



**RYE NECK UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
300 HORNIDGE ROAD  
MAMARONECK, NEW YORK 10543  
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING  
APRIL 19, 2023**

Present: President Gloria Golle  
Trustee Rebecca Mansell  
Trustee Patty Nashelsky  
Trustee Jennifer Rubin  
Trustee Devina O'Reilly  
Trustee Elizabeth Yong  
Dr. Eric Lutinski, Superintendent of Schools  
Carolyn Mahar, Assistant Superintendent for Business  
Corinne Ryan, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction  
Mary Ellen Chiera, District Clerk

**I. Opening of Meeting**

President Golle called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m

**II. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Lutinski began his report by acknowledging that school safety has taken on greater importance in the past few decades, and advised that he has recently received inquiries from parents concerned about the physical safety of their children. He stated that maintaining a safe environment for students and staff comes in many forms, such as enhanced technology and hardware, safety protocols, training, and personnel, and that some of these items are mentioned in the budget presentation. He noted that we all have a personal stake in school security and physical safety is our first priority.

Dr. Lutinski advised that the structure of our budgets allows us to continually address school security needs. Rye Neck has completed many improvements in recent years. We hired Altaris, a security consultant firm to guide us as we make security changes; we began joint drill planning between Rye Neck and both Rye City and Village of Mamaroneck police departments; we now include real-time police presence at our Daniel Warren and F.E. Bellows lockdown drills; we have added to our security camera system, including license plate readers; we have now included the Rye City police, in addition to the Village of Mamaroneck police, for full remote camera access to our schools; we have added more extensive evacuation drills during superintendent's conference days by moving staff members and equipment off site; and we reintroduced student ID cards for grades 6 through 12 to make sure the young people on our campus belong here. Just

before spring break districts in our region were the victims of “swatting”, calls made to deceive their local police saying there were shootings going on at schools. We used our new mass notification system to keep parents informed.

In addition, Dr. Lutinski stated that there are other improvements nearing completion or planned for the near future. Rye Neck recently invested in a much more robust radio system that will enable better critical communication on each campus, as well as the ability to talk between campuses. This summer, we will be transitioning from the Lobbyguard entry kiosks to the next generation system with better desktop alert capabilities. Also this summer, we have plans to create a security vestibule at the high school entrance that will require people to go through two sets of doors and walk by a security desk to enter. The renovation of the front parking lot will provide safer pathways and allow bikers and walkers to cross to the main building at two different locations.

With regard to personnel, Dr. Lutinski advised that, in consultation with our police department and Altaris, we have been actively researching options to enhance our security team. In addition to Ernie Ricketts, a retired Mamaroneck Youth Detective who has been on staff for many years, we now employ security staff at all three campuses, including a new position at our Middle/High School Athletic Center. We have contacted a security agency that can provide unarmed guards to fill open school monitor positions and who will be visiting our campus as a prelude to hiring our first security guard. A combination of a fast response time from the local police, more and better trained security personnel on campus, and all of our other measures will help maintain a safe environment for students and staff.

Dr. Lutinski then stated that in addition to physical security, we believe it is important to address the mental wellness of our students. Discussion was had regarding the addition of ESS, Effective School Solutions, to add therapeutic support for some of our students, but a significant advantage of ESS will be professional development in the area of mental wellness which will better inform our threat prevention for troubled students.

Next, Dr. Lutinski reported that the annual spring safety presentation, which was set for the June Board meeting, has been moved to the May 17th Board meeting since it is important to keep the community informed of our safety plan as these changes take effect.

Lastly, Dr. Lutinski advised that there will be two “Programs and Priorities” meetings for parents in May and June. These meetings will be opportunities for families to contribute to our strategic planning by sharing what they feel is important - what programs and priorities they value. This process will help inform the Board and administration about the communities’ interests as we approach long-range plans and future budgets. The dates for these meetings will be shared shortly.

### **III. Budget Presentation**

Dr. Lutinski and Mrs. Mahar presented the proposed budget for the 2023-2024 school year. Dr. Lutinski started the presentation by noting the dates of the remaining budget discussions and the date of the budget vote and trustee election, May 16th. He advised that the goals of the budget are to maintain favorable class sizes; maximize efficiencies in scheduling and personnel; continue with breadth and depth of core course offerings;

ensure access to mental wellness and social emotional resources for all students; offer extracurricular opportunities that support a comprehensive educational program; and propose a tax cap compliant budget for the 12th year in a row. He stated that the proposed budget is \$49,651,520, which is a \$2,081,381 or 4.38% increase over this year's budget. The 2.18% tax levy increase will be at the tax levy cap.

