



**RYE NECK UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
300 HORNIDGE ROAD
MAMARONECK, NEW YORK 10543
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
FEBRUARY 15, 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. Adjournment of Executive Session

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

RESOLVED, that the executive session be adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

AYES: All Present
NAYES: None

II. Opening of Meeting

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

**III. Public Hearing
Revisions to Code of Conduct**

Trustee Rubin announced that the Board is going to adopt two policies later on in the meeting. Since they are revisions to the Code of Conduct, the Commissioner’s Regulations require that we have a public hearing to allow any members of the community to comment before the Board approves the policies. There were no comments from the community.

IV. Budget Presentation

Dr. Lutinski and Mrs. Mahar presented the preliminary 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 \$49,587,089, which is a \$2,016,950 or 4.24% increase over this year's budget.

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. There is a \$2,016,950 or 22.95% increase over 2022-2023 revenues. She stated that this is the 12th consecutive year of a tax cap compliance budget and reviewed the tax cap components and draft tax cap calculation which is calculated at 2.30%. She then reviewed State Aid estimates which total \$5,032,708, the bulk of which is from foundation aid.

Next, Mrs. Mahar reviewed proposed expenses. Salaries (\$24,005,567) and benefits (\$11,276,597) make up 74.33% of the budget. These numbers represent a 3.49% increase in salaries and 6.54% 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 \$275,000 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. 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, increasing the employer's share of FICA 8.5% 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 \$3,620,732, 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.

Finally, Dr. Lutinski stated that the business office will be finalizing revenue and expense projections and tax rate estimates in preparation for further public budget discussions. Budget information and updates can be found on the District's website.

V. President's Report

President Golle began by reminding the Community that this year's budget marks the 12th year that the District is tax cap compliant. She stated that the budget not only preserves our programs but has allowed us to add the staff necessary to continue to grow and evolve with our needs. She thanked Mrs. Mahar and her team who have been working on the budget since October 2022 to ensure that the District is fiscally responsible and still able to deliver what is needed.

Next, she announced that the Board would be approving next year's one-page calendar later in the meeting, and it will be posted on the website for viewing.

Finally, she reminded the community that they can communicate with the Board anytime by email and at office hours once a month.

VI. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Lutinski began his report by explaining the decision making process for changes to the High School course catalog each year. He advised that some of the changes come from changes in New York State requirements, but the District also has the opportunity to provide variety beyond the requirements based on what students find interesting. The process includes feedback from teachers. Since they spend the most academic time with the students, they have a strong sense of what coursework is of interest and value. Student input is given at the Senior Exit Interviews which take place with Dr. Lutinski and Dr. Wilson in March of each year. Further, the District has added a Curriculum Council which consists of a group of students from grades 8 through 12 who meet once a month with Mrs. Ryan, the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. Additionally, Dr. Lutinski stated that these methods have generated the addition of new extracurricular clubs such as Editing, Students for Racial Unity, and Help Your Neighbor, and the opportunity for existing clubs to participate in overnight trips for competitions.

Next, Dr. Lutinski explained that support for the District's annual operating budget has made a progressive, student-centered approach possible, and he thanked the community in advance for their participation in the budget process.

Dr. Lutinski then acknowledged the donation of two new scholarships to the District. *The Chief Joseph DelBianco Memorial Scholarship* which was established by Rye Neck's Accounts Payable Clerk Tina Lividini on behalf of the Lividini and DelBianco families, and *The Peter Anthony Fasolino Memorial Scholarship* which was established by former School Board Trustee and President Pietro Fasolino and his family.

Finally, Dr. Lutinski announced that Senior Track athlete Joe Lavelle was named this week's Con Edison Scholastic Sports Award recipient.

