

**WEST WINDSOR-PLAINSBORO REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES**



<u>BOE Committee:</u> Anthony Fleres (Chair) Hemant Marathe Yibao Xu	<u>Administration:</u> Victoria Kniewel Larry Shanok Lawrence LoCastro Russ Schumacher	<u>Guest/Public:</u> Jeanette Jones, WWPSSA
---	--	--

February 19, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 PM at Central Office. Topics covered included:

Transportation and Buses: Jeanette Jones, president, West Windsor-Plainsboro Service Association and district bus driver, spoke on two transportation themes: aging district bus fleet and limited availability of the current district bus garage and parking area. Fifteen busses will age out of service in 2017; she suggests buying a few busses each year so as to avoid a large expenditure in any year. The current garage location will be displaced by the West Windsor Township actions in connection with the Transit Village. Ms. Jones suggested building a facility on the grounds of the Millstone River School; she did note that Plainsboro Township has expressed displeasure with busses being located in town and that area traffic on Grovers Mill Road is problematic.

Review Agenda Items: The finance agenda was reviewed and the Committee supports the agenda. It was noted that the State of New Jersey has notified districts that Board approval of the preliminary budget will be acceptable only if done after the State provides budget information on state aid. The State will not provide that information until at least February 28, 2013. The new plan of action is to have a special board meeting to approve the preliminary budget on March 5th.

2013-2014 Budget Progress: The frugality exercised by the district in 2011-12 combined with that years increase in state-aid, raises the probability of achieving the district 2013-14 tax levy goal: a zero total tax levy increase for the budget. This does not mean that the split of the tax levy will not change or that individual township tax rates will not change with changed assessed valuations. The overall budget will include dollars for potential safety-related capital projects ; this will be done not by adding to the general fund budget but by allocating capital reserve to the task. Work continues on adding security-related funds to the general fund to cover potential recurring costs.

NJ Unemployment Compensation Benefit: The fourth quarter 2012 unemployment compensation charges from the State of New Jersey were at the lowest level in ten quarters. High expenditures in the first two quarters due to the State and Federal action on Extended Benefits suggests that additions to the district's unemployment compensation fund be made in the future.

BOE Retreat Reflection: There was general satisfaction with the retreat. Calendar issues will require further discussion.

Village Addition: It was noted that the enrollment and class size discussions establish the usefulness of providing additional space for classrooms and special education services. The preliminary architect's work has been completed and it is time to engage the architect on the process of finalizing a design and developing construction specifications. A contract to do this will be done soon. The likely project cost is in the \$10-12 million range.

Ordinarily spaces for classroom and special service requirements would be funded by debt service. Debt service would add to the annual tax levy so as to repay principal and interest for the project. In this case this annual expense can be avoided by utilizing capital reserve. Capital reserve can only be used for capital projects and use for this project minimizes taxes. While there will be no impact on the general fund budget the 2013-14 budget process will allocate \$5 million of capital reserve to the initial phase of this project.

SREC: The district currently has 166 SRECs from its solar panels. A few more will be certified in February. There has been a small recovery in SREC prices and it was agreed to follow the State rules in selling the SRECs in a March auction.

Capital Projects: The 2013-14 general fund capital budget will be \$1.7 million; the increase is associated with technology projects. Due to Storm Sandy and other project needs, there will also be projects funded by insurance/FEMA dollars, maintenance reserve, and capital reserve. In all, over \$3 million of projects will be done as part of the 2013-14 budget cycle.

Buildings & Grounds: A renewal of Aramark for 2013-14 is being finalized.

Food Service: With the new federal nutrition rules this year, the district made no changes to this year's student meal prices. However, the new rules do increase costs. The Committee agreed that with present student meal prices being below many of our sister districts in Mercer County, there would likely be a moderate increase for the 2013-14 school year.

Closed Session: The Committee moved to closed session to discuss negotiation issues and then returned to open session.

Calendar: With the loss of the Sun Bank Center to the Special Olympics, discussion of its impact on the 2013-14 calendar was discussed. Presently, the district has Saturday reserved for high school graduations. At this time Tuesday is also available. Changes that would accompany either the Saturday or Tuesday graduation dates were discussed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:42P.M.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, March 19, 2013, 6:30 PM @ Central Office

Topic for Next Meeting
Review Agenda Items
2013-2014 Budget

Future Topics:
Impact of Recent Legislation
Policies