

**EAST GREENBUSH CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING- PUBLIC HEARING
TUESDAY, MAY 6, 2025
Columbia High School Auditorium**

1. A. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: Ms. Steinbach- 7:00 P.M.

B. ATTENDANCE

	Present	Absent	Arrival
Mr. Buono	X		
Mr. Mann		X	
Ms. O'Brien			X 7:16 p.m.
Ms. Phillips	X		
Ms. Skumurski		X	
Ms. Steinbach	X		
Mr. Temple		X	
Ms. Turner	X		
Mr. Van Orden	X		

Also Attending

Mr. Simons	X
Mr. Mahar	X
Mr. Mulligan	X
Mr. Stiles	X

Student Council

Kole Hardy	X
Natalie Krisanda	X

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. THE CALL OF THE MEETING

Ms. Steinbach states that the Board of Education of the East Greenbush Central School District hereby waives the reading of the public hearing notice for the May 20, 2025 vote.

4. PRESENTATIONS

A. Proposed 2025-2026 School Budget - Superintendent Jeffrey P. Simons

Mr. Simons gave an overview of the adopted budget emphasizing that the budget prioritizes maintaining all programs that contribute to the District's recognized excellence, despite facing a significant budget gap. He said the proposed \$115.1 Million budget preserves all current programs, including academic offerings, electives, mental health and emotional supports (including additional social workers and counseling programs), team teaching at the middle school, English as a New Language (ENL) services, maintaining class sizes, career technical education, AP/college credit courses, and extracurricular activities. The Superintendent noted the proposal includes a 4.8% tax levy increase, which exceeds the New York State tax cap by approximately 1.6%. This increase is deemed necessary to close a projected \$6.5 million budget gap through a combination of the tax levy increase, expenditure reductions, and appropriation of available reserves. Mr. Simons explained that historically, the Board has kept average annual tax levy increases low (1.17% over the last five years, 0.51% excluding next year's projection), and said an estimated impact on an average homeowner in East Greenbush (based on a \$400,000 home) would be an approximate increase of \$20.88 per month.

Mr. Simons then spoke about the bus purchase propositions, explaining that these buses will be fully paid for using the existing bus purchase reserve, saving on borrowing costs. He stated the District proposes purchasing 8 traditional gas and diesel buses (4 large, 2 28-passenger, 2 wheelchair accessible) and 2 zero-emission (EV) buses. This is in anticipation of a New York State mandate that prohibits the purchase of gas/diesel buses by 2027 and their operation by 2035. He noted that grant monies have been applied for to help reduce the higher cost of these EV buses. Next, Mr. Simons discussed the proposal to establish a new bus purchase reserve. He explained that the current reserve has reached its maximum, and remaining funds must be transferred to establish a new one to continue this cost-saving practice for future bus purchases.

Additionally, Mr. Simons reviewed the key revenue sources, local property taxes, PILOT agreements, and State Aid. He then explained that employees benefits has been the largest driver of expense increases for next year (approximately 70% of the increase), largely due to skyrocketing prescription drug costs. The Superintendent said to address the budget gap the District plans to appropriate \$7.6 million from reserves. He also explained the significant expenditure reductions that have been made through attrition, some layoffs, and postponing equipment purchases, eliminating some software purchases and contractual expenses totaling \$1.1 million.

The Superintendent reviewed the District's priorities:

Portrait of a Graduate: Emphasizes five key skills for all students: confident learners, effective communicators, adaptable, empathetic, and critical thinkers. These skills are fostered through both classroom instruction and extracurricular activities.

Board & District Goals:

- **Future Driven:** 94% 4-year graduation rate, investment in technology (Chromebooks), early intervention and literacy development (science of reading), expanded career and technical education programs (Questar 3, Tech Valley High, STEM high school at Hudson Valley).
- **Focused:** Continued support for mental health and social-emotional needs (social workers, counseling programs, mental health clinic in high school/middle school).
- **Safe and Belonging:** Emphasis on student safety, belonging, and valuing diversity (multicultural fair, student voice groups like "Be the Change," school climate survey)

B. Introduction of Candidates for the Board of Education

Mr. Simons explained that this year, there are four open seats: three for three-year terms and one for a one-year term, due to the resignation of Mr. Mann. The three highest vote-getters receive the three-year terms, and the fourth highest receives the one-year term.

He then introduced the candidates:

Ms. Emily Steinbach- current Board vice president

Mr. Rob Panasci- district parent and member of Education Foundation

Mr. Robert Shane, district parent

Mr. Rob Marchiony- district parent involved with community youth sports programs.

Ms. Cyndi Herron- educator retiring from Questar III

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None at this time

6. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS

Mr. Buono asked if the District would be holding a "Meet the Candidates" forum to introduce the candidates to the community.

Ms. Steinbach answered that the forum would take place on May 14, 2025 at 7:00P.M. in the Goff Middle School cafeteria. She said all candidates have received information about the forum and were invited to attend.

7. CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING

Motion by Mr. Buono, Second by Ms. Turner to close the Public Hearing

Vote: Ayes- 6, Nays- 0

Motion carried

Time: 7:51 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Reamer

Superintendent Secretary

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Pangburn

District Clerk