

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

**BOARD TRANSCRIPT
REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
MAY 12, 2020**

- Sternin:** Before we begin, I'll once again announce that 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 6:31 PM. Roll Call Madam Clerk
- Maxwell:** President Ms. Sternin.
- Sternin:** Here
- Maxwell:** Vice President Mrs. Opalinski
- Opalinski:** Here
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Misner
- Sternin:** Excused
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mr. Calabrese
- Calabrese:** Excused, although he may be late.
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Koch
- Koch:** Here
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Schmutzler
- Schmutzler:** Here
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Gilbert
- Gilbert:** Here
- Sternin:** Please turn off all cell phones during board meetings. Board members received a revised agenda in their packets containing election inspectors and a new date for the budget vote meeting. May I have a motion to approve the minutes and transcription from the meeting of April 21, 2020?
- Koch:** So moved

- Gilbert:** Seconded
- Sternin:** I have a motion from Mrs. Koch and a second from Mrs. Gilbert. 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 Mrs. Gilbert
- Gilbert:** Yes
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Koch
- Koch:** Yes
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Opalinski
- Opalinski:** Aye
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Schmutzler. Trustee Mrs. Schmutzler? Looks like she might be frozen.
- Sternin:** Kristin?
- Schmutzler:** Yes
- Maxwell:** President Ms. Sternin.
- Sternin:** Aye, motion carries. As part of new business, I'd like to discuss Item 12.6 to change the date of our budget vote meeting. Because we cannot predict how long it will take our inspectors to tally the absentee ballots, we are planning to hold the meeting to accept the canvass of the polls the next day on June 10th. We need to decide what time would work for the Board. Does anybody have suggestions on the timing for that meeting?
- Koch:** I'm open to any time.
- Opalinski:** So am I
- Gilbert:** I'm open to any time also
- Sternin:** My concern that I was concerned about was that if Mr. Calabrese and Mrs. Misner were working in the day they wouldn't be able to attend the meeting. So I was suggesting that we do it at like 6:00 or something along those lines. Does anybody have an issue with that?
- Koch:** No

Sternin: Is it a problem for anybody, Mrs. Maxwell? No, then can we say 6:00 on June 10th, 6 PM?

Maxwell: Yeah, in motion 12.6 you'll just have to add that time in when we get to that part.

Sternin: Ok. I'd also like to announce that petitions for two open board seats were due yesterday, May 11th. There were four candidates who returned petitions who will be placed on the ballot for the June 9th election. They are Dennis R. Atkinson, J. Mario Pena, I hope I pronounced it right, Pena, Kristin Schmutzler and Jeff Thorp. Is there any additional new business or changes or deletions to the old business list? No everybody's good with that? Dr. Oldenburg and his staff will provide us with updates at this time.

Oldenburg: Thank you, President Sternin.. At this time I will turn the meeting over to Donna Hill who will present to the Board our presentation of our balanced budget within the tax cap for the board to consider adopting and us to move forward with the process of the vote coming up later in June. So with that said, I'm going to transition to share my screen here in a moment and then from here I'm hoping if I click this right you should be seeing the cover slide. Is that right?

Sternin: Yes

Oldenburg: Ok, Donna I'm gonna let you take it away from the next slide

Hill: Looks great, thank you very much. Good evening. So we're going to be looking at our potential budget for adoption this evening and for all of these figures that you'll see in this presentation you've either heard or you've seen before in previous presentations. I'll say as a whole, our team has worked very hard to maintain programming our instructional value at the district for our students, while being sensitive to the taxpayers. You know we have a very strong possibility that we will have further reductions assessed to the school district via New York State and our Governor, so with that, we took a balanced approach trying to maintain all of our programming needs but should something more come forward it is anticipated with those reductions we would have to then start looking potentially at staffing and/or programing. So look at the revenues and the expenses, this you have seen before. I will point out on the revenue side it was hopeful that we would be receiving more state aid and actually with the latest Governor's run we were actually further to almost \$21,000. Everything else remains the same that we've seen in the past so I'll just point out some highlights in case you have some questions I can take those but I'll just I'll keep going we have someone waiting to come in. On the expense side you'll see that have some increases but in areas of instruction and the areas of facilities we've had some you know we've made some cuts.