Mrs. Mahar reviewed proposed revenues, the bulk of which come from property taxes, Westchester County sales tax, and State Aid, in addition to funding from the appropriated fund balance, interfund transfers and a few other miscellaneous sources. She stated that this is the 12th consecutive year of a tax cap compliance budget, reviewed the tax cap components and draft tax cap calculation which is calculated at 2.18%). She then reviewed State Aid estimates which total \$5,046,358, the bulk of which is from foundation aid, and grant funding for the 2022-23 school year which totaled \$516,708.

Next, Mrs. Mahar reviewed proposed expenses. Salaries (\$24,820,266) and benefits (\$11,754,922) make up 73.66% of the budget. These numbers represent a 3.39% increase in salaries and 4.24% increase in benefits. Other expenses consist of instruction, special education, instructional support, operations/maintenance/security, and debt service.

Dr. Lutinski then reviewed expense changes in the budget. He explained that there is an allocation of \$340,000 for capital improvements, renovations and upgrades to the high school entrance, a temporary parking lot and a bike/walking path at the Middle/High School campus. There has been an increase in utilities costs driven by rate increases in electricity, gas and water., and an increase in custodial and grounds services and supplies. There will be an increase in special education staffing as well as the addition of an in-house therapeutic support program at the Middle/High School. There has been an increase in benefits with health insurance rates increasing 8%, ERS contributions increasing 1.5%, and the social security wage base increase which increases the employer's share of FICA 9% in 2023. Additionally, there will be 4.7 new staff members district wide.

Mrs. Mahar then reviewed Rye Neck's foundation aid history, next year's estimate being \$3,624,382, and the results of the October 2022 foundation aid survey. 22.9% of responses favored the money going towards buildings/infrastructure/fields; 20% favored extracurricular/sports/other activities; 18.6% favored academics, mental wellness/social emotional resources, and personnel/staffing; 15.7% favored student support/tutoring/AIS; 11.4% favored food service/food security. Others thought the money should be spent on security/safety, special education, college prep, language programs and technology to name a few.

Dr. Lutinski reported that the District plans to use the Foundation Aid funding for high-impact tutoring, new staffing, an in-house therapeutic support program, mental wellness presentations, a new elementary math curriculum, a High School summer credit recovery program, and more funding for Middle/High School extracurriculars. In addition, some of the funds will be transferred to capital to fund the High School entrance and Middle/High School temporary parking lot and bike/walking path.

Next, Mrs. Mahar reviewed the change in tax levy (+2.18%) and the estimated tax rate change for Rye Town (-6.86%) and Rye City (+5.36%). She advised that the factors

which influence the tax rate change are changes in the budget, changes in equalization and changes in assessments. Community members can calculate their estimated school taxes using the 2023-24 Tax Rate Calculator located in the budget presentation on the District website.

Finally, Mrs. Mahar gave a capital reserve fund update. She stated that as of June 30, 2022, \$1,360,359 was transferred to the fund.

#### **IV. President's Report**

President Golle began by reminding the community that the budget vote and trustee election will take place on May 16th. While budget season may be a short season for most, for the business office, budget season begins in the second month of the school year. In October, Mrs. Mahar and her team meet with administrators to discuss their expenses, staffing and other needs. By December, there is an initial review of the full expense budget, a review of the next year's budget indicators and planning for the use of Foundation Aid. In the new year, the Board receives weekly budget updates highlighting any necessary revisions. At the February planning session, the Board and administration have a discussion about the budget. Ideas are considered and questions are answered. During the February Board meeting, there is a public discussion of the budget, programs and state aid estimates. There are a total of four public discussions that the Board and administration have with the community, and the budget is on the agenda at the March, April and May planning sessions. She assured the community that the Board understands the importance of presenting a thoughtful, fiscally responsible budget that preserves what makes Rye Neck so special and allows us to move forward as a district to continue to support our students and staff.

In addition to the budget, President Golle stated that there will be a trustee election for which there are two seats available. Trustees Rubin and O'Reilly have elected not to re-run this year. We have three candidates who are running for a three-year term - Jaime Santa, Jason Carmel and Erica Wagner.

