

**NORTH BELLMORE UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
Town of Hempstead, North Bellmore, New York 11710  
Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Education  
May 22, 2018

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Minutes of the special meeting of the Board of Education, North Bellmore Union Free School District, Town of Hempstead, Nassau County, State of New York, held at the Martin Avenue School of said district on May 22, 2018.

Present: Peter Mayo, President  
Melissa Cmar-Grote, Vice President  
JoAnn DeLauter  
John Ferrara  
Nina Lanci

Also present: Marie Testa, Superintendent of Schools  
Carol Eskew, Deputy Superintendent  
Mark Schissler, Assistant Superintendent for Business  
Janet Pollitt, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction  
Jason Fischetti, Direct of Technology, Chief Information Officer  
Larry Tenenbaum, District Counsel  
Jeanne Canavan, Board Secretary

**CALL TO ORDER** The meeting was called to order at 7:33 p.m. Mr. Schissler led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance. Mrs. Lanci then read the District's Mission Statement.

**MOMENT OF SILENCE** Mr. Mayo called for a Moment of Silence for the victims of the recent school shootings in Texas and Florida.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION** Mrs. Testa gave a summary of the May 15 budget vote and detailed results of the transportation propositions. (presentation on the district website.)

Looking ahead at the budget revote on June 19, Mrs. Testa explained that the Board has three options:

Option 1 - To put up the same budget for a revote, with no modifications.

Option 2 - Adopt a contingency budget

Option 3 - Modify the budget and hold a revote

Mrs. Testa reported that she is recommending that the Board Education adopt a modified budget and hold a revote on June 19. The revised budget is \$75,000 lower than the original budget due to a reduction in expenditures that are related to the district's insurance costs and BOCES rental fees. She stated that the former transportation referendums would not appear on the ballot. All other aspects of the revised budget remain the same as presented to the public on May 16. Mrs. Testa stated that if the budget is defeated a second time, the district is required to adopt a contingency or austerity budget.

**BOE DISCUSSION** Mrs. DeLauter asked for clarity on the proposal to modify the budget.

Mrs. Testa stated that the budget will remain the same, except for the reduction of \$75,000 in expenditures.

Mrs. Lanci asked about enrollment status.

Mr. Schissler stated that according to the demographic study, the projected enrollment will remain constant, with the exception of a slight decrease at Dinkelmeyer and an increase in Saw Mill Road School.

Mr. Ferrara asked, if the budget passes on the second time, will the taxpayers receive the refund check.

Mrs. Testa said they would.

Mrs. DeLauter asked how many years is the Library loan incorporated in the budget going forward.

Mr. Schissler stated that we are responsible for the next 15 years for the principal and interest. He indicated that it will have no bearing on the tax rate in the years ahead.

Mr. Mayo questioned the BOCES payment.

Mr. Schissler explained that the \$1 million payment will be divided among the districts in Nassau County. He added that the \$35,000 should stay stable.

Mrs. Lanci asked if we are getting any additional State Aid.

Mr. Schissler indicated that we would not.

Mrs. Testa stated that she and members of her administration team, along with Mr. Mayo and Mrs. Grote, met with MaryEllen Elia, Commissioner of Education, Senator John Brooks, and Regent Tilles to discuss how North Bellmore about the decrease in state aid and the fact that portions of the state aid formula are not keeping pace with the actual expenditures. Mrs. Testa shared that state aid has decreased from 21% to 17% in just five years. Mrs. Testa stated that as an outcome of their conversation, Commission Elia agreed to sponsor a bill with Senator Brooks that would restructure the current way taxes are collected from taxpayers. Mrs. Testa explained that North Bellmore residents pay approximately 94% of the school tax for North Bellmore since our town does not contain many commercial

**BOE DISCUSSION**

properties. Additionally, Mrs. Testa explained that North Bellmore appears wealthier than it really is because the assessed evaluation of the homes increased significantly while the Combined Wealth Ratio is average (equal with the State). Mrs. Testa stated that she will continue to have conversation with our state educational leaders and government officials about state aid.

Mr. Mayo stated that there has been many questions about the transportation propositions. He wanted to make it clear that the community, not the Board or the administration, brought the propositions to the district.

Mr. Schissler stated that under state law the community has a right to bring propositions to the Board of Education. If the proposition meets the legal requirements, the Board of Education has no choice but to put in on the ballot.

Mrs. DeLauter clarified that the district did put up Proposition C.

Mrs. Testa stated that we were advised by New York State School Boards Association and our attorney to include the proposition C in order to preserve the option of keeping the current transportation policy unchanged.

Mrs. Lanci asked Mr. Schissler to review the qualifications to vote and how to register to vote.

**VISITORS**

The following community members addressed the Board of Education on the 2018-19 budget:

Mrs. Haugh (Harding St.) asked if the \$75,000 can be kept in our budget and be used to keep one of the excessed teachers.

