

East Greenbush Central School District
Board of Education Meeting
Wednesday May 20, 2020

Transcription of remote proceeding:

Michael Buono: I will call the meeting to order. 7:02 PM is my time. Welcome, as Peter said, to our special meeting on May 20th. For attendance tonight we have all Board members present except for Mr. Mann, who had a work commitment. Good to see everybody out there, I hope you had a good day. A little louder, ok, a little louder. Peter is giving me the up sign. With that, we will move to our Pledge of Allegiance. Please join me in the pledge.

Everyone: Pledge of Allegiance.

Michael Buono: Thank you. So next I see that Lily and Katie did sign on so why don't you give us the latest update. How are you guys doing?

Lily Mahoney & Katharine Asenbauer: Good, How are you?

Lily Mahoney: Lately we've been doing...We've been keeping up with doing some different Instagram challenges to keep the students involved. We've been last, I think last, at the last meeting we talked about how we were doing a Spirit Week where they could post pictures from school, their favorite school event, or maybe their favorite first day of school picture and that went really well, we had a really good involvement for that. We're optimistic that we'll have just as high as not higher involvement for future challenges that we're going to be doing on our Instagram. The next thing that we'll be doing with that is that over the past few weeks, we've been having some teachers from Columbia send in baby pictures or pictures from when they were really young and we're planning on having a Guess Who? challenge on our Instagram so students can guess which teacher it was. Then I'll hand it over to Katie. Thank you.

Katharine Asenbauer: Yeah, and then just our biggest concern with this whole virtual thing has been how we're going to do elections for the officers for the next coming year. And at our last meeting, last week, we decided that we're going to have virtual elections through a Google form and those will be held on June 4th and 5th and that's it.

Michael Buono: Great. Did you guys get your visit today, the parade coming around for the seniors?

Lily Mahoney: Oh, yes. I got, I had the parade come to my house. I really enjoyed it. Thank you to everyone that was involved in that. That was really great to see.

Michael Buono: Nice. Awesome. Thanks. Ladies. Appreciate it.

Lily Mahoney: Thank you.

Katharine Asenbauer: Thank you.

Michael Buono: Now moving to the public forum and reminder that being virtual we have an email system setup, so if you have a comment for the Board, please use the email system.

Residents, students, employees, and business representatives of the East Greenbush Central School District may address the Board on matters concerning programs and/or operations of the district, other than matters involving personnel. Members of the Board do not directly respond to citizen concerns during the Public Forum. If a response is appropriate either the President or Superintendent will contact the individual in the near future. Those persons wishing to address the Board will be recognized by the chair of the meeting and should state for the record their name and address, or affiliation with the District or business. While the Board does not wish to infringe upon free speech protections, it must be stressed that the "Visitors' Forum" is not deemed to be an "open forum". The Board president will conduct the forum for the orderly and efficient operation of Board business. In addition, any remarks which may be considered defamatory or stigmatizing are prohibited and will be declared out of order. All comment shall be limited to five minutes.

If you have any comments, please send them to the BOE email. Typically at our meetings, we get comments at the second public forum.

Jeffrey Simons: No comments.

Michael Buono: No comments yet. Folks will listen to the meeting, and hope we have some comments regarding the budget and conversations for today, later in the meeting. As far as Board members, do you have any initial comments? You are kind of all over the place on my screen here so, I'll just kind of put it out there John, Deanna, Jennifer, Kathleen, Karen, Michelle?

Karen Curran: Hey Mike. I just wanted to give a shout-out to JoAnn and thank her for organizing the parade for all the seniors, and I also wanted to give a thank you to the Hilton family for their donation for the backpack program. That was all.

Michael Buono: Great, thank you Karen. Michelle or JoAnn?

JoAnn Taylor: I just like to take a minute to thank the community. It was a huge team effort to get the parades underway from transportation to our Police, Fire, Sheriffs, State Police was there. It was just amazing, the fire every Fire Department. In fact, one of the fire department's today came to me at the end of the parade, was not scheduled to be in the parade tomorrow and said they had such a good time, could they please come back tomorrow? The community support was just unbelievable. It's just so gratifying to see a community come together like this.

Michael Buono: Great, great comments. Thank you, JoAnn. Thanks for your involvement and putting that together with the community and Foundation and everyone who participated. Anyone else? No? Okay, so we'll now move to our Discussion Items, kinda a big part of why we're here today is the 2020- 2021 budget and the presentation. I will turn it over to Mr. Simons.

