

WILLIAMS BAY SCHOOL
BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Wednesday, December 21, 2022

Board Members Present: J. Lothian, K. Nelson, P. Peyer, E. Nichols, M. Schneider
Absent: None
Administration Present: District Administrator Dr. W. White, Business Manager J. Frederick
Guests: T. Hajewski, E. Johnson

I. CALL TO ORDER

President J. Lothian called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

II. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Discuss Items Related to a Potential Referendum

Mr. Lothian framed the discussion with four questions:

1. Does the District need to go to referendum?
2. Why does the District need to go to referendum?
3. If the District needs to go to referendum, when?
4. Should the referendum be recurring or non-recurring?

The board discussed these items in order. Mrs. Frederick shared budget projections for the next four years. Dr. White reiterated that projections show that the 2024-2025 budget projection shows approximately a 1.5-million-dollar deficit. To absorb this deficit and future deficits, the district would need to make significant reductions to staffing and programs. These reductions would have a tremendous impact on students and staff and hamper the district's ability to provide a high-quality education to students. Board asked questions to understand if a referendum was the best option for the district.

Mrs. Frederick addressed why the district's budget is facing projected deficits. She indicated that declining enrollment, and state funding were the primary factors. Dr. White spoke to increased costs for supplies, insurance, and services due to inflation. He spoke to shortage of candidates and increased in staffing costs. Dr. White and Mr. Hajewski spoke about the state funding formula, stating that if a district has declining enrollment, it is inevitable that a district will need to go to referendum. Dr. White also shared that our local legislators have stated that if school district's need more money, then they need to go to their local taxpayers in the form of a referendum

The Board and administrators discussed if the district should go to referendum in the Spring of 2023 or Spring of 2024. The board members discussed the current tenor of the community due to increases in on property tax bills that were just sent to homeowners.

The village portion and the school district portion of the tax bill in Williams Bay showed a significant increase. The school district portion for the other municipalities also showed an increase. Mrs. Frederick shared the reasons for these increases which included transfer of service, fund 80, defeasance, and property reassessments. Board members shared their concerns regarding a referendum in the spring of 2023 and waiting until 2024. There were several pros and cons shared regarding both. The Board discussed the challenges of passing a referendum under the current circumstances and the work that would need to be done to inform the community of the needs of the district. The Board and administration discussed using the Donovan Group to support the marketing of a potential referendum.

The Board and administrative team discussed the differences between a recurring and non-recurring referendum. Mr. Hajewski shared information about both and the trends regarding referendums across the state and region. The board members asked questions, so they understand the impact on taxpayers for both types of referendum. Based on projections board members discussed amounts for a recurring referendum and years and amounts for a non-recurring referendum.

Based on discussions the discussion an action item regarding a referendum in the Spring of 2023 will not be on the January regular monthly agenda on January 9, 2023. Dr. White will reach out to the Donovan Group for more information and an appropriate timeline for a referendum in the Spring of 2024.

III. ADJOURN

At 6:37 pm., P. Peyer / E. Nichols motion and second to adjourn the meeting, carried 5-0.

Ed Nichols, Clerk
EN: 12/26/2022