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POCANTICO HILLS SCHOOL BUDGET INFORMATION BULLETIN

APRIL 2010

Dear Community Members,

You are cordially invited to participate in the development of our proposed 2010-2011 school budget, and are encouraged to attend the next two budget workshops scheduled for Saturday, April 10, beginning at 9 a.m. in the school cafeteria, and the Monday April 12, 2010, School Board meeting beginning at 8 p.m. in the school cafeteria. The Board will have held eight budget workshops over the past several weeks in preparation for the adoption of the proposed budget on April 12, 2010.

This newsletter contains budget information for you to consider. In addition, the latest working draft of the budget may be reviewed on our District's website at www.pocanticohills.org or you may pick up a copy at the school between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. We encourage your ideas, questions and comments. If you are unable to attend the meeting on April 12, please forward your questions and comments to budgetinfo@pocanticohills.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

Interim Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent
Jay Scotto-Friedman

About the 2010-2011 Proposed Budget

Here are questions and answers about the preliminary Pocantico Hills budget prepared by the District administration.

Q. How is the school budget communicated to District residents?

A. The District has followed a communication plan that provides opportunities for residents to have input into the development of the draft budget before the Board's adoption of the budget on April 12, 2010. The budget has been presented in its entirety at each community budget workshop to ensure that a resident missing one or more budget work sessions would not miss part of the description of the budget. A PowerPoint presentation and other documentation, including the most recent working draft, are posted on the District's website. The District's intention is to communicate more effectively with the community, and to seek input and suggestions to explain the budget in terms more easily understood by the community, and to

ensure that the budget meets the needs of the District's students and residents.

Q. How much has the budget increased over the 2009-2010 budget, and in what areas have expenditures increased the most?

A. The increases and decreases in the budget are as follows:

Salaries	\$ 515,914
Benefits	363,044
Equipment	25,124
Contractual Expenses	1,103,755
Supplies	47,613
Tuition	(97,203)
Textbooks	4,323
BOCES	(48,075)
Utilities	(50,262)
Debt Service/Transfers	814,965
Software	162
Incarcerated Youth	368,408
TOTAL	\$3,047,768

The overall proposed budget represents an increase of 12.95% (\$3,047,768). The large increase in the contractual expenses provides for a \$1,000,000 new line item in the budget to begin to formally address the approximately 70 outstanding tax certiorari claims already filed against the Pocantico Hills Central School District. This new line item comprises 4.25% of the budget-to-budget increase. The increase in the budget resulting from new debt arising from the construction project approved by residents in January 2008 is equal to 3.55% of the budget-to-budget increase. Also located within the District is a prison in which there are incarcerated youth. The education of these youths is the responsibility of the Pocantico Hills School District. However, the cost to provide this education is funded at approximately 105% by New York State, and therefore does not negatively impact the tax rate since there is offsetting revenue, although the \$368,408 increase in the cost to operate this program is still included in the Pocantico Hills budget. This amount accounts for 1.57% of the budget-to-budget increase. These three areas in total comprise 9.36% of the 12.95% budget-to-budget increase. The difference or 3.58% budget-to-budget increase accounts for increased costs for salaries, contractual expenses, and benefits. The increase in the assessed valuation of the District addresses the increases in the draft budget and provides the District with the opportunity to restore reductions included in the 2009-2010 budget for student supplies, equipment and textbooks, and the funding for the Extended Learning Opportunity (ELO) program and still produces a tax rate reduction of 5.30% in Greenburgh and a 0.87% tax rate increase in Mt. Pleasant. The budget also continues the District's previous efforts to replace older computers through an Installment Purchase Agreement with BOCES. This initiative provides for a lower cost of the computers, and allows Pocantico Hills the opportunity to maximize our State Aid for BOCES services.

Q. Why is there a 5.30% projected tax rate decrease for Greenburgh and a .87% increase in Mt. Pleasant when the budget-to-budget increase is 12.95%?

A. The draft 2010-2011 school budget provides for a 12.95% budget-to-budget increase even though the projected tax rate for Greenburgh is an estimated decrease of 5.30% because there will be an increase in the value of commercial property

within the District. Approximately \$5.5 million has been added to the District's assessed valuation resulting from the inclusion of the water treatment plant that is being constructed within the District. Financially, this will benefit the residents of Pocantico Hills because as the assessed valuation of the District's commercial property increases, there is both downward pressure on the tax rate, and there is a shift of the tax burden from the residential to the commercial property owners within the District. As a result of this significant increase in the assessed valuation, there is an estimated tax rate **decrease** of 5.30% projected for Greenburgh, and a .87% increase projected for Mt. Pleasant.

