difficult to react to. You can't cut classes in the middle of a year, so we're taking a proactive approach. We're being conservative. So the state aid that I'm utilizing in this final budget proposal is \$16.486 million. To help us balance, I've allocated in consultation with Pat, \$470k from our ERS reserve, our employee retirement system reserve. You can utilize in any year, an amount that is no more than the expense that you would incur for that particular item. So our employee retirement system payment generally comes in at about \$470k in our expenditure budget. So we can allocate up to about that amount, so that's

why I've pulled that in as a revenue source. And the balance is appropriated fund balance, which is that 4%, which for us is more about 9%. I want to talk to you about that because if you look at the comparison of the two years, you are probably thinking, well we usually use 1.6%. It looks like it's going down. Well the problem is that the state implemented transparency reporting this year, which forced us to take about \$800k of salary costs out of our expenditure budget and move it into our special aid fund. That was one of the requirements of transparency in ESSA. So the 1.6% really should have been about \$800k, so the \$800k has already been pushed into another fund. I was hoping in a good budget year, that would make sense and we would just have to use \$800k of our appropriated fund balance sort of our cushion. Unfortunately, that's not enough for us to balance, so we're allocating \$1.355 million of appropriated fund balance. To the extent that we get more state aid than we anticipate, we won't have to use that obviously to the extent that we get more sales tax revenue, we won't have to use that. But it does give us a decent enough buffer, we know that we've got the funds and the appropriated fund balance reserve account. That totals up our revenue budget of \$33,696,592. I wanted to stop there and see if anyone had a question on the revenue side. Cindy, just a couple of questions. What is the difference in projected revenue to go from 1.95% to 3.21% on the property taxes?

Cindy - I can tell you that. Let me pull my tax cap calculation. 3.21% would generate another \$124k.

Alright, thank you. And just to summarize, there's a new line this year, the other state aid of \$103 million.

Cindy - Yup. That's our Native American building aid. So that comes in separately, it's also an expense line in our expenditure budget. That is the Native American building aid that we generate. Basically, it's just an up front payment that allows us to take in that building aid early in the project so we don't have to borrow for it. It's not really additional building aid, but is paid up front to a project. We expect to get that sometime over the summer.

Ok, to summarize the revenue then, you're saying we would have a normalized use of the fund balance of about \$800K, so looking at that, we're short an extra \$550k above where you normally would like to project.

Cindy - Correct.

Anybody else have any other questions for Cindy on the revenues?

Phil - Just to clarify, this would be if the state aid that we originally projected comes in at \$16.4 million?

Cindy - Correct.

Phil - Worst case scenario, the state aid gets recalculated and drops another million and a half. Worst case scenario, are we going to be looking at what we looked at in 2009-2010, having to come back in and as you said, we may get hit with mid-year cuts, should we be considering or planning what to do if the bottom falls out?

Cindy - So again, it's really anybody's guess where the numbers are going to fall. And the Governor's so consumed with COVID-19 right now that he's not focusing on budget numbers and he's not giving a lot of clues to where he stands. There are some districts, Phil, that aren't making a half a million dollar cut to their revenues. I think that's extremely short-sighted and that's kind of where we were back in 2009. We paused, we were like until we see a mid-year cut, the State's never done that, and then it happened. We were like oh geeze, you know. And then they created the gap elimination adjustment, and then it lasted forever. So I don't know how to answer that. I do think what we have done on the expenditure side, and we are going to talk about that, I think what we've done is we've been very thoughtful about eliminating costs that won't hurt people. Would they normally be things that we would do, probably not, but I think in this year of uncertainty, it gives us an ability to be somewhat proactive in terms of putting a budget in

place that anticipates cuts, but until we know exactly how many cuts, it does a good job of preserving people and lives and livelihoods, and doesn't replace certain positions that are retiring anyway, which was really the position we took way back when, when we had the retirees and we didn't replace them, and that was how we were able to reestablish our financial footing, so to speak. So if bad things happen, and it ends up being worse than half a million dollars, and again I've already estimated it at a couple hundred thousand below, so we've really got about a \$700K buffer from the original executive proposal. Then I think we ride out the year because we are not going to cut courses mid-year, we are not going to disrupt students, but I think next year's budget will be that much more challenging. I wouldn't recommend making additional cuts right now. I think what we've done is good. I do, I sincerely believe that the expenditure budget is good.