Mr. Schissler indicated that it is not enough money for a teaching position in North Bellmore. It is being recommended to the Board to use the \$75,000 to reduce the tax levy.

Mrs. Fleming (Sycamore Ave., Merrick) referred to the PowerPoint presentation and asked what reductions will be made in 2019-20.

Mrs. Testa stated that the reductions are not decided yet, however, the administrators are looking at every line item to decide which reduction would affect the students the least.

**VISITORS**

Mrs. Callahan (Willard St.) asked what will be "lost" if we go to a contingency budget.

Mrs. Testa advised that under NYS Law when a board of education adopts a contingent budget, anything that is not considered core programs, related art programs, and absolutely necessary to operate and maintain the educational programs can be cut. The proposed budget would be further reduced by an additional \$1.2 million resulting in deep cuts in instructional and co-curricular programs and the elimination of teachers and staff.

Mrs. Wildeman (Sterling St.) asked how much the revote will cost the district taxpayers, because the budget did not pass the first time.

Mr. Schissler stated that it would cost approximately \$10,000.

Mrs. Margaronis (Arthur La.) asked how the cuts affect the children's time spent in physical education.

Mrs. Testa stated that physical education is a required mandate and would be kept the same.

Mr. Zucker (Bellmore Rd.) ask if the modified budget will be presented on the ballot as piercing the tax cap, and will that be the case for 15 years, including the Library loan.

Mr. Schissler that the modified budget represents a tax levy of 3.2 percent, does not pierce the tax cap, and includes the Library loan. The Library loan has no effect on the budget-to-budget percentage going forward, as the principal and interest will be the same for the next 15 years.

Mrs. Campbell (McKinley Ave.) asked what categories are included in General Support.

Mr. Schissler stated that General Support includes expenses of:

- The Board of Education and association fees
- Office of the Superintendent and association fees
- Finance – Business Office (Payroll, Accounts Receivable, Auditor services
- Staffing- Legal services and the Human Resources area
- Facilities Department – custodial and maintenance, utilities, and supplies

BOCES Administrative costs and all insurance costs.

**VISITORS**

Mrs. Yepez asked if the budget decreases by \$75,000, why can't it be put back into the budget to avoid losing programs or teachers.

Mr. Schissler stated that is not enough to cover a full staff member and bringing back a program. We will be compounding expenses. It is being recommended to reduce the budget, as our costs are reduced. This will bring the tax levy from 3.4 percent to 3.2 percent. Mr. Schissler added that the budget is good for the children and good for the community members. Mr. Schissler stated that each year we should see a savings in the BOCES category going forward.

Mr. Mayo stated that the budget to budget will decrease from 1.98 percent to 1.85 percent next year.

Mrs. Goedel (Martin Ave.) asked how the district plans to get the word out to the entire community about the revote in light of misinformation put forth by local media.

Mrs. Testa reported that she has reached out to Mr. Hildebrand at Newsday and the media. The district is preparing a revote budget newsletter that will sent out the community within the next week.

Mrs. Flanagan (Camp Ave.) asked if the budget fails, will UPK still be offered. Mr. Schissler indicated that it will be offered, as it is separate from the budget.

Mrs. Adipietro (Pacific St.) asked what will be cut, if the budget does not pass and will that information be included in the newsletter.

Mr. Mayo stated that it will not be included. The Board does not want to use a scare tactic; however, the cuts will affect the children.

Mrs. Testa stated that all expenditures will be looked at line by line to see where the budget can be cut by \$1.2 million. For example: technology teachers, math leaders, kindergarten monitors, instructional coaches, behavior specialist, paraprofessionals, CSE chairperson, Math AIS, maintenance, cleaners, etc.

Mr. Schissler indicated there are very specific limitations on expenditures under a contingency budget. Any expenses incurred outside of the school day are not included-- such as use of facilities. It could cause organizations to pay a district facilities usage fee. It would also prohibit the purchase of any new equipment.

MINUTES OF THE NORTH BELLMORE UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
SPECIAL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING May 22, 2018

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**VISITORS**

Mr. Mayo added that a contingency budget would not just affect next year. It could take 10 years to reinstate programs once they have been eliminated.

Mrs. Addeo (Regina Ave.) asked when the public will know exactly what the revote budget will look like.

Mrs. Testa indicated that the Board will address the revote budget momentarily.

There being no further questions, the Board proceeded to the following resolution:

**FINANCE**

Mrs. DeLauter moved that the Board of Education authorize the North Bellmore School District to expend the sum in the General Fund Appropriation in the total amount of \$57,153,137 for the 2018/2019 school year. Mr. Ferrara seconded and the motion was carried 5-0.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion made by Mrs. DeLauter, seconded by Mr. Ferrara, and carried 5-0, the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Canavan  
Board Secretary

Mark Schissler  
District Clerk