Instruction-wise it's basically a technology person from BOCES in that area and some charter school tuition line items and in the facilities it's more of a right-sizing of our utility budgeting forecast based on past years. Ok, so we are again we're at a zero gap. This is basically the same information just broken down as a snapshot so you can see the percentages and how it plays out for both our revenue and our expenditures. The tax levy we established in a previous meeting, the new information on this slide would result in the information for our basic STAR. Again the reason for the increase is basically because of our capital exclusions that were higher this year than they had been last year. So the impact on the house \$108,000 average house would be \$61.95. It does not exceed the allowable tax cap levy and the STAR and the Enhanced STAR amounts are listed in the bottom right. Overall, our anticipated budget is the \$36,667,466 which is a \$486,136 increase and our anticipated levy is increased the 3.64%, which we already discussed. Our budget hearing is our three-part budget where we break down all of our expenses in administrative, program and in capital. There's a definition for each one attached and the total amount in percentage to the right. This is our anticipated budget notice that would be going out to State Ed and New York State with the approval of the budget this evening. Our 19-20 school year is listed in the first column of what we adopted and we're under at the moment. The proposed budget for 2020-21 is in the middle column and contingency budget to the right. Again in our contingency budget should the vote not be successful, these are items that would be considered for removal to meet the contingency budget from the previous slide. And also our new vote day on June 9th and our virtual public hearing budget date is set at May 26th at 6 PM. And then the qualification of voters and then this information is also going out on a postcard to all taxpayers in the City of Tonawanda.

Sternin: Not just taxpayers, right, because people who rent would get one.

Hill: All houses, every property.

Sternin: Ok.

Hill: Sorry, thank you. The one thing with this trying time for all of us we are going to be using our website as a live document, indulging all of our updates regarding the budget, absentee ballots, our school board election, other relevant information and we are asking if the public frequently check for updates on our website as they have been doing most recently in the last couple months but all of the information will be on the website. Does anyone have any questions?

Oldenburg: Any questions from any of the Board members for Donna Hill? So if you don't mind, I'm just going to head back to the front of this. I know Mr. Calabrese joined us just a moment late. Obviously on this first revenue expense slide, Donna explained what we anticipate as revenues, Obviously there's a huge asterisk here. The Board understands and remembers that I, for the last few

months, have been communicating and trying to share as much information as possible in regards to the dependency this district has on state aid and the challenge and threat that this pandemic may face on state revenues and potential reductions of anticipated state aid all through next school year. Additionally, we've been in communication with the Erie County Comptroller where our expectation of county sales tax is subject to change due to the pandemic in the county and the lack of sales tax collection that's been happening over the last few months and the months going forward. So this budget again is our total amount of anticipated expenditures within the tax cap. Furthermore, you'll see in the snapshot a difference or at least the outline of our different revenue sources and how they graphically make up our budget as a whole. This slide I want to call special attention to the rate of change. It's 3.64%. I want to articulate that this is within the New York State tax cap. This calculation after you've seen that calculation and that chart before there's a lot of different exclusions and add-ons and subtractions that go into that so I'll remind everyone that last year at this time we had a negative 1.97% tax levy. We collected less than we had the previous year. Unfortunately this year, as it relates to our taxpayers we weren't able to maintain that reduction or that negative trend and this year our tax cap calculation allows and it's important for us to be able to increase our tax levy to maintain our programs, services and staff to deliver effective instruction supports to students at \$434,020. There's a lot of important information on this slide as it relates to some estimated STAR refunds and also the effect on the average home but most important it should be noted that this does not exceed the tax cap. Obviously the three-part budget, the program are staff our program it takes up the biggest chunk of the pie here as expected. This is our business and this articulates a bit more and you'll learn more about this at the budget hearing, line by line in these areas in the sense of our expenditures and planning in these areas. So I just want to spend a little bit of time reviewing some of the key points and also mentioning that should this vote be unsuccessful, we would require us potentially to reduce the budget which would realize some other changes that we are not expecting and that would not be in the best interest of our district at this time. There's a lot of unknown as it relates to state aid and other revenues that come to the district but we're preparing by mapping out an expenditure plan to be approved or considered to be approved by the school board and then our community. Should there be a reduction in state aid along the way or during the year, we always have the ability to spend less. Our expenditures are completely driven by our revenues which in this district is over 60% based on state aid and then additional funds from other areas, including Erie County sales tax. We're optimistic that some federal support is coming as early as today I'm told. There's a plan for a significant round 5 stimulus that will be voted on in the House on Friday and will go to the Senate for further negotiation. I'm told in this plan there's \$500 billion for local governments, including school districts, which gives us hope that there's an opportunity for us to be funded at the anticipated level from earlier on this year from the Governor's office as close as today. The vote date, I've got to give a lot of credit to Dana Maxwell and Donna Hill who have done