Are there any funds in the unappropriated reserve that we could look to tap in this budget?

Cindy - Yes. It's very difficult to work at home, just so you know. Just give me a second to put my hands on our reserve numbers.

Pat - While Cindy's looking for that, I just wanted to speak to Phil's earlier question. Is that one of the things that we have known really for well over a year that we are in a position of declining enrollment and increasing costs. So really looking through our budget through a critical lens has really been ongoing since the start of the budget development process. But having said that, when we initially started to look for cost savings, and we'll talk about expenditures in a minute, we did kind of identify areas that we don't want to touch, but worst case scenario could eventually without compromising the program to a large degree. Without being specific, and the reason I am not being specific is because more thought would need to go into those. We have thought of the worst case scenarios, and I think what we have done is come up with a fair approach as Cindy said to drop down expenditures, we have some retirements, without compromising or shorting the educational program.

Cindy - I'm sorry, I think I left my reserve. I'm going to do my best to do this from memory. So we have certain reserves, and I'm going to go down them. We have a capital reserve that can only be used for capital projects, so we can't tap into that. The voters authorized the amount that we were to use to fund the project that we are currently in and that's what we've done. We no longer have an unemployment reserve. We have compensated absences, in school district terms, they call it employee benefit reserve. What the state allows you to use is an amount that represents the costing out of days that would get paid out when an employee leaves. Every year we use about \$80K-\$120K depending on the retirees for that year. We calculate the number of days and the payout for those days, and if there's a retirement incentive associated with it, and we are able to kind of draw down from that reserve and utilize those funds. So there isn't a lot of money that we could draw down from that. At the end of the year, once we calculate how many days are left for the employees that already submitted their retirement notices, we'll be able to draw down a little bit of those reserves, but that is not something you can allocate to a future budget year. On top of that, we have our Workers' Compensation reserve, that's money that we use in the case of a situation where we have a large Workers' Comp. claim exceeds our thresholds or our caps within our policy. We are self-funded in a consortium, so there really isn't anything we can allocate from that. The 2 reserves that we can use are our employee retirement reserve and our teacher retirement reserve. The employee retirement reserve, I am allocating the maximum amount. We do have a couple hundred thousand we could allocate from our TRS. Remember, when they allowed us to start TRS, which was just last year, they capped the amount we could put in each year and they also capped the amount that could be in there in total. We put in \$200K, which was the calculation of what we could contribute, so there really isn't a ton that we could use from there, but we could take the \$200K that you put in there last year and use it if you wanted to.

Jim - That was the reserve that I was thinking of and I'd much rather use a specific reserve than the general reserve at this point. It gives us flexibility moving forward if we have a reserve that is specific for, so I would like to use that. I know we just started to build it last year, but it's there.

Cindy - Ok, so you would like to flow in \$200K from the TRS reserve and bump down our appropriated fund balance from \$1.355 million to \$1.155 million?

Jim - That's my recommendation. Comments from the other board members?

Pat - If you're going to comment, you need to unmute your mic.

No, I think that's a good plan that Jim brings up, that's a good point.

Jim - Looks like Phil gave us a thumb's up.

Cindy - He did. Ok, that sounds great. I can make that change, that's easy enough. Ok, anything else on revenue?

Jim - I just want to make a statement on the tax rate. I'd like to keep it below 2% if we could, to avoid confusion on the 2% tax cap, recognizing that our cap isn't 2%, but if we could keep it below 2% I think the optics are better.

Phil - I agree with Jim. I think that would be the smart way to go. It's a larger increase than we had last year, but again isn't the maximum amount that we would be allowed to levy, and I think that would go over well with the community.

