

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION
Paducah, Kentucky
SPECIAL MEETING
PUBLIC HEARING
August 19, 2015

A regular meeting of the Board of Education of the Paducah Independent School District was held at Central Office, 800 Caldwell Street, Paducah, Kentucky, on Wednesday, August 19, 2015 at 5:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Felix Akojie, Danette Humphrey, Carl LeBuhn, Rose Lowery, Janice Howard

Others Present:

Donald Shively, Superintendent

Lisa Chappell, Secretary

Nicholas Holland, Attorney

Julie Huff, Treasurer

William Black, Instruction/Assistant Superintendent

Media

After the roll call, it was established that a quorum of Board members was present. Mr. Shively led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ORDER NO. 79

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was presented. The motion was made by Dr. Akojie and seconded by Mrs. Humphrey that the Board concur with the recommendation of the superintendent and approve the agenda as presented. The roll was called and all members present voted "yes".

PUBLIC HEARING TO HEAR COMMENTS REGARDING PROPOSED GENERAL FUND TAX LEVY

This hearing was advertised in the Paducah Sun newspaper as required by law.

Dr. LeBuhn opened the floor to hear public comments regarding a proposed general fund tax levy of 80 cents on real property and 80 cents on personal property. He read the recommendation from the Superintendent.

The General fund tax levied in fiscal year 2015 was 77.1 cents on real property and 77.1 cents on personal property and produced revenue of \$7,781,216.66. The proposed General Fund tax rate of 80 cents on real property and 80 cents on personal property is expected to produce \$8,024,580.48. Of this amount, \$1,954,474.32 is from new and personal property. The compensating tax rate for 2016 is 77 cents on real property and 77.1 cents on personal property and is expected to produce \$7,726,101.30.

The general areas to which revenue of \$243,365 in excess of 2015 revenue is to be allocated are as follows: Cost of collections, \$20,000; building fund, \$15,000; instruction, \$168,365; transportation, \$20,000, and maintenance of plant, \$20,000.

HEARINGS OF INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS

There were no comments from the public against the tax rate.

Three city residents spoke in favor of the proposed tax rate: Andy Wood, Bill Black, Margaret Pope.

Some of their comments:

Andy Wood, city resident, since 1959. Although he has no children he gives the board his full support. In his position as a college professor he has seen students leave high school requiring remedial work. Schools were failing these students. Now, he sees the city schools doing a great job and keep it up. "What do I get out of raising taxes and improved schools? We all receive a well educated work force. These well educated students need jobs, will earn income, stay here and also pay taxes. They have social mobility, they now have hope. I give you my full support and thank you for what you are doing."

Bill Black, lifelong city resident with 3 children who attended city schools and currently has 5 grandchildren attending as did he and his wife. "The board appeals to the long tradition of a community who has traditionally supported the schools. Many times the board found itself in the unfavorable position of raising tax rates. Excellence is the standard here. Reputation is that you expect excellence but you need a certain level of funding to do that. Paducah has traditionally backed the board at these times. They appreciate the school system and I am sure they will be as you face these challenges. So will I and my family. We applaud your courage."

Margie Pope, city resident since 1973 with husband Bruce Pope in attendance. Both of their children are PTHS graduates. Margie stated she attended the meeting to hear the others' comments and has given encouragement for many years. "I do ask that Paducah Leadership take this opportunity to get the discussion at the state level going between ADA funding vs. average daily membership / enrollment. That could make a significant difference to how funding is set in Kentucky. I do appreciate what you are continuing to do to improve our schools."

Some of the Board Member comments:

Danette Humphrey – Thank you all for coming to the meeting. I am thrilled with work that we have done in the the 14 years I have been on the board, proud of improved facilities and the enhanced educational leadership. There are things happening in Paducah and in the state that we cannot control. The unfunded mandates and the issue with Paducah Power make me feel very uncomfortable asking the people to give more.

Janice Howard – I too am proud of my 12 years on the board and I appreciate the comments made here. I feel that we are in a comfortable place with our carryover due to the effective leadership of Mr. Shively. I do not feel comfortable burdening our taxpayers along with the high utility costs and do not feel that we should always take the easy solution of raising taxes. The extra revenue would be nice but we are in a stable financial condition at this time.

(Margie Pope added that she appreciated Mrs. Howard's and Mrs. Humphrey's comments but feels certain that the state's unfunded mandates were not going to stop any time soon. The district needs to be prepared for more. She feels it is important to pay teachers even more to get the quality teachers.)

Carl LeBuhn - I believe Mr. Shively has clearly demonstrated at our working session last year, our working session this year, and at board meetings throughout the year, that the state is shifting more of the responsibility for funding public education to the local level. The largest single increase we have in our budget this year is the funding of a mandated raise for our staff. Although this raise is being mandated, I strongly feel that our committed, hardworking and dedicated staff are deserving of this raise. As we examine a funding solution to accommodate this, we need to make sure we are thinking not only of the present, but also about the future. Thus budget item will need funding, not only this year, but in years to come. We need to make sure that our solution does not erode into our current level of financial strength. We need to make sure that the decisions we make don't head us into a situation where we are forced to diminish the services we are offering the students. I feel the community understands that the Board of education, Dr. Greene, our previous superintendent, Mr. Shively, and our school administrators have worked very hard to cut costs, to find efficiencies, and to improve the district's financial position. I also believe that they understand that we are near or at the limit of what we can ask them to do in this regard. I feel that Paducah Public Schools remain an excellent investment. As Mr. Black has presented at various board meetings throughout the year, we are seeing individual and aggregate improvements in performance throughout our district. If you are a student attending Paducah Public Schools and you apply yourself, you will not only graduate college and career ready, but you will graduate prepared to excel. We cannot expect our superintendent, administrators, teachers and other staff to continue to grow this success without our ongoing financial support. Our community has an incredibly long tradition of supporting excellence in public education, and I believe they understand the rationale for our superintendent's tax recommendation. With all of this in mind, I intend to vote yes in support of our superintendent's recommendation.

Felix Akojie – I am a man of few words. I appreciate our school system. I had four children benefit and they are all out in the world in good standing. I do not believe in using our savings but feel it is best to raise the tax levy now. If you compare our carryover percentage to other districts in the region we are one of the lowest. I support the superintendent's recommendation.

Rose Lowery – Although I am new to the board, I have had children in this system as well as many foster children go through this school system. I believe in this district. I prayed to become a school board member so that I can be a part of it and see the things to help improve. Our teachers are grateful for that 1% and 2% raise. We must show our children that we do the tough things when needed. The funds are needed to create the programs for our future students. As a single parent I've paid those taxes and I saw the value in it. I support this recommendation. It is something we do not like to do, but I also do not like to borrow from our savings or carryover funds. We must prepare for long range needs.

You either pay it now or pay it later. We should be able to plan, not struggle, if a roof or building needs to be replaced or repaired. You have my support.

ORDER NO. 80

ACTION TO ADJOURN

The motion was made by Mrs. Humphrey and seconded by Dr. Akojie that the hearing be adjourned. The roll was called and all members present voted "Yes." The meeting adjourned at 5:54 p.m.

Chairman

Secretary

The requirements of KRS 61.810, 61.815, 61.820 and 61.823 were complied with relative to the foregoing meeting.