a ton of work on essentially overnight pulling together a system that we've never used or been responsible for. We are now responsible to print all absentee ballots, envelopes, prepaid return envelopes and a whole bunch of other parameters outlined by the Governor's executive order. This is something that was not budgeted for, we could have never known and it's a significant expense to the district. We hope that there will be an opportunity in the upcoming stimulus and other relief efforts to realize some financial remuneration for some of these expenses but as it relates to the coordination of efforts, I did want to recognize Dana and Donna for doing excellent work to meet these deadlines thrust upon us in very short order. Any other questions regarding this budget presentation? Ok, I'm going to briefly stop sharing and go back to our grid view here and I just want to take the time to introduce Ron Wasik. Ron has taken over for Jeff Hatten and joined us on May 1st. Ron is the Director of our Buildings and Operations and I wanted to give an opportunity for him to meet all of the board members. I know this is a strange way to do it via Zoom, but nonetheless should you be on campus or one of our buildings or engaged in any of our other work, I wanted you to be able to have an opportunity to meet him. So Ron I think you've met most of the board members maybe before the meeting. Mr. Calabrese, if you just want to wave or something so Ron can connect with you and Mrs. Schmutzler I don't know if you had a chance either, but I just wanted to give an opportunity for you to have a chance to meet each other through this. Just wanted a couple things here I wanted to add before I turn it over to you, President Sternin and move forward with the meeting. We are working on, along with other superintendents in Erie County, on determining the end of the instructional calendar year and also the end of our school year for our instructional staff. We expect more notice to come out late this week or early next week on some of those things. We're being very careful to make sure we understand all the nuances of the Governor's order as it relates to being applicable for the 180-day state aid waiver. So there's a lot of things that we have to do in order to be eligible to include in this waiver that essentially allows buildings to be closed and still receive state aid for all of these instructional days so we're working hard on that. Our principals and other staff inside the district have begun working on plans for teachers to come in and clean out their classrooms and students or parents to come into buildings to retrieve items in a manner that's safe and applies to all of the social distancing and other concerns we have for people's safety during this time. But we are in the process of working on those types of plans as we approach the end of the school year. I know our principals are working on other student recognition, what would I say, celebrations and other ways to recognize maybe some of the traditions that our parents and our students are accustomed to but that we may not be able to deliver in the same expected manner. So we're engaged in those types of things, along with delivering instruction every day, food service every day and opportunities for child care. We are aware and working very closely with the guidance that is beginning to come out in regards to planning for when school will open. As you know, school is in Phase IV of the reopening plan and should things go well, education as a whole is in Phase IV and there's some

expectation that that might come around as early as mid-July. As we work through the effective phases of the reopening plan. As it relates to the school's reopening plan, whenever that may be, even in September if we were to think about a normal school calendar, we're working with a lot of our agents and resources in gathering information on what that would be like and what that may be. There's been a lot of ideas that have been thrown around, many by politicians, but as educational experts and safety experts and other officials that we work with to help understand and follow guidance, we're beginning those conversations on how we can best prepare ourselves to have a reentry plan should and when school comes back in session with students and staff. So we're on top of those things as we navigate so much more. Any questions about those topics? Ok, so I'm gonna switch back. I have, I don't know if I'd call it a surprise but a little presentation for you here and I wanted to show you, let me just see here, if I can do this just right. Ok, let me try once more. Let's see if I can do this and I think I can. So what I'm showing you here are two renderings of what the new school, the new Fletcher school will look like. As you know, we have been continuing to move forward with this project. We meet, seems like every day but certainly every week and we're approaching the end of our design phase on the exterior and this is just a view of what the main entrance, what we're calling the main entrance to the new school will look like. So over on the left-hand side you see the brick area. Now this is the auditorium, this is going to be the old building that will remain so this is kind of a little down on Hinds Street, looking over maybe across the beginning of that first current grass field, which will be a main entrance and you can see the parking lot over here to the left and then a loop for parents to be able to drop off and make deliveries and other things. This over here on the right side as you can see in the gray is some of the wood veneer and windows will also be part of the new building. The old building will be demoed here this will be all new. Here's a look on the Gibson Street side. This is just about where the current bus loop is and the current main door is, but as you can see, this is all new build and this is what an extended bus loop would look like in this area an entry point for students that arrive by bus and walkers in the morning. This will not be a main entrance to the building during the day or for parents but will be an entrance for students that arrive and leave school by bus or by walking. Any comments or questions about this?