Jeffrey Simons: Thank you, Mr. Buono, so can everyone hear me okay? Over the course of the last couple of weeks as we've been monitoring what might be happening at the State level we've been uncertain as to whether or not we would receive information indicating that the State would be adjusting our state aid. As we reported at previous Board meetings, the State when they finalize the State budget they were able to use some of the stimulus monies that had been provided to the State in the initial couple of programs provided by the federal government to offset any potential state aid cuts. We did receive a pandemic adjustment in the final State budget. The impact of the State budget on our District's budget was about a net \$25,000 loss in aid. At that point we were not concerned about the overall impact. However, at that time we were also informed that there will be a measurement period in which the State would indicate they may adjust our state aid. The first measurement period has now come and gone and we have yet to receive any information that our state aid has been reduced. Initially, additionally, we have also been monitoring what the Governor has been saying about the need for Federal assistance for State and local governments and the need to utilize monies to be appropriated to the State so that Police, Fire, Emergency personnel and teachers can be supported in the State budget. We were anticipating around May 15 that he would make an announcement that our state aid would be impacted but instead he chose to take a path of a more aggressive effort towards lobbying for New York State to receive additional federal funds. At this point in time, as we work to put forth a budget to the community we are being as cautious and conservative as possible. As I move to the formal budget presentation, cautious and conservative means we want to be able to have a budget that can support the needs of our students, whatever those needs may be and however those needs may have changed, as students have been engaged in online learning for approximately three months. In the event that we reopen in September under typical conditions, we anticipate that class sizes may need to be adjusted. We also anticipate that the social emotional needs of our students, may have become more significant and we want to have room within our budget to be able to address those needs. Additionally, on the other side of being conservative we anticipate that we could at any time between now, over the summer or even into the new school year, receive information from the State indicating that our state aid would be reduced. We just don't know when that will occur, whether it will occur, and how much that state aid adjustment might be with the projections having been between 10 and 20 percent depending what happens with Federal revenues appropriated towards the State.

At this time we need to adopt a budget because we have a vote date of June 9 and as I move into the presentation there have only been some small adjustments to the budget that the Board has previously received, and seen, and has been presented to the community. We did take a look at the items that were funded within the budget and we felt that it was important to forgo the equipment purchase of the furniture. So the overall budget number has been adjusted down about \$10,000 from March 11th. We had proposed a 99 million seven hundred eighty eight thousand 0 1 2 on March 11th. We've adjusted that down just slightly, removed the furniture. The proposed budget, should the Board adopt it this evening would be \$99,778,012 which represents a budget to budget increase from this year to next year of about 4.02. As we had indicated at previous meetings, a large portion of that increase is associated with our Capital project, conversion of short-term borrowing to long-term borrowing on projects that have been previously done for which we pay interest. Additionally, a large portion of that adjustment are changes that have been made because we have increased some services to BOCES, for students who want to attend BOCES, as well as an adjustment that was related to the ???? Reserve. An issue that was addressed on a long-range plan a few years ago. All in all, the budget has been adjusted to a one and a half percent proposed impact on our tax levy which is under the New York State tax cap for East Greenbush, which is currently 1.62%. On page 3, the numbers are reflected in the adjustment to a \$99,778,012 proposed budget. On page 4, we see the breakdown of how the tax levy is calculated. We remove the expenses of \$10,000. We have reduced state aid based on the final State budget. When we reduce the state aid by \$25,000, we add that 25,000 dollars of additional revenue back into the tax levy to offset that state aid reduction. We have an adjustment in our PILOT revenues moving from this year to next year. We project that that adjustment will be three hundred and forty eight thousand two hundred and forty two dollars. As we will be receiving less money in PILOT's next year. We have to subtract that amount from the tax levy. If your PILOT's are increasing from one year to the next, you have to reduce the tax levy by a comparable amount. Additionally, we had discussed with the Board at a previous meeting, using monies that have been set aside in a reserve through unspent budget of about \$900,000 to offset that expense for employee retirement payments next year. Again, we're using monies that were not spent within the budget, appropriating it towards an expense which will offset the tax impact of our proposed budget for next year. And additionally, we received some revenues projected for next year that for retiree prescription reimbursement of about \$200,000. All in all, the proposed tax levy would yield to the District next year fifty eight million three hundred seventy four thousand four hundred fifty six dollars, which yields about sixty six thousand six hundred twenty dollars less in Revenue in our budget next year than what we could go and propose a budget all the way up to the tax cap. Can everyone still hear me?

Peter Goodwin: Yes, they can still hear you but someone has their mic on and I can't get there right now.

Jeffrey Simons: In addition to the proposition on the proposed spending plan for next year, the voters will see additional propositions on June 9th. The District has been very successful at implementing a replacement plan for its bus fleet through utilizing reserves that have been both authorized by the Board and the community. You may recall that a reauthorization occurred last year because we had successfully met the threshold for closing out the existing reserve. We have a proposal for the purchase of eight school buses. All of those buses would be purchased out of the reserve which would save principal and interest payments on borrowing that the District would otherwise need to do to purchase the buses. We have evaluated those purchases this year and we really feel that the total number of buses that we want to maintain in the fleet is critically important now as we don't know exactly what changes might happen next year in terms of our bus routes. Particularly if we have to have fewer kids on a bus. Additionally, we are still in the process of studying our high school start time and we think that we would potentially have an impact for a need of buses, additional buses. So this plan would enable us to have buses that have more efficiency, fuel efficiency, are more modern and safe. The average age of the buses that we intend to trade in and replace is about 10 years, 9 to 10 years and those buses have, are pretty close to their estimated life life span. So we're recommending to the Board that that proposition for use of the reserves to purchase eight school buses goes forward. Although we did evaluate it. Additionally we have the election of three school Board members and those three school board members are our current

incumbents in our Board President Michael Buon, our Board Vice President Mark Mannn, and our Board member Kathleen Curtin, all incumbents. There were no other candidates for the Board election and those names in accordance with the modified rules for the election will appear on the ballot in alphabetical order. Is that right Mr. Edson?

