

Highlights

BUDGET REVOTE
June 2006

Children and learning are the heart of Bethlehem Central

School budget revote is June 20

Revised budget reduces tax rate increase to 3.75%

Bethlehem Central residents will return to the polls on Tuesday, June 20, to vote on a revised \$72,450,816 budget for the 2006-07 school year.

In the wake of the defeat of the district's original budget proposal on May 16, Bethlehem Central residents face an important decision when they enter the polls on June 20.

Voters can choose to pass the revised budget, which cuts spending by \$802,000 and carries an estimated 3.75 percent tax increase, or they can defeat the budget a second time, imposing the state-mandated contingency limit on the district.

The Board of Education adopted the revised budget after holding three public meetings to determine what cuts to make. The cuts, which include reductions in administration, teachers, support personnel, athletics and other programs, are described on page 2.

"We as a Board supported our initial budget proposal, but the voters did not," says Board of Education

President Richard Svenson. "Making these cuts was an incredibly difficult process, and they no doubt will begin to erode or limit the quality of programs and services we have developed over the years. But a contingency budget would do far more damage."

At the final public meeting, the Board accepted the decisions of all four central administrators—Superintendent Dr. Les Loomis, Assistant Superintendents Steve O'Shea and Dr. Michael Tebbano and Pupil Personnel Services Director Rita Levay—to voluntarily forego their contractual salary raises next year.

RAMIFICATIONS OF A SECOND BUDGET DEFEAT

If the revised budget is defeated, the mandated contingency budget would require another \$590,094 in staffing and program

BUDGET REVOTE

What am I voting on?

A \$72.5 million revised budget.

What is the tax rate increase for the budget?

An estimated 3.75%, down 1.7% from the proposal in May.

When is the vote?

Tuesday, June 20, 2006.

Polls are open 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. at BC Middle School.

What else will be on the ballot?

A reduced proposition to purchase 12 school buses for an amount not to exceed \$732,456. [See page 3.]

Who can vote?

Anyone who is a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years old and a resident of Bethlehem Central School District for at least 30 days prior to the vote. You do not need to be registered to vote.

reductions [see page 3] and would result in an estimated tax increase of 2.47 percent.

"Our voters need to realize that a 'no' vote for the revised budget is a 'yes' vote for contingency," says Superintendent Les Loomis. ■

Inside this issue

- 2 What is cut from the proposed budget?
- 3 Tax impact and contingency budget scenario
- 4 State-mandated budget notice



What is being cut from the budget?

In adopting a revised budget, the Board of Education made **the following cuts, totaling \$802,000**, from the proposed budget defeated by voters in May.

1.0 FTE* Elementary Teacher – \$60,040

Increases average class size from 22.2 to 22.4 (2005-06 avg. class size = 22.4).

1.45 FTE Middle School Teachers – \$88,300

Reduces staffing for special subjects and second languages across grades 6-8.

1.0 FTE High School Teacher – \$60,040

Increases average class size from 22.1 to 22.5 (2005-06 avg. class size = 21.1).

Reconfigure Elementary English Language Arts (ELA) Supervision – \$20,000

Eliminates director of elementary curriculum & Slingerlands assistant principal and funds part-time increase in elementary ELA supervisor position instead.

10-month Technology Specialist – \$36,460

No expansion of staffing. Current staff (3.8 FTE) will support 600+ computers and VOIP telephones each.

1.0 FTE Middle School Clerical Position – \$40,450

Eliminates one clerical position (to be determined) from school-wide clerical staff of 7.

* FTE = Full-time equivalent

1.0 FTE District Office Clerical Position – \$40,450

Three existing positions will be restructured into two.

0.5 FTE Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant – \$28,640

Decreases level of non-mandated physical therapy services to students.

0.6 FTE Committee for Preschool Special Education Chairperson – \$44,580

Outreach to preschool families & providers, which would help ensure proper levels of service for students entering kindergarten, will not be increased as planned.

1.0 FTE Pupil Personnel Services Secretary – \$40,450

Staffing will be reallocated from HS main office to manage state aid reimbursement for special education.

1.0 FTE Custodian – \$43,500

Eliminates one additional position proposed to manage new facilities opening next year at MS/HS.

