BOARD OF EDUCATION  
BUDGET HEARING MINUTES  
May 4, 2010

A Budget Hearing of the Board of Education of the Westbury Union Free School District, Towns of North Hempstead and Hempstead, Westbury, New York was held at the Westbury High School in the Little Theatre located at 1 Post Road, Old Westbury, New York on May 4, 2010.

Present, Ms. Karin B. Campbell, President
Board of Dr. Pless M. Dickerson
Education: Mr. Rocco N. Lanzilotta
　　　　　Mr. Larry D. Wornum
Absent: Mr. Stanton, L. Brown
　　　　　Mr. Floyd T. Ewing, III
　　　　　Mr. Lawrence F. Zaino
Others Dr. Constance R. Clark-Snead, Superintendent of Schools
Present: Mr. Robert Brisbane, Asst. Superintendent - Curriculum, Instruction, Personnel
　　　　　Mrs. Mary Lagnado, Asst. Superintendent – Business & Management Services
　　　　　Dr. Marjorie Toran, Asst. Superintendent – Spec. Education & Spec. Services

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

At 7:40pm, Ms. Karin B. Campbell, President called the meeting to order. Ms. Campbell then asked those present to salute the flag followed by a moment of silent mediation.

2. BUDGET PRESENTATION

At 7:45pm, Ms. Campbell yielded the floor to Dr. Constance R. Clark-Snead, Superintendent of Schools, who stated that this evening was the final presentation of the proposed budget for 2010-2011 and the official budget hearing. Dr, Clark-Snead yielded the floor to Mrs. Mary Lagnado, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Management Services who presented the budget.

The Board of Education adopted a budget of 2.5% an increase, budget-to-budget, for a total of $106,215,920 for the 2010-2011 School Year. If the budget fails, the administration has recalculated the contingency budget, based on the average forecast of enrollment growth for next year, of 1.6% budget-to-budget increase or $105,287,370. Mrs. Lagnado presented a history of State aid that we have received over the past five (5) years indicating how very fortunate we were to receive large amounts of state aid with increases of over three-million dollars. Through those increases, the district was able to implement new programs under the direction and leadership of the Superintendent. Also, this alleviated the tax levy increase to be minor as the state was giving us that money for those new programs to spend on.

You will see that this year for 2010/2011, due to the economic situation downturn and the New York State budget we are earmarked to receive 1.5 million less in State aid then we received this year. The “per pupil” cost has increased, but our state aid is decreasing and that is what is happening this year. Although we have a budget-to-budget increase of 2.5% our tax levy is 6.88% because of a lack in state aid, yet our costs are still continuing to go up.
The projected revenues for next year of 27-28% is made up of basic state aid. This year we are earmarked to get 27.9 million dollars under the governor’s proposal. The governor released his projected budget at the end of January (2010) and until the state legislature passes the final budget, districts must use these figures. One source of revenue that is going up is Medicare reimbursement, Child Find and Health Services. However, the use of monies (where we put our money in savings), has also taken a hit with interest payments being historically low.

The District is putting money from the reserves to help off-set the tax levy from several fund sources. The total amount of $4.4 million dollars (last year was over $5 million) is being applied to offset this year’s levy. Any monies under-spent this year will be applied to help offset next year’s tax levy. That being said, with a 2.5% budget increase, we see a tax levy of 6.88% increase.

For a typical homeowner, at an assessed home value of $416,800 it would be an increase of $476.80. We did get Federal Stimulus money this year that helped fund some of our programs. We currently have Pre-K at Wantagh which is being currently funded under ARRA money (which has to be budgeted and coded separately within the general fund, filing quarterly reports with the state). Next year will be the last year for this funding. We would have to find new sources to continue these programs.

The Federal government requires that the district use a specific formula to calculate the amount of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs that were saved due to the federal stimulus monies (ARRA) received. The district was able to report that 37.9 FTEs were saved.