Sternin: Beautiful

Koch: Looks awesome

Opalinski: Looks beautiful

Gilbert: It is, it's beautiful

Oldenburg: Great. Well, thanks for the feedback. I have one more thing to show you. This is an animation that was done this was actually a bonus that was offered by our

vendor that did a lot of the graphic work. This is called the flyover so it's an animation of a flyover of the buildings. So let's take a look. This again is the Hinds Street side and here we're going around the auditorium, the current auditorium as we loop around to Fletcher Street. This is looking maybe from the High School over that corner and now we're wrapping around to some updates to the old building as we'll call it. This is from as we approach Gibson Street, Fletcher down to Gibson on the corner where the current sign is. Here's a look from the current main door or bus loop out onto Gibson Street on the corner or near the corner of Fletcher. This is back on the other side of the building facing the housing authority and where the playgrounds will be as we wrap around close to the main door again on Hinds Street. So there's a look, there's a look at the new building through a flyover as they call it and some of our exterior design work that we've been working hard on over the past few months since the vote.

Opalinski: Very nice

Sternin: Looks terrific.

Opalinski: Thank you for sharing

Oldenburg: Sure, and we'll have this posted on our website but I wanted everyone to have a quick glimpse of it first and we'll begin sharing these items and allowing the community to have a glance. Again, these are rendering, not everything is directly in stone, but in large part this is the view of the building moving forward on the exterior side. Any other comments otherwise I'll turn it over to President Sternin. Thank you all.

Sternin: We will now move to consent agenda items. May I have a motion to approve instructional personnel items 8.1 and 8.2?

Koch: So moved

Gilbert: Second

Sternin: I have a motion from 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. May I have a motion to approve non-instructional personnel items 9.1 through 9.11?

Koch: So moved

Gilbert: Second

Sternin: I have a motion from 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 carries. May I have a motion to approve CSE information from 10.1?

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. The floor is now open for discussion on the policies scheduled for a first reading. Anyone have any comments or questions, concerns about any of the policies? If there are no questions or concerns, may I have a motion to waive a second reading and adopt policies listed in Items 11.1 through 11.8 as presented?

Gilbert: So moved

Koch: Second

Sternin: I have a motion from Mrs. Gilbert and a second from Mrs. Koch. 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. May I have a motion to approve adoption of the 2020-21 school district budget, Item 12.1?

Koch: So moved

Opalinski: Second

Sternin: I have a motion from Mrs. Koch and a second from was it 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. May I have a motion to approve adoption of the 2020-2021 property tax report card, Item 12.2?

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. May I have a motion to approve Items 12.3 through 12.6 with amended time of 6 PM for Item 12.6?

Calabrese: So moved

Koch: Second

- Sternin:** Moved by Mr. Calabrese and a second from Mrs. Koch. Any questions or comments? I just want to.
- Schmutzler:** If I am opposed to just 12.3 and not the rest
- Sternin:** Then I believe we have to separate it. Mrs. Maxwell?
- Maxwell:** We have to pull it out and have a separate motion for that item.
- Sternin:** So how do we do that?
- Maxwell:** We will go back. Alright, so we're going to have to do it not as a consent. We can go back and have a motion to approve Item 12.3 as a separate and follow a motion for that.
- Sternin:** Ok, I think it was 12.5 that she's
- Maxwell:** Oh, I thought she said 3, I apologize.
- Sternin:** No, I think it's 5 so can I say a motion to approve 12.3, 12.4 and 12.6? Like that?
- Maxwell:** Well, wait one second. 12.5 is an annual appointment from the reorg.
- Sternin:** Oh, I'm sorry, I've gotcha.
- Maxwell:** And I think she said 12.3.
- Schmutzler:** It is 12.3
- Sternin:** You're correct, yes. Alright, then, I'll start with may I have a motion to approve Item 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. Mr. Calabrese, looks like it might be frozen.
- Sternin:** 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:** Nay
- Maxwell:** President Ms. Sternin.
- Sternin:** Aye, motion carries. May I have a motion to approve Items 12.4 through 12.6 with amended time of 6 PM for Item 12.6?
- Koch:** So moved
- Sternin:** Moved by Mrs., I have a motion from Mrs. Koch and a second from
- Opalinski:** Support
- Sternin:** Second from Mrs. Opalinski. Any questions or comments? I just want to say, Mr. Calabrese, because you weren't here, we decided to have that meeting at 6 PM because we weren't sure your work situation and we wanted to make sure that you would be able to have it as opposed to trying. You'd be able to be there as opposed to trying to do it in the day time. Is that acceptable to you?
- Calabrese:** Yes, yes
- Sternin:** Roll Call vote Madam Clerk
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mr. Calabrese
- Calabrese:** Can you hear me?
- Sternin:** Yes
- Koch:** Yes

Maxwell: So what is your vote for this motion?

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. May I have a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 PM?

Koch: So moved

Opalinski: Second

Sternin: I have a motion from Mrs. Koch and a second from Mrs. Opalinski. 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, everyone and we'll see you on the 26th.