

NESHAMINY

Residents could see smaller tax increase

Gambling revenue could further offset the increase, a district official said.

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If the Neshaminy school board approves the proposed final 2009-10 budget later this month, the average tax increase for residents could go down from \$146 to \$133.

That's what business administrator Joseph Paradise told the board Tuesday night after finding more savings in insurance and by reducing copying services.

Those changes would lessen expenses to less than \$158.8 million.

With revenues estimated at \$154.7 million, the projected deficit would be \$3.7 million, officials said.

To balance the budget, officials said they need another 4.9 mills, down from 5.4, or a 3.3 percent increase, lowered from 3.6 percent. The current millage rate is 148.6, administrators said.

For homeowners with an average assessment of \$27,080, that would mean a \$133 tax hike.

But gambling revenue could offset that with a \$211 credit, said Paradise.

The budget already includes administrators' recommendations to cut bus routes and overtime, revise class schedules, institute pay to play fees and layoff more than 60 people, officials said.

Although some residents have been pushing for a 0 percent tax increase, Paradise said anything beyond those recommendations would hurt programs, students and the community.

Paradise also talked about another 11 items that could save roughly \$6 million including closing the district's two pools, eliminating the alternative program and cutting some school sports.

The board is expected to discuss those items and vote on the budget June 16.

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