RYE NECK UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
300 HORNIDGE ROAD
MAMARONECK, NEW YORK 10543
BOARD OF EDUCATION PLANNING SESSION
MAY 6, 2026

Present: President Erica Wagner
Trustee Halli Gatenio
Trustee Ruth Homberg
Trustee Alex Rainert
Student Representative Spencer Elliot
Mr. Michael Burke, Superintendent of Schools
Carolyn Mahar, Assistant Superintendent for Business
Corrine Ryan, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Tara Goldberg, Daniel Warren Elementary School Principal
Melinda Folchetti, High School Principal
Mary Ellen Chiera, District Clerk

Absent: Trustee Jason Carmel

I. Final Budget Hearing

Mr. Burke stated that this was the last budget hearing before the May 19th Budget Vote and Trustee Election which will take place from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. in the MS/HS Community Room and reviewed the ballot details. He advised that the draft budget for the 2026-27 school year totals $53,812,226, which reflects a 2.38% tax levy increase, and a 2.41% spending increase over 2025-26 totaling $1,263,815. He stated that the budget goals are: a tax cap compliant budget; one that is committed to favorable class sizes and that maximizes efficiencies in scheduling and personnel; upholds the District's security and safety measures; offers extracurricular opportunities that support a comprehensive educational program; and continues the breadth and depth of core course and elective offerings. Mr. Burke then reviewed the projected enrollment for 2026-2027 which shows a slight decrease from this school year.

Next, Mrs. Mahar reviewed the draft revenues, the bulk of which come from property tax and estimated State aid. Other sources of revenue are transfers in from reserve funds and ERate Cat 2 funding. She reviewed the tax cap components, the draft tax cap calculation and the 10 year look at how the tax cap levy has moved.

Mrs. Mahar then reviewed the expenses, the bulk of which are salaries ($26,389,787), benefits ($13,546,109) and regular school instruction and ENL ($14,937,450). Some of the other expenses include special education ($6,206,315) which fluctuates based on the needs of students; cleaning/repair, maintenance and storeroom ($2,416,310); counseling, health services, psychology and social work ($2,186,718); and co-curricular and

interscholastic athletics ($1,721,493). The total proposed expenses are $53,812,226 which represents a 2.41% increase over this year. Factors that are affecting the budget are: active and Medicare health insurance rates are increasing by a composite rate of 8.77%; employer retirement system contributions are increasing for ERS and are decreasing for TRS; and the special education outside placements and transportation costs fluctuate based on placements and routes, and transportation assumes an estimated 3.0% CPI, and there is a net increase of $512,000. Other expense changes include the addition of one new psychologist/social worker to head up the Middle/High School in-house therapeutic support program, the reallocation of certain security duties to existing district staff, and a transfer to capital in the amount of $485,000 for capital improvements, renovations and upgrades to the Middle/High electrical system, boiler replacements and repair work in the Middle/High School gym, HVAC upgrades for the F.E. Bellows Annex, and gym floor replacement at Daniel Warren.

Next, Mrs. Mahar presented the budget in three parts, as required by the State. Programming makes up 74%, Capital makes up 15% and Administrative makes up 11%.

Mrs. Mahar then discussed the factors that influence the tax rate change and the effects of equalization and assessment on the tax rate change. She informed the community that they could calculate their estimated school taxes using the tax rate calculator on the District website.

Finally, Mr. Burke briefly spoke about the athletic field and renovation referendum vote scheduled for October 1, 2026. He will be providing livestream information once a month until the vote, with the next one taking place on May 20th.

II. Opening of Meeting

President Wagner called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m.

III. Approval of the Minutes of the April 21, 2026 Board of Education Meeting

Upon Motion duly made by Trustee Homberg and seconded by Trustee Rainert, it was

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District approves the Minutes of the April 21, 2026 Board of Education Meeting.

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

IV. Discussion

Universal Pre-K

Mrs. Goldberg updated the Board with regard to Universal Pre-K. She reminded them that Governor Hochul is mandating universal pre-K, beginning 2029, for all children who turn 4 by December 1st. It is required to be 5 hours a day for 180 days per year. The projected reimbursement rate from the State, at this time, is $10,000 per child. Families will have to pay for anytime over 5 hours per day/180 days (i.e before and after care, and summer care). She advised that since Rye Neck is limited on space, the District will contract with outside agencies. An RFP will go out to agencies in our area some time in May, and it is hoped that a contract will be awarded in October so that registration can begin in January of 2027 and the program can begin in September 2027.

West/Put Update

Trustee Rainert reported that WPSBA programming is lighter in the spring since most districts are focused on budget votes and board elections. However, he stated that the advocacy priorities aligned on in the fall are actively being pursued in Albany. From January through June, WestPut continues that work in partnership with the Lower Hudson Education Committee throughout the Albany legislative session. Their next event is the WPSBA Annual Meeting and Dinner is scheduled for June 8th.

Cell Phone Policy

Mrs. Folchetti and Mr. Priskie updated the Board on how the first year of the new cell phone policy went. They reviewed the ladder of referral for offenses. They stated that it is a living document and they have been handling it on a case by case basis. There was a long period of warnings before actually enforcing the consequences. They are going to review the behavioral framework again for next year and will work with staff to reflect, revise and improve the document. They stated that they are seeing the impact of having removed cell phones from the school day as students are doing other things during their free time.

Board Committee Liaisons

The Board reviewed the current committees/teams and discussed the current roles and number of trustees on each committee. Following discussion, they decided to increase the WestPut team to 2 trustees, and reduce the community partners team to 1 trustee.

Policy Committee Update

Trustee Homberg reported that the Policy Committee met on Monday, April 28th to review the 4000s section of the policy manual. Mr. Siegel joined the meeting to walk through this section, as many of the policies relate to Special Services. He noted that much of the 4000s is grounded in civil rights law rather than education law. The Committee reviewed 15 policies from the 4000s and a few others that came up including 4321.1–4321.14, 4327, 4770, and 4773.

Policy 4321.2 is a required policy, but the wording is at the discretion of the Committee and the Board. We discussed updating it with language that better reflects current Rye Neck practices.

With regard to Policy 0320 (Exhibit – Evaluation of the Superintendent), the Board will be using a widely recognized superintendent evaluation model that has been vetted by the American Association of School Administrators and is also used by the Harrison School District. The Board has reviewed the model, and we will be updating the policy to include it as an exhibit.

With regard to Policy 5252, the Committee reviewed updated wording to replace outdated language from 2008. The revisions align with more current policy language and do not require a first read.

With regard to Policy 2150 (Filling Board Vacancies), Mr. Burke consulted with legal counsel on how to handle differing term lengths in the event of a three-way tie in an

election. While unlikely, the recommended approach is a coin flip. There will be a first reading at today's meeting and it will be adopted at the May 19th Board meeting.

The next Policy Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, May 28th at 9:00 AM. The Committee will review the remainder of the 4000s section as well as the 5000s. Thereafter, the Committee will meet quarterly, unless anything urgent is raised.

V. New Business

First Reading - Policy 2150 - Filling Board Vacancies

Trustee Homberg explained the revisions to this policy in her Policy Committee update.

VI. Adjournment

Upon motion duly made by Trustee Homberg and seconded by Trustee Carmel, it was

RESOLVED, there being no further business before the Board that the Board of Education Planning Session of April 8, 2026 be adjourned.

AYES: All Present
NAYES: None

President Wagner adjourned the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Mary Ellen Chiera