Lawrence Edson: Correct

Jeffrey Simons: Typically, at this time of year. actually, it would have been yesterday I think, that we would have actually had the vote, right Larry?

Lawrence Edson: Yes

Jeffrey Simons: So we haven't had a vote yet and typically will be celebrating tonight and approving and accepting the vote. Here we're just proposing the budget for adoption by our Board because the date was changed to June 9th. No regulations have been provided to schools this year indicating whether or not there would be a second bite at the apple, so to speak. Typically, when a budget goes out to the voters, and it is voted on in the third week of May. You typically have a date in June in which if the budget had failed in May you can go back out with either the same budget or a modified budget or you can go to a contingency budget. This year, the answer among many questions is we don't know. We have received guidance from our law firm and School Boards Association to assume that we will only have one bite at the apple. And therefore we need to make sure that everybody gets the word about the budget vote and that those ballots come back via mail. If we are in a situation where we would be forced to go to a contingency budget, the District would not be permitted to raise taxes at all, and we would have to take a look at reducing our overall spending, by the amount that we otherwise would have raised through the 1.5% tax levy which is approximately \$863,479. We've listed here on page 7

Lawrence Edson: Next slide

Jeffrey Simons: Excuse me.

Lawrence Edson: Peter

Jeffrey Simons: I'm sorry. I'm talking faster than I'm clicking on the next slide on page seven, our list of non-mandated programs, but as we have said in the past just because the state doesn't mandate them, doesn't mean that they're not important to the community. Our community has expectations for its school District. Offers such things as full-day kindergarten, as honors and AP courses, we made a concerted effort over the last several years to increase the number of college credit courses that we offer through our college and high school program. More important than ever, they've always been important but our school social workers who provide counseling services and social emotional support for kids and families. We believe that they are critically important. However, they are not mandated by SED regulations, along with Athletics and other services that we wouldn't want to, we wouldn't want to have to reduce within our budget, not offered to the community because we go to a contingency. For example over the last couple of years our Board has made strategic decisions to put the District in a good position to provide for the academics and I think in part the community will hear at the hearing on March 27th we think in large part our fiscal plans have been responsible to the taxpayers, but also advanced the District. We have the third highest graduation rate in the Capital Region, we offer more than 25 college credit courses at our high school. We enjoy far above the State average performance on all of the indicators and this year our high school as well as Red Mill School were selected to be recognition schools and rewards schools. So we're doing very well and our spending plan as we proposed to the community and hopefully we don't have to go to a contingency. Even in uncertain times reflects the Board's priority to continue to advance our district academically and to meet the community's expectations. We've talked a little bit about the bus reserve, just to break it down a little bit, we plan to replace four 66 passenger buses at a cost of \$459,000. Two 35 passenger buses at a cost of \$136,000. One 30 passenger bus at a cost of \$80,000 and a 22 passenger bus at a cost of \$60,000. Eight buses at a total cost of \$736,070. Anyone in the community that is interested can take a look at a very specific Transportation Fleet Bus Replacement Plan, which is available on our website under the Budget Finance portion of the website. It's all there for you to see, the dates of the buses that we're trading in, the age of the buses and it's pretty well

detailed for the community. The community has gotten grown accustomed to this plan of using reserves to purchase buses. One of the things we continue to emphasize is that in addition to addressing student safety, our transportation fleet has one of the best Department of Transportation ratings in New York state in terms of its safety. We use the bus replacement plan to make sure that our buses that have high mileage are traded in and we get a value in new buses. They save on operation and maintenance costs. Not only are we struggling to have, to find drivers for our buses, we have been able to fill some of the mechanics positions in our District, but it has been a challenge. So operation and maintenance of the buses, the fact that we will have newer buses alleviates that concern to some degree and we get State funding for our buses. For every dollar we spend to purchase a bus, again out of money that has been saved, we get 65 cents back on the dollar and that's 65 cents on a dollar goes right back into the transportation reserve that we can use to purchase buses in the future and it kind of replenishes itself to some degree. In addition to the Board election, three Board members the budget vote and the use of the transportation reserve to purchase buses, we want the community to be mindful of our timelines. Here we are on May 20th, hoping after some discussion with our Board that our Board will adopt a budget. I'll be it, recognize that it is a very uncertain time and there's a lot of things that we need to think about. On May 27th, we will have a public hearing on the budget that will be a virtual hearing. Typically that hearing would have been held at Howard L Goff Middle School, but that will be a virtual hearing and we will have our budget vote on June 9th. That will be done solely through paper ballot. We anticipate that the ballots, in addition to a postage-paid return envelope will be in the mail and sent to all of the registered voters, eligible registered voters within the East Greenbush Central School District on or about May 29th. It is very important for anyone who is listening that folks who receive those ballots, open their mail immediately, fill out the ballot completely, put it back in the envelope that has been provided by the District and a critically important step is to sign the envelope. If individuals failed to sign the envelope, the District is not permitted to count the ballot. We will be putting that out at our newsletter. We will be putting that out on our website. We'll be talking with PTO's and the community. It will be on our signs out on Columbia Turnpike, it's very important that individuals sign the envelope. We will have our vote on June 9th, and we will count the vote beginning at five o'clock or hereabouts and we will continue to count until everyone is fatigued and/or we finish or we move into the next day. We are permitted to move into the next day, but we're going to do our level best to do as much counting as we can on the night of the night. That correct, Mr. Edson?

