

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
TONAWANDA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
100 HINDS STREET, TONAWANDA, NY 14150**

**BOARD TRANSCRIPTION
REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
APRIL 21, 2020**

- Sternin:** Before we begin, pursuant to the Governor's proclamation based on mass gatherings, no visitors would have been allowed to attend this meeting. Therefore, the Board of Education has agreed to conduct this meeting virtually via Zoom. Any members of the public who wish to see the agenda can find it on our website on the district calendar. The regular meeting of the Board is called to order at 6:30 PM. Roll Call Madam Clerk
- Maxwell:** President Ms. Sternin. Heather, can you hear me?
- Sternin:** Here
- Maxwell:** Vice President Mrs. Opalinski
- Opalinski:** Here
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Misner
- Sternin:** Absent, excused
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mr. Calabrese. Trustee Mr. Calabrese
- Calabrese:** I'm here
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Koch
- Koch:** Here
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Schmutzler
- Schmutzler:** Here
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Gilbert
- Gilbert:** Yes, here
- Calabrese:** I lost video
- Sternin:** Please turn off all cell phones during board meetings. There were no changes or additions to the agenda. Dan, did you get your video back?
- Calabrese:** No, all I've got is a screen that says your meeting should start in a few seconds.

Gilbert: We see you, Dan.

Calabrese: Well, I don't see any of you.

Koch: You look very nice, Dan

Sternin: Do you need to go back and log on?

Calabrese: I can't get to anything on this thing right now, it's just like I said it just says meeting should start in a few seconds. Just go ahead I just won't see anybody that's all.

Sternin: Ok, may I have a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting of March 10, 2020?

Calabrese: So moved

Schmutzler: Second

Sternin: I have a motion from, I didn't hear who made the motion.

Gilbert: Dan did

Maxwell: Mr. Calabrese and Mrs. Schmutzler

Sternin: Ok, I have a motion from Mr. Calabrese and a second from Mrs. Schmutzler. Any revisions or corrections? For the purposes of this meeting, all votes will be done via roll call vote. Roll Call vote Madam Clerk

Maxwell: Trustee Mr. Calabrese

Calabrese: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Gilbert

Gilbert: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Koch

Koch: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Opalinski

Opalinski: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Schmutzler

Schmutzler: Aye

Maxwell: President Ms. Sternin. Heather, can you hear me?

Calabrese: I don't know about anybody else but

Sternin: Aye, motion carries. May I have a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting. Yes, I said aye. Did you hear me?

Maxwell: You have a really strong delay right now for some reason.

Sternin: Can everyone hear me?

Calabrese: Barely, you're vey jumbled.

Sternin: Can everyone hear me?

Koch: Barely

Gilbert: It's hard to hear you.

Maxwell: Heather, I might suggest you log out and try to get back into the meeting.

Sternin: I don't know why.

Opalinski: Brian suggests that if when Heather comes back she's still hard to hear, that it might be better if she shuts her video off, that we'll hear her better.

Gilbert: Oh, that's a good idea.

Opalinski: Just an idea.

Gilbert: Because it won't draw so much internet maybe?

Opalinski: I think so.

Sternin: Can everyone hear me now?

Gilbert: Yes

Calabrese: Yep

Sternin: Ok, may I have a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting of March 19, 2020?

Opalinski: So moved

Calabrese: Support

Sternin: I have a motion from Mrs. Opalinski and a second from Mr. Calabrese. Any revisions or corrections? Roll Call vote Madam Clerk

Maxwell: Trustee Mr. Calabrese

Calabrese: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Gilbert

Gilbert: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Koch

Koch: Abstain

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Opalinski

Opalinski: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Schmutzler

Schmutzler: Aye

Maxwell: President Ms. Sternin

Sternin: Aye, motion carries. Is there any new business or changes or deletions to the old business list? Is there any new business or changes or deletions to the old business list?

Calabrese: No

Sternin: Ok, Dr. Oldenburg and his staff will provide us with updates at this time.

Oldenburg: Thank you, President Sternin. We have two brief presentations here this evening. The first one will be Donna Hill with an update. I'm just going to take a moment to screen share here if you'll just allow me a moment and then I should have, I'm hoping you're seeing a power point presentation with the title page of the Tonwanda 2020-2021 proposed budget. Is that correct?

Gilbert: Yes

Calabrese: Hey, I can see it now.

Oldenburg: So Donna I'll let you walk them through this and here's the first slide

Hill: Ok, thank you dr. Oldenburg and good evening. As it relates to our actual budget since the last time that we met, truly monetarily not much has changed.

