

# ANNUAL MEETING of the SCHOOL DISTRICT of REEDSBURG

Official notice of meeting given and posted.

August 16, 2010

Central Office Building Board Room

8:00 p.m.

## Present:

Board of Education: Steve Balda, Heather Scully, John Pearson, Gary Woolever, LuAnn Brey, Mike Hartje, Jim Wieczorek  
Administration: Tom Benson, Patrick Ruddy, Jeff Bindl, Linda Bruun, Rob Taylor, Matt Terry, Bryan Yager, Casey Campbell, Clint Beyer, Paul Bierman, Jenny Gehri, Tammy Hayes  
Media: Jeff Seering, Reedsburg Independent; Tom Demmin, The New Radio Group; Ken Leiviska, Reedsburg Times Press; Tommy Lee Bychinski, Reedsburg Utility  
Others: Barbara Sand - see list for others in attendance (total attendance – approximately 118)

## — Budget Hearing —

Mr. Balda, president of the Board of Education, called the Budget Hearing to order at 8:02 p.m. Approximately 116 district residents and 2 non-residents were in attendance. Following welcoming remarks and introductions Mr. Balda reviewed the materials distributed and noted the rules of order for this hearing. Mr. Balda called on Mr. Ruddy, director of business services, to review the proposed budget.

Mr. Ruddy reviewed the Budget Summary, identifying an expenditure decrease of 1.25 percent to \$31,874,575 (all funds) and revenues of \$31,984,222 creating a surplus of \$109,647. The proposed tax levy for 2010-2011 is \$13,423,424, a 4.09 percent increase over 2009-2010. The 2010-2011 tax rate for the School District of Reedsburg is predicted to be \$9.21, a \$0.23 increase from 2009-2010. This means that the taxpayer is predicted to pay, for school purposes, \$9.21 for each \$1,000 of equalized property valuation, which he or she possesses. The tax rate last year was \$8.98.

The proposed budget included a reduction in expenses of \$1,367,367. This is in addition to the reduction of expenses in 2008-2009 of \$416,675 and in 2009-2010 of \$1,070,000. **To date we have made a total of over \$2.8 million dollars in cuts.**

Mr. Ruddy stated that the preliminary budget is based on a number of factors (enrollment figures, finalization of property values, receipt of the final aid certification, etc.). Final numbers are due in October and the Board will review and finalize the 2010-2011 budget at that time.

There were no questions or comments regarding the proposed budget and the Hearing was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

## — Annual Meeting —

Mr. Balda called the Annual Meeting to order at 8:18 p.m. and called for nominations for a temporary chairman.

Motion by Joyce Johnson to nominate Steve Balda for temporary chairman.

Motion by Fred Gawronski to nominate Phil Craker for temporary chairman.

Mr. Balda requested a paper ballot. Paper ballots were distributed, collected and counted by Paul Bodendein and Fritz Cunningham. Steve Balda received a total of 43 votes and Phil Craker received a total of 68 votes.

Phil Craker assumed the chair and called on District Administrator Thomas Benson for a district report.

Mr. Benson began by welcoming everyone and thanking them for coming. Though we are facing some incredibly challenging times, the start of a new school year is always very special.

You have heard from Mr. Ruddy regarding the financial condition of our district, which continues to be of concern. We can all be proud of the fact that the work of the district continues to focus on preserving quality programs and a strong staff as we make decisions aimed at serving the needs of students. Clearly the formula used for funding public schools in Wisconsin does not work for all public schools and, until that changes, we continue to face great challenges. Largely due to that broken formula, we were forced to reduce or eliminate programs and services in order to bring forward a budget with a slight surplus for this year. The current economic crisis has magnified our challenge. Throughout the development of this budget, our staff, our Administrative TEAM, and our School Board have maintained a commitment to our children. While some cuts may have been less difficult than others, no cuts have been easy. The responsibilities we face in this business seem to grow larger every day. As our workforce is reduced, more will be asked of our administrators, teachers, support staff and our partners, including volunteers, local and area businesses and of course the parents of our students. Even with this extra effort, the educational experience in Reedsburg will clearly be different. We have cut nearly \$3M over the past three years and it is simply impossible to impose this kind of reduction without some significant impact. Unless something changes that allows us to generate additional revenue, the budget forecast clearly demonstrates that we will be forced to make further cuts for next year and the years that follows. While some of this information can be overwhelming, let me share with you that there is plenty to be excited about. We are working hard to ensure that our faculty and staff are well prepared to address the needs of each child. We have a strong and committed team who will fill each day with quality learning experiences. We are making efforts to strengthen our partnerships with parents. This school year will be filled with some incredible teaching and some invaluable learning.

The work of our facilities, food service and transportation departments continues to be very good. In these days where every dollar needs to be stretched to the fullest, our supervisors continue to do a wonderful job of balancing quality with fiscal responsibility. However, continued budget cuts will cause a decline in the overall condition of our buildings and our buses. We need to maintain a long-range focus on these needs.

