# HAWTHORNE BOARD OF EDUCATION
# HAWTHORNE, NEW JERSEY
# Tuesday, April 29, 2025
# Public Budget Hearing – 7:00 P.M.
# Hawthorne High School

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**: **Time**: 7:05 p.m.

**PUBLIC PORTION OF MEETING BEGINS:**

The New Jersey Open Public Meeting Law was enacted to ensure the rights of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interest is discussed or acted upon.

In accordance with the provisions of this act, the Business Administrator/Board Secretary has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time, and place thereof posted at the municipal building, communicated to The Herald News, The Record, and filed with the Clerk of the Borough of Hawthorne.

(Ask for Roll Call)

| ROLL CALL: | PRESENT | ABSENT | Time of arrival after meeting has been called to order. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Joseph Carr | | **X** | |
| Alex Clavijo | **X** | | |
| Michael Doyle | **X** | | |
| Jennifer Ehrentraut | | **X** | |
| Abigail Goff | **X** | | |
| Erica Mulkey-Koltzan | **X** | | |
| Anthony Puluse | **X** | | |
| Gisselle Vega | **X** | | |
| Marco Totaro | **X** | | |
| William Goff | | **X** | |

Also Present: Richard A. Spirito, Superintendent of Schools
Patricia Ratcliffe-Lee, Interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary
And approximately 18 members of the public. 11 online.

**FLAG SALUTE**:

**MEETING REGULATIONS**:

During each regular meeting, two opportunities are provided for citizens to ask questions and to make comments. During the first opportunity, early on the agenda, the meeting is open to the public for the purpose of addressing items listed for approval on this agenda only. The second opportunity occurs just prior to adjournment, when citizens may address any subject matter that is pertinent to and/or directly related to the operation of the school district.

Persons wishing to speak must upon being recognized, rise, state their name, address and subject matter. Comments and questions shall be addressed to the Board President or the presiding officer and shall be limited to five minutes per person. The Board may (or may not) respond to issues raised by members of the public at the time they are raised, but will provide a response if and when appropriate.

The Board asks that members of the public be courteous and mindful of the rights of other individuals when speaking. Please note that the Board will not respond to comments regarding students or board employees in light of the privacy rights held by those individuals. Moreover, the Board discourages comments about such individuals, and will not be responsible for such comments. Members of the public who choose to speak during this public session should carefully consider their comments, since they could be held personally liable for any statements they make.

Finally, please note that in accordance with District Policy the Board will not officially comment or respond to any matter mentioned unless it can confirm that the matter has first been brought to the attention of the appropriate school personnel in an attempt to resolve the issue.

**BUDGET PRESENTATION:** 2025-2026 Budget Power Point Presentation by Dr. Spirito

**PUBLIC BE HEARD – BUDGET ONLY:**

**MOTION TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING:**

***Board of Education Roll Call Vote***

| | Mr. Carr | Mr. Clavijo | Mr. Doyle | Ms. Ehrentraut | Mrs. Goff | Ms. Mulkey-Koltzan | Mr. Puluse | Mrs. Vega | Mr. Totaro |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Motion** | | **2** | | | | **1** | | | |
| **Aye** | | **X** | **X** | | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| **Nay** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Abstain** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Absent** | **X** | | | **X** | | | | | |

**PUBLIC BE HEARD- AGENDA ITEMS ONLY:** None

**BUDGET ACTION ITEMS:** **Alex Clavijo, Chairperson**

Pursuant to the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Committee on Finance and Administration recommends the following resolutions:

B-1 Adoption of the FINAL BUDGET, with modifications to the TENTATIVE BUDGET approved by the Interim Executive County Superintendent

WHEREAS, the Hawthorne Board of Education adopted a TENTATIVE budget on March 18, 2025, and submitted it to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools for approval, and

WHEREAS, the TENTATIVE budget was approved by the Executive County Superintendent of Schools on April 16, 2025, and

WHEREAS, the TENTATIVE budget was advertised in the legal section of The Record and The Herald News on April 24, 2025, and

WHEREAS, in the proposed FY2026 State Budget, certain districts had the opportunity to apply to the Commission of Education to increase expenditures, including an allocation of Tax Levy Incentive Aid, in order to satisfy the thoroughness and efficiency standards established pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-46.