Mr. Edson: That's correct.

Jeffrey Simons: One thing I would advise the Board is we are going to hold off on filling positions that have become vacant in our budget or that we anticipate additions, for example, the social worker position, the two Elementary additional classrooms plus any positions vacated by retirement. We are going to hold off on filling those at least until mid to late June because we want to monitor what might be happening with reductions in aid. The Board is aware that we have also offered an expanded retirement incentive, which is now public information, to our teachers and at this point that retirement incentive has not closed. It closes on Friday and we have only received one additional notification of retirement. We don't know where that will result, but we're still in the window to accept those retirements. Thank you.

Michael Buono: We are going to go back to the regular screen and have some conversation of the Board, as Mr. Simon said we've been discussing the budget for at least a couple months now. We've got to a point, we made some decisions around the use of reserves and other items to get the budget to that 1.5% tax levy. So, is there any comments, Board members, on the on the budget at this time for Mr. Simons, Mr. Edson, or general comments?

John Dunn: Mike, I have a comment

Michael Buono: Ok, John. John Dunn.

John Dunn: First, I'd like to thank the administrative team for putting together a budget in these uncertain times. It's a very difficult planning period but I support the overall budget and the philosophy towards it that we are still trying to maintain some semblance of normalcy in these very difficult times, and I, Jeff, liked your comment about some of the pending job allocations in the budget, but being cautious in your approach. I think

that's prudent. So you have my support and thanks, you know, Larry and all your team for being very thoughtful in these very difficult times. Thank you.

Michael Buono: Thanks, John. Any other comments Board members?

Michele Skumurski: Mike?

Michael Buono: Yes. Michelle

Michele Skumurski: I just want to Echo what John said, as well, it's very challenging to even start to think of what the budget is going to look like in these crazy times. So I appreciate the conservatism that we have to make sure that we're being accountable the best we can on the uncertain times with the state aid, and I also support the budget.

Michael Buono: Thanks, Michelle. Kathleen?.

Kathleen Curtin: I also want to echo Michelle and John. I support the budget a hundred percent. You can't pick up the newspaper without reading about the devastating cuts that so many other districts are going through right now. So I really want to say thank you for working as hard as you did. I guess not getting as much state aid is actually kind of a blessing in disguise right now because when they cut the little bit that we got, the cut's not quite as deep, so that's not something we want to continue, but it is going to help us at least a little bit this year. So thank you for working so hard.

Michael Buono: Thanks, Kathleen. Anyone else?

Karen Curran: I too, just want to thank everybody for all the hard work and dedication you guys have put in through this year and all the challenges. So I too support the budget and echo what all of my colleagues have said. Thank you.

Michael Buono: Thanks, Karen. Deanna?

Deanna Muth: I just want to say that I think it's a very solid budget and I think we're very fortunate to be in the position that we're in.

Michael Buono: Thanks, Deanna. Anyone else, Jennifer? Are you good?

Jennifer Massey: I was just going to say the same and I don't want to repeat what everybody said, but I do want to pass along my deepest appreciation to everybody who's been involved in that process and pulling it together. It is an extremely difficult time. So thank you so much and I too support what we're doing and how we're moving forward.

Michael Buono: Excellent, and I know I talked to Mr. Mann earlier. He is supportive of the budget as well and later on in the agenda there will be, the resolution is on the Board agenda for the consent to approve the budget. And again, I want to thank the team for all their work and remember that, you know, if something does come up we're prepared for it, we will make the necessary steps. The District has been very fiscally prudent for many years and when these kind of situations, this kind of very difficult situation comes up, it puts us in a better position to be thoughtful, to be mindful and to still continue to provide our families and students and staff the opportunities that they need to to run the district and to maintain the excellence that we have worked so hard for, you've work so hard for in the community, as administrators, parents, teachers and students. So we want to continue that, whatever looks like in the fall, we will be able to adjust and do our best to maintain those things.

Jeffrey Simons: Mr. Buono, I would like Mr. Edson to review the annual report that is on, under the budget discussion, which is the revenue report.