At that time, we had prepared a proposed balanced budget with a small gap that we were working on at that time and based on the first governor's run. We had hoped for an additional run with additional aid that didn't occur. In fact, when the last governor's run did come, it added a line for federal CARES act but was also offset by a line referred to as the pandemic assessment. In the end, for Tonawanda, that resulted in a reduction of aid of approximately \$20,000. So I guess what has changed since our last meeting significantly is the potential threats if you will for quarterly reductions in aid moving forward. Those potential reductions are yet to be determined by the governor with the first review period ending on April 30. So recently all of our attention has been focused on analyzing our entire budget including our programming, and should we have to absorb any of these future reductions in state aid in the future, what is our plan to meet that challenge. So the second slide that you're looking at right now of course you've seen before which was just the annual tax cap calculation that we perform each year and report to New York State and the comptroller's office. The slide you're looking at right now is actually what our proposed tax levy is with an increase of \$434,020, resulting in a percentage increase of 3.64%, which is below our tax cap limit, and all of these other items listed beneath that are still in play on the table. On the next slide, really just illustrates our revenue versus our expenditures and how we came to a zero dollar budget gap and you'll note the revenue increases, which is the reduction of our state aid year to year and then some of our appropriation or expenditure reductions that we made to the right to get us to that zero balance. The next slide just shows our year to year anticipated budget with an increase of 4.05% year to year, and again our tax levy which we're proposing at 3.64% for potential vote. Contingency slide is the same that you see, you know we don't even know when our vote will be. That's not been set at this point or if we will have a vote but still as we follow protocol with a contingency budget, these are additional areas that we will be mandated to remove from our budget. The next slide is really the same information that you've seen but put in format of the preliminary report card that again is used in our publications once a budget has been adopted and preparing for a budget vote. That's it. I'd like to thank you for letting me share this with you. What we do know is that we expect and anticipate some additional changes more information to share after April 30th when the governor is expected to announce any further changes, if any, to the school state aid across the state. It's bleak, but I can assure you that we continue to stay on top of the changes daily as they come and try to analyze their impact to Tonawanda and its students.

Oldenburg:

Thank you, Donna. Any questions or comments from members of the board? So I'll just add in, thanks Donna for this. Our entire central office team and administrative team has been working on this budget as Donna mentioned at the beginning much of what you're seeing isn't too different from some of the previous budget presentations and that's because the state aid runs, the first run we received earlier on in the year usually is sometimes considered the worst case scenario and then as the lobbying takes place through the budget process the state, additional runs come out and usually there is more additional support for schools. This year, during the lobbying effort, the pandemic began and the

ramifications of that for our state and even our county are extremely significant. It's almost unprecedented but not impossible that what's happened this year for the budget that the governor now has for what I'd considered claw back periods of state aid. So those numbers that Donna used to put together the budget, we're not sure if they're going to be there come April 30th or June 30th or December 31st or June 30th of 2021. So while we're, while we've addressed our budget gap that brought us to this point and while we're counting on those aid numbers that were provided in the most recent aid run for the budget, everything's been turned upside down in a sense of will that aid be sustainable to be delivered through the 2020-2021 school year? So our district is preparing for what could be the first claw back on April 30th and within 10 days after that the legislature can adopt those reductions or make amendments to it. That should be our first indicator of the significance of these cuts. We are planning within the district to do whatever we can to be able to absorb and deal with the management year cuts because it's untenable to be changing staff and programs once the school year gets started and students and teachers are attached to one another and programs have been committed to. It will be really, really difficult to do that mid-year so we're preparing, we're listening to the guidance the governor and other politicians, and are extremely hopeful that the federal stimulus will continue even a package specifically for public schools. We're hopeful and optimistic that that will be coming but we're running out of time here to put our budget together and I would expect in May that we will be sending a budget to the board for consideration for approval with a pending vote sometime after June 1st. Again we don't have that information from the state at this point or how it will relate to school board elections and other referendum items that districts may have on the ballot but at this point it's going to be some time after June 1st and we're preparing to move forward with a budget for you in May for potential adoption. Any additional comments or questions? Ok, I'm going move forward with the smart schools presentation. Mary Beth, will you walk us through this presentation please?

Scullion: Yes, I will. What we did is we're doing our presentation now so we can have it on the website for the 30 day public comment session. This is just a recap of what our smart schools bond act was. You can, you can move.

Oldenburg: Yeah, I'm trying

Scullion: Oh, the total amount that we were awarded for the smart schools is \$1,561,513. These were the steps that it took for the investment plan process. These were the smart schools categories. We're still focusing on the same one, acquiring learning technology, so we're focusing on the second one. This is our committee meeting and we had another meeting on March 20th. We had a meeting in February also. March 20th meeting took place to decide that we were going to start a Phase II in regards to what is taking place with COVID-19 so we will have 4 phases, so we're going to present Phase II right now. What we want to do in Phase II is to be able to purchase approximately 510 more Chromebooks that will replace some of our obsolete Chromebooks that we currently have in the district. The next steps for the board of education

approves the preliminary plan and then we post it on the website for 30 day comment and then we submit it to the board of regents or the state. Currently right now we have Phase I that is under review. So what will happen for Phase III and Phase IV we'll have approximately \$704,000, \$704,513 left after Phase I and Phase II. And then we will talk about what to do for TONA2020 and be able to purchase more Chromebooks in Phase IV. Thank you. Anybody have any questions?

