

March 4, 2015

The regular Budget Workshop of the Board of Education of the Freeport Union Free School District was held on Wednesday, March 4, 2015, in the cafeteria of the Atkinson School. Michael Pomerico, President of the Board of Education, called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. He then led the pledge of allegiance.

Those present were: Mr. Michael Pomerico, President
Mr. Anthony J. Miller, Vice President (arrived 7:59 pm)
Mr. Ronald Ellerbe, Trustee
Ms. Vilma Lancaster, Trustee
Ms. Debra Mulé, Trustee

Absent were: none

Also present were: Dr. Kishore Kuncham, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Mary Bediako, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel,
Special Projects & District Clerk
Mr. Gerard Poole, Assistant Superintendent for
Curriculum and Instruction
Mr. Louis S. Frontario, Assistant Superintendent for
Business
Mr. Michael Singleton, Executive Director of Operations

Also absent were: none

The number of people in the audience at the opening of the meeting was 10.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Kuncham welcomed everyone to the meeting and made the following remarks:

- Congratulations to Mr. Ellerbe who has been chosen as "Advocate of the Year" by New York State School Boards Association. This is a very prestigious award. It is equivalent to being chosen as the "Board Member of the Year" for the entire State. The award presentation will be on March 15, 2015 at the Capital Conference of the State School Boards in Albany.
- The Black History Month celebration at Freeport High School on February 26, 2015 was amazing. The performances were very moving and touching. Thanks to all the students, teachers, Principals and particularly Anne Marie Hudley Simmons, Director for the Arts, for the wonderful program.

Advocacy Events:

- Superintendents in the Senatorial District 8 met with Senators Venditto and Flanagan. It was a very good meeting where we discussed various issues confronting the school districts.

- Will be chairing a Legislative breakfast for REFIT on March 6, 2015. Both State and Federal legislators are invited to this breakfast.
- Legislative Forum is being held by PTAs from Baldwin, Long Beach, Oceanside, Rockville Centre and Freeport on March 18, 2015.
- New York State lobbying day in Albany will be March 16, 2015.

Dr. Kuncham announced that the Freeport Educational Foundation's first fundraiser will be on April 29, 2015 at the Coral House. The Foundation's Website is also functioning. The web address is feffreeport.org. Dr. Kuncham explained that the Foundation is an independent organization with its own Board of Directors. However, by charter the Superintendent of Schools and Board of Education President are on the Board of Directors as non-voting Members. Dr. Kuncham explained that FEF is a separate independent organization whose purpose is to support of Freeport Public Schools.

Overview of the Proposed 2015-16 Budget

Dr. Kuncham reviewed the Budget process which began in October, and as in the past years, it included all stakeholders, i.e., principals, department chairs, directors and teachers. He stated that, on February 11, 2015, the district presented a brief overview of the proposed budget and gave three numbers:

- 1) Budget-to-budget increase of 3.19% or 5.1 million dollars,
- 2) Tax Levy cap of 1.51% or \$1.3 million and
- 3) Budget gap \$3.8 million.

He explained that at that time there were still emerging numbers that could affect the bottom line such as retirement system rates, actual teacher retirements, and BOCES tuition rates. He was happy to announce that the budget to budget increase came down 2.94% or \$4.8 million and \$3.5 million budget gap. The tax levy cap remains at 1.51%. The goal is to stay at 1.51% or close to it. However, this number may change slightly depending on the State aid information which should have been released but is being held hostage by the Governor. He urged everyone to lobby hard for the release of the State-aid runs, and the elimination of the GEA.

Presentation of the proposed budget Component Parts:

The Superintendent stated that by law, the proposed budget is divided into three components: Administrative Component, Program Component and Capital Component. He explained that the bulk of the increases in the proposed budget are in the Program Component and that the increases in the Administrative and Capital Components are insignificant. Dr. Kuncham then introduced Mr. Louis S. Frontario, Assistant Superintendent for Business, to present the component parts. Mr. Frontario gave a power point presentation as attached.

The Superintendent informed the public that the proposed budget included some value-added items. In the budget, we have restored some of the electives lost in the recent past years and also added new ones. Some of these value added courses include:

- Technology in our Society (expanding on the new Technology by Design which was introduced this year)
- Writing Workshop
- Increase in Dual Enrollment Courses
- Virtual Enterprise
- Special Education Self Contained Class
- New AP courses – Spanish Literature, Environmental Science and Art History

Included also in the budget is a provision to bring back Boys JV Volleyball which was lost in the previous year.

Questions from the Public

The public was given the opportunity to address the Board of Education. Each speaker was allowed to address the Board for four minutes on the Budget. The Board and administration addressed the comments from the public.

Adjournment

At 9:26 p.m. with no other business, on a motion by Mr. Ellerbe, and seconded by Ms. Mulé, the Board adjourned the meeting.

The vote was unanimous, Ellerbe, Lancaster, Miller, Mulé and Pomerico.

Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Action meeting of the Board of Education will be on March 11, 2015, 7:30 p.m., at Caroline G. Atkinson Intermediate School.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary R. Bediako, Ed. D.
District Clerk