Cindy - I agree. I did do some preliminary calculations of tax rates. As you all probably know, there was a re-eval. Did everyone get their re-evaluation notice sent from the assessor? So it's interesting, Newstead and Pembroke, Tina McQuillen is the assessor for both towns. We have the seven towns, two of them Newstead and Pembroke, both got re-eval. It's interesting our town of Newstead, which is our largest town, the taxable assessed value increased 28% over last year. I think people if they haven't gotten their notices yet, are going to be not pleased when they get them. We're entering the period of time when you can contest your assessments, so I'm not sure where that will all end up. Right now it's very early on in the process to be estimating tax rates. So I took that taxable assessed value estimate and I paired it back a little bit thinking that some people are going to be successful as they contest their assessment. So I brought it down a little bit and the same with the town of Pembroke. Their taxable assessed value increased 12.5%, so I asked where we might finally land and I haven't been able to secure numbers for Royalton. Our other towns Clarence, Alden, Alabama, and Lockport are smaller towns, so they don't really swing a tax levy. At this point it looks like even with the increase in the assessment, when assessments go up our equalization rate will go back to 100%, which when you calculate the tax rate, it's ultimately going to generate a tax rate that's a decrease from last year. Unfortunately, you're battling the fact that people understand their assessments are going up, so they think that the taxes are also going to be going up, when in fact the equalized rate kind of equalizes all of that, so to speak. I think it's good to keep the levy below 2% because there's too many changes for people to process, and I think they're going to just assume that this is going to be a much bigger hit to them than it ultimately is going to be. Ultimately, I think at the end of the day, when all the dust settles on this, we'll probably have tax rates that are a decrease in the town of Newstead which will be good news for people, but by the time we're able to publish that it'll be long past after the assessments are here. I think staying below 2% makes a lot of sense. So keep it at 1.95%

Jim - Yes please.

Cindy - Ok. Do you want to move on to expenses?

Jim - Yes please.

Cindy - Ok. There are 3 handouts that were uploaded. One of them is a snapshot of the BOCES budget. I just wanted to give you a quick hit on the BOCES budget and then salaries and then we are going to go to the full model. If you look at your BOCES budget, you will see that there were primarily 2 line items that increased significantly from last year's

adopted budget to this year's 2020-2021 proposed budget. The one line item is called instruction for BOCES and that big increase primarily is the result of English is a second language ESL services that we contract through Erie 1 BOCES for. The current year budget for that service was about \$45K, next year it's \$165K. We had some kiddos move into our district that needed quite a bit of service. Those types of services are very difficult to find. The kids are doing really well, but that was a \$120K increase alone just for those 3 students. And then our edge program, our middle tech, and our twilight program unfortunately, this current year we were under budgeted by 2 slots and then next year we are increasing it by 2 slots. So that had an overall increase of about \$115K. The combination of those 2 items, that's what is resulting in about \$260K increase on that one particular BOCES line item. The second large increase that's on our Harkness programs and that's simply due to an increase in enrollment, which I think everyone would agree is a good thing. They have amazing programs for kids. However, the cost for each of those spots did increase between \$360 and \$450 each. So we've got increased enrollment and increased cost per spot, that resulted in the \$63K increase on the OC/ED line. Any questions on BOCES?

Heather - I was wondering, have we considered having ESL in house rather than going through BOCES? I don't know if that's an option with whether it's available out there. You probably already considered that, but I'm just throwing it out there.

Pat - Yeah Heather, Pon did do an analysis of that, but one of the problems we have is right now our number of students is relatively small in the grade span as well as the amount of service they need. We could justify it perhaps for a year, but then a year from now it might not work as they age out of the service, so to bring someone on for a year and then to not need them the following year, there's just too a level of uncertainty because of our smaller numbers. We have enough kids that we needed more service, but not enough to sustain a position over time.

Heather - Ok.

Cindy - Ok. I did include a handout for salaries. I did this because I wanted to illustrate to you the information I gave you about transparency in ESSA. You can see all of the salary lines for our general fund, then you can see one line item that captures the food service salaries in our C fund and then our special aid fund starts with the F code. You can see how in the past we've never had budget salaries in the F code, but this year we do have to budget salaries. That's the expense that came out of our general fund and went into the F fund, which is why I was theoretically counting on having to use about \$800K of appropriated fund balance rather than the \$1.6 million that we normally use. So I just wanted to show you guys that. I also do this for Jim because I know he likes to recalculate my FICA and my ERS and my TRS, so he can have all of the salary lines easily kind of totaled. And we've done that kind of analysis as well, but it's always good to know what you're spending from a salary standpoint. Any questions on that? Ok. Then we're going to go to the full budget model. The full expenditure lines, which is every single expenditure code. Unfortunately, I couldn't highlight for you the line items that changed from the original proposal, but I have that in front of me and I'll give it to Pat or I'll be able to scan it when I'm in the office and he can send it to you so you can see exactly what line item had changes to it. We've made some thoughtful modifications to our budget lines in a way that was least impactful to student program as well as least disruptive to our staff. I'm not sure, Pat, do you want me to go through the major changes that we had or how would you like me to do this?

