



# Farmingdale School District

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**DATE:** March 13, 2019

**KIND OF MEETING:** Special Meeting

**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, Mrs. Rogers

**Call to Order** Meeting called to order at 7:30 p.m. in the A. Terry Weathers Board Room at the Howitt Middle School by Mr. Goldberg, President of the Board of Education.

**Executive Session** Motion made by Mrs. Soete, seconded by Mrs. D'Amico, to meet in executive session to discuss a specific personnel issue in accordance with Open Meetings Law.

Motion carried 7-0

Meeting recessed for executive session at 7:30 p.m.

Meeting reconvened in the Howitt East Cafeteria at 8:00 p.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance** Board President Michael Goldberg welcomed those present and announced that the Board of Education is interested in encouraging all members of the public to share their ideas, comments and questions. He noted that public participation opportunities would be available at the beginning of the meeting and again at the end of the meeting and, as stated in Board Policy, no person shall speak for more than three minutes and each period of public participation would be limited to thirty minutes. It is the policy of the Board of Education that public participation during Special Meetings are limited to items on the agenda. Mr. Goldberg pointed out the emergency exit. The public session began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public Participation** Mr. Goldberg opened the meeting for the first public participation. Mr. Capobianco asked if the district had received the state aid runs from the Assembly or Senate. He had learned from a REFIT meeting that the Governor

**2019-2020  
Budget  
Overview**

had anticipated a shortfall in revenue. Mr. Defendini stated that we had not yet received information about state aid.

Board President Michael Goldberg introduced Superintendent of School Paul Defendini for the first of the 2019/2020 budget presentations. Mr. Defendini introduced Assistant to the Superintendent for Business Michael Motisi and welcomed him to his first budget workshop. Mr. Defendini stated that Mr. Motisi had been an integral member of the budget development team for the past ten years and that his work had always been incorporated into the presentations that were provided to the community during that time. Mr. Motisi began his presentation by introducing Brian Ernst, the district's School Business Administrator, who has also been part of the budget team. Mr. Ernst's role in the budget development is also critical to our financial success.

Mr. Motisi provided an overview of the 2019/2020 budget, beginning with the goals that served as the district's vision. Goals include staying within the tax levy limit while maintaining a strong financial condition within a program delivery environment that strengthens and serves the children of our community. He reviewed the sources of revenue that are available to, but not controlled by, the district, including property taxes, which are restricted due to the tax cap, PILOT payments, which are restricted due to the negotiations made by local governments and state aid, which is controlled by the state legislature. The only flexibility that the district has is in the use of other miscellaneous revenue items and fund balance and reserves, which makes up just 5% of the total revenue. As to the tax levy, Farmingdale has had a ten year average of just over 1.7% in increases, while Nassau County has had over 2%. During the same time period, the district has seen an increase in the percentage of yes votes, indicating a strong support of our budget.

Mr. Motisi reviewed the tax levy calculation, which results in an increase of 2.73%, while remaining within the tax cap limit. He detailed the revenue estimates from PILOT payments, state aid, tuitions, rental revenue, Medicaid reimbursements, reserves and fund balance. He explained that the tax increase will stay within the cap limitation, while the budget to budget increase will be 3.24%. Mr. Motisi reviewed the appropriation side of the budget, focusing on salary increases associated with the negotiated collective bargaining settlements, the decrease in benefits due to lower costs for retirement system expenses and decreases in tuition costs and debt service. There are increases in contract services and transportation costs included in the budget.

Dr. Olsen, Dr. Brennan, Dr. Ripley and Mr. Zakian provided explanations of district initiatives, including math and writing inquiry labs, an elementary school counselor, an additional high school special education position, secondary intervention supports, Naviance software and security, AV, playground and gymnasium heating system upgrades.

Mr. Motisi reviewed some of the governor's legislative initiatives that have been attached to the executive budget proposal. Governor Cuomo's

recommendations include changes to the foundation and expense aid formulas, the STAR program for residents, APPR and school bus cameras. Most notably is his recommendation to make the tax cap legislation permanent beginning in 2020/21.

The budget presentation concluded with the impact of a contingency budget should the district not be successful in the May 21 vote. Mr. Motisi also provided a listing of upcoming workshops and budget meetings. Mr. Goldberg thanked Mr. Motisi for the work that has gone into developing a comprehensive budget that is responsive to the community and provides for quality programming in a fiscally responsible manner.

**Public  
Participation**

Mr. Goldberg opened the meeting for the second public participation. Mrs. Kelly asked what would happen if the state did not have a budget. Mr. Defendini stated that there are many years where our budget is presented to the voters without a passed state budget. Our work continues whether it is in place or not. She also asked about a transition specialist for the high school. Dr. Ripley stated that the Special Education department was working on changes in the program delivery for special education students based on the changes in the CDOS pathway. While there would not be a specific transition specialist, that work will be incorporated into our programs.

Mr. Firmes asked about the salary increases associated with steps and also asked for specific information related to reductions in ERS and TRS codes within the benefits line. Mr. Defendini explained the value of the step, summarizing that the increases would result in a 2% increase. Mr. Defendini also stated that the breakdown in benefit costs will be presented at a future budget workshop.

Mr. Capobianco stated that during a recent REFIT Legislative Breakfast, our elected officials were not supporting some of the Governor's initiatives. It was their understanding, however, that the Governor would not approve a budget without an agreement on a permanent tax cap. Mr. Capobianco also asked if there was any data on utilities savings. Mr. Motisi stated that this would be part of the March 20 budget presentation.

Mr. Espinosa excused himself from the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

**Adjournment**

On a motion made by Mr. Morales, seconded by Mrs. Lively, the meeting was adjourned.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Motion carried 6-0

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Mary E. Rogers, District Clerk