WHEREAS, Hawthorne Board of Education is below local fair share and spending below adequacy to be eligible to participate in this program.

Whereas, Hawthorne Board of Education is eligible to increase expenditures by $326,557 and qualify for Tax Levy Incentive Aid in the amount of $15,550.

WHEREAS, the Hawthorne Board of Education has been granted approval to increase expenditures based on the following reasons: The expenditures will support salaries for employees to perform required maintenance on school educational facilities, required maintenance repair expenses, and supplies for required maintenance repairs. These expenditures will ensure that the facilities are safe, healthy, and educationally adequate to support the delivery of the thorough and efficient education to which all students are entitled, as defined by the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (N.J.C. 6A:26-1.1).

WHEREAS, the FINAL BUDGET including the increase in accordance with the tax levy

incentive aid was presented to the public during a public hearing held in the Hawthorne High School, Hawthorne, NJ, on Tuesday, April 29, 2025.

WHEREAS, the Board of Education has now determined to make modifications to the Tentative Budget as follows:

Increase in Revenues:

| Revenue Budget Line | Description | Tentative Budget | Final Budget | Change | Explanation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10-1210-000 | Tax Levy | $45,074,339.00 | $45,385,346.00 | $311,007 | Tax Levy Incentive Program |
| 10-3190-000 | Other State Aid | $00.00 | $15,550 | $15,550 | Tax Levy Incentive Aid |
| TOTAL | | $45,074,339.00 | $45,400,896.00 | $326,557.00 | |

Increase in Appropriations:

| Budget Appropriation Line | Description | Tentative Budget | Final Budget | Change | Explanation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11-000-261-420 | Cleaning Repair & Maintenance Services | $326,150.00 | $652,707.00 | $326,557.00 | |

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that in consideration of the above, the Hawthorne Board of Education hereby adopts the following FINAL Budget for the 2025-2026 school year:

| | |
|---|---|
| Expenditures | |
| Total General Fund Expenses | $53,774,129 |
| Special Revenue Fund | $ 2,009,952 |
| Repayment of Debt | $ 1,949,922 |
| **Total Expenditures** | $57,734,003 |
| Revenue | |
| Budgeted Fund Balance – operating | $ 2,149,034 |
| Budgeted Fund Balance – debt service | $ 69,766 |
| Local Tax Levy | |
| Current | $45,385,346 |
| Debt Service | $ 1,381,683 |
| Tuition | $ 121,494 |
| Misc. Revenue | $ 156,250 |
| Medicaid Reimbursement | $ 16,430 |
| State Aid | |
| Current (includes extraordinary aid) | $ 4,415,575 |
| Debt Service | $ 498,473 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Special Revenue Fund | $ 2,009,952 |
| Withdrawal from Capital Reserve | $ 630,000 |
| Withdrawal from Maintenance Reserve | $ 900,000 |
| **Total Revenue** | $57,734,003 |

Be it further resolved, that the District's general tax requirements to support the 2025-2026 budget, as stipulated by the Hawthorne Board of Education Finance Committee and Hawthorne Borough Municipal Officials, as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| General Fund: | $45,385,346 |
| Debt Service: | $ 1,381,683 |
| Total: | $46,767,029 |

Be it resolved that the Hawthorne Board of Education includes in the final budget a Health Care Costs adjustment as calculated in the budget software and pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-38 subsection (b)2 and N.J.A.C 6A:23-11.2 subsection(b), above 2% in the amount of $601,266.00. The district intends to utilize this adjustment for increased health care and salary costs.

Be it resolved that the Hawthorne Board of Education includes in the final budget the adjustment for banked cap in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-110.1(b). The district has fully exhausted all eligible statutory spending authority and must increase the base budget in the amount of $19,223 for the purpose of supporting the increase in health care and salary costs. The district intends to complete said purposes by June 2026. Total Banked Cap available for future budget years is $0.