VII. Approval of Consent Agenda

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 approves the following consent agenda:

1. Approval of the Minutes of the February 1, 2023 Planning Session
2. Approval of Personnel Tenures, Appointments, Leaves and Retirement
3. Acceptance of Donation of Scholarships
4. Approval of 2023-2024 Calendar
5. Approval of Disposal of Computer Equipment
6. Approval of Disposal of Equipment
7. Approval of Homebound Instruction
8. Approval of CSE Recommendations
9. Establishment of Standard Work Days for Athletic Support Staff
10. Approval of Transportation Contract
11. Approval of Piggyback Contract with Goosetown Communications
12. Approval of Budget Transfers
13. Approval of Financial Reports

AYES: All Present

NAYES: None

VIII. Financial Reports for Information

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

IX. Communications to the Board

President Golle reported that the Board has received no communications since the last Meeting.

X. Citizens' Privilege of the Floor

There were no comments made by the public.

XI. Reports - Community and School Groups

Student Senate

Student Senate President Tomas Fernandez reported that midterms ended the week of January 23rd marking the end of the second quarter. Report cards are out and available on the portal. Course selection for the upcoming school year is now available for students in grades 9 through 11, and there are new classes being offered for next year, and Juniors have begun preparing for the college process and are actively meeting with their counselors.

Finally, Tomas stated that the Junior class raised money by selling bags of Hershey Kisses and teddy bears with a bag of Hershey Kisses for Valentine's Day. In addition, the Senate helped organize and set up for the High School Winter Formal which took place on February 10th. The dance was a huge success with over 160 students in attendance.

Student Athletic Council

SAC representative Clare Picone reported that during the month of March the SAC will celebrate reading with each member visiting one of the elementary classes to read their favorite book. Athletes will be wearing their Rye Neck uniforms and encouraging the students to come and support the Spring teams. March madness around the corner, and there will be a life size bracket in the main hallway that will be updated throughout the tournament. In addition, the SAC is collaborating with the Student Senate to plan a spring season pep rally, and the spring schedules are on the website and can be viewed on the SAC bulletin board in the lobby of the Middle/High School gyms.

PTSA

PTSA President Megan McFarland reported that the third SEAC meeting was held last week. It included a talk titled “The Launching Project: How to Confidently Send Your Child to College Without Going With Them.” The next SEAC meeting is on April 20th, and the speaker will be Kathleen Brigham who will speak about executive function, developmental stages and transitions.

She advised that after-school clubs are in full swing at both Daniel Warren and F.E. Bellows with clubs being run on Mondays through Thursdays for 8 weeks, and the spring session will begin in April. In addition, STEAM programming is happening in the schools. The 5th grade enjoyed a visit to the SkyDome Planetarium at F.E. Bellows, and 9th graders had a virtual presentation on Ancient China by The Museum of Cleveland. Health & Wellness programming at the Middle and High Schools will include the JCK Foundation giving all grades the “You Are Not Alone” presentation later this month. Following the break, the Daniel Warren Environmental committee will run a book drive to celebrate the 100th day of school.

Next, Mrs. McFarland stated that the PTSA held their annual Parents Night Out, which was attended by approximately 200 people who enjoyed dinner, dancing, a silent auction and raffles. Over \$13,000 was raised, and the money will go towards enrichment programming.

Finally, Mrs. McFarland announced that the Panther Party Spring Event and Fun Run will take place on Saturday, April 29th from noon to 3 p.m. at Daniel Warren. There will be food trucks, raffles, games and activities. It will also include a Fun Run for all ages from F.E. Bellows to Daniel Warren. She congratulated the logo contest winner, Valeria Barajas, for her design which will be on printed t-shirts and sweatshirts. More information about the event can be found on the PTSA website.

Booster Club

Booster Club President Patrick West reported that the Booster Club will be providing meals for the cast and crew of *Anastasia* during their rehearsals over February break. He stated that the winter sport season has ended and playoffer are being held this week. In addition, the Booster Club is planning for the March Madness event for parents and their spring initiatives.

RNTA

RNTA Representative Melissa Silva stated that the RNTA appreciates and supports the District's efforts to present educationally sound and fiscally responsible budgets, and look forward to tonight's presentation.