Our Administrative Team continues to work hard to move the district forward. Here are a couple areas of priority for the administrative staff:

1. We will continue our effort to have the results from a variety of assessment tools guide the district's work to strengthen the practices of our teachers and expand the opportunities for students;
2. We will increase our effort to explore alternative educational experiences;
3. We will continue our commitment to help each child develop strong literacy skills; and
4. We will encourage creativity in an effort to find new ways to offer quality experiences for all children.

Though the rules have changed, we will continue to utilize every dollar we receive through the SAGE Program in an effort to help our youngest children get a strong start in school. In a similar way, though I want it to be clear that the stimulus money and the newly approved Education Jobs Fund money are designed to provide short-term relief, we will make good use of these and all available sources of revenue.

Though the cuts that were made to bring forward this budget were both significant and significantly disappointing, they were necessary. I am proud of the work done by our school board, our administrative team and our staff in the preparation and presentation of this budget. I encourage you to support it as well.

I would also like to share remarks regarding some developments that are currently underway.

Through collaborative efforts between the School District and the City of Reedsburg three projects are currently under way. A storm water retention basin is being expanded near Westside Elementary, which will help alleviate future flooding problems on the Westside of town. A new brick building has been constructed on our high school campus, which houses a new city well. New tennis courts are being constructed in the area between the Central Office Building and Reedsburg Area High School.

Please let it be clear that NO school district dollars are being spent on any of the above mentioned projects. The district will share in the ongoing cost for the maintenance of the tennis courts; however, construction costs are solely that of the city.

Finally, I want to say that I understand that there will be differing of opinions about the potential sale of some school property. In my opinion it would be shortsighted of us to think that the sale of any, or even all, of these properties is the answer to our financial condition. Our financial challenges are recurring and proceeds from the sale of property hold more of a one-time value. If the district decides to sell the forest for example, the money should be used for something that will provide lasting benefit to the children that we serve.

Again, thank you again for being here tonight.

#### Old Business - None

**New Business** – Phil Craker read each of the following resolutions that were presented for action and called for their adoption.

1. **Resolution – School Board Salaries:** **Be it resolved** by the electors of the School District of Reedsburg that school board members will be compensated at the rate of \$ 2,500 for the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

Motion by Pauline Brown, second by Ed Matthews. Motion carried by a voice vote.

2. **Resolution - Tax for Operation and Debt Service:** **Be it resolved** by the electors of the School District of Reedsburg that a tax be levied on all taxable property of the district for:

the General Fund expenditures in the amount of	\$ 11,347,034
and for Debt Service in the amount of	\$ 1,971,500
and for the Community Service Fund in the amount of	\$ 104,890
Total Proposed Levy to be	\$ 13,423,424

Motion by Barb Klang, second by Dana Westedt to approve the resolution as presented. Motion carried by a voice vote.

3. *Resolution – Sale of Property:* **Be it resolved** by the electors of the School District of Reedsburg that the District will have the authority to sell the properties listed below (prices yet to be determined):
- a. Rock Springs Elementary School, 306 Elm Street, Rock Springs, WI 53961
  - b. Ironton/LaValle Elementary School, 109 River Street, LaValle, WI 53941
  - c. Loganville Elementary School, S5864 Hwy. 23, Loganville, WI 53943
  - d. Romoren School Forest

Motion by Gene Wuest, second by Larry Mundth to vote on each property individually. Motion carried by a voice vote.

The following individuals addressed the board regarding the sale of any one, or a combination of all, of the properties listed above: Joyce Johnson, Ed Matthews, Mimi Wuest, Dorothy Sivam, Gene Wuest, Gary Williams, Jamie Busser, Julie Wenninger, Brian Pepper, Dale Dorow and Kristin Gesteland. In addition several comments were made from the floor.

Motion by Rich King, second by Gary Williams to not sell the Romoren School Forest.  
Following a lengthy discussion, motion carried by a voice vote.

Motion by Dorothy Sivam, second by Fred Gawronski to not sell Loganville Elementary School.  
Following further discussion motion carried by a voice vote.

Motion by Robert Valleck, second by Fred Gawronski to not sell Rock Springs Elementary School. A voice vote was inconclusive. Dana Westedt requested a show of hands. Motion defeated 19-69.

Motion by Jamie Busser, second by Ed Matthews to allow the sale of Rock Springs Elementary School contingent upon the School Board working with the Rock Springs Village Board on buyer approval.

A lengthy discussion followed and the motion was eventually defeated by a voice vote.

Motion by Calvin Brey, second by Kay Daley to allow the School Board to sell Rock Springs Elementary School. Motion carried by a voice vote.

Motion by Clinton Mihlbauer, second by Andrea Frand to not sell LaValle Elementary School. Motion carried by a voice vote.

4. *Resolution - Establish Annual Meeting Date:* **Be it resolved** by the electors of the School District of Reedsburg that the Annual Meeting date will be Monday, August 15, 2011.

Motion by Kevin Runde, second by Dana Westsedt. Motion carried by a voice vote.

There being no further business, motion by LuAnn Brey, second by Barb Sand to adjourn the Annual meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting was declared adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

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Gary Woolever, Clerk  
Barbara Sand, Recorder