Athletics – \$52,000

Eliminates ice hockey, gymnastics and cheerleading teams. Eliminates all non-league games. Reduces supervision of Fitness Center by 50% (to 90 minutes per day).

Field Trips/Athletic Trips – \$20,000

No district-funded field trips next year. Reduction in athletic trips are the result of athletics reductions (mentioned above).

Transportation – \$44,400

Eliminates private/parochial transportation during BC school recess weeks; consolidates some midday (kindergarten) routes; eliminates one day per week of late bus runs for MS and HS.

Availability of Pools – \$24,500

Middle & High School pools will be closed when not in use by physical education dept. or district athletic teams (mid-March through mid-August). Community groups would pay for operating costs to use pools during these months.

Buildings Use Costs – \$40,000

Community groups will underwrite facilities costs resulting from their use of school buildings.

Elementary & Secondary Intramurals – \$8,140

Planned program expansions will not occur.

Modified Coaches (Football/Swimming) – \$4,500

Proposed coaching additions (to allow more students to participate) will not occur.

6 Extracurricular Clubs – \$6,150

Eliminates advisor stipends to start up 6 new student clubs as planned at MS/HS.

NCBI Coordinators – \$3,000

Two coordinator positions to oversee National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) program (to reduce disrespect and bullying) will not be added. Funding for the NCBI program remains in the budget.

School Resource Officer Program – \$15,000

Reduces amount of increase in district's share of SRO costs to reimburse the town.

Chaperones – \$5,000

Reduces the number of school dances & events held at MS/HS that require staff chaperones.

Substitute Costs – \$20,000

Reduces use of substitutes wherever possible, especially for professional development during school day.

Educational Programs Funding – \$25,000

Reduces Arts in Education funding (Shakespeare company visits to BCMS and Scotia-Glenville Children's Museum visits to elementary schools).

Energy Manager Savings – \$16,000

Existing energy manager position will be combined with building mechanic position.

O&M Vehicle – \$14,400

Eliminates replacement of existing maintenance vehicle.

Board of Education Funds – \$1,000

Eliminates policy update service from New York State Schools Boards Association. ■

Estimated Tax Rates

PER \$1,000 OF ASSESSED VALUE

(Rounded to the nearest cent for the purposes of this comparison only.)

	2005-06 BEFORE REVAL	2005-06 AFTER REVAL	2006-07 REVISED	DOLLAR INCREASE
Bethlehem	\$27.74	\$16.37	\$16.98	\$0.61
New Scotland	\$25.82	\$16.37	\$16.98	\$0.61

Tax rates and increases for next year are estimates only. The district will set its final tax rates in August based on final assessment figures and equalization rates for each town as provided by the state Office of Real Property Services. The above rates DO NOT reflect STAR or other tax exemptions that may reduce individuals' school tax bills.

Both Bethlehem and New Scotland are in the process of completing town-wide reassessments. Based on the preliminary reassessment totals, the district has estimated the current-year (2005-06) tax rate after revaluation. Total assessment figures may change, resulting in revised tax rates, but the tax impact of the revised budget will remain an increase of 3.75% over the 2005-06 tax rate after revaluation.

How will the school budget affect your school taxes?

For the budget defeated by voters in May, the estimated tax increase for a home assessed at \$200,000 was \$178. Below are estimates of the tax increase for both the revised budget and a contingency budget for three different home values.

If your home is assessed at ...	Your tax increase for the revised budget is ...	Your tax increase for a contingency budget is ...
\$200,000	\$122	\$80
\$300,000	\$183	\$120
\$400,000	\$244	\$160

What happens if the budget is defeated again?

The realities of a contingency budget

If the revised budget is defeated on June 20, the district will be required to go to a contingency budget. **A contingency budget would further reduce the revised budget by \$590,094—i.e., all of the cuts described on page 2 plus another \$590,094 in cuts would have to be made.**

A contingent budget would result in an estimated tax increase of 2.47 percent, instead of the 3.75 percent that the revised budget carries.

Under contingency, the district cannot cut federally or state-mandated items or eliminate its contractual obligations. Debt service and negotiated salary increases for employees cannot be reduced. The \$590,094 in cuts would be made from the following list of about \$790,000.