Michael Buono: Sure

Jeffrey Simons: Also, Larry, can you talk a little about our general approach to fund balance next year in the event that we are close to the four percent or over that 4%.

Lawrence Edson: Ok. The revenue report is a report that you've seen as part of the budget packet and it's been adjusted according to the additional revenues which were shown in the Google slide presentation earlier. It shows what the sources of revenue to support the expenses are in our budget by category. Page one is a quick summary and then detailed accounts follow on pages two through five. At the end it shows the budget to budget increase that's slightly over 4% and the tax levy increase projected at one-and-a-half percent. What you

see towards the end of the document is you show there's an application of our fund balance into the next year of approximately 6.8 million. There's also a transfer from the ERS reserve for nine hundred thousand dollars to support the expense in the following year. In the last Fund Balance projection that was done for the Board of Education, we believe that we will have approximately \$1.5 million, I think we had, could've been \$ 1.4 million that will be above that. The hope is that we will retain that, we will retain that money to offset a portion or all of any state aid cuts that could occur in the following year. That's the hope without adjusting programs. Now depending on the severity of the cuts that might not entirely be possible. You may need to look at additional use of fund balance and or reductions at that time, we just don't know. So that's the approach. There was also another report which you'll see later on in the agenda, which is related. That is the property tax report card. And this is a required report to be sent to the state that outlines a comparison of budget, year to year along with the tax levy and whether or not the budget is compliant with the state property tax cap. It is also compared to our enrollment increase or projected increase, which is consistent with the CVRPC projection report that the Board saw earlier in the year along with the change in the Consumer Price Index. Then there's a newer section that follows, newer section of the past couple of , of what are the components of our fund balance. These are really of no surprise because the fund balance components and the projections at year end match the fund balanced projection that was just recently done. So it's so this is not a surprise. We talk about reserves typically early on in the fiscal year. We then talk about them again in October with the presentation of the financial statements and we're talking about it again at this point during the budget process. So again, it's not essentially new information, but it is a disclosure piece and you'll see that parts of this property tax report card are expected and then made part of the required budget notice which people will see on page 3 of the newsletter which will be mailed to most homes in the district on or about May 28 immediately following the budget hearing. That is the just a quick recap of the property tax report card and the revenue report.

Michael Buono: Any questions, Board members, for Larry, regarding those two reports? Revenue and the property tax card, report card? Nope, and I think part of it is that we want to make sure, I mean, the way I look at this budget it's not planning for just this year, we are looking at the future, beyond this year. That's why it's important when we plan our budgets, look at our reserves, look at our spending, that we're thinking 1-2 years. Even though we're dealing with one year of time, our long-range planning is critical to this District to maintain those things long-term. If we're short sighted and we make cuts and do things that impact ,the ripple effect is felt for years. I think it's important that we act like we have and adopt this budget.

Jeffrey Simons: I want to thank the Board for its support for the budget. I really appreciate it. It's been, as I said, a very uncertain time period and this budget as we propose to the community is the best we can do with the information we have available. It puts us in the best position possible to have flexibility during the school year in the event that school aid is cut during the school year. We will be able to adjust to it and react to it appropriately. Thank you to the Board for supporting it.

Michael Buono: The next item in our discussions is the virtual Community Forum that was held last Thursday.

Jeffrey Simons: I wanted to provide the Board, maybe not all the Board members were able to participate in our community forum last Thursday evening. I view it as a tremendous success because we had a high level of participation. We used Facebook for members of the community, majority of the community being our parents, to connect on Facebook through a video live stream. After some initial glitches with a live stream dropping us, we were able to connect the community to a zoom panel discussion and a number of our administrators participated in that panel discussion. I want to thank those that participated. We engaged a third party vendor called Thought Exchange to do outreach to the community to find out what the key concerns were and to prioritize those concerns. We had 273 individuals participate in the Thought Exchange. At one point, I believe, the Facebook comments and likes were close to that mark if not a little bit more. 175 thoughts were exchanged through Thought Exchange and they were rated for 9345 ratings. Bubbling to the top were key concerns and questions about the calendar of the school year for the rest of the year, the online learning program, senior activities such as graduation. We tried to be as informative as we could based on what we know. We also responded to what ifs, in regard to what might happen next school year, in September, what some of the

considerations might be for reopening school and any issues that we could respond to with as much information as we could. After the community forum and discussions with the members of the panel which included Mr. Bruno, and monitoring the Facebook comments, I would say overall 95% to 97% of the comments were either positive or simply questions seeking information. I thought overall the response to what we did was very positive. We learned a lot from it. Thought Exchange provided us a report. We have yet to analyze it but that report will include some tools that represent some of the most important thoughts of the community, some of the differences, kind of a high-low analysis. The questions that got the lowest ratings versus the questions that got the highest ratings. Where some of the gaps might be and we're going to continue to take a, heat maps in terms of the hot issues that are out there versus issues that may be cooler in their own temperature. It was a great tool to use, it was good to connect with the community, and at the end I really had a sense that we were together. That the community was together despite some of the challenges and I really feel that there's some important information that we can glean for the District to move forward on. I also think it provides us momentum going into the budget.