Pat - I don't know if the board necessarily needs a line by line reduction. I think that it's important for the board to know because of some of the things that we discussed that changes were made to some of those items. I'll highlight some specifics, but ask the board to certainly ask questions. We took a look at, for example, our travel lines across the district and made reductions to those. We had some conferences out of state, we drew those down. There is some local travel still within the budget, some travel outside the local area that we might have to send someone to is still included. We did a nice job, I had asked to expand our BOCES legal services to a level 3. We've done fine without that level, so we are maintaining our BOCES legal services, but the additional \$20K I had asked, had been cut. Cindy did a really nice job of

analyzing expenditures that we've had budgeted for. For example, foster tuition, hadn't realized that while we had been putting money into the budget for tuition payments for foster children, historically over the last 5 years, maybe we put too much in that line. Those are the types of examples of a reduction, that was a \$10K reduction. One of the biggest reductions that we made is looking at our curriculum, our summer curriculum. You know it's virtually impossible to get substitutes these days, so we shifted a lot of our professional development out of the regular school year and into the summer, but we cut \$25k out of that line. Again, not to say that we don't need professional development for our teachers, but it's something that has less of an impact than a program cut. So there's still \$71,425 in that line. One of the things that I know the Board had discussed, and we had discussed at length, was bringing lifeguards back so that we can have swimming in physical education. That is something that we cut. We were looking at that as a \$16K expense. We had some reservations as to whether or not we could even get lifeguards, for one. But two, we also looked at any new expenditures and we weren't going to include them in this budget. Should revenue projections change from the Governor, those are things we can look at obviously. Perhaps, I know Mr. Dimitroff talked about the Huddle Program, that was the video software, that was not included. I had utilized, and I still want to share with the Board, Alan Pohl's HR Audit, I had built in \$17,500 for another audit for next year, looking at our other aspects of our overall programming. That was removed from the budget. I can go on and on, but in terms of I think the earlier point that we haven't dipped into anything that would substantially change the experience that our teachers and children have remains true, despite some of these cuts. Cindy, you want to add to that or does that cover it?

Cindy - No, that's actually fantastic. We also did take a really close look at some lines in our maintenance department and given Mike's skillset as a maintenance mechanic, we are going to eliminate the U&S service contract for \$80K so that saves a big chunk of money. And we were able to kind of tweak some lines given the elementary office position is moving from a 12 month to a 10 month clerical position, so there's saving inherent with that move. You know, those types of things. We looked critically at all of the expenditure lines and we honed in very carefully on those items that wouldn't impact kids and wouldn't impede program and would still allow us to grow as a District, and I think we did a really good job, frankly, of that. I'm sure we would love to offer lifeguarding at some point, this just wasn't the time to add it. We also cut the radios out of the transportation department. While we do recognize that's a safety issue, we feel that the radios that we have right now are sufficient to get us through and that certainly wasn't going to impact student program. So those were really yeah.

Pat - There are some personnel changes that I'd like to discuss now though. By changes, I should just say looking at some of our retirements and analyzing the number of students who we anticipate coming in next year, but also looking at some courses that are under utilized by students. So let me just speak to those directly. Right now, and I don't have today's figures I apologize, but the last figures I heard on kindergarten enrollment were around 60 students, a little bit over. That would only put us at 12 children per kindergarten class. Even if we were to get up to 80 students, we feel comfortable that kindergarten class sizes of 20 aren't excessively large, so with the retirement that we have at the elementary, there's an opportunity to do a position cut through attrition, so no one will be losing their job and we do think that it is an appropriate and responsible teacher to student ratio to go with that number. I wanted to make you aware of that.

So Pat, that would mean 4 kindergarten teachers?

Pat - That's correct.

