



# Farmingdale School District

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**DATE:** March 17, 2021

**KIND OF MEETING:** Budget Workshop

**PLACE:** Virtual Meeting: [www.farmingdaleschools.org](http://www.farmingdaleschools.org)

**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 6:00 p.m. by Mr. Goldberg, President of the Board of Education. In accordance with Governor Cuomo's Executive Order related to temporary modifications to Public Officers Law, the meeting was conducted in a virtual format to allow for the uninterrupted continuation of our important work. The Board meeting notice indicated that access to the meeting would be posted on the district's website at [www.farmingdaleschools.org](http://www.farmingdaleschools.org) and a live feed would be available on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com).

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

Motion carried 7-0

Meeting recessed for executive session at 6:00 p.m.

Meeting reconvened in public session at 8:00 p.m. Board President Michael Goldberg welcomed all present for the first public presentation of the 2021-2022 school district budget. He opened the meeting with the following statement:

Pursuant to Executive Order 202.1 (and subsequent orders closing District schools) issued by the Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York, signed March 12, 2020, and due to the concerns of the Board of Education for the Health and Safety of the community emanating from the current COVID-19 pandemic, there would be no in-person public access to the board meeting and instead the meeting would be live streamed and recorded. Access to the live stream could be had by accessing the school district's website

for a link that will bring you to a youtube site and the recording of the meeting can be accessed on [www.farmingdaleschools.org](http://www.farmingdaleschools.org). In addition, the public participation portion of the meeting was suspended by board resolution.

**Motion to Suspend Public Participation**

On a motion made by Mrs. D'Amico, seconded by Mr. Giordano, pursuant to the aforementioned Executive Order, the Board suspended the public participation portion of the meeting and therefore, accordingly, there would be no public participation at this Board meeting.

Motion carried 7-0

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Mr. Goldberg continued, stating that the Board of Education was interested in encouraging members of the public to share their ideas, comments and questions. Feedback and questions should be directed to the Board's email account at [boe@farmingdaleschools.org](mailto:boe@farmingdaleschools.org). Questions and comments would be responded to by members of the central administrative team and would be publicly reviewed at the next regular Board meeting. Mr. Goldberg thanked everyone for their anticipated courtesy and cooperation. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Budget Presentation- Michael Motisi**

Board President Michael Goldberg introduced Superintendent of Schools Paul Defendini and asked for the first public presentation on the 2021-2022 budget development.

Superintendent of Schools Paul Defendini kicked off the 2021-2022 budget season with an introduction of the work that has been happening in the build of the school budget. He stated that the philosophical approach in the midst of the pandemic was very different. We did not want to have lost program opportunities next year when so many things had been changed this year. We have a responsibility to our students. We believe we have maintained the core of our work, keeping Farmingdale Farmingdale. We also know that there are difficult financial pressures in the community due to the pandemic. Our administrative team has worked very hard in making adjustments to budgets to address both sides of the issue of programmatic opportunities for students within a manageable budget for our community.

Mr. Defendini introduced Assistant to the Superintendent for Business Michael Motisi, who provided a presentation. Mr. Motisi began by thanking the administrative team for their work. He thanked the Business Office team for their work in developing the overall budget itself.

Mr. Motisi stated that the challenge for this year was the uncertainty over the past six months. Specific information was provided in the presentation and the impact on the revenue and appropriations sides of the budget. The budget goals, specifically, were to stay within the tax levy limit, manage programs and services, stabilize our financial condition and continue to protect the district

from fluctuations in state aid and the fluctuations in retirement systems and/or health benefit costs.

Mr. Motisi provided an overview of revenue sources, including property taxes, PILOTs, state aid and other income. 78% of our revenue comes from property taxes and PILOTs, 18% from state aid and the rest comes from other sources, including tuitions, rental property, Medicaid reimbursements, interest income, student fees and the use of fund balance and reserves.

Mr. Motisi walked through the calculation of the tax cap for Farmingdale Schools. He reminded the Board that the property tax cap is different for every school district. The 2% cap is actually the limit on the CPI rate used in the calculation. This year, Farmingdale's tax levy limit is 1.51%. In addition, residents will see varying individual increases for a number of reasons and variables, including the Nassau County vs Suffolk County residency, the Nassau County property classification, STAR and other exemptions and the individual property tax grievance process. Nassau County properties will be seeing a reassessment calculation that is coming to us from the county legislature.