The budget continues to grow in expenditures: climbing special education costs and increased enrollment. There is a large population coming into district that have IEPs (Individualized Education Plans), they have to receive services already identified as children with special needs that require special services. Many times if we cannot provide the services, we send the student out-of-district. This, coupled with the cost of transportation has been a challenge for the district this year.

Continuing the mandate of the 4408 Summer School program, again this is a challenge, as the district usually receives 80% of this expenditure as a reimbursement from the state. However, the governor has proposed that the amount be cut back to 40% which is tied into our foundation aid formula which is about 40%, so we will be cutting this summer program in half.

Also there is the MTA tax, which cost us over $200,000 a year and the district was supposed to get the amount reimbursed, but as of yet, the form has not been issued by the state. Increases are also seen in the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) and Employees Retirement System (ERS) growing from 6.19% to 8.62% and from 8.1% to 11.2%, respectively. Again, these are contractually obligated. Health and dental insurance premiums have gone up 4%, along with heat, light and power and along with our maintenance that continues to go up.

The other challenge, of course, has been the enrollment. This year we experienced an enrollment growth of 4.6% or 193 children. Our demographic study of last year, on the high end, had projected 86 children. It has been a phenomena, that we have seen this increase. Out of the 193 children, 60 of them have entered the district with existing IEPs. So, again, it has been a big strain on our budget this year.
Next year, at the moderate level or the average forecast, it will call for a 2.09% enrollment growth or 91 children. Again, we are looking at this very carefully. Why is this happening? It could be the economy and that people are moving in with family. We know that we have had a significant increase in enrollment this year. And the phenomena is that other districts have seen a decrease of about an half-a-percent in their enrollments. Coupled with this information, it has been a challenge to develop a budget this year.

In-district placements of Special Education students have increased from 16 to 35 of classified children over the past three years. It is always evolving. Our enrollment growth continues. Mrs. Dingwall from the Park Avenue Schools has enrolled six additional children in her school alone since the Spring Break.

With the additional students coming into our Special Education program where we needed to place these children out-of-district, it puts additional strains on the transportation system as additional bus “runs” are needed to accommodate these students. The amount in transportation alone for this population of students was over $300,000.

There are three component parts to the 2.5% budget:

- 9% or $9.6 million is administrative
- 80% or $85 million is program (everything that has to do with instruction)
- 10.7 or $11 million capital is (maintenance and debt service)

The Contingent Budget is prepared utilizing the CPI (Consumer Price Index) which is listed as a MINUS 0.4% so the state instructed districts to use zero coupled with the enrollment demographic study, plus debt service. These figures give the contingent budget of 1.6% or a tax levy increase of 5.74% - with an average home value of $416,000 the tax increase would be $367.29 for the year.

It has been a very difficult budget dealing with:

- State aid reductions
- ARRA Stimulus Money that we will have to deal with losing next year
- Cost of unfunded mandates
- Reductions in staff and in other areas

But we are very fortunate that we have a sound budget for next year.

The adopted budget of a 2.5% increase totaling $106,215,920 with a contingent budget of 1.6% increase totaling $105,287,370 or approximately a difference of $928,000. So, if the budget fails there would have to be further cuts to make up that nine-hundred-thousand dollar figure.

Mrs. Lagnado was very happy to report that Moody’s Investor Services has upgraded our bond rating two notches, which is almost unprecedented. The district went from A1 to an AA2. This means that when we go out to borrow money, we actually pay less in interest. The district is very proud of its fiscal accountability and the upward movement in the rating.
Mrs. Lagnado then rescinded the floor to Dr. Clark-Snead who then welcomed the public for any comments. The following persons were asked to be heard:

Mr. Larry Kirton  Mrs. Allison Clonmell  Mrs. Regina Jones  
Mr. Kelvin Campbell

3. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:29pm, Ms. Campbell asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Wornum, seconded by Dr. Dickerson and carried unanimously to adjourn the Budget Hearing of the Board of Education.

Respectfully submitted,

Rocco N. Lanzilotta
District Clerk to the 
Westbury Board of Education