Ok

Pat - The other is we have a retirement at the middle school teacher that provides Home & Careers. We did an analysis of that position from a couple of different angles, so if you give me a moment I'd like to explain. We're required to provide certain CTE credits at the middle school level, children have to have 1.75 units. We're currently offering 2.5 units. So we're offering more programming than is required or necessary. And that's the combination of Christina

O'Malley's class, Jason Zuba's class, our technology classes, and our home and careers class. The second thing that we looked at is the teachers with the Home and Careers certification are virtually impossible to find. We know of neighboring districts that have posted for the position and have not been able to find candidates for it, so ended up not offering home & careers, specifically there was no one there to teach it. So again, we're offering 2.5 units, children only need 1.75. What we would be able to do, at the same time Mr. Zuba's classes at the high school are very small, is meet the modular requirements from state ed with Christina O'Malley's class at 1.5, Mr. Zuba would have to offer .25 worth of units at the middle level and we would try to tie those 2 curriculums together so there's nice continuity of instruction between Mrs. O'Malley's classes and Mr. Zuba's classes. There's a variety of course offerings that we could look through for what the state says you can have, including some ag programs, quite frankly. We'd need to look at Mr. Zuba's skillset and help him develop a course at the middle level. We talked to Mr. Caprio about this, Mr. Ricci about this, and they thought it was a sound decision quite frankly, and Mr. Zuba could be utilized more effectively. So that would be a position we would not be seeking to replace, using existing staff more efficiently and more effectively.

I like it.

Pat - I had mentioned to the Board a while back, this is pre anything related to COVID-19, pre anything related to budget concerns, it was simply a matter of numbers that we have a 12:1:1 at the high school, but the children have aged out of and we don't have enough need to sustain their classroom. That was already shared with you at an earlier budget presentation, but wanted to refresh your memory that there's not a need for that program. I think that is all the personnel issues.

Cindy - Yep and you can see that our total expenditure budget then matches our revenue \$33,696,592. Again, I feel good about the expenditure budget. We don't know what's coming, but I think we've prepared as well as we can prepare and I think honestly, we're preparing a little bit better than some of the other districts who are a little bit slower to react. I think we're going to be safer.

Jody - Now Cindy and Pat, I get how much time this takes and I really appreciate your thoughtfulness and mindfulness going line by line and finding those cuts. Phil and I both lived that time with Cindy, so we joke about it now but it was not a fun time. I'm thankful that we are going ahead with what you proposed to us, so thank you very much for that.

Pat - Thank you Jody. I also lived that and I'll never forget, I was a fairly, I wasn't that young in my administrative career, but walking down the hall and telling people that I had hired that I had to let them go was not a fun thing. So we really want to avoid that obviously.

Jim - I think it's important that we estimate even without firm guidance, decrease costs, and have made an attempt to balance that with costs and be proactive now rather than waiting until December or early next year. So I think it's the right approach. Are there any other questions or comments on budget?

Cindy - Ok. If there's nothing else, my follow up items are to make that modification on the revenue side that we talked about taking the \$200K out of TRS, and reducing the appropriating fund balance. And I also wanted to get you my printout of expenditures with the line items highlighted that had changes in it, so you guys don't have to go line by line and try to figure those out. Otherwise, this will be the total expenditure budget that we put on for the Board to authorize to take to the voters for approval in May. Assuming we have a May vote, but at your next meeting, whenever that is. If it's next week or whatever. Alright, perfect. If anybody does have a question or any concern, please reach out and talk to me.

Jim - Thank you very much Cindy.

Cindy - Thank you.



Jim - Item #3, Superintendent's Report. Pat?