Q. What is a tax certiorari claim?

A. Tax certiorari claims are made by commercial property owners when they believe that their property is assessed at too high a level, and their tax bill is also too high. A court-ordered judgment can reduce the assessment of a commercial property, and provide for refunds to the commercial property owner for taxes they might have overpaid in prior years and reductions in their assessed value.

Q. How can there be an increase in the property tax levy and the budget, and still be a projected tax rate decrease?

A. The increase in the property tax levy refers to the additional amount of funds requested to operate the School District. The increase in the tax levy is projected to be 16.86%. Even though there is a budget-to-budget increase, and an increase in the tax levy, the tax rate paid by homeowners in Greenburgh is less than last year because there has been a significant increase in the District's assessed valuation. Essentially, there are more taxpayers contributing to the tax levy, so the rate that each taxpayer would pay is less than it would be without the increase in the assessed valuation.

Q. What will happen if the community does not approve the school budget on May 18, 2010?

A. State law provides that the Board of Education can, if it wishes, resubmit the same or a different budget to the community for approval once. If it is disapproved by the community again, or the Board of Education decides not to resubmit the budget, the school district will operate on a contingency budget.

Q. What is the contingency budget increase, how does it compare to the proposed budget increase, and what will the tax rate increase be under a contingency budget?

A. New York State law places a spending cap on a District’s contingency budget, with a few exceptions made for repaying debt, costs associated with enrollment growth, etc. The State-imposed spending cap for 2010-2011 is 120% of the CPI or 4%, whichever is lower. Since the CPI is a negative number this year, the Governor is expected to introduce special legislation to allow school districts to use a 0% increase as the CPI. The proposed contingency budget to be considered by the Board of Education provides for a contingent budget increase of 6.50% which will require budget reductions of \$1,516,635. The projected tax rate decrease under the contingency budget is 10.31%

for Greenburgh, and a projected tax rate decrease of 4.47% in Mt. Pleasant.

Q. How is the community impacted if the District operates under a contingency budget?

A. Under a contingency budget, the community will not be able to utilize the District’s buildings and grounds in the same way that the District’s facilities can be used under an approved budget. State Regulations require the school district to calculate the cost of the use of the buildings and grounds by community groups, and to pass these costs along to the community groups utilizing the District’s buildings and grounds.

For more information, please visit our website:
www.pocanticohills.org

2010-2011 Budget Highlights

Participation in the Tri States Consortium	\$10,000
Funding for ELO Program	\$19,800
Funding for the Bookmobile Program	\$3,000
Replacement of older computer equipment	\$68,000
Transfer to Tax Certiorari Reserve	\$1,000,000
Summer Camp	\$311,808
Swim Program	\$156,444
After-School Program	\$105,170
Field Trips	\$44,539
Instructional Supplies and Materials	\$134,341
Video Conferencing Program	\$10,000

Budget-to-Budget Increase

2009-10 Budget	2010-2011 Proposed Budget Expenditures	Budget-to-Budget Increase	Percent of Budget-to-Budget Increase
\$23,537,759	\$26,585,527	\$3,047,768	12.95%

IMPORTANT BUDGET DATES

Saturday April 10, 2010

Board of Education Meeting
Budget Workshop
9 a.m. School Cafeteria

Monday April 12, 2010

Board of Education Meeting
Adoption of Proposed Budget
8 p.m. School Cafeteria

Wednesday, April 28, 2010

PTA Budget Presentation - 6 p.m.

April 19, 2010

Last Day to File petitions for
Board of Education seat and propositions

May 10, 2010

Budget Hearing
8 p.m. School Cafeteria

May 11, 2009

PTA Meet the Candidates Night
8 p.m. School Cafeteria

May 13, 2010

Last day to register to vote. Voters may register to vote at any time up to May 13 at the District office, Monday through Friday 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

May 18, 2010

Budget Vote 7 a.m. – 9 p.m.
School Library

Applications for Absentee Ballots may be applied for at: The office of the School District Clerk, 599 Bedford Road, Sleepy Hollow, NY; or by calling: 914-631-2440 ext.103

Completed applications for absentee ballots must be received by the School District Clerk prior to 5 p.m. on May 11, 2010 if the ballot is to be mailed; by May 17, 2010 if picked up in person.

Absentee ballots must be received by the District Clerk no later than 5 p.m. on the day of the vote – May 18, 2010.

For more information, please visit our website: www.pocanticohills.org

POCANTICO HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL
599 Bedford Road
Sleepy Hollow, N.Y. 10591

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
White Plains, NY
Permit #2033

Board of Education

Mrs. Katherine Yu
President

Mr. David Wilens
Vice President

Mr. Maurice Curran
Trustee

Mr. John Conrad
Trustee

Mr. Robert W. Balog
Trustee

District Administration

Mr. Jay Scotto-Friedman, Interim Superintendent/ Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Stanley Steele, Principal
Mrs. Nadine McDermott, Interim Director of Curriculum and Instruction