B-2. APPROVAL OF STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND WITHDRAWAL FROM CAPITAL RESERVE

Be It Further Resolved, that included in the general fund appropriations, budget line 620, a Withdrawal from Capital Reserve - Excess Costs & Other Capital Projects in the amount of $630,000 for excess costs of capital projects of $170,000 for building and grounds improvements at the Roosevelt Elementary School including paving, fencing, stairs and gymnasium flooring, costs of $160,000 for grounds improvements at the Jefferson Elementary School including paving, costs of $250,000 for masonry repairs at Hawthorne High School, Roosevelt Elementary School and Washington Elementary School, and costs of $50,000 for vape detector installation at Hawthorne High School and Lincoln Middle School which represent expenditures for construction elements in addition to the facilities efficiency standards determined by the Commissioner as necessary to achieve the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.

B-3. APPROVAL OF WITHDRAWAL FROM MAINTENANCE RESERVE

Be It Further Resolved that, as per N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-14.2(d), the general fund appropriations, budget line 630, include a $900,000 withdrawal from the Maintenance Reserve for use on required maintenance activities for a school facility as reported in the comprehensive maintenance plan pursuant to N.J.A.C.:6A:26-20.5.. These required maintenance activities include:

| | |
|---|---|
| $273,000 | General plumbing repairs including the replacement of bathroom fixtures and partitions and the addition of bottle fillers to additional water fountains. |
| $ 82,000 | General electrical repairs including new circuits in the High School boys' |

locker room.

$ 27,000 Wall repairs including locker removals.

$115,000 HVAC repairs including boiler repairs and roof top unit repairs.

$158,000 Exterior building repairs including door hardware/lock replacement, repointing and lintel repair/replacement.

$245,000 Interior building repairs including replacement of classroom and cafeteria floors and stair treads.

B-4. WHEREAS, the Hawthorn Board of Education recognizes school staff and Board members will incur travel expenses related to and within the scope of their current responsibilities and for travel that promotes the delivery of instruction or furthers the efficient operation of the school district; and

WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 6A:23A23A-7.3 et seq. requires Board members to receive approval of these expenses by a majority of the full voting membership of the Board and staff members to receive prior approval of these expenses by the Superintendent of Schools and a majority of the full voting membership of the Board; and

WHEREAS, the Hawthorne Board of Education policy #6471 and N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12 (p) provide that the Board of Education shall establish in the annual school budget a maximum expenditure amount that may be allotted for such travel and expense reimbursement for the 2025-2026 school year.

WHEREAS, the Hawthorne Board of Education appropriated $81,782 for travel during the 2024-2025 school year and has spent $42,707 as of this date.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Hawthorne Board of Education hereby approves travel and related expense reimbursements in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A-7.3, to a maximum expenditure of $90,000 for the 2025-2026 school year and

BE IT RESOLVED that the School Business Administrator shall track and record these costs to ensure that the maximum amount is not exceeded.

B-5. WHEREAS, the Hawthorne Board of Education policy #0177 and N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-5.2(a)1, provide that in each pre-budget year, the Hawthorne Board of Education is required to establish a maximum for professional services, to include Public Relations, Architect, Attorney, Auditing and other professional services fees for the budget year which may not be exceeded;

AND WHEREAS, the Board of Education has determined that the maximum expenditure for professional services includes all that is supported by State and local funds;

WHEREAS, the Board of Education has not elected to exclude professional service expenditure supported by federal funds from the maximum professional service expenditures amount;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Hawthorne Board of Education hereby establishes the maximum, professional service expenditures amount for the 2025-2026 school year as $600,000.

***Board of Education Roll Call Vote***

**B-1 through B-5 - Moved by Mr. Clavijo, seconded by Mr. Puluse**

| | Mr. Clavijo | Mr. Doyle | Ms. Ehrentraut | Mrs. Goff | Ms. Mulkey-Koltzan | Mr. Puluse | Mrs. Vega | Mr. Carr | Mr. Totaro |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Motion** | 1 | | | | | 2 | | | |
| **Aye** | X | X | | X | X | X | X | | X |
| **Nay** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Abstain** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Absent** | | | X | | | | | X | |

*Mr. Clavijo commented on the state's performance regarding the education budget and funding process. Concluded that the state must do better. Thank you.*

**FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION:** **Alex Clavijo, Chairperson**

**ACTION ITEMS:**

Pursuant to the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Committee on Finance and Administration recommends the following resolutions:

F-1. Acceptance of the Secretary's and Treasurer's Report for February 2025 and the Board Secretary certifies that no budgetary line item account has been over expended and that sufficient funds are available to meet the District's financial obligation.