Pat - Sure. Well, once again I just want to thank the Board for their flexibility and for allowing us to move the meeting date to today. The extra time was certainly needed and appreciated. I'm gonna really focus my report around the District's response to COVID-19. There is a lot of information, and I will try to highlight some of the most salient points and ask at the end or even while I'm speaking, if you have specific questions please, I'd be happy to address those. But to try to cover everything would be virtually impossible. You know the pace of events over the last several weeks, especially this week has been remarkable and I want to reassure that I think we are staying on top of things, prioritizing them, and responding as quickly as possible. In fact, many of you know that teachers are educators, there is a lot of concern out there because teachers want to do best by their children. They want answers now, and there's a little level of stress. I happen to live with 2 of them. I hear it all day and I come home and I hear it some more. I want to touch on some of the major components of our response plan. The first of which is just the environmental impact and the need to keep our number one priority of keeping our students, staff, and community members safe. We were the earliest district, quite frankly, to stop children coming into school. We were the only one, in fact, that had the last day of March 13th in the region that I'm aware of. That was a tough call, but I'm glad that I made it. We were able to do a deep clean of the entire campus and we ensured that happened before any staff were allowed back into classrooms. We have not allowed children in at all. There always is some confusion about why school's are able to open. We are a local government agency and therefore, considered an essential service. The 100% rule does not apply to us, we're at the 50% reduction of staff rule, but obviously we are well below that. We currently only have people coming on as an as needed basis, but we are maintaining some staff members to continue operations. For the fiscal plan and supporting our continuing education, some administrators have been coming in, some clerical. Our biggest need obviously is the meal service where we have folks coming in. In terms of what we are required to do by the state, we are following all their guidelines, but there are 3 main things that districts are required to do during this closure. And that's continuity of education, meals to school-age children, and childcare for emergency responders, healthcare workers, and essential service providers. I want to touch on those each, kind of briefly to give you an update. And I'll start with the continuity of instruction through distance learning modalities. It was interesting, we finally got some additional information from SED by webinar, I was on this morning. SED is talking to district superintendents within their component BOCES, so that was my call this morning. It has been, and I want to capitalize letters, WHOLE TEAM EFFORT here at Akron. I'm so grateful to our administrative team, our clerical, our technology staff has been amazing, our teaching staff has been amazing, and maintenance. In order to have the ability to develop and distribute opportunities for learning for kids, if you haven't yet, this evening go to our website and look for the ACS COVID-19 response link, you will see a very impressive display of information, all on one stop shopping. That has all of my letters, all of the information about meal service, but most importantly has all of the continuing education that we are providing for kids. Detailed plans are in place. Obviously, there's a limit. Teacher's were asked to do it through April 20th. We don't know, the Governor says we're closed until the 31st, so we may need to provide more opportunities for kids, depending on the executive order. One of the biggest barriers, that I'm sure you're aware of, is with the distance learning. It's paper and pencil based, but it's also technology based. Our biggest barrier is children that don't have internet access. By a survey today, we had 113 children without. I expect that number could be larger, as some of the families didn't respond to the survey. It is at least a touch point. That would be 43 children at the elementary school, 22 at the middle, and 46 at the high school. So we know who those children are and we have provided educational resources, paper and pencil based tasks and those families have either picked them up or we have them. I worked with our Native American counselors today, during the meal distribution plan, they have further ways of getting that information. We're exploring every option we have to provide broadband and internet access. The problem that we're encountering is the carriers are saying 'even if it's free, we just don't have service down that road. There's no physical way, the infrastructure's not there'. So they could have it for free, it just doesn't go that far. We looked at even purchasing hot spots for our high school kids, but the cell service is so weak that even a hot spot wouldn't work. We are telling folks, quite honestly, in other districts are doing this, please pull into our parking lot. You can get our Wi-Fi all the way across the street and into our athletic fields. And then like I said, we're doing the paper and pencil tasks, we're continuing to explore how we can bridge that gap that

we have. Decisions related to grading, regents, the length of the school year, are still to be determined. We're waiting for more guidance. SED is supposed to put out a Q&A later this week. For our students with disabilities, we're still conducting CSE meetings for any referrals that are complete. Referrals that are incomplete, we are allowed to put on hold. Tim is exploring teletherapy for related service providers, so speech, OT, through a distance learning modality. Some other things that I'm grateful for are just some of our fiscal obligations, Cindy and her team are able to work, do payroll. They do have to come in at a time, but we're meeting all of our payroll as well as all of our account payable obligations. In terms of the meal delivery, that's the little engine that could. They are amazing. We're producing 800 breakfasts, 800 lunches at one time. So with the Monday, Wednesday, Friday delivery, that's 1600 meals distributed on Monday, 1600 meals distributed on Wednesday, and another 800 meals distributed on Friday. We have reached out to the food pantry of WNY. They're going to be bringing in a truck that will be parked in the elementary parking lot and will coincide with meal deliveries. So if you're going to get your breakfast and lunch, you can also go over to the food pantry truck. They need volunteers, so we're going to be putting information out to the community that they'll need volunteers. Our guidance department is doing that. And then finally, as it relates to child care for emergency responders. You will hear the Governor talk about this a lot. We're partnering with Rattles to Reading, we've put out as much information as we can. We're working with our Town of Newstead Disaster Coordinator to survey people within healthcare, emergency responders, and essential services to find out who needs what. Interesting in our area, and including Rattles, enrollment in those programs are down because families are home and they're not sending their kids to childcare. Right now we only have one volunteer fireman that needs childcare. That is intended by the Governor to be free childcare. It's a little unclear as to who is going to foot the bill for that. Right now Rattles is collecting that information and they intend to go through FEMA at the appropriate time for payment. But if necessary, we may need to step up and remit payment to Rattles, and we would seek restitution through the Federal government. That's still to be determined, it's a little unclear. Right now, and we might get a flood at some point, but right now people aren't really requesting in large numbers to use that service. So that's kind of a fast overview, do you have questions that I can attempt to respond to?

