



**RYE NECK UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
300 HORNIDGE ROAD  
MAMARONECK, NEW YORK 10543  
BOARD OF EDUCATION PLANNING SESSION  
MAY 3, 2023**

Present: President, Gloria Golle  
Trustee Rebecca Mansell  
Trustee Patty Nashelsky  
Trustee Devina O’Reilly  
Trustee Jennifer Rubin  
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. Final Budget Presentation**

Dr. Lutinski and Mrs. Mahar presented the proposed budget for the 2023-2024 school year. Dr. Lutinski reviewed the items that will be on ballot, including the amount of the proposed budget (\$9,651,520) and the names of the three candidates running for the two available seats on the Board (Jaime Santa, Jason Carmel and Erica Wagner). Her reviewed the goals of the budget which 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. He stated that the tax cap compliant budget 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 compliant budget, reviewed the tax cap components and draft tax cap calculation which is calculated at 2.18%).

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. Mrs. Mahar stated that it is a three part budget consisting of \$36,615,278 in programmatic expenses, \$7,573,410 in capital expenses and \$5,462,832 in administrative expenses.

Dr. Lutinski then reviewed expense changes in the budget. He explained that there is an allocation of \$350,000 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. Additionally, Dr. Lutinski reviewed the planned safety and security spending which totals \$852,228.

Finally, Mrs. Mahar then explained that the factors which influence the tax rate change are changes in the budget, changes in equalization and changes in assessments, and reviewed the effects of equalization and assessment on the tax rate change. Community members can calculate their estimated school taxes using the 2023-24 Tax Rate Calculator located in the budget presentation on the District website.

## **II. Elementary Programs & Priorities Meeting**

Dr. Lutinski explained how the District prioritizes its programming, and invited parents to express what they would like to see the District to focus on. The responses included: the addition of foreign language in the elementary classrooms; offering paid after school clubs for foreign language; the addition of foreign language to the Daniel Warren New Pursuits program; and reaching out to Rye Neck's international community for ideas on foreign language instruction.

Dr. Lutinski explained how several years back foreign language was offered in F.E. Bellows but it was found that only 30 minutes of instruction a week wasn't really changing anything, and to offer it more often, would mean taking away from specials since you can't take away time from their core subjects. Discussion was had regarding different ways to offer foreign language to the elementary students.

In addition, parents requested that the District give more consideration to school and the addition of more protective safety measures, especially in the elementary schools. They suggested properly trained security staff at all schools; parking aides monitoring entrances onto the campuses; safety glass on doors and ground level windows; double level vestibules at building entrances; locked gates around the perimeter of the schools; security cameras at all gates and entrances; blocking off the back parking lot at Daniel Warren; and ID badges.

Dr. Lutinski explained that we now have a safer environment at our schools, and we continually review our safety and security measures and plan to spend money on safety upgrades. We are currently looking into new technology, we are adding security staff, and we spend a lot of time on training. Additionally, we have a new relationship with a security company who is providing us with trained security staff; we started looking into window armory; electronic alarms for the camera systems; and will be replacing doors. At the Middle/High School campus, students are required to wear their ID badges at all

times. At F.E. Bellows, the gates around the field remain locked at all times once the students have entered the building at arrival, and their new safety monitor is highly trained.

Mrs. Goldberg advised that at Daniel Warren, many of the doors have alarms that send a notice to her cell phone so that she knows when they are opened. In addition, no outsiders are allowed on the property during school hours, and all staff have walkie talkies when they're outside and communicate with the appropriate person when someone comes onto the property. There are approximately 12 safety drills that take place each year after which they debrief with Altaris, our security consulting firm.

Discussion was had regarding the mental wellness piece with regard to school safety, the steps the District is currently taking, the financial aspect of some of the suggestions, what steps can be taken immediately, and what parents can do to assist.

### **III. Opening of Meeting**

President Golle called the meeting to order at 10:49 a.m.

### **IV. Approval of Minutes**

#### **Approval of Minutes of April 19, 2023 Board of Education Meeting**

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 Minutes of the Board of Education Meeting held April 19, 2023, as submitted.

**AYES: All Present**

**NAYES: None**

### **V. Discussion**

#### **2023-2024 Board of Education Meeting Schedule**

Following discussion on the dates of the April and June Board meetings, the meeting schedule was approved and will be put on the agenda for the May 17th Board of Education Meeting.

#### **Senior Car Parade**

Dr. Lutinski reported that the Senior Car Parade will take place on Monday, June 12th. It will start at 10:30 a.m. from Harbor Island and will end at the Middle/High School campus where the seniors will be greeted by students and staff.

#### **Athletic Update - Joe Ceglia**

Mr. Ceglia had a discussion with the Board regarding the request to allow students who participate in out-of-school sports to participate in athletic option. Mr. Ceglia explained the reasons why this is not allowed. It was mentioned that some schools in the Consortium do offer athletic option to students who participate in out-of-school sports, while some take the same position as us and some do not offer athletic option at all. Discussion was had regarding whether or not athletic option has any impact on students that use it and whether or not the District's position is inequitable to some students.

**Security Discussion**

Dr. Lutinski updated the Board on his latest conversation with the Police. Historically, the Village of Mamaroneck Police Department responded to issues at the schools and the Rye Police Department responded to issues on the Middle/High School fields. Going forward, officers from both departments will participate in drills and respond to issues at the Middle/High School campus. In addition, the Village of Mamaroneck Police have recently added Rye Neck Schools to their patrol patterns. They are now stopping at the schools and walking through the schools. This allows them to familiarize themselves with the buildings in case of an emergency. The police departments will also be conducting training in the schools after-hours and over the summer.

**VI. Executive Session**

Upon Motion duly made by Trustee Mansell and seconded by Trustee Yong, it was

**RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District hereby agrees to move into executive session to discuss a particular person.

**AYES: All Present**

**NAYES: None**

**VII. Adjournment of Executive Session, Reopening of Public Meeting and Adjournment of Public Meeting**

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

**RESOLVED**, that the executive session be adjourned and the Public Meeting be reopened; and it was

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that there being no further business before the Board and upon motion duly made by Trustee O'Reilly and seconded by Trustee Mansell, it was

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education Planning Session of May 3, 2023 be adjourned.

**AYES: All Present**

**NAYES: None**

President Golle adjourned the meeting at 12:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Mary Ellen Chiera  
District Clerk