

School budget vote is Tuesday, May 17

Tax levy increase lowest in three years

BUDGET NEWSLETTER
May 2005

On May 17, residents of the Goshen Central School District will go to the polls to vote on the \$48.7 million proposed budget for next year. The projected tax levy increase will be 5.98 percent – the lowest it’s been in three years.

Voters will also decide on a \$777,224 bus purchase proposition, elect three members to the Board of Education and decide whether to appoint a student representative to the Board of Education.

Why did the budget increase?

The 13.4 percent increase over this current year’s budget is being driven by the district’s obligatory costs. Fuel, heat and electricity prices are on the rise, as well as salary and benefit contributions. Educational costs for students in the Orange County Jail and St. Dominic’s Group Home will increase by more than \$3 million, and although the costs are fully reimbursable by the state, they must appear as part of next year’s expenditures.

The district is also looking to add items to its educational program – items that were dismissed or cut after the budget was voted down last year.

For the first time in twenty years, the New York State Legislature has produced the budget on time, and it is projected that Goshen will receive \$9.64 million in state aid next year – \$302,588 less than the current year.

This dip in state aid comes at a time when obligatory costs are escalating at an alarming rate.

For example, the district has spent \$116,356 on fuel so far this year, and expects to spend another \$75,600 before the end of the school year. In anticipation of skyrocketing prices, the district will budget an additional \$48,000 towards fuel for next year. “Gas prices will continue to soar, and early next year, the entire country

will begin converting to Ultra-Low Sulfur diesel – which is about 12 cents more per gallon than regular diesel,” said Transportation Director Peter Brockmann. “The district purchases its fuel at state contract prices – which includes taxes and is the cheapest possible – but we can’t control escalating costs.”

Heating and electric

prices are also on the rise, and the district estimates that it will cost an additional \$72,229 for next year.

Other rising costs include teacher and employee retirement contributions as well as health insurance rates, which are estimated to increase by approximately \$2 million next year. These costs are

continued on page 3

Three-Part Budget: How it breaks down

Budget component	2005-06 budget	Percent of total
Administrative costs	\$4,592,396	9.42%
Educational program	37,847,837	77.65%
Capital costs	6,304,479	12.93%
TOTAL	\$48,744,712	100.0%

New York State mandates that schools release their proposed budget in three components: administrative, educational program and capital.

ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS contain administrative salaries, benefits, and office and program costs for directing and supervising the instructional activities of the district.

EDUCATION PROGRAM includes salaries and benefits for teachers and staff, instructional materials, supplies and services, interscholastic sports, extra-curricular programs and transportation.

CAPITAL COSTS includes costs for facility maintenance including salaries, benefits, supplies and utilities, capital expenditures and debts service and purchase of transportation equipment.

Your tax dollars at work

Goshen students show successes of all measures

* 89 % of last year's graduates went on to attend 2- or 4-year colleges

* Goshen's dropout rate is normally below one percent.

* A student at C. J. Hooker Middle School placed third in the Orange County Spelling Bee

* A GHS senior was named a 2005 National Merit Scholarship finalist after scoring in the top one percent in the nation on the PSAT exam

* Two high school seniors received a perfect score on the national Latin exam

* Six CJH students were nominated for the Kohl's Department Store "Kids Who Care" 2005 program for outstanding volunteerism

Former Goshen students currently attend prestigious institutions such as NYU, Georgetown, Boston University and Cornell

* In November 2003, the National Association ranked the Transportation Department one of the top three in the nation

* Odyssey of the Mind teams from CJH and GHS both placed second at the regional competition. The middle school team won an OMer award for exemplary teamwork, artwork and collaboration

* The Junior Division Science Olympiad team

took home two gold, three silver and three bronze medals at the Junior Invitational Competition

* The GHS Mock Trial Team won the Orange County finals and will compete in the regional tournament.

* 81 percent of GIS students

and 75 percent of CJH students met or exceeded state standards on the 2004 state standardized math exam.

* The Transportation Department's Bus Jeopardy program will be featured at the State Transportation Conference in

EXPENSES: *Where the money goes*

Expense	2004-05 austerity budget	2005-06 budget	Increase (decrease)
Equipment	\$ 0	318,900	318,900
Contractual	2,905,464	3,937,055	1,036,591
Materials & supplies	1,177,727	1,383,128	205,401
Textbooks	201,153	210,500	9,347
Salaries	21,901,385	23,436,561	1,535,176
BOCES services	3,948,458	6,777,851	2,829,393
Employee benefits	9,544,373	10,077,818	537,441
Debt service	3,319,080	2,602,899	(716,181)
TOTAL	\$42,988,644	48,744,712	5,756,068

REVENUES: *Where the money comes from*

Revenue source	2004-05 budget	2005-06 budget*	Increase (decrease)
State aid	\$9,993,514	9,640,926	(302,588)
Fund balance	600,000	700,000	100,000
Interest	80,000	281,250	201,250
Other revenues	2,492,000	6,516,510	4,024,510
Property taxes	29,823,130	31,606,026	1,782,896
TOTAL	\$42,988,644	48,744,712	5,756,068

*The revenue numbers are estimates based on the amount of state aid the legislature has proposed for the Goshen schools.