Jim-Before we get questions on it, I just want to commend you and your entire team, everybody at this school for their efforts in moving forward in keeping this going.

Pat - Thanks. I want to mention though, and I left this out, I apologize. We did enter into a memorandum of agreement with the AEA and everyone has been incredible. The AEA has agreed, they are all receiving payment for their regular compensation, they've agreed there's a clause in their contract that allows them to be paid their regular compensation and their hourly rate in addition if they're called in during a school closure. They've agree to suspend that additional compensation during COVID-19, and quite candidly said 'we would never try to make money out of this situation', and I just think that really speaks to the character of those individuals. At the same time, they've also agreed that they recognize there may be a need for them to work out of title and job description and be flexible in response to the needs we have. And so, they've been terrific and we're really grateful for all of our bargaining units and the way that they've responded to this situation.

Heather - I just have a general comment. With 2 elementary students, I thought everything went seamlessly. Their package just came home Friday, so organized. 2 weeks worth of work, all paper and pencil. I was just impressed by the quality of the work, it was divided up into different subject areas, just very well organized. I haven't had to use technology, so I feel like that hasn't been an issue even though we have it, you know. I definitely think that they're not bored, and they're definitely getting a lot of their work done, so I was very impressed and I heard other districts that aren't even sending anything home, so I can't even imagine how far behind those kids would get, but I feel like my kids are staying on task and it's improving or at least keeping up with the curriculum, so a great job by the teachers and administration.

Pat - Thanks.

Jody-I agree with Heather. My oldest, my freshman, she's in her room for a good 5-6 hours doing her work, so there is no lack of schoolwork here in this household between the teacher and the 2 children. Kudos to all of them too because I know they're also learning on the fly these teachers, how they can engage with their students and do these things that they have never had to do before. From everything that I have been seeing and hearing, living with one, I applaud them for what they're doing and I think I'm even going to have him get a YouTube channel going so he can actually do a lesson. But I'm not sure if he's comfortable doing that yet, so we'll see.

Pat - That's great, I will share those comments.

Erik - I just had one thing that's come up for just a suggestion. I know that with some other districts that seem to have done things that have schoolwork, but the other individuals, there's a means or options or a way in which the teachers can try to regularly interact or reach out to students to give them some sort of normalcy. I know they are following Mr. Dimitroff's workouts in his tiger outfit, which has been phenomenal I think it's something that has a positive response. I know most of my daughter's teachers have been very regular in regards to emails or correspondence, then others there's been no communication whatsoever, and I know with friends she's been doing something with her class. It seems that every time she goes to post something, even if it's just a quick video where they ended up hanging for 15 minutes, the kids immediately responded because it just gave them sort of normalcy to the days. It was something that they all looked forward to and if there's any way we can get our teachers to do the same thing, even if was like coaches with their class. I know my son from college got some notifications from there to see how they were doing, that sort of thing. Is there any way they could crosscheck with one another, I think it would be beneficial.

Pat - Did anybody understand any of that?

No.

Talk again Erik.

Pieces and parts. I did hear a part, he did say something about Mr. Dimitroff is doing workouts on his Twitter page in tiger gear, it's fantastic. Everyone's talking about it, he's actually exercising and giving kids tips on what to do and what to exercise. You guys gotta check that out, it's great.

Pat - I also picked up Erik, if you can tell we got very little of what you just said, I also picked up the communication piece between teachers and students, that varies, so I know the building principals are working with their teachers to overcome some of those issues, so I would encourage not just the Board, but any community members to reach out to the building principal or email the teacher so that they can address that.

Bob - Hello?

Pat - Hi Bob.

Bob - How you doing Pat?

Pat - I'm good.

Erik - Here, does this work any better?

Pat - No.