Next, Mrs. Sliva reported that because we are halfway through the year, teachers are assessing and evaluating programs in anticipation of the end of the year and next year's undertakings. In addition, the schools remain active and social places of learning. Daniel Warren celebrated the 100th day of school with 100 collections and posters; F.E. Bellows celebrated the written word with "Bellows Loves Writing" and invited parents to a publishing party; Middle School students are participating in lessons by the Anti-Defamation League; High School students are engaging in a virtual lesson with The Cleveland Museum of Art and taking a trip to the Met; the Student Senate sponsored a winter formal; and the RNTA held their New Year event last month.

XII. Reports - Board of Education

Office Hours

Trustees Golle and Mansell will represent the Board at the next Office Hours, March 1, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. Please call the District Clerk by Friday, February 24th to make an appointment and state your topic of interest.

West/Put Report

Trustee Rubin reported that this is the time of year board members and superintendents meet with local legislators to discuss district concerns and wishes enabling them to provide greater support for education initiatives in Washington. Last week, Dr. Lutinski participated in a virtual roundtable with Assemblyman Steve Otis and other superintendents and this Thursday Dr. Lutinski, Mrs. Mahar and President Golle will participate in another call with Assemblyman Steve Otis and a roundtable with Senator Shelly Mayer. In addition, Trustees Nashelsky and Mansell participated in a regional advocacy meeting, and she recently attended WestPut's Annual Public Education Legislative Forum with Dr. Lutinski and Trustee Nashelsky.

Audit Committee

Trustee Nashelsky reported that on February 9th, the Committee met with the claims auditor who provided his annual written report of his internal claims audit. He gave the District a high rating.

In addition, Trustee Nashelsky advised that the Committee met with the internal auditor regarding his special project audit of the capital project requisitions. He stated that he found no irregularities and the District is in financially great shape. He also noted that there is still \$1 million that has not been borrowed, and the balance of any unused money already borrowed will go into debt service to pay off principal and interest once all outstanding balances are settled.

The next Audit Committee meeting is scheduled for May 24th.

Policy Committee

Trustee Rubin reviewed the two policies up for adoption. Policy 5300.25 - Student Dress Code - is part of the Code of Conduct and amendments were made to foster a more

inclusive and equitable learning environment. Policy 5300.60 - Student Searches and Interrogations - is also part of the Code of Conduct, and amendments were made to remove strip searches and replace them with personal searches.

XIII. New Business

Adoption of Amended Policy 5300.25 - Student Dress Code

WHEREAS, revisions to Policy 5300.25 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 January 18, 2023 Board Meeting; and

WHEREAS, Policy 5300.25 has been presented to the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District at this current public meeting for a public hearing and a second reading.

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 approves the adoption of Policy 5300.25.

AYES: All Present

NAYES: None

Adoption of Amended Policy 5300.60 - Student Searches and Interrogations

WHEREAS, revisions to Policy 5300.60 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 January 18, 2023 Board Meeting; and

WHEREAS, Policy 5300.60 has been presented to the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District at this current public meeting for a public hearing and a second reading.

Upon motion duly made by Trustee O'Reilly 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 Policy 5300.60.

AYES: All Present

NAYES: None

Acceptance of 2022-23 Special Review of Capital Project Expenditures

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

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District accepts the 2022-2023 school year special review of capital project expenditures, proposition II, Athletic Facility and Collaborative Science Center dated December 31, 2022 by Sanossian, Sardis & Co., LLP.; and it was

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the attached district management action plan prepared in response to the review.

AYES: All Present

NAYES: None

XII. Public Comments Concerning Above

There were no comments made by the public.

XIII. Adjournment

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

RESOLVED, that there being no further business before the Board, the Board of Education Meeting of February 15, 2023 be adjourned.

AYES: All Present

NAYES: None

President Golle adjourned the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ellen Chiera
District Clerk