Michael Buono: Yeah, it was very well done. I want to thank everyone again for the participation. Is there any comments, Board members? Throughout the audience? Anything that you want to discuss? I see Jennifer came on.

Jennifer Massey: I didn't know if I was going to lose my connection, so I apologise about that. I thought it was excellent, joining from, I had to join from my phone. It was, I thought some great information, and I have been hearing wonderful feedback about it, so thank you so much.

Did it freeze?

Michael Buono: No, you're good. We can see you.

Jennifer Massey: Okay, I'm sorry.

Michael Buono: It's ok. Anyone else? I know the challenges of balancing the three platforms: Facebook, Zoom and Thought Exchange and I want to thank Peter and his team for working on that, and Mark Adam as well for putting that together. I think it was a good way to reach out to the community, give information, what we know what we don't know, then give people an opportunity to just participate in a dialogue and connect again. We miss those connections. I think Mr. Alvey said it very well, about missing our students' answers and missing those connections as well.

John Dunn: Hey Mike, just one comment if I could.

Michael Buono: Sure, John

John Dunn: Again, thank you for facilitating that. I think it's important that we continue this path that we're on, in the name of transparency. I think it's really important that we get to the people in the medium that, at that particular time. So maybe we can think about doing a follow-up forum after the budget vote. Hopefully it'll pass. Just to keep people informed. I think we can take advantage of everyone adopting their new comfort with technology and make that a regular practice for the future. Not that you don't have enough work to do already, Jeff. So, thank you again.

Jeffrey Simons: Thanks, John.

Michael Buono: Thanks, John. Any final comments. I like that suggestion.

JoAnn Taylor: I just want to comment, and I think parents appreciate the openness, that if we don't know something it's said that we don't know it, and they're patient and they're willing to wait. Once they know that it's all up in the air, I think they appreciate that, and thank you for doing that Jeff.

Jeffrey Simons: You're welcome. Thank you, JoAnn.

Michael Buono: Great. Okay, if there's no other comments, we will move to our Committee Report section of the meeting. Marissa?

Marissa Cannon: None at this time.

Michael Buono: Mr. Edson?

Lawrence Edson: Just a reminder to the policy committee members to review their draft policies and get comments back by next week, please.

Michael Buono: Thanks, Larry. Jim McHugh, are you out there?

James McHugh: I am. Just report out that on Monday, May 18th, 6:30-7:30 PM we had an online session for reducing anxiety in your child and in you. That was presented by Dr. Jennifer Bashant. 110 community members registered for that session. 85 folks were logged in. She talked about how anxiety thrives on faulty beliefs and contrary to what many people think, techniques such as distraction or avoidance really don't work. She encouraged people to really try to understand the root cause of their panic and dispute inaccurate thinking. She talked a lot about permanent versus temporary. She addressed and acknowledged the fact that many people were missing friends, missing routines and fearful of getting sick. She just talked about the importance of being able to bring on those feelings and acknowledge how you're feeling, and trying to reframe your mindset. She talked about the importance of really seeking out accurate information. And then she ended with some strategies on dealing with some difficult times and she talked about mindfulness and meditation. Pretty well-received, got good feedback. And again, I think people are getting used to the online technology and I was pleased that 85 community members logged in. I will have something finalized tomorrow for all of our District employees with Doc Bird, Stephen Birchak. That was our opening day speaker. He's going to do a check-in. for District employees. And there's another session that we're working on about helping children and staying motivated. I'll continue to update the Board, and let you know how those things play out.

Michael Buono: Thank you. I appreciate all your efforts, teams efforts in putting all those things forums together and opportunities for parents and staff. Thank you. Mr. Simons, anything?

Jeffrey Simons: Just want to talk a little bit about graduation. We had talked, spoken at our community forum about the fact that the District had been developing two plans for graduation, but we were waiting to assess what guidance if any we might receive from either the State Education department, Department of Health, the Governor's office and/or the county. As the districts, excuse me, as the regions are moving into reopening, today is the first day of phase one as everyone knows which involves construction and manufacturing and some curbside expansion of retail, we're continuing to talk about the graduation plans. We are engaged in conversations within the Questar BOCES about graduation options and each week we meet with the county executive and the Department of Health. We were hoping that continued guidance might flow to the school districts. We are being advised that that guidance may not come or if guidance comes it may not be clear. We're still monitoring the situation but at some point in time, we need to make a decision about what we're going to do. We're holding out because ideally we're hoping and praying that the situation in terms of the phase-in, for our region, that people will become more confident and comfortable and as the Governor is announcing such things as permitting Memorial Day ceremonies with certain criteria for Memorial Day ceremonies and for religious observances, he is still citing the 10 to 1 groups or excuse me, the no groups larger than 10 ratio when he describes those activities that he will be permitting. At best a live graduation ceremony on the turf would be our best option in my view because it would bring our kids back to our campus at CHS. It would involve a diploma ceremony for kids in small groups, but when you count the number of children, even with the social distancing and masks and all of the other parameters and supervision we put in place, you still would in order to get the ceremony done in a reasonable time period, even if it were two full days, it would be far above the ten. We're hoping that things will loosen up quite generally over the next couple of weeks and that we might receive more information to go with plan A. Plan B was to use the model that has been talked about across the country, which is to have our graduates and their families go to the drive-in. We reserved the drive-in in Malta. We need to make a firm decision on that because the drive-in has a waiting list. We're going to need to make that decision within a few days. So upon assessing all this in this situation, we've had some conversations with the county executive and we are working on a common framework for districts in Questar for which we could document our plans, have the county review our plans, give us some feedback through Craig Hanson and the health and safety risk management service. The county has indicated that they won't approve our plans but that they would give us some assurances that we were on the right track. Additionally, we are going to do a survey that will come out to our parents tomorrow. That survey will be a quick Google survey that Mr. Harkin and Mr. Adam developed today, that I approved. It will describe Plan A,