Oldenburg:

Ok, thanks Mary Beth. I'm going to move away from screen share here and Heather I'll turn it back over to you in just a moment. I'll just continue on with announcements and communication briefly. I'm not going to do a central office round up here for this meeting but I just want to take the time to recognize our students and parents who have been doing an incredible job in supporting our educational plan, our instructional plan and working with teachers and principal during this unprecedented times. None of us chose to go down this path. I'm extremely grateful and we want to be supportive to our students and our families who are dealing with the challenges in this pandemic. All of us as employees, as members of the community, the parents, the students are doing what we can following guidance for the betterment of society during this time. The social distancing, the other avenues that we've had to take which has modified our routine instruction has been challenging for us but we're all doing this in an effort to beat this virus and to be able to survive and come out as a stronger community, a stronger society after it, so I'm grateful for that. I'd be remiss if I didn't recognize teachers, instructional staff, our administrators, support staff and maintenance staff and cleaners. Everyone has been working really, really hard and creating innovative ways often times outside of our comfort zones to do what we can do for our students and their families and to continue education to the best extent possible. It isn't perfect but the best extent possible during this incredible time. We are serving over 800 meals on average per day in our schools every day. We are continuing to plan and prepare for many unknowns. It's a very, very difficult time for a school system for public education who often is very routine in their budgeting, their planning their execution and we're in a scenario in this situation that carries so many unknowns but yet we're continuing to move forward with our Tonawanda 2020 project. We're continuing to move forward with building maintenance and upkeep. We're moving forward with our instructional plan and as we begin to plan for the end of the school year with an unknown of how that exactly will look in the sense of coming back to school before June 30th or having the rest of the school year be dismissed by the governor. We have as you have heard significant budget concerns, not just the way the budget looks today but what these claw back periods could mean perhaps to our staff to the way we deliver education and we know that we are advocating with our politicians, we are advocating with our association groups and educational public education experts and we are continuing to have a lot of hope. So even though these times are challenging and tough, we are doing our best every single day to deliver technology, supports, food, instruction and other needs to our families in our community and we're optimistic and hopeful that we will move through this time period in the most positive way that we can. Thankyou.

Sternin: We will now move to CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS. May I have a motion to approve instructional personnel items 8.1 through 8.3?

Koch: So moved

Gilbert: Second

Sternin: Moved by Mrs. Koch and a second from Mrs. Gilbert. Any questions or comments? Roll call vote Madam Clerk.

Maxwell: Trustee Mr. Calabrese

Calabrese: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Gilbert

Gilbert: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Koch

Koch: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Opalinski

Opalinski: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Schmutzler

Schmutzler: Aye

Maxwell: President Ms. Sternin

Sternin: Aye, motion passes

Sternin: May I have a motion to approve non-instructional personnel items 9.1 through 9.3?

Koch: So moved

Calabrese: Support

Sternin: I have a motion from Mrs. Koch and a second from Mr. Calabrese. Any questions or comments? Roll call vote Madam Clerk.

Maxwell: Trustee Mr. Calabrese

Calabrese: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Gilbert

Gilbert: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Koch

Koch: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Opalinski

Opalinski: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Schmutzler

Schmutzler: Aye

Maxwell: President Ms. Sternin

Sternin: Aye, motion carries

Sternin: May I have a motion to support CSE information item 10.1?

Calabrese: So moved

Gilbert: Second

Sternin: I have a motion from Mr. Calabrese and a second from Mrs. Gilbert. Any questions or comments? Roll Call vote Madam Clerk

Maxwell: Trustee Mr. Calabrese

Calabrese: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Gilbert

Gilbert: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Koch

Koch: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Opalinski

Opalinski: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Schmutzler

Schmutzler: Aye

Maxwell: President Ms. Sternin

Sternin: Aye, motion carries

Sternin: May I have a motion to approve the BOCES vote, Items 12.1 through 12.3?

Koch: So moved

Opalinski: Second

Sternin: I have a motion from Mrs. Koch and a second from Mrs. Opalinski. Any questions or comments? Roll Call vote Madam Clerk

Maxwell: Trustee Mr. Calabrese

Calabrese: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Gilbert

Gilbert: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Koch

Koch: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Opalinski

Opalinski: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Schmutzler

Schmutzler: Aye

Maxwell: President Ms. Sternin

Sternin: Aye, motion carries

Sternin: Board members received a March attendance report. May I have a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:57 PM?

Koch: So moved

Gilbert: Second

Sternin: I have a motion from Mrs. Koch and a second from Mrs. Gilbert. Roll call vote Madam Clerk

Maxwell: Trustee Mr. Calabrese

Calabrese: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Gilbert

Gilbert: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Koch

Koch: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Opalinski

Opalinski: Aye

Maxwell: Trustee Mrs. Schmutzler

Schmutzler: Aye

Maxwell: President Ms. Sternin

Sternin: Aye, motion carries. Thank you very much, everyone.