- ✗ Reduction of up to two more High School teacher positions.
- ✗ Reduction of up to two more Middle School teacher positions.
- ✗ Reduction of one more elementary teacher position.
- ✗ Elimination of Career & Technical Education Supervisor position.
- ✗ Part-time reduction in instrumental music teacher staffing.
- ✗ Reduction of up to two more custodians.
- ✗ Reduction in clerical support for department supervisors and teachers (one position).
- ✗ Elimination of all freshmen-level sports teams.
- ✗ Elimination of one year of funding for district's computer replacement plan (delaying bringing district to 6-year replacement cycle).
- ✗ Elimination of funding restored for purchase of instructional/classroom supplies.
- ✗ Elimination of Early Learning Focus (ELF) summer program to build the skills of struggling readers.
- ✗ Elimination of all funding for non-instructional equipment purchases.
- ✗ Reduction of summer custodial staffing. ■

BUS PURCHASE PROPOSITION — Voters will also decide on a reduced bus proposition to purchase 12 buses for a total not to exceed \$732,456. The buses would not increase the size of the fleet but would replace existing buses that are reaching or have passed their recommended years of service. As always, the cost would be financed and paid back over five years. There would not be any tax impact until the 2007-08 school year, and this new bus debt would replace old bus debt that the district is continually paying off, thus mitigating the budget impact.

The school district is required by state law to distribute the budget notice to the right. The information contained in the notice is proscribed by the state, including the use of a \$100,000 full-value assessment example. For a more complete explanation of how the revised budget will affect your taxes (and more realistic assessment examples), please see page 3.

Absentee ballots

To vote by absentee ballot, you must fill out an application. Contact the district clerk at 439-7481 or download one from the district's Web site at <http://bcsd.k12.ny.us>. Your application must be received by June 13 (if requesting a ballot to be mailed) or June 19 (if picking up your ballot).

Board of Education

Richard W. Svenson, President
 Dr. Stuart Lyman, Vice President
 James E. Dering
 Lynne L. Lenhardt
 James W. Lytle
 Warren Stoker
 Robin M. Storey

Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Leslie G. Loomis

Assistant Superintendents

Dr. Michael D. Tebbano
 Steven O'Shea

Editor

Jessica Scheckton, (518) 439-3650
schejco@bcsd.neric.org

This publication is produced with the cooperation of the Capital Region BOCES Communications Service.

SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET NOTICE

The school district is required by state law to distribute this budget notice to all district residents.

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget adopted for the 2005-06 school year	Budget proposed for the 2006-07 school year	Contingency budget* for the 2006-07 school year
Total budgeted amount	\$65,368,176	\$72,450,816	\$71,860,722
Increase for the 2006-07 school year		\$7,082,640	\$6,492,546
Percentage increase in each proposed budget		10.83%	9.93%
Change in the consumer price index		3.4%	
Resulting estimated property tax levy for the 2006-07 school year		\$48,468,716	\$47,878,622
Administrative component	\$5,924,883	\$6,158,967	\$6,078,967
Program component	\$49,837,870	\$52,401,727	\$52,007,933
Capital component	\$9,605,423	\$13,890,122	\$13,773,822

* A contingency budget is limited by law to a growth cap of 120 percent of the consumer price index or 4 percent, whichever is less, excluding certain budget categories. It is anticipated that a contingency budget would require: elimination of new equipment purchases; reduction in the purchase of supplies; and elimination of an unknown number of instructional and non-instructional staff 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 the 2005-06 school year	Budget proposed for the 2006-07 school year
Basic STAR tax savings	\$570	\$747
School tax increase (decrease)	(\$35)	(\$200)
Net basic STAR tax savings	\$605	\$947

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2006-2007 by the qualified voters of the Bethlehem Central School District, Albany County, New York, will be held at Bethlehem Central Middle School in said district on Tuesday, June 20, 2006, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., prevailing time, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

Bethlehem Central School District

90 Adams Place
 Delmar, New York 12054

Non-Profit Org.
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 Albany, NY
 Permit No. 79

POSTAL CUSTOMER