District looks to add items to educational program

Instructional items, co-curricular activities will address students' needs

continued from page 1

mandated by the state and cannot be cut or frozen without eliminating staff.

What's new for 2005-06?

Keeping in mind the defeat of the current year's budget last May, administrators and the Board of Education have strived to present a budget with as small an increase as possible, but which continues to address the educational needs of the students.

"In order to compensate for the loss of funding after the budget was defeated, several proposed items were dismissed, while other existing programs were cut," said Assistant Superintendent for Business Joe Abbondanza. "The district has analyzed the items that were taken out last year in the areas of instruction and co-curricular activities and decided to add only those we found critical to our students' educational needs."

The district is looking to reinstate modified and junior varsity sports as well as field trips, assemblies and theater productions. It will also add teaching positions – many which were proposed in last year's budget.

"The district attempted to add several of these positions last year, but they were dismissed after the budget was defeated," said Abbondanza. "Adding these positions is necessary to provide students with a comprehensive curriculum and reduce overcrowding in some classes."

Specifically, next year's budget calls for:

Pupil Personnel Services

- Two special education teachers
- Half-time English language learner teacher
- Social worker

Scotchtown Elementary School

- Classroom teacher

Goshen Intermediate School

- Part-time Academic Intervention Services math

C. J. Hooker Middle School

- Music teacher
- Sixth grade teacher
- Teacher aide
- Part-time technology and Family and Consumer Science teachers

Goshen High School

- Part-time English, health, French, Spanish, Family and Consumer Science, technology and AIS teachers
- Guidance counselor
- Art teacher
- Assistant principal

How do OCJ and St. Dominic's affect the budget?

State law mandates that the district provide an education to all students within the boundaries of the district – including incarcerated students at Orange County Jail and severely handicapped, high-cost special education students at St. Dominic's Group Home.

Approximately \$3.7 million will be used to educate these students – a tremendous 976.8 percent increase of over this year's \$345,000.

The money budgeted to educate these students represents a large chunk of the estimated \$5.8 million increase for next year's budget. However, the money is fully reimbursable from the state – plus the district receives a five percent administration fee for administering the programs. Although these programs won't affect taxpayers' wallets, they must appear as part of next year's expenditures.

Students show achievement in all areas of education

continued from page 2

Albany on July 11

* Nine GHS students were selected for Area All-State Chorus; 22 for All-County Chorus; two for All-County Band; and one student as All-State Alternate.

* The CJH PTO helped raise more than \$47,000 to reinstate fall and spring modified sports

* 92.9 percent of SAS Limited English Proficient (LEP) students in grades 1-3 achieved benchmarks on state assessments while in kindergarten. A Certifi-

cate of Recognition was awarded by the NYS Education Department, Office of Bilingual Education.

* At the Olympics of the Visual Arts competition, four of the high school's six teams won five awards, including two first-place awards, second and third place honors, and most artistic

* Three GHS varsity winter sports teams received the NYSPHSAA Scholar/Athlete Team Award for having a cumulative GPA of 90 or above

New testing in grades 3-8: How will it affect the budget?

Beginning next year, the New York State Education Department will require its school districts to annually test all students in grades 3-8 in the areas of English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, in response to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) federal legislation.

Along with the challenge of preparing students for the exams, many districts also face added expenditures in 2005-06 as a result of the new testing requirements.

“For Goshen Central Schools, additional expenses will be found in the scoring of these exams,” said Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Jane Unhjem. “When you increase the number of students being tested, you increase the number of exams that must be scored.”

In order to tally the results, the district must pay to have each exam scored. After the students take the exams, the testing materials are sent to the Mid-Hudson Regional Information Center (MHRIC) in New

	Exceeded state standards*	Met the standards	Needed some help	Serious academic deficiencies
8TH GRADE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS				
C.J. Hooker	10	48	39	3
State average				
4TH GRADE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS				
Goshen Intermediate	14	49	32	5
State average				
8TH GRADE MATH				
C.J. Hooker	16	59	18	7
State average				
4TH GRADE MATH				
Goshen Intermediate	23	58	17	2
State average				
8TH GRADE SCIENCE				
C.J. Hooker	39	51	8	2
State average				
4TH GRADE SCIENCE**				
Goshen Intermediate	42	49	8	1
State average				

* Represents the percentage of students given state tests during the 2004-05 school year.

