

# ANNUAL MEETING of the SCHOOL DISTRICT of REEDSBURG

Official notice of meeting given and posted.

August 17, 2009

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 Wiczorek  
Administration: Tom Benson, Patrick Ruddy, Linda Bruun, Rob Taylor, Matt Terry, Bryan Yager, Casey Campbell, 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 64)

## — Budget Hearing —

Mr. Balda, president of the Board of Education, called the Budget Hearing to order at 8:02 p.m. Approximately 59 district residents and 5 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 increase of 0.51 percent to \$30,935,999 (all funds) and revenues of \$30,935,999 creating a balanced budget. The proposed tax levy for 2009-2010 is \$12,942,528, a 13.62 percent increase over 2008-2009. The 2009-2010 tax rate for the School District of Reedsburg is predicted to be \$9.42, a \$1.23 increase from 2008-2009. This means that the taxpayer is predicted to pay, for school purposes, \$9.42 for each \$1,000 of equalized property valuation, which he or she possesses. The tax rate last year was \$8.19.

The proposed balanced budget included a reduction in expenses of \$1,070,000. In the prior year we cut expenses by \$416,675. To date we have made a total of almost \$1.5 million dollars in cuts. In addition, our projected State Aid is decreasing by -\$977,796 or 6.86% less than last year. This decrease is due to the state's cut or reduction in overall school aid. This was an unanticipated decrease, which was revealed to us in July.

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 2009-2010 budget at that time.

There were no questions or comments regarding the proposed budget and the Hearing was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

## — Annual Meeting —

Mr. Balda called the Annual Meeting to order at 8:23 p.m. and called for nominations for a temporary chairman. Motion by Bill Klang, second by Dana Westedt to nominate Phil Craker for temporary chairman. Motion by Rob Taylor, second by Steve Bauer to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Phil Craker for temporary chairman. Motion carried unanimously.

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 the new school year is a very special time.

You have heard from Mr. Ruddy regarding the financial condition of our district, which continues to be of concern. We have reduced our budget by over \$1.2 million over the past 1½ years. Clearly the formula used for funding public schools in Wisconsin does not work. The current economic crisis has magnified our challenge. Though some reductions may have seemed "easy", due to the fact that they were the result of resignations and retirements, none of this has been easy. Throughout the development of this budget, our staff, our Administrative Team and our School Board has maintained a commitment to our children. Tough decisions have been made and will continue to be made in the days and months ahead. More will be asked of everyone who works for us. Even with this extra effort, the educational experience in Reedsburg has been reduced. You cannot impose a reduction of over 1 million dollars without some negative 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. There will be some opposition to decisions that we have made and we understand that. Most of the opposition will reflect concern about an increase in local property taxes. Let it be clear that we did consider the impact on our taxpayers as we developed our budget. At the same time, when we look our students in the face, we need to know that we have done all that we can to provide opportunities for success, which this budget allows us to do. While this information can cast some gloom over this exciting time, there is plenty to be excited about.

Leadership in the care and maintenance of our buildings and grounds, in food service and in transportation 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, without some new source of revenue, it is likely

that we will realize a significant decline in the overall condition of our buildings and our buses. It may be necessary for us to reduce the accessibility to our buildings, as well as significantly increase the bus ride to school. In addition, lunch prices are likely to continue to rise.

The entire Central Office staff has been busy closing out one year and making the necessary preparations for the new year. Our Administrative Team continues to work hard to move the district forward. This has been especially challenging, given that we have had several administrators leave the district, some of which have been replaced and others that have not. Our team will continue to increase the attention being paid to the analysis of test results. We will continue to increase our efforts to identify, promote and ensure appropriate targets of learning at each grade level and in each subject area. We will continue our commitment to helping each child develop strong literacy skills. We will continue to utilize every dollar we receive through the SAGE Program in an effort to help children get a strong start.

I am proud of the work done by our school board and administration in the preparation and presentation of this 2009-2010 budget. A strong and assertive approach to programming and staffing has been appropriately tempered by conservative and responsible budgeting in the very challenging economic environment.

Though the road before us is more uphill than it has been in a very long time, we expect this to be a terrific year for the School District of Reedsburg.

The two newest members of the Administrative Team were introduced – Linda Bruun, Director of Instruction and Jeff Bindl, Director of Pupil Services.

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 \$ 2,860 for the 2009-2010 fiscal year.*

Motion by Bill Klang

Motion died for lack of a second

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 2009-2010 fiscal year.

Motion by Pauline Brown, second by Pat Schlough. Motion carried 30-21.

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	\$ 10,927,929
and for Debt Service in the amount of	\$ 1,905,000
and for the Community Service Fund in the amount of	\$ 109,599
Total Proposed Levy to be	\$ 12,942,528

Motion by Rob Taylor, second by Dana Westedt to approve the resolution as presented.

The initial voice vote appeared evenly split.

A show of hands indicated that the motion was defeated by a 26-27 vote.

A paper ballot was requested.

Following a tally of the paper ballots by Barb Sand and Pauline Brown, motion carried 30-28.

A recount was requested but was denied by the chairman.

A question was raised regarding the possibility of the district refinancing its long-term debt. Mr. Ruddy replied that the district has previously refinanced their long-term debt and as such are unable to do so again.

3. *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 16, 2010.*

Motion by Linda Bruun, second by Steve Bauer. Motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business, motion by Dana Westedt, second by Rob Taylor to adjourn the Annual meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting was declared adjourned at 8:50 p.m.