

**SHELTER ISLAND UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**BUDGET REVOTE PRESENTATION
May 28, 2025**

Members Present: Kathleen Lynch, Katherine Rossi-Snook, Margaret Colligan, Tracy McCarthy, Dawn Hedberg, and Anthony J. Rando

Others Present: Dr. Brian Doelger, Superintendent; Jennifer Rylott, Assistant Superintendent; Todd Gulluscio, Director of Athletics, Physical Education, Health, Wellness, & Personnel; Jacqueline Dunning, District Clerk; Deborah Vecchio, District Treasurer; and 2 faculty/staff/ student and 0 community resident/other

Absent: Karina Montalvo; Harrison Weslek, Student Liaison

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm by President Lynch, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Margaret Colligan read the following Shelter Island School Mission Statement – Engage, Explore, Empower:

We want our students to cherish our small Island community while applying and expanding their learning about, understanding of, and engagement with the wider world. To do this, they must be: ethical and moral individuals; respectful and responsible communicators; creative and analytical thinkers; knowledgeable and literate readers, writers, mathematicians and scientists; participants in and audiences for art, drama, music, athletics, and other artistic, cultural, and social activities; skilled and successful workers and consumers; and committed and active citizens.

Budget Revote Presentation

Dr. Brian Doelger welcomed everyone to the 2025-2026 Budget Revote Presentation and he stated that last week's budget vote results were not what the District hoped for. Dr. Doelger explained that the Board of Education met with Administration last week to discuss the cuts that needed to be made to stay within the Property Tax Cap. The Board of Education asked Dr. Doelger to meet with any individuals who would be affected by the budget cuts. Dr. Doelger also stated that the presentation he is presenting tonight was presented to the Faculty and Staff at a voluntary meeting held earlier in the day. Topics presented by Dr. Doelger at tonight's meeting were as follows:

- The Proposed Budget Failed. What Comes Next?
- What is a Contingency Budget
- Administrative Recommendation: Go back to the voters with a budget that is at the property tax cap.
- Budget Reduction Goals
- Recommended Adjustments

Dr. Doelger stated that the cuts affecting personnel include eliminating the Pre-K3 program, eliminating the Summer School program and reducing the schedule for the School Social Worker.

Dr. Doelger also reviewed the schedule of the dates and topics for the remaining 2025-2026 school budget revote meetings. The schedule is as follows.

- June 2, 2025 – Budget Adoption by the Board of Education
- June 9, 2025 – Budget Hearing at Board of Education Meeting
- June 17, 2025 – Budget Vote, 12:00 pm – 9:00 pm, School Conference Room

President Lynch asked if anyone had any questions. Dawn Hedberg inquired about the shuttle service being cut in half and what that would look like. Dr. Doelger responded that the exact schedule has not been determined yet and he is planning to speak with teachers to determine what would work best. Dr. Doelger and Mrs. Rylott did both add that the ferry lines in the morning are the more difficult so perhaps the shuttle will only run in the mornings or perhaps they will run seasonally at times when the lines tend to be longer.

Julie Lane, Shelter Island Reporter asked Mrs. Rylott or Dr. Doelger to explain a bit about the cuts to Special Education that will take place in the new budget. Mrs. Rylott explained that it will be a reallocation of teachers with a decrease in electives offered and AIS services.

At this time, President Kathleen Lynch read a prepared statement in response to various things she has been hearing out in the community. Following is her statement in full.

"Put up the same budget and it will pass"

There is nothing we would like more than to put up the original budget we proposed. The last time we pierced the cap was almost ten years ago and it got us this far. We anticipated that the failed budget could have sustained us for another eight to ten years, but we do not, as Dr. Doelger pointed out, think it is worth the risk to our students. Were it to go down, it would be devastating.

Propositions

We do not approve the propositions; I know some members of the community were looking through Board of Education minutes to see when we approved the propositions, but we have no control over who submits a proposition. If a member of the community submits a proposition on time with all the paperwork filled in correctly and legitimate signatures, they are good to go.

*Call to Order
And Pledge
of Allegiance*

*Mission
Statement*

*Budget
Revote
Presentation*

*Board
Member
Statements*

The second piece of that is we do not determine the verbiage of the propositions; our legal team determines that. We are here to answer any questions leading up to the vote, but that's really all we can do.

Busing and Cafeteria Cuts

A couple of community members have suggested that in the past, if a budget needed to be paired down, it would be done by removing the cafeteria and/or busing. That is not even a consideration were we to go to a contingency budget, and as a District, we would never consider that. There is a substantial number of students who rely on us for two hot meals a day and certainly many children who would not otherwise be able to get to school were it not for our busing them here. Again, feeding students and getting them here are considered "essential."

Administrator Cuts

There are always a few who suggest we reduce our administrators. The last time there was only one administrator in the building was over twenty years ago and, I can assure you, the State has created at least a few mandated requirements since then. Every school is required to have a Superintendent. Every school is required to have a Principal. Every school is required to have an Athletic Director. It is generally required in New York State to have a Director of Pupil Personnel Services.

That said, School Business Official is an administrator position and when our last one moved on, six years ago, we did not replace them; Dr. Doelger took on that role. At the time, that individual was earning \$120,000 plus benefits and would now be somewhere around \$150,000 plus benefits. Our neighboring East End school with roughly the same number of students has five administrators and almost double our budget.

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This is not a place that we can discuss anything. At times, one or more of my fellow Board Members will answer a question to help clarify or correct something, but any issues, comments, questions, are best answered in this room or you can contact the Superintendent directly.

Katherine Rossi-Snook explained that she went through a range of emotions when the community rejected the budget. Ms. Rossi-Snook stated that she finds it very disappointing that the many people who chose to reject the budget to send a message are not willing to take the time to be here and have their questions answered. Ms. Rossi-Snook declared that she doesn't is disappointed that some talented and loving staff members are having their positions reduced or eliminated. In closing, Ms. Rossi-Snook stated that she would love to see people show up and have adult conversations.

Antony Rando stated that obviously, we are all very disappointed in the results of last week's vote. However, we do take the message sent seriously. Over the last year or so the tax burden on the taxpayer on Shelter Island has gone through the roof. Unfortunately, the way the system is set up you get to vote directly on the budget that affects children's education. Mr. Rando stated that he believes voters who feel overtaxed took the opportunity to take out their frustration against our students. Being on the school board the past two years Mr. Rando noted he got to see administration and the Board of Education take every decision very seriously and assess what financial saving options were available to them. This included transportation, consolidating resources with other districts, cutting back on their own conference time, whatever it took to lower the budget and ultimately the tax burden. Insurance rates and other items that are out of our control increase at a rate higher than the 2% tax cap so as we look at this budget and we're able to come in under the tax cap we will need to do some long-term planning so that in the future collectively the school and community come together to put something forward to offer our students the best education without reducing standards. I ask the community to please come out and support this new budget.

Visitor Questions & Comments – None

Adjournment

A motion was made by Katherine Rossi-Snook, seconded by Margaret Colligan, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried unanimously

The meeting adjourned at 6:26 pm.

Jacqueline Dunning, District Clerk

The next regular meeting of the Board of Education of the Shelter Island Union Free School District is Monday, June 9, 2025, at 6:00 pm, in the Conference Room.