

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
HALF HOLLOW HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL MEETING OF JANUARY 24, 2012**

APPROVED AS WRITTEN – FEBRUARY 6, 2012 – OFFICIAL COPY

- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jeanine Bottenus, President
James Ptucha, Vice President
Diana Acampora
Betty DeSabato
Eric Geringswald
Frank Grimaldi
Paul Peller, M.D.
- MEMBERS ABSENT:** None
- ALSO PRESENT:** Kelly Fallon, Superintendent
Anne Marie Marrone Caliendo, Assistant Superintendent for
Finance and Facilities
Patrick Harrigan, Assistant Superintendent for District-wide
Administration
John O’Farrell, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education
Mary Rettaliata, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education
Rosanne Marini, District Clerk and Guests
- CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting, held at High School East, was called to order by
Mrs. Bottenus at 7:10 p.m.
- PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Mrs. Bottenus commenced the meeting with the Pledge of
Allegiance.
- OPENING REMARKS:** Mrs. Bottenus thanked everyone for coming this evening and
taking an interest in the budget process. Tonight’s public forum
has been designed to provide information to educate as many
stakeholders in the Half Hollow Hills community regarding the
development of the 2012-2013 school budget. Tonight is a
milestone in that it is January and we have an outline of the budget
to present to you. During the last several months it has been our
goal to develop a budget that is both responsible to the children of
the District as well as to the taxpayers. In trying to adhere to the
new 2% tax cap guidelines, on top of increased mandated
expenditures, we are forced to make very difficult decisions and
are faced with making approximately \$7 million in cuts. None of
these cuts come easy as we are already so lean as our budget has
been extremely efficient as a result of prior year’s effective

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budgeting practices. We have received statewide accolades regarding fiscal management, recognition of our low student to administration ratio, as well as our ability to work with our nine bargaining units. I would like to make you aware that last evening at the Board of Education meeting, we approved a memorandum of agreement with members of the Administrators' Association opening their contract and agreeing to a 2 year hard salary freeze. Nothing presented this evening is final, however, we feel it is our duty to present to you where we are in the process and ask that you listen to the presentation. We will then open the floor and are committed to staying this evening to answer all of your questions. Mr. Bottenus turned the meeting over to Mrs. Kelly Fallon, Superintendent of Schools.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REMARKS:

Mrs. Fallon welcomed everyone to this evening's Community Budget Forum. In the spring of 2011, legislation was passed that imposed a 2% property tax levy cap on all New York State school districts. This dramatically changed the budget preparation process. We have held two forums to date, explaining the tax levy cap to the community, and this evening we will share with you where we are in the process of developing the 2012-2013 school budget. Mrs. Fallon explained that the budget process has changed. Historically, the District first reviewed and developed programs; analyzed expenses and revenues, making sure the outcome was a triple A education for the students of Half Hollow Hills. The 2012-2013 budget development sequence required us to first analyze expenses and fixed revenues in addressing the tax levy cap legislation, and then focus on maintaining all programs making sure the outcome would remain the same, that being a triple A education for all Half Hollow Hills students. So, in making a decision whether the District should exceed the cap, a careful review of our work has been ongoing since the fall.

At this point, we have developed a *preliminary* budget of \$221,900,000, which is a budget to budget increase of 2.75% - the lowest budget to budget increase in Half Hollow Hills in 15 years. Mrs. Fallon's recommendation to the Board, at this junction in the budget development process, is a 2.75% year over year increase with a tax levy increase of 2.37%, complying with the new property tax levy law requiring a simple majority to pass.

Mrs. Fallon thanked the community for their attention this evening. She said that a well informed community member is our students' biggest ally.

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Mrs. Fallon introduced Ms. Anne Marie Marrone Caliendo, *Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Facilities*.

2012-2013 BUDGET DEVELOPMENT:

Ms. Marrone Caliendo presented a detailed presentation on the 2012-2013 budget development and how the budgeting process has changed. Ms. Marrone-Caliendo explained in detail the following:

- Determining the “Cap”
- Closing the Gap
- Maintaining the Quality of Our Programs
- Making a Decision on the 2012-2013 Budget

Handouts were provided to the audience to allow the community to follow the presentation.

COMMENTS RELATED

TO THE PRESENTATION: Unidentified Speaker complimented the Board of Education and Administration on this evening’s presentation. He said he is concerned about transparency and asked about individual checks.

Unidentified Speaker had questions about the Administrator’s Association salary freeze.

Sabrina Frazer had questions about the super majority and the numbers presented this evening.

Sharon Pesner asked about the Reserved Fund Balance and asked about positions being excessed because of declining enrollment as opposed to the budget.

Unidentified Speaker (H.S. East Senior) asked how the District can maintain its theater program.

Unidentified Speaker asked about the superintendent’s salary.

Unidentified Speaker asked why the number of administrators stay the same while we have a decline in enrollment.

Carole Catapano asked if there were to be a school closing would administrators be excessed?

Stacey Manilow asked for the specifics of the positions being excessed.

Unidentified Speaker questioned the vendors that the District uses.

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Michael Dyckman asked if the memorandum of agreement with the Administrators' Association was available to the public and asked if there was a retirement incentive being offered this year.

Unidentified Speaker asked what law states that excessing is done by seniority and asked what percentage are we using of the fund balance.

Unidentified Speaker asked if the super majority would pass the budget.

Allen Kovesdy asked how much money was saved by the Administrators' Association salary freeze; and how much money will it cost when the teachers go back to their increase.

Joseph Tantillo thanked the Administration and the Board of Education for putting together this presentation. Asked what the budget would look like without the cuts.

Unidentified Speaker is in favor of going for a super majority.

Gina Bitsimis asked how many teaching positions would have been saved if the Teachers' Association would have opened their contract.

Mrs. Fallon stated that if anyone in the community has any further questions pertaining to the budget process to please contact her office, any Assistant Superintendent's office, or the Board of Education.

Mrs. Fallon thanked the community for being with us this evening.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosanne Marini, District Clerk