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Rhinebeck school project impacts detailed by officials

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RHINEBECK, N.Y. >> School district officials estimate a \$12.09 million capital project proposition would cost the average homeowner \$78.04 annually over the 18 years that the financing bonds would be repaid.

Voters will decide the issue in a referendum scheduled for Dec. 6, from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m., at Bulkeley Middle School, 45 North Park Road.

The figures were provided during a Board of Education public hearing last week, with district Assistant Superintendent Thomas Burnell saying the additional expense will not affect the state limit on property tax levy increases.

“If we get a positive result here, the payment of that debt service does not count toward the tax cap,” he said.

A report by the district states that annual debt payments will be reduced from \$1.71 million in 2021 to \$1.04 million in 2022, but the amount of state aid will have a corresponding drop from \$771,497 to \$44,172.

“In a couple of years, we’re having some of our (current) debt (paid) off,” he said.

“The original (Bulkeley Middle School debt) will be coming off in a couple years and that’s reducing the debt,” Burnell said. “So we have retiring debt, which will ... help offset the cost of this project.”

Burnell said the \$78.04 estimated annual cost was based on a property valued at \$291,500 and claiming a \$38,580 STAR tax exemption. He also said about 95 percent of the project should be eligible for state aid, which would have a reimbursement rate of about 36.8 percent.

“Most of this is going to be allowable,” he said. “There’s going to be a couple items where the state is going to say this is not an allowable expense, something that they call ordinary maintenance.”

Items included in the proposed project are similar at both the middle-high school building and Chancellor Livingston Elementary School. Included are interior doors and hardware, kitchen ceilings, telephone systems, entrance handrails, skylights, roof ladders, roof recoating, exterior doors and windows, and lighting replacement.

Other projects include installing an emergency backup generator in the middle-high school and adding acoustical tiles to the gym walls.

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