

RHINEBECK CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOARD OF EDUCATION

April 20, 2017

Special Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT:

**DEIRDRE BURNS
DEIRDRE d'ALBERTIS
MARK FLEISCHHAUER
STEVE JENKINS
DIANE LYONS
LISA ROSENTHAL
LAURA SCHULKIND**

OTHERS PRESENT:

**JOSEPH PHELAN, THOMAS BURNELL,
MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, MEMBERS OF THE
PRESS**

SPECIAL MEETING

1.0 Call to Order

President Fleischhauer called the meeting to order in the RHS/BMS Library at 7:10 pm.

Superintendent Phelan reported that the Board had a lengthy discussion on the budget on Tuesday, April 18th, and that it was the consensus of the Board to give Board members a few days to process the budget discussion. The meeting tonight is to further discuss and act on the adoption of a proposed 2017-18 budget. We must adopt a budget number this evening.

Superintendent Phelan went over his recommendation to pierce the tax cap in the amount of \$32,876,618 which pierces the tax cap at 2.97%. He reminded the Board that they are voting on a budget number, not individual items within the budget, and that piercing the tax cap would require a 60+% super majority vote.

President Fleischhauer said that the Board should be familiar with the documents handed out. From communications within the last day, it seems that the Board is leaning towards an override.

The Board had a lengthy conversation as to how much to pierce the tax cap. Various comments were offered in support of piercing the tax cap as well as several Board members who did not feel that this is the year to pierce the tax cap. Lisa Rosenthal suggested that the District pierce the cap by more than the minimum in order to give the District a cushion for next year so the Board need not approach the community again for an override. She reasoned that cushioning District funds would provide a higher baseline to work from for coming years. Lisa Rosenthal proposed that the District put up a budget 1.7% over the tax cap limit to 3.88% (\$456,779). Superintendent Phelan expressed concern that putting up a higher tax cap percentage may present a challenge in gaining voter approval. Several Board members commented that they could be persuaded to go to a 3.88% override but worried that doing so presents an additional layer of risk that the District may not be prepared for.

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Deirdre Burns commented that the Board has worked hard on Board goals that are being affected, such as technology, professional development, and school climate. The District has much to be proud of and she is concerned of the impact of cuts over time.

Diane Lyons commented that the District has experienced a shortfall each year of the tax cap and streams of revenue have dried up. Each year, the Board cuts deeper and now the District is looking to cut staff. She stated that, should the Board put up a budget that pierces the tax cap, we need to be sure it is the right year to do so. She is not convinced that this is the year;

Steve Jenkins stated that the District needs a long-term strategic plan to go to the community with, should the Board put up a budget that pierces the tax cap. He commented that this is not the year to pierce the tax cap.

Laura Schulkind stated that she could be persuaded to pierce the gap but wants a guarantee that an ad-hoc committee will be created to look at long-range budget planning.

The Board discussed creating an ad-hoc committee to look at long-range budget planning. Lisa Rosenthal offered herself to participate in such a committee if the Board wishes to have community members take part in the committee. Laura Schulkind offered to participate in the committee as well.

The discussion turned back to approving a budget. The Board decided to put up a motion to pierce the tax cap to 3.88% (\$456,779). Various Board members expressed their support of the motion. Superintendent Phelan cautioned that the Budget has a better chance of passing at a 2.97% increase. In any case, should the budget fail the first time, the Board will have to cut to the tax levy limit of 2.18% for the second vote.

President Fleischhauer asked for a motion to open up the discussion for public Comment. **Motion** by d'Albertis, seconded by Rosenthal, the Board of Education voted to open up the meeting for public comment.

VOTE: 7 AYE (Burns, d'Albertis, Fleischhauer, Jenkins, Lyons, Rosenthal, Schulkind); 0 NAY; 0 ABSTAIN; 0 ABSENT
MOTION CARRIED

Joe Baer, community member running for the Board of Education, stated that about 2/3 of the people who signed the petition for candidacy wanted him to keep their taxes down. He stated that with the recent capital project and a President who doesn't want to release his own tax records, the community expects the District to provide the best education possible for most reasonable dollar.

Beth Heady, staff and community member, expressed her appreciation of the Board's struggle with this decision. She expressed that keeping the cost around \$50 per household seems more acceptable than anything higher.

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Victor Britton, faculty and community member, empathized with the difficulty of the decision the Board needs to make and suggested that meeting in the middle is more prudent than “go big or go home”.

Lisa Rosenthal asked for a five (5) minute recess.

Motion by d'Albertis, seconded by Rosenthal, the Board of Education voted to recess for five (5) minutes.

VOTE: 7 AYE (Burns, d'Albertis, Fleischhauer, Jenkins, Lyons, Rosenthal, Schulkind); 0 NAY; 0 ABSTAIN; 0 ABSENT

MOTION CARRIED

President Fleischhauer resumed the special meeting at 9:00 pm.

The Board briefly discussed what percentage to pierce the gap by and decided to make a motion to pierce the tax cap limit to 3.88%.

2.0 Action Items

2.1 Motion by d'Albertis, seconded by Rosenthal, the Board of Education voted to adopt the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education hereby adopts the proposed Budget for the 2017-18 school year in the amount of \$33,121,397, and authorizes the following proposition to be placed on the ballot at the Annual Meeting on May 16, 2017:

“Shall the Board of Education of the Rhinebeck Central School District be authorized to expend the sums of money which will be required for School District purposes for the 2017-2018 school year, in the amount of \$33,121,397, and to levy the necessary tax therefore? Adoption of this budget requires a tax levy increase of 3.88% which exceeds the statutory tax levy increase limit of 2.18% for this school fiscal year and therefore exceeds the state tax cap and must be approved by sixty percent of the qualified voters present and voting.”

VOTE: 5 AYE (Burns, d'Albertis, Fleischhauer, Rosenthal, Schulkind);

2 NAY (Jenkins, Lyons); 0 ABSTAIN; 0 ABSENT

MOTION CARRIED

2.2 Motion by d'Albertis, seconded by Rosenthal, the Board of Education voted to create an ad-hoc long range planning committee for the purpose of long range planning.

VOTE: 7 AYE (Burns, d'Albertis, Fleischhauer, Jenkins, Lyons, Rosenthal, Schulkind); 0 NAY; 0 ABSTAIN; 0 ABSENT

MOTION CARRIED

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3.0 Adjournment

Motion by d'Albertis, seconded by Rosenthal, the Board voted to adjourn at 9:15 pm.

VOTE: 7 AYE (Burns, d'Albertis, Fleischhauer, Jenkins, Lyons, Rosenthal,

Schulkind); 0 NAY; 0 ABSTAIN; 0 ABSENT

MOTION CARRIED

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ann Torres

District Clerk