Next, President Golle acknowledged that the Board is aware of the community's concerns regarding school safety. She stated that they share Dr. Lutinski's position that this conversation is important and ongoing and assured the community that they will continue to work with the administration to do everything in their power to keep the schools and our children safe. There is nothing more important to them.

Finally, President Golle reminded the community that the vote is scheduled for May 16th from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. in the Middle/High School Community Room.

#### **V. Approval of Consent Agenda**

Upon Motion duly made by Trustee Nashelsky and seconded by Trustee O'Reilly, it was

**RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District approves the following consent agenda:

1. Approval of the Minutes of the March 29, 2023 Planning Session
2. Approval of the Minutes of the April 18, 2023 BOCES Budget Vote

3. Approval of the Minutes of the April 18, 2023 Special Board of Education Meeting
4. Approval of Personnel Appointments, Leaves and Resignation
5. Adoption of Resolutions Concerning the Annual District Meeting and Election of the District
6. Adoption of Resolutions Appointing Election Personnel
7. Approval of Work in MS/HS Performing Arts Center
8. Approval of Additional Extraclassroom Activities
9. Approval of Disposal of Furniture
10. Approval of Sale of Equipment
11. Approval of Tax Certiorari Settlements
12. Approval of CSE Recommendations
13. Approval of Homebound Instruction
14. Approval of Budget Transfers
15. Approval of Financial Reports

**AYES: All Present**

**NAYES: None**

**VI. Financial Reports for Information**

The Board was presented with the Warrant Schedule - All Funds for information Purposes.

**VII. Communications to the Board**

President Golle reported that the Board has received 30 communications since the last Meeting, 29 regarding security and 1 regarding athletics.

**VIII. Citizens' Privilege of the Floor**

Community member Elizabeth Gillespie addressed the Board regarding security and requested to know the amount of money in the 2023-24 budget being allocated to safety and security. Students Mark DiMaggio, Tara O'Reilly, Thomas Frisco and Katie Lawhon addressed the Board with regard to the District's policy which states that students who participate in a competitive sport outside of Rye Neck are not entitled to athletic option. They requested that this be changed.

**IX. Reports - Community and School Groups  
Student Senate**

Student Senate President Tomas Fernandez reported that the Spring Pep Rally was canceled, and they are working on rescheduling it. On March 31, Judith Altman returned to speak to students about the Holocaust; Junior/Senior Day took place on April 13th; the NYSSMA Strings Festival was held in the Middle/High School on April 14th and 15th; and the High School Spring Concert will take place tomorrow night. In addition, the Senate is working on putting together a Spring social event for students.

### **Student Athletic Council**

SAC representative Clare Picone reported that during the month of March, student athletes visited the elementary schools and read books to the students, and March Madness was a success. The Booster Club has posted its scholarship applications for seniors, and they will be hosting a barbecue for the spring teams. Finally, she stated that the Sport Award Ceremony is scheduled for June 12th, and August 21st is the first day of the fall sport season.

### **PTSA**

PTSA President Megan McFarland reported that the PTSA has several events going on. The elementary after school clubs started on April 10th, STEAM programming is taking place in the schools, and the elementary Environmental Committees are celebrating Earth Day with walk-to-school week. In addition, they hosted an after school playdate and sports exchange at Daniel Warren, they “woke up” the Peace Garden at Daniel Warren, and sponsored Family Fitness nights at both Daniel Warren and F.E. Bellows.

Mrs. McFarland stated that the PTSA is busy working on the Panther Party which is taking place on Saturday, April 29th from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. at Daniel Warren. There will be food trucks, raffles, fire trucks for the kids to explore, a bike rodeo, crafts, a DJ, musical performances from students, and games and activities. The event will kick off with a fun run from F.E. Bellows to Daniel Warren.

The next General Membership meeting is Tuesday, May 9th at 7 p.m. in the Middle/High School Community Room.

### **Booster Club**

Booster Club President Patrick West reported that the Booster Club’s second annual March Madness event for parents was a big success. The Booster Club Scholarship application is now available for seniors. They are awarding 8 scholarships totalling \$5,000. The Pantherpalooza track meeting is taking place this Saturday, April 22nd, and the Spring barbecue for athletes and coaches is scheduled for May 4th.

Lastly, Mr. West stated that the Booster Club is currently seeking volunteers to act as officers and committee chairs for next year.