F-2. Approval to make the necessary transfers for the period February 1, 2025 through February 28, 2025, for the budget year 2024 - 2025 in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:232.11. A list of these transfers is submitted under separate cover and shall be made an integral part of this resolution.

***Board of Education Roll Call Vote***

**F-1 through F-2 - Moved by Mr. Clavijo, seconded by Mr. Puluse**

| | Mr. Doyle | Ms. Ehrentraut | Mrs. Goff | Ms. Mulkey-Koltzan | Mr. Puluse | Mrs. Vega | Mr. Carr | Mr. Clavijo | Mr. Totaro |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Motion** | | | | | 2 | | | 1 | |
| **Aye** | X | | X | X | X | X | | X | X |
| **Nay** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Abstain** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Absent** | | X | | | | | X | | |

**PERSONNEL:** **Abigail Goff, Chairperson**

The following resolutions are pursuant to the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools.

**ACTION ITEMS**:

P-1. Approval of the revised job description Business Office Secretary – Business Administrator as attached under separate cover.

**Appointments, Retirements, Terminations, Resignations, Rescissions:**

| Item # | Name | Action | Position | Degree /Step | Salary | School | Effective Date | Notice Date or Ending Date | Reason/ Account |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| P-2. | Lisette de la Torre | Hire | Administrative Assistant to the School Business Administrator/ Board Secretary | n/a | Pro-rated on the basis of an annual salary of $50,000 | Board Office | EST 5/14/25 or sooner | 6/30/25 | To Fill a Vacancy Created by the resignation of Vivian Cascone |

P-3. BE IT RESOLVED that the Hawthorne Board of Education (hereinafter referred to as the "Board") appoints Matthew D. Mignanelli (hereinafter referred to as "Mignanelli"), as the Superintendent of Schools for the Hawthorne School District effective on July 1, 2025 and ending on June 30, 2029.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Employment Agreement has been submitted to and approved by the Executive County Superintendent, according to standards adopted by the Commissioner of Education, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7-8(j).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board approves the Employment Agreement with Mignanelli for the position of Superintendent of Schools for the foregoing period of appointment, which Employment Agreement is attached to this Resolution and made a part hereof.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board hereby authorizes the Board Vice President and the Interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary to execute, on behalf of the Board, the Employment Agreement by and between the Board and Mignanelli.

***Board of Education Roll Call Vote***

**P-1 through P-3 - Moved by Mrs. Goff, seconded by Ms. Mulkey-Koltzan**

| | Ms. Ehrentraut | Mrs. Goff | Ms. Mulkey-Koltzan | Mr. Puluse | Mrs. Vega | Mr. Carr | Mr. Clavijo | Mr. Doyle | Mr. Totaro |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Motion** | | 1 | 2 | | | | | | |
| **Aye** | | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X |
| **Nay** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Abstain** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Absent** | X | | | | | X | | | |

*Mrs. Goff extended congratulations to the incoming superintendent and described the new superintendent's qualifications.*

**PUBLIC BE HEARD:** *None*

At this time, members of the public may ask questions or make comments on educational issues or school matters.

**GENERAL COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM THE BOARD RELATED TO SCHOOL DISTRICT:**

*Mr. Totaro thanked staff and Board for working on the budget. Thanked Ms. Mitchell and Board members for their work on the superintendent search. Welcome to Mr. Mignantelli*

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:**

***Board of Education Roll Call Vote***

**At 7:50 p.m. Mr. Doyle moved the board adjourn, seconded by Mrs. Goff.**

| | Mrs. Goff | Ms. Mulkey-Koltzan | Mr. Puluse | Mrs. Vega | Mr. Carr | Mr. Clavijo | Mr. Doyle | Ms. Ehrentraut | Mr. Totaro |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Motion** | **2** | | | | | | **1** | | |
| **Aye** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | | **X** | **X** | | **X** |
| **Nay** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Abstain** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Absent** | | | | | **X** | | | **X** | |

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Ratcliffe-Lee
Interim Board Secretary