

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: William Blake, Patricia Cardozo, Sue Cohen, Rita Gedansky, Thomas Hurley, Tracey Lane Russo, James Stirling

Also Present: Thomas Buffa, Charles Dumais, Jack Levine, Marianne Lippard, Terry Lumas, Marie McPadden

The Annual District Meeting for the 2014-2015 Budget was held on Monday, May 5, 2014, at 5:30 p.m. in the Presentation Room at the Amity District Offices. A presentation of the budget was offered, and the meeting adjourned to a machine/ballot vote to be held in the Towns of Bethany, Orange, and Woodbridge on Tuesday, May 6, 2014.

1. Call to Order: William Blake, chairman of the Board of Education, called the Annual District Meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

2. Presentation of the Budget

The budget development process began in August. The Interim and new Superintendent worked with District staff over a seven-month period. The Amity Finance Committee and Amity Board of Education then worked on the budget during the months of January, February, March and April.

The total budget request of \$46,047,862 is an increase of \$1,569,407, or 3.53 percent more than the current \$44,478,455 budget. The increase is due primarily to an increase of \$615,941 in salaries, \$426,566 in medical and dental insurance, and \$761,854 in special education transportation and tuition expenses. All other accounts are budgeted to be reduced by a total of \$234,954. The Board of Education has developed its budget with consideration of both current economic conditions and the District's "Missions-Goals-Objectives".

Salaries are based on 318.5 full-time equivalent positions (FTE). Contractual salary increases total \$588,136. The budget adds 3.5 full-time equivalent positions, including mandated special education staff and one-half security guard for the high school for \$115,908. The budget eliminates 1.0 FTE certified positions at a savings of \$88,103. Overall, salaries will increase by \$615,941.

Medical, dental and prescription drug expenditures are budgeted to increase by \$426,566. The District has a self-funded insurance program. Medical inflation is the primary reason for the higher costs.

Special education transportation and tuition costs are budgeted to increase by \$761,854. These costs relate to mandated programs which Amity must provide.

**Amity Regional School District No. 5
Board of Education
Annual District Meeting on the Budget**

May 5, 2014

The debt service item consists of principal and interest payments on construction projects at the high school and middle schools. Given the financial health of Bethany, Orange and Woodbridge, and Amity's financial management, Moody's Investors Service, Inc. kept the District's bond rating at Aa2. This had a favorable impact on the District's last three bond issues. The savings on the interest costs are reflected in the budget. Accordingly, debt Service will decrease by \$113,516.

Texts and digital resources have been reduced by \$74,653. Decisions on the purchasing of texts and digital resources have been postponed. The District is in the process of implementing the Common Core State Standards and will purchase texts and digital resources when texts are aligned with these new standards.

Discussion:

Mr. Blake noted that the \$46,047,862 budget proposed for 2014-2015 is 3.53 percent more than the current budget. This budget has been presented to the Board of Finance in each of the three towns. A second presentation was held in Orange. Voting will take place from 6:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 6, 2014.

Mr. Buffa said that he had read about the reasons for the budget increase this year, but is interested to learn more about what to expect with next year's budget. He had heard that the District had been keeping budget increases low and this year had to deal with some expenditures that couldn't be delayed any longer. He questioned whether next year will be a return to a smaller percentage increase, or whether the District will again be faced with the need to spend on projects that have been put off.

Mr. Blake said that the Board is always looking at ways to operate more efficiently in order to save money. The District also hopes for more revenue from the State. Amity is currently dealing with increases in fixed costs and decreasing enrollment. At this point, it's hard to say exactly what the budget will look like next year, although we are anticipating slightly fewer students. The District will also soon be going into teacher negotiations. Mr. Blake invited Mr. Buffa to come to more meetings because issues involving the budget are debated here.

Motion to waive with the reading of the budget by Mr. Dumais (Mr. Hurley, 2d Ms. Gedansky).

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed.

Motion to adjourn to a machine/ballot vote to be held in the towns of Bethany, Orange and Woodbridge on Tuesday, May 6, 2014 from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (Mr. Hurley, 2d Ms. Cardozo).

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed.

**Amity Regional School District No. 5
Board of Education
Annual District Meeting on the Budget**

May 5, 2014

3. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Marianne Lippard, recording clerk