

Slate Valley Unified Union School District  
School Budget Informational Meeting  
Virtual Meeting  
Monday, June 8, 2020

Attending: Andrea Hooker, Nancy Mack, \_\_\_79, \_\_\_82, Amy Roy, Andrea Tester, Angela Charron, Ann Thayer, Barb Buxton, Casey O'Meara, Cheryl Scarzello, Chris Cole, Kris Benway, Deb Infurna, Glen Cousineau, Glen Traverse, Jason Rasco, Jessica Thurston, Julie Finnegan, Kim Prehoda, Loretta Lee, KC, Mary Ann Munger, Mike Bache, Nedra Boutwell, Pam Arel, Patti Beaumont, Patrick Walters, Paul Millette, Peter Stone, Phil Hall, Rebeckah St. Peter, Rick Wilson, Sweet Stuff, Tanya Tolchin, Tara Buxton, Theresa Molar, Tim Smith, Toni Lobdell, Unknown, John Wurzbacher, Kim Alexander, Kim Lucci

Meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by Tim Smith.

Tim Smith, Board Chair opened the meeting by reflecting on the original budget vote back in March 2020 and the fact that it failed because it was linked with the bond vote of nearly \$60,000,000.00. The re-vote we are holding tomorrow is only for the operation of our schools for the upcoming year. Tim noted that there have been enough improvements in the Covid situation that we are able to open our voting polls.

Tim summarized the slide presentation. Tim talked about the Enrollment and the fact that we also have a large population of students taking advantage of school choice options outside of our district. There also has been a significant increase in homeschooling trends.

Tim talked about the objectives of the district. Of primary importance are the Social Emotional Needs of our children, Staff and Families especially in light of the Covid Pandemic.

Additional budget considerations include:

- Decrease in mental health services @ state level
- Increased costs of Health Insurance
- Statewide Health Insurance costs are up
- Deferred Maintenance costs
- 15% increase in transportation costs
- Food Service costs have gone up since we instituted universal access to all students for free breakfast and lunch for all students.
- Food Insecurities is a critical issue for many of our families since the pandemic.

Tim Smith asked Kris Benway and Casey O'Meara to speak about the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) needs of our kids. Kris spoke about lots of families in need, anxiety over the seclusion caused by Covid Pandemic. Fear around the virus in general, the safeguards to be put in place in order to come back to school. Our School Psychologists and School Based Clinicians rising to the challenge of caring for all. We have extended the snack program for the summer months as there is a need to feed our kids. We have great responses from the community for our Food Drive. We have contracted with Gillian Boudreau, a consultant to work with the Administrative team on working with our staff on Therapeutic Reflective Listening Practices. Casey O'Meara, Director of Curriculum spoke about the benefits and challenges we have come to learn about with the challenges of remote learning. Casey talked about how we would better hone our craft of remote learning should we have to utilize this again in the future. Tim also asked Casey to speak about what we mean by Equity for all students. Casey talked about

how we are going about equity for all students in Slate Valley during the remote learning period. We did all that we could to ensure that all kids have access to the internet and we also looked at providing enrichment opportunities to those kids ready to extend their learning. Kris Benway recognized the excellent work of our Technology Team and how instrumental they have been during this remote learning period. Kris mentioned that some of our neediest student populations are suffering without the personal contacts. She also wanted to recognize the important work of many of our Instructional Assistants. They have been a huge support to many student families. Proactive check ins with children and to access supportive adults was another role instructional assistants took on.

Tim Smith wanted to let all Administrators and Teaching Staff know what an excellent job they are doing to meet the challenges from Covid.

Tim wanted to remind voters that they are only voting on operational School Budgets and the schools in their current school configurations. Going forward we will have to determine how we can better utilize our current school buildings. We will be hearing from our Administration about developing a safe and responsible school plan for fall.

Tim shared that over the past three years we have realized some staff efficiencies by reduction of 13 staff members. This also relates to the decrease in pupils over time. Slate Valley is below the state average in per pupil equalized pupils costs. Tim shared that the two largest cost factors in our school budget are salaries and wages which consume 55% of the budget and benefits which equals 20% of the total budget. We really have very little impact in either of these areas as they are in large part driven by the master teacher agreements. We can't further reduce in force now as there are dates that speak to this in the master teacher agreement.

Due to our merger we are still in line to receive a 4 cent merger incentive on the tax rate this year. Tim mentioned that the slight increases taxpayers will see are due to associated costs with Covid and loss of revenues. The loss of revenues statewide has an impact on the Education Fund. Question Period was opened up: No questions from the audience.

Informational Meeting ended at 7:00 p.m.