describe Plan B, so that everybody understands what the plans would be and what the limitations of those plans would be. For example, the drive-in option does have some restrictions and families have to remain in their car, there may not be the kind of socialization that maybe some of the kids and the families think that occur at the drive-in because of the restrictions that the state has on the drive-in. Another option which we're throwing out as a third option is to do both. That if we need to reserve the drive in by a certain date, we could have some kind of a senior family celebration at the drive-in. May not necessarily take the form of a graduation. It could involve some of the videos on the large screen and some of the awards that our seniors receive and recognition of the class. Just a fun family time to celebrate the class. If we were to do that in June, reserve the date and potentially delay a formal diploma ceremony a little bit later into July, would people be able to participate? We're going to be asking them in that survey. We are concerned to some degree about delaying it too long because we have graduates who will have to report for military duty. That survey will try to capture those families who would be impacted, who would not be able to participate if we were to delay it into mid-July. We would delay it to buy time, for the phasing of the reopening to continue to occur. Hopefully that the numbers that the state is monitoring regarding Covid-19 will continue to be favorable. There may be, there is a potential for a loosening of restrictions as people become more confident and less worried, and we want to do as much as possible to try to preserve a ceremony for our kids and part of that part of that preservation would be hearing what the preferences of the senior class and their families would be through the survey that we plan to send out tomorrow. That's an update on graduation, it's still a very fluid situation. School districts aren't clear as to whether or not they have the authority to do the ceremonies that we've been planning. We're trying to work with each other to have a common framework for those ceremonies. They might differ by building, or excuse me, by district because of size and other considerations, and we're trying to buy a little bit more time before we formally announce a decision so that we can hopefully keep our fingers crossed that the phase in of the reopening goes well and there is somewhat of a loosening restrictions and or more guidance coming our way. That's where it stands at this point.

Michael Buono: Any questions for Jeff? . I know it' I mean we are trying to look at all options right to help people get to a place where they at least have some senior year celebrations and you know, ending the year on a high note of some sort. Balance that with the safety of our community, and our parents and our families.

Jeffrey Simons: One thing that came through today with the parades and delivery of the signs is the kids and the families are really looking forward to something and they're really missing out and it was really a good positive shot in the arm today and I want to thank JoAnn because it really breathes some life into our senior class and their families who have been worried about this. It was really a reminder of how important a senior year is and to celebrate the senior year and it kind of charged us up a little to really do what we could to continue to try to preserve a graduation, as much of a graduation form as we can, even if that meant delaying it a little bit.

Michael Buono: Thank you. Moving next on our agenda, we have the Minutes from May 6th. All members were present. So any questions, or comments, revisions to the minutes. No? If not, I need a motion to approve the minutes. Jennifer, second JoAnn. All those in favor, approved. Next on the agenda Regular business. There is none at this time. Then Reports and Presentations. We have the first item is the adoption of the budget for 2020- 2021. Any final comments. Mr. Simons, Mr. Edson? If there's no comments, Board members? I need a motion to adopt the budget. Kathleen, second, John. All those in favor.? Approved. We will see that at hearing in the little week.

Jeffrey Simons: Thank you to the Board.

Michael Buono: You're welcome. The property tax card, Mr. Edson had mentioned that earlier in the meeting any final questions, comments on the property tax report card? No? If not, I need a motion to approve that. Deanna, I need a second, Karen. All those in favor. You're all a little smaller. So I'm just trying to read your names, at the same time, forgive me. That motion is approved. No other reports and presentations at this time, Mr. Simons?

Jeffrey Simons: None

Michael Buono: We have no tabled motions, old business? Board members, old business you'd like to bring to the attention of the Board? Kathleen?

Kathleen Curtin: I just want to say that since the last meeting I did attend the webinar put on by the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. Leading with emotional intelligence in uncertain times. I know the emotional intelligence is something that Mr. McHugh has worked very hard on with the professional development and the entire District has worked with this. The webinar was excellent. Yale did mention that all of their programs are going online this summer, if anybody is interested and we have any professional development money. It was fantastic and I really want to thank Mr. McHugh for doing as much as he has bringing this forward and working with the District with it and anything else that we can do to further that would be wonderful.

