

**Minutes of Budget Advisory Committee Meeting
May 8, 2019**

Attendees:

Michelle Gosh, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction K-12
Victor Karlsson, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations
Elena Nash-Graham, School Business Administrator

Kristin Cacal	Chris Palizza	Scott Seaman
Eric Larca	Francine Santos	Christine Zirkelbach

Absent: Karen Bridges, Jamie Callanan, Kerry Cunningham, Annette Gabriel, Rebecca Hegenauer, Valerie Henning-Piedmonte, Bryan Horn, Connie Hussey, Ann Marie Kovaleski, Jennifer Lynch, Sonia Mesika, Nora Mannuccia, Caren Marotta, Carrie O'Connell,

The meeting began at 6:38pm with Mr. Karlsson thanking the members for dedicating their valuable time to this important committee. He reminded the group about the upcoming budget information session at BHS on Saturday, May 11th at 9am and encouraged members to attend.

The objective of this meeting is to increase voter turnout. There are fewer votes casted each year than there are parents/guardians in the District. In other words, parents/guardians who have a vested interest in the District's success are not even participating in the budget vote. There are over 3,600 parents/guardians, but less than 2,000 total votes (on average) each year.

A committee member responded that parents/guardians do not feel compelled to vote unless there is a pressing issue at-hand. Mr. Karlsson lamented in the even greater challenge this year in that the Board of Education election is uncontested, which typically results in even lower turnout than normal.

Over the previous five years, voter turnout has ranged from 8% to 12%, with an average of 10.6%. Feedback received from the PTA is that some parents/guardians were unaware of their ability to vote before/after attending a student event on the day of the budget vote. Mr. Karlsson requested that the Principals include information about the budget vote when advertising the student events that parents/guardians are requested to attend.

Mr. Karlsson requested feedback from the committee regarding which methods of communication have been most helpful in explaining the budget and motivating community members to vote. Most committee members acknowledged the effectiveness of text messages and short "budget minute" videos, but cautioned against over-saturating parents/guardians with text messages about other less critical matters. The committee members also acknowledged fatigue from the numerous "Bears Backpack" messages each day.

Mr. Karlsson informed the committee that the annual Budget Newsletter, a required mailing, would be mailed to residents early next week, in advance of the Budget Hearing. A committee member anticipates that the Budget Newsletter may create a new wave of angst in the community since they may not have been aware of the 4% Tax Levy increase until they received the newsletter.

The placement of budget vote signs was discussed and Mr. Karlsson informed the committee that the District is prohibited from posting signs on public property, such as on street corners. The District is only permitted to post signs on its property. Similarly, private citizens may post signs on their property, as has been done by candidates seeking election or those in support or opposition to the budget.

The meeting concluded at 7:15pm with additional gratitude and appreciation extended to those participating on the committee and informing the greater community of the upcoming budget vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Elena Nash-Graham
School Business Administrator