

EAST GREENBUSH CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING- PUBLIC HEARING
WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 2024
Goff Middle School Cafeteria

1. A. PUBLIC HEARING CALLED TO ORDER: Mr. Buono - 7:00 P.M.

B. ATTENDANCE

	Present	Absent	Arrival
Mr. Buono	X		
Mr. Dunn	X		
Ms. Kennedy	X		
Mr. Mann	X		
Ms. O'Brien			X 7:21 PM
Ms. Skumurski			X 7:11 PM
Ms. Steinbach	X		
Ms. Taylor	X		
Mr. Temple	X		

Also Attending

Mr. Simons	X
Ms. Cannon	X
Mr. Mulligan	X
Mr. Stiles	X

Student Council

Roan Butterfield	X
Kole Hardy	X

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. THE CALL OF THE MEETING

RESOLUTION TO WAIVE THE READING OF THE PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE FOR THE MAY 21, 2024 VOTE

Motion by Mr. Mann, Second by Mr. Dunn

Resolved, the Board of Education of the East Greenbush Central School District hereby waives the reading of the public hearing notice for the May 21, 2024 vote.

Vote: Ayes- 7, Nays- 0

Motion carried

4. PRESENTATIONS

A. Proposed 2024-2025 School Budget - Superintendent Jeffrey P. Simons

Mr. Simons discussed the process of developing the proposed budget, and the challenges presented by the changes to the foundation aid formula in Governor Hochul's executive budget. He explained that the district received less aid than expected, and had to adjust both the revenue and expenditures. The Superintendent stated that while working on the budget, the District tried to be mindful of the Board of Education's vision for the students and the community..

Mr. Simons presented and explained the Board's goals:

Future driven Education

Whole-Learner Focus

Safe, Inclusive and Diverse

The Superintendent explained that Proposition #1 is for the proposed 2023-2024 budget of \$111,660,557, and carries a .55% tax levy increase. Mr. Simons explained the revenues and expenditures that make up the proposed budget, and reported that for many years the Board has kept the tax levy under the tax cap. Mr. Simons announced that the proposed budget will preserve all academic offerings, maintain all extracurricular programs, provide mental health support for students, all within the NYS tax cap of 0.55%. He explained Proposition #2 is for the Bond Referendum (Capital Project) which proposes to borrow \$116 million to improve facilities and make repairs to the buildings. He explained the Capital Project funding is completely separate from the operating budget. Mr.

Simons stated the capital project is financed in phases and when a phase is finalized, the District will be reimbursed from the State for eligible expenses at 72%. He reported about 84% of the project will be eligible for that reimbursement. The Superintendent also stated that the Capital Reserve approved by the voters in 2022, would also be used for the project, offsetting some of the financing costs. Mr. Simons announced that the timing of the project is optimal, because some current debt is falling off, which will make the project tax neutral to the local taxpayers.

Mr. Simons explained Proposition #3 relates to the purchase of eight buses through a Bus Purchase Reserve, established by voter authorization in 2018. He explained that using the reserves saves the District from borrowing, because the money has already been set aside. He explained the requirement to purchase EV buses beginning in 2027, and reported the District has applied for grants to help fund those buses. He stated that if the money is provided, the District may decide to purchase two EV buses.

The Superintendent reviewed a listing of information in the public hearing notice:

Location and time of the public hearing

Availability of budget documents

Voting date and propositions

Election of Board members process

Voting districts and polling sites

Voter registration, inspection of register

Qualifications of voters

Absentee Ballots

Mr. Simons said the public hearing notice was published in local newspapers four times within the forty-five days preceding the vote and made available on the website.

The Superintendent reviewed the availability of budget packets after May 8, 2024, during regular business hours in all school buildings, at local public libraries, and on the District website.

Mr. Simons announced the voting date as Tuesday, May 21, 2024, between the hours of 7:00 AM and 9:00 PM. Voting will be conducted to fill three Board of Education seats. Voting will be by the electronic voting machines. Three propositions are up for consideration. The first relates to the proposed 2023-2024 budget, the second involves the Bond Proposition for the Capital Project, and the third is the proposed purchase of school buses.

Four polling sites will be available to District voters dependent upon town of residence. Residents of the Towns of Sand Lake and Chatham and residents with Nassau mailing addresses will vote at the Donald P. Sutherland Elementary School. Residents of the Town of Schodack without Nassau mailing addresses will vote at Green Meadow Elementary School. Residents of the Town of East Greenbush will vote at the Howard L. Goff Middle School. Residents of the Town of North Greenbush will vote at the Bell Top Elementary School.

Voter registration is required in order to vote in the May 21, 2024 election. Individuals may register at the Rensselaer or Columbia County Board of Elections or at the District Clerk's Office on regular business days. Individuals will be deemed as registered if they voted in the school election in the last four years. The register of voters will be open for inspection from May 15, 2024 to May 20, 2024 during regular business hours at the Office of the District Clerk.

Mr. Simons explained that qualified voters are citizens of the United States, eighteen years of age or older, a resident of the District for 30 days preceding the day of the vote, and registered to vote.

Absentee ballots became available on and after April 23, 2024. An application is required and is available at the Office of the District Clerk and online at www.egcsd.org. The due dates for applications are Tuesday, May 14, by mail and Monday, May 20, 2024, if in person. After the application is received, an absentee ballot is issued to the voter with a return envelope. Ballots are due back by 5:00 p.m. on May 21 at the Office of the District Clerk.

Absentee ballots may only be issued to voters with a valid reason such as hospitalization, physical disability or illness, business commitments out of the area, vacation, or incarceration. Individuals with questions on absentee ballots or desiring to view the absentee ballot list should contact the District Clerk.

Early Mail Voting is a new option available to everyone. If anyone is interested an application is available with the same timelines as the absentee ballots.

The Superintendent explained that if the budget is passed, it will be enacted effective July 1, 2023. If the budget is not passed, the Board has three options, including submitting the same or revised budget to the voters or adopting a contingent budget.

Mr. Temple asked Mr. Simons to explain how the money in the general fund and the money financed for the capital project differ.

Mr. Simons explained that approval of the Bond Proposition is important, because if the proposal is defeated, the cost of repairs will need to come from the general fund and will not be aidable. The Superintendent explained that if the District gets public approval, the plans can be submitted to the State Education Department and the District will receive 72% reimbursement for the project. He stated it would be best if the money needed for repairs can be financed, so it will not affect the programs and services that the community has come to expect.

Mr. Buono stated the amount of work identified as needed in the building condition survey is much higher, but the Board, Administrators, along with the architect and construction firms have worked to pinpoint the priority items needed to best benefit the students, staff and the community.

Mr. Dunn explained the capital project addresses the long term health of the District. He stated it is really important for the community to support not only the operating budget, but also the capital project, because many of the projects have been needed for years and the costs of construction are not going down. Mr. Dunn thanked everyone for moving the District forward in a very sound financial manner.

B. Introduction of Candidates for the Board of Education

The Superintendent said that five candidates for the Board of Education submitted petitions with the required number of signatures by April 22, 2024. Mr. Simons announced the five candidates running for three Board seats: Incumbent Board member, Cheryl Kennedy, Incumbent, JoAnn Taylor, Samantha Phillips, Kimberly Turner, and Catherine Van Orden .

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None at this time.

6. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS

None at this time.

7. CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING

Motion by Mr. Temple, Second by Ms. Taylor to Close the Public Hearing

Vote: Ayes- 9, Nays- 0

Motion carried

Time: 7:49 P.M.