### **RNTA**

RNTA Representative Mark Lauten announced that the RNTA reinforces its support of the proposed 2023-24 budget. Fiscal responsibility coupled with an instructional program that provides opportunities for all students is the cornerstone of Rye Neck’s mission, and they are proud to be part of the district’s efforts to continue this important work.

Mr. Lauten reported that seniors began their internships this week, grades for the third quarter were due this week, testing season is upon us with AP exams starting in 10 days, and graduation is 10 weeks away. In addition, all the celebratory events that the end of the school year brings are being organized and celebrated. Junior/Senior Day took place last week, garden’s are being woken up, and proms, graduations, moving up ceremonies and much more are being planned.

**X. Reports - Board of Education**

**Office Hours**

Trustees Nashelsky and Yong will represent the Board at the next Office Hours, May 3, 2023 at 8:00 a.m. Please call the District Clerk by Friday, April 28th to make an appointment and state your topic of interest.

**West/Put Report**

Trustee Rubin reported that on March 16th she and Trustees Nashelsky and Mansell attended an education law series organized by WPSBA entitled “From the Classroom to the Boardroom”. There were presentations on a variety of topics such as social media including privacy rights and accountability, collective bargaining, legal aspects of executive session, codes of conduct and First Amendment issues in school settings. In addition to this workshop, Trustee Nashelsky participated in a workshop for new individuals interested in running for boards of education.

**Audit Committee**

Trustee Nashelsky stated that there was nothing new to report. The next Audit Committee meeting is scheduled for May 24th.

**Policy Committee**

Trustee Nashelsky stated that this will be handled under New Business.

**XI. New Business**

**Adoption of 2023-2024 Proposed Budget**

Upon motion duly made by Trustee Rubin and seconded by Trustee Mansell, it was

**RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District hereby adopts the proposed budget or estimate of expenditures for the ensuing fiscal year, July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 in the amount of \$49,651,520.

**AYES: All Present**

**NAYES: None**

**Approval of 2023 Property Tax Report Card**

Upon motion duly made by Trustee Yong and seconded by Trustee O’Reilly, it was

**RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District hereby approves the annual New York State Property Tax Report Card, attached, which has been prepared pursuant to the regulations of the Commissioner of Education.

**AYES: All Present**

**NAYES: None**

**Adoption of Amended Policy 9645 - Disclosure of Wrongful Conduct (Whistleblower Policy)**

**WHEREAS**, revisions to Policy 9645 were presented to the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District at a public meeting for discussion and a first reading at the March 15, 2023 Board Meeting; and

**WHEREAS**, Policy 9645 has been presented to the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District at this current public meeting for discussion and a second reading.

Upon motion duly made by Trustee Mansell and seconded by Trustee Nashelsky, it was

**RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District hereby approves the adoption of amended Policy 9645.

**AYES:**           **All Present**

**NAYES:**          **None**

**Adoption of Amended Policy 4321.12 - Use of Time Out Rooms and Physical Restraints**

**WHEREAS**, revisions to Policy 4321.12 were presented to the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District at a public meeting for discussion and a first reading at the March 15, 2023 Board Meeting; and

**WHEREAS**, Policy 4321.12 has been presented to the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District at this current public meeting for discussion and a second reading.

Upon motion duly made by Trustee Rubin and seconded by Trustee Yong, it was

**RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District hereby approves the adoption of amended Policy 4321.12.

**AYES:**           **All Present**

**NAYES:**          **None**

**Acceptance of Donation of Scholarship**

Upon motion duly made by Trustee O'Reilly and seconded by Trustee Nashelsky, it was

**RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District hereby accepts the donation of *The LMBA Scholarship* which will be awarded annually to a graduating Rye Neck senior beginning with the 2022-2023 school year in accordance with the criteria established; and it was

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District hereby accepts the donation of *Chief Joseph DelBianco Memorial Scholarship* which will be awarded annually to two graduating Rye Neck seniors beginning with the 2022-2023 school year in accordance with the criteria established.

**AYES:**           **All Present**

**NAYES:**          **None**

**XII. Public Comments Concerning Above**

There were no comments made by the public.



**XIII. Adjournment of Meeting**

Upon motion duly made by Trustee Yong and seconded by Trustee Rubin, it was

**RESOLVED**, that there being no further business before the Board, that the Board of Education Meeting of April 19, 2023 be adjourned.

**AYES: All Present**

**NAYES: None**

President Golle adjourned the meeting at 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Mary Ellen Chiera  
District Clerk