Mr. Motisi spoke of Governor Cuomo's proposed state aid package. The Governor proposes a budget that is then sent to the legislature for consideration. He detailed the state aid packages, included the basic aid, foundation aid, high tax aid, reimbursable aid and categorical/grant aid. He stated that foundation aid is based on wealth and student need; the high tax aid has been frozen since 2013-2014. He noted that reimbursable aid is provided to the district based on the expenditures in the prior year. Transportation aid is at 50% of costs; BOCES aid is set at 66%. Other reimbursable aid categories include software, library and textbook aid and computer hardware and technology aid.

The Governor's budget was presented in two different scenarios based on federal stimulus funding from December 2020. The first scenario provides for \$6 billion in additional stimulus funding, which was to be used to help in the deficits as result of the pandemic. The first scenario has some of the deficits passed to the municipalities and schools. The second scenario would provide for additional aid to schools. Mr. Motisi provided a summary of the project state aid calculation.

Mr. Motisi moved on to the appropriation side of the budget. He stated that the largest expenditures in the budget are the salaries. He detailed the salary increases based on step increase. All collective bargaining agreement expire on June 30, 2021. He detailed the increases in health insurance and retirement system costs. He stated that the health insurance costs were lower than expected, which may have been the result of the limits on elective surgery and doctor visits during the pandemic. The increases in retirement system costs follow consistent trends. He spoke about the FICA/Medicare increases, which are directly related to salary costs. In an effort to alleviate the Workers Compensation expenses, the district provides training and other safety

protocols to help address situations where injuries occur most often. Mr. Motisi detailed the transportation costs and the advantageous position Farmingdale Schools is in due to the negotiated contracts that had been put into place prior to the pandemic.

The Cost Element Summary was provided which detailed the year over year changes in each of the expense categories. He noted specifically the decreases across many categories, which was a result of the work of the administrative team. He detailed specific initiatives for cost savings, including reductions in staff through attrition, the reallocation from one-time operating budget codes and reductions in non-contract salary related budget reductions. Several facility and safety related projects will continue, including playground equipment replacements, locker replacements, floor abatements and door replacements.

Dr. Ripley spoke of some of the curricular initiatives including a PAES lab (Practical Assessment Exploration System), which is intended to assist Special Education students as they transition to the work environment. Units include consumer services and computer technology. In addition, we plan to maintain the psychiatry services partnership through Northwell South Oaks Hospital. The Career and Tech Education program at Farmingdale High School will continue to be enhanced. New equipment will be brought into our shop/technology classrooms for state of the art opportunities.

Dr. Olsen spoke of the elementary and middle school initiatives, including a multi-sensory reading toolbox. Reading development work using the Lexia Core 5 and Wilson resources will be expanded. Response to Intervention protocols and interventions will be enhanced.

Mr. Motisi's presentation provided an overview of the service reductions that would result if the district were to move to a contingent budget due to a failed school budget vote. Reductions would be allocated across the three major components of the budget, including instruction, administration and capital/facility.

Mr. Motisi reviewed the Governor's 2021-2022 legislative proposals. Specifically, he noted the consolidation of expense based aid, which does not seem to have the support of the legislation, the local funding adjustments vs the coronavirus response and relief supplemental appropriations act where he is using the stimulus package from December to fund expenses for next year. The enhanced STAR program would no longer "age up" in the exemptions. Residents need to reapply for the enhanced STAR program; it would no longer be automatic. Finally, he spoke about a new Gap Elimination Adjustment, which pass the state's debt to the school districts: funding is never fully restored.

Mr. Motisi's presentation concluded with a summary of the proposed budget, the budget to budget increase of 1.13% and the proposed tax levy increase of 1.51%.

Board President Michael Goldberg thanked Mr. Motisi and his team, along with the district's administrative team, for pulling together this budget.

**Adjournment**

On a motion made by Mrs. D'Amico, seconded by Mr. Giordano, the meeting was adjourned.

Motion carried 7-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

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Mary E. Rogers, District Clerk