Michael Buono: Jennifer, do you have something to say?

Jennifer Massey: I was just going to say, Kathleen, I was on that as well and I've been following Mark and his work that he's been doing at Yale since the New York State School Boards conference a few years ago. I shared out the information and resource follow-up email with Mr. Simons and Mr. McHugh in hopes that maybe some of those additional resources may be of use to the District because I too, thought it was very relevant and meaningful and definitely is in support of all of the work that the District and Mr. McHugh have been doing in this particular area. So yeah, excellent excellent presentation and hopefully those resources will be of assistance.

Michael Buono: Great, thank you, Kathleen and Jennifer. Any other old business to attend to? Moving on to the Consent Agenda items A- G. I think no instructional or non-instructional personnel items. We do have some gifts and authorizations, health service contracts, calendar change, Mr. Simons, do you want to talk about that?

Jeffrey Simons: This is another issue that is important to the community both our families as well as our staff. We have reviewed our calendar from a standpoint of the number of days that we were required to have students attend school as well as our contracts regarding our employees and we feel that based on our own local review that we will meet all of the number of student attendance days and not exceed all of our employee obligations for the total number of contract days by ending the school year for students being the last day of instruction on June 15th. The last day for staff would be the 16th with the exception of certain 12-month employees who work beyond that calendar. We have discussed this with our respective bargaining units. We are all in agreement regarding the day count. As a reminder to the public, when the Governor extended the school closing periods through April 15th, the executive order required school districts to include instruction online for students during the spring break, including the religious observances of Good Friday and Passover. That was six additional days added to the student attendance calendar if we were to go all the way to June 26, which is our calendar as currently approved by the Board: last day. The district would incur expenses associated with settling contractual issues with its employees if we do not make this adjustment. Additionally, our families have indicated that they could use a break and they would like some closure on when the school year is going to end. So based on all of that, I will be recommending through this resolution that the board is going to hopefully approve, that student instruction stops at the end of the day on June 15th, last day for staff to report will be a professional development day on the 16th. Subject to any adjustments that the State may come forward. So for example, if the Board approves this this evening, and we get an executive order tomorrow that says no, no, East Greenbush School District you got to go all the way to June 30th then we will go all the way to June 30th and we will try to settle the labor issues that are presented by that. This is another issue where school districts including our State Advocacy organizations have sought clarity from the State Education Department, from the Governor's office and from others for which we have not received. We are acting on the advice of counsel to make this adjustment this evening subject to any further State mandate that may come down the line on our District that would cause us to have to change it again.

Michael Buono: I think it speaks to really local control of school district, calendars doing what's best for our families, our students and our staff to give them a sense of, to plan what the end of the school year looks like so I think this is a prudent action again like Mr. Simons said, subject to Executive order or other kinds of guidance. Any other questions regarding the Consent Agenda items at all, and the calendar? No?

Jeffrey Simons: I had one thing, the question has come up, what is our obligation to provide meals to students? And what is our obligation for the Child Care Program for essential workers? It is our understanding, based on the readings of the Executive orders, that those services, until further notice, are to continue through June 30th

Michael Buono: Good, I support that 100%, too. All right, if there's no other questions or comments, I need a motion to take those items by consent. JoAnn second, John. All those in favor? Looks like it's unanimous, approved. Thank you very much, Board members.

Jeffrey Simons: We'll send a notice to our families tomorrow and our staff. On the calendar,

Michael Buono: Great. I think that's consistent with a lot of the region is doing as well. Bidding on what their calendars, closings and when the last day was. Any new business that needs to come before the Board, Board members? No, ok. We'll go to our second public forum. Is there any comments from the orum, Mr. Simons?

Jeffrey Simons: There are no comments from the public

Michael Buono: OK, so they like what we are doing, it sounds like. That's good. Board forum number 2. Anyone? Including Administrators, I welcome some feedback or input from the Administrators that are present at the meeting, who would like to say anything?

Michael Harkin: Mike, this is this is Mike Harkin. How are you?

Michael Buono: Good. Mike thanks, jump in.

Michael Harkin: Good. I just want to thank the Ed foundation and the transportation department and all the faculty and staff that participated in today's parade. It was really a special day.

Michael Buono: Thanks, Mike. Anyone else? Ok. We do have a need for an executive session for purposes of collective negotiations, employment history and some personnel matters. So we don't, we don't have any business coming in after that executive session so Mr. Goodwin reminded me that there will be a 10 minute break. He will email the Board members the link, as we have done in the past. I'll need a motion to go into Executive Session. Kathleen, second, Jennifer. All those in favor? Approved and we will move to Executive session. So thanks everybody, appreciate your attendance tonight and have a great night, a nice day, a nice couple days and we'll see you soon.

Jeffrey Simons: Thank you everybody.

Michael Buono: Thank you. So again, ten minutes sign back on, and check your emails. Goodnight everyone.