



Farmingdale School District

DATE: May 27, 2020

KIND OF MEETING: Board Meeting/ Public Hearing

PLACE: A. Terry Weathers Board Room, Howitt Middle School East Cafeteria,
Howitt Middle School

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Goldberg, Mrs. D'Amico, Mr. Espinosa, Mr. Giordano, Mrs. Lively,
Mr. Morales, Mrs. Soete

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. Defendini, Dr. Ripley, Mr. Zakian, Dr. Brennan, Dr. Olsen, Mr.
Motisi, Richard Guercio, Esq., Reesa Miles, Esq., Mrs. Rogers

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 8:00 p.m. in by Mr. Goldberg, President of the Board of Education. In accordance with Governor Cuomo's Executive Order related to temporary modifications to Public Officers Law, the meeting was conducted in a virtual format to allow for the uninterrupted continuation of our important work. The Board meeting notice indicated that access to the meeting would be posted on the district's website at www.farmingdaleschools.org and a live feed would be available on www.youtube.com.

**Motion to
Suspend
Public
Participation**

Pursuant to Executive Order 202.1 (and subsequent orders closing District schools) issued by the Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York, signed March 12, 2020, and due to the concerns of the Board of Education for the Health and Safety of the community emanating from the current COVID-19 pandemic, there would be no in-person public access to the board meeting and instead the meeting will be live streamed and recorded. Access to the live stream could be had by accessing the school district's website for a link that will bring you to a youtube site and the recording of the meeting can be accessed on www.farmingdaleschools.org. In addition, the public participation portion of the meeting was suspended by board resolution.

On a motion made by Mrs. D'Amico, seconded by Mr. Espinosa, pursuant to the aforementioned Executive Orders, the Board suspended the public participation portion of the meeting and therefore, accordingly, there would be no public participation at this Board meeting.

**Pledge of
Allegiance**

Mr. Goldberg continued, stating that the Board of Education was interested in encouraging members of the public to share their ideas, comments and questions. Feedback and questions should be directed to the Board's email account at boe@farmingdaleschools.org. Questions and comments would be publicly addressed at the next regular Board meeting. In addition, a member of the central administrative

team would reach out to all individuals who have questions, comments or feedback regarding the budget development. Mr. Goldberg thanked everyone for their anticipated courtesy and cooperation. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public
Hearing /
Budget
Presentation**

Board President Michael Goldberg welcomed everyone to the 2020 Public Hearing for the Budget Vote and Election. The meeting began with a statement by Superintendent of Schools Paul Defendini, which focused on the many challenges that the community and school district have faced during the pandemic. He noted that challenges were continually addressed and responded to, and that included the challenge of developing the 2020-2021 budget during a time of great uncertainty. He reminded the Board of Education of the importance of meeting the needs of the students, maintaining the programs that define our schools and ensuring that Farmingdale remains Farmingdale. Mr. Defendini also noted the challenge in communicating this guiding principle to our community groups. It has been customary for district administrators to present to as many organizations as possible, including senior citizen clubs, youth organizations, PTA teams, and business groups. This year, Zoom and other electronic formats have helped in disseminating information; the website includes 'flipgrid' question and answer videos. The budget newsletter will arrive in homes this week; absentee ballots will be mailed over the next few days. Mr. Defendini stated that information provided in these new formats is essential in order to make informed decisions in the vote. He encouraged community members to reach out to him with any questions or concerns. Mr. Defendini introduced Assistant to the Superintendent for Business Michael Motisi.

Mr. Motisi provided a summary presentation on information related to the development of the 2020-2021 school budget. He stated that specific information was included on the Business Office and Board of Education pages on the district's website.

Mr. Motisi began with an overview of the revenue projections for next year. The challenge is specifically related to state aid and the anticipation of reductions based on COVID-19's impact on the state's revenue. The district is hopeful that the federal government will work with states and schools districts in providing aid to cover any shortfalls. Mr. Motisi explained the status of PILOT payments; newer PILOT agreements are resulting in some increases while older PILOTS are beginning to come off the rolls. He spoke about the appropriation of fund balance in helping to meet expenses. He addressed the reductions in capital expenditures that allowed the district to remain well below the tax cap calculation.

Mr. Motisi moved on to the cost element summary, which details the expenditures associated with the budget. During the budget development and redevelopment, the challenge remained to continue programs and providing for the health and safety of students, staff and the community. There are no reductions in core programs, electives, fine arts, athletics and extra-curricular activities. He indicated that there is a slight increase in salaries, based on contractual step increases. Employee benefits, including health insurance and retirement systems projections were favorable. Mr. Motisi stated that the challenge related to the uncertainty in an economic recovery would define future costs as both health insurance rates and retirement system contributions are directly related to the larger economic outlook. He addressed the transportation costs and efforts to reduce the number of buses and realign bus routes towards a savings profile with safety paramount.

Mr. Motisi shared information related to anticipated reductions under a contingent budget. He stated that school districts are challenged to look to specific regulations as they relate to the development of a contingent budget, including required expenses that cannot be adjusted, the allocation of reductions across the three areas of the budget (program, administration and capital) and the specific areas that could be impacted if the budget were to revert to last year's level due to a failed vote.

Mr. Motisi shared the language that is on the ballot for the budget vote. He emphasized that the two propositions related to capital reserve fund expenditures is the permission from the tax payers to use funding already in those accounts for specific projects. In this case, there is \$5,000,000 slated for bathroom renovations throughout the district. The second proposition is related to the expenses associated with the second energy performance contract. As previously described, the EPC II work will result in savings on utility costs; the expenses associated with the costs of improvements will be offset by the savings in electricity costs, as guaranteed by the energy performance contract.

Mr. Motisi stated that the vote will include the Farmingdale Youth Council budget. He reminded the Board of Education that their budget funds more than just the summer program. While voters are aware that the Youth Council's summer program will not run this year, there are many winter, spring and component groups connected to this important organization. There is no spending increase from the 2019-2020 to 2020-2021 budget document.

Mr. Motisi reviewed the Board of Education trustee election, wherein Mr. Morales and Mrs. Soete were both running for reelection in an uncontested race. This year, the district is handling the election of the Farmingdale Public Library Board of Trustee. There is one seat open on this Board, and Laurie Rozakis, the incumbent, is also running unopposed.

Mr. Motisi's presentation concluded with the statement that absentee ballots would be in homes over the weekend. All ballots must be received by the district by 5:00 p.m. on June 9. There will be locked box at the main entrance of Howitt East on Monday and Tuesday, June 8th and 9th, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for residents' convenience. The ballot counting would begin at 5:00 p.m. on June 9th. It will be live streamed on the district's website so as not to interrupt the counting process while also being mindful of the social distancing and safety of our election workers.

Board President Michael Goldberg thanked Mr. Defendini and Mr. Motisi for their hard work and their many efforts to reach out to the community to discuss the importance of this vote.

Adjournment

On a motion made by Mrs. D'Amico, seconded by Mr. Espinosa, the meeting was adjourned,

Motion carried 7-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Mary E. Rogers, District Clerk