

Board to tackle projected deficit

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Neshaminy

At least one board member recommended soliciting the staff's input for ways to trim the fat.

Even though Neshaminy's projected deficit is half of what it was this time last year, it still could mean more layoffs.

That's what the district's business administrator, Joseph Paradise, told the Neshaminy school board Tuesday night.

Neshaminy's 2010-11 spending plan is expected to be about \$162.8 million. Revenues are estimated to be around \$155.5 million, he said.

That would mean a \$7.3 million gap, or a 9.6 percent increase. For homeowners with an average assessment of \$27,626 that would be a \$265 hike.

The average tax bill would increase from \$4,199 to \$4,464, said Paradise.

Under Act 1, the district's tax increase limit is 2.9 percent, or 4.4 mills, or \$3.4 million. The value of one mill in Neshaminy is \$736,526. The district's current millage rate is 152, he said.

The budget does not include capital needs like roof projects and replacing original window walls at the elementary level because there are no capital monies, Paradise said.

While this year's deficit is not as much as last year's \$14 million, it's still "nothing to sneeze at," since it could still mean staff reductions because those are the biggest budget items. Last year, the district eliminated 65 positions to reduce operating costs.

Board member Richard Eccles recommended asking the staff for ways to decrease expenditures. Board member Kim Koutsouradis suggested inviting employees and residents to finance meetings. Superintendent Lou Muenker said committees with staff members could be formed, but he'd need time.

Meanwhile, the budget will be made available to the public Jan. 20. The board will vote on the preliminary document in February, the proposed final spending plan in April and the final budget in June, said Paradise.

Board President Ritchie Webb reminded the community that this spending plan is just a start and cuts will be made. The district will also be applying for exceptions, Paradise said.

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Update on negotiations

Neshaminy school board President Ritchie Webb said Tuesday night that the district and the support union will be meeting with a fact-finder in February. Both sides will present their offers for a nonbinding recommendation to be issued in March. Mindy Anderson, the support union's president, confirmed those details, but did not comment further.

The board also met with the teachers union this week and additional meetings are being discussed. Louise Boyd, president of the Neshaminy Federation of Teachers, agreed but didn't comment further.

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