Paltz, where they are scored and analyzed by a machine. MHRIC scores, converts and reports the results of state standardized tests and will deliver customized reports based on the district's requests.

In addition, certain parts of the exams – such as the writing section – must be graded by a teacher. In

order to do so, the teachers must be pulled from their classes - and the district must pay for substitutes.

“An alternative is to contract people to grade the exams – such as retired teachers or persons through Orange-Ulster BOCES,” said Mrs. Unhjem. “It can take one to three days to score an exam, and pulling

teachers for that long can disrupt the learning process for our students. We don't want to do that.”

Minimal materials are needed to compensate the additional testing. “We don't need to make many changes in our curriculum – at least not yet,” said Mrs. Unhjem.

On the Ballot

School Bus Proposition

The district is asking to purchase new buses and vehicles for the 2005-06 school year. Six full-size buses, two wheelchair conversion buses, two van buses and a service truck are needed to replace older, damaged vehicles as well as address growth in the district. The cost of the \$777,224 proposition will be spread over five years, with no tax impact for the first year.

After 12 months, the district will begin to make the first of five annual payments. Twenty percent of the cost will be paid at the end of each year. Taxes won't be affected until 2006-07.

School Board Election

Residents will also vote to elect three members to the Board of Education. Two members will be appointed for three-year terms starting July 1 to succeed Steve Esposito and Alvin Watson, whose terms expire on June 30. One member will be appointed for the unexpired term of Anthony Millich, who resigned in March.

There are blah candidates running for these three positions:

Basic STAR exemption impact

Estimated basic STAR exemption savings based on a hypothetical home within the school district with a full value of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000)

	Budget adopted for 2004-05 school year	Budget proposed for 2005-06 school year
Basic STAR tax savings	\$507.90	\$563.77
School tax increase (decrease)	\$(81.00)	\$186.23
Net basic STAR tax savings	\$588.90	\$377.54

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2005-06 by the qualified voters of the Goshen Central School District, Orange County, New York, will be held on Tuesday, May 17, 2005, between the hours of 6 a.m. and 9 p.m. in the Main Street Office in said district, at which time the polls will be open for voting.

School District Budget Notice

Overall budget proposal

	Budget adopted for 2004-05 school year	Budget proposed for 2005-06 school year	Contingency budget for 2005-06 school year
Total budgeted amount	\$42,988,644	48,744,712	
Increase for the 2005-06 school year			
Percentage increase in each proposed budget			
Change in the Consumer Price Index			
Resulting estimated property tax levy for the 2005-2006 school year			
Administrative component	\$4,812,666		
Program component	\$31,521,188		
Capital component	\$ 6,654,790		

* Statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2005-06 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated: All equipment has been removed; community use of buildings and grounds has been removed; modified sports have been removed; and reductions have been made in proposed spending for existing as well as additional personnel, after-school transportation, co-curricular activities and staff development.

When is the vote?

Tuesday, May 17, 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Where do I vote?

At the district office in the Main Street Building.

What will I vote on?

Three propositions:

Proposition 1: A \$48,744,712 budget

Proposition 2: A \$484,540 school bus purchase

Proposition 3: School board election

Who may vote?

To vote, you must be:

- 1 A resident of the district for at least 30 days prior to the vote.
- 1 18 years of age or older.
- 1 A citizen of the United States.
- 1 Registered with either the school district or the county Board of Elections.

How do I register?

If you are registered to vote in general elections, you are automatically eligible to vote in school elections. If you are not registered, you can obtain a registration form at

the Main Street Administration Building or at any district school. The last day for voter registration is May 12. For more details, call District Clerk Cindy Curry at 294-2410.

How do I get an absentee ballot?

Absentee ballots are available if you are:

- 1 A patient in a hospital or unable to vote in person because of illness.
- 1 Planning to be out of the area on vacation or for business.
- 1 Confined to prison due to conviction of an offense other than a felony.
- 1 Accompanying a spouse, parent or child of the same residence who can't come to the polls for one of the above reasons.
- 1 Applications for absentee ballots are available at the Main Street Administration Building. Please make your request to District Clerk Cindy Curry at 294-2410.
- 1 Legally, ballots cannot be mailed after May 10. However, you have until May 16 to pick up an absentee ballot application in person at the district office.
- 1 Absentee ballots must reach the office of District Clerk Cindy Curry no later than 5 p.m. on election day, May 18.

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