Jim-Pat, since my voice is as bad as Erik's, why don't you just please move on with the meeting agenda?

Pat - Sure. Ok so that concludes the Superintendent Report. Let me pull up the agenda electronically. Comments on Points of Pride, enrollment, we got a policy update which is in a 2nd reading on abuse and maltreatment of children, and then we have our privacy and security of data for teachers, which is I believe a 1st reading. Roxanne, are you there?

Roxanne - Yes, I am.

Pat - Ok. I'm just following along in the agenda, you tell me if I do anything wrong because it sounds like I'm taking over Jim's role.

Roxanne - Ok.

Jim - Can you hear me better?

Pat - Who's that?

Roxanne - That was Jim.

Pat - Jim, let me do something. Hang on Jim, I'm gonna fix it. Debbie, are you still there?

Debbie - Yes.

Pat - Ok don't hang up, I just gotta call Jim. Jim I'm gonna call you on your cell. Hey Debbie, don't hang up.

Debbie - I won't.

Pat - Hi Jim, I think the group should be able to. Jim why don't you say a few words, mute your mic, and we should be able to hear you.

Jim - Alright, I think the next item is minutes then.

Roxanne - If everybody wants to look at the chat, Doug did give a dial-in number to join by phone if that helps anyone.

Jim - Alright, is Doug presenting tonight?

Pat - No, but I think everybody should be able to hear you now.

Jim - Alright, through the phone.

Pat - Correct.

Jim - Ok next we have item #4, which is the minutes for February 12th and March 4th for our recommendation that the Akron Central School Board of Education, upon the recommendation Patrick D. McCabe, Superintendent of Schools, does hereby approve the Meeting Minutes, consent items 4A & 4B.

Deb - Aye.

Jody - Second.

Roxanne - Hold on, I don't know who moved.

Pat - Deb Forrestel.

Roxanne - Jody second?

Pat - Correct.

Jim - Any questions or comments?

Roxanne - Deb, am I voting for you?

Deb - No, I just did it.

Roxanne - You're good. Erik are you voting on BoardDocs or no?

Pat - I'm joining Erik. Ok go ahead.

Roxanne - Erik are you voting on BoardDocs or no?

Erik - Vote yes for me right now, I'll have to log back in.

Roxanne - Ok.

Pat - Vote yes for him while he logs back in.

Roxanne - I got it. All are in favor.

Jim - Motion carried. Item 5 is Personnel Instructional and the recommendation is that the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of Patrick D. McCabe, Superintendent of Schools, approve the following instruction items, consent items #5A - 5H.

Jody - Moved.

Debbie - Second.

Roxanne - Moved by Jody, seconded by Debbie?

Yes.

Pat - Correct.

Jim - Questions, comments? Can I just thank Debbie Hamm for all of her years of service.

Roxanne - Erik? Got it. All were in favor.

Jim - Alright. Item #6 is Personnel Non-instructional and the recommendation is that the Akron Central School Board of Education, upon the recommendation Patrick D. McCabe, Superintendent of Schools, does hereby approve the Non-instructional item, consent 6A-6M.

Bob - Moved.

Jody - Second.

Roxanne - I got Bob moved, who second?

Pat - Jody.

Roxanne - We had 6 yes, 1 abstain.

Jim - Then motion carried. 8 District Items, the recommendation is that the Akron Central School Board of Education, upon the recommendation Patrick D. McCabe, Superintendent of Schools, approve district item 8A through 8D.

Phil - Moved.

Heather - Second.

Roxanne - Phil Kenline moved. Who second?

Pat - Jody Brege. I'm sorry, Heather Cayea.

Roxanne - All were in favor.

Jim - Alright, item number 8A, Financial Reports. Any questions on the reports? The recommendation is that the Akron Central School Board of Education approve the financial reports for January and February 2020 as submitted.

Jody - Moved.

Phil - Second.

Roxanne - So I have Jody and Phil. All were in favor.

Jim - Item 9, upcoming dates. Next Wednesday is our Bboard Meeting at 7 o'clock, at this time I am going to recommend that we do it, we resume again. I know we got some technical issues that we can figure out. Item 10, Executive Session, we do not need executive session. And that brings us to adjournment.

Bob - Moved.

Phil - Second.

Jim - All in favor?

Roxanne - All in favor.

Jim - Thank you everyone.