The January 26th Board of Education meeting was held in the Middle School auditorium. During announcements, High School Principal Douglas Lauf stated that one-hundred (100) percent of all students who took the Math A Regents exam passed during the January administration. Elementary School Principal Anne Ressler announced that over $1,700 was collected by Elementary School students for the tsunami victims.

Under the Consent Agenda, a number of volunteers were approved by the Board of Education. These included volunteers who work within the school walls and others who are chaperones for trips.

Under Reports to the Board, six (6) Committee on Special Education cases were approved. Middle School nurse, Janann Phillips, along with Wanda Miller and Wendy Havens, reported on the important work that the school nurses perform throughout the district. This includes the obvious health issues, along with daily attendance monitoring and participation on the building Pupil Personnel Service (PPS) Committees. The Board thanked the District nurses for their contributions. High School Principal Douglas Lauf and Link Crew Coordinator Kathryn Taylor presented information on the Link Crew that was initiated in the High School this year. This initiative links juniors and seniors who are nominated by their teachers to serve as mentors for incoming freshman. Link Crew member Stephanie Gowan along with freshman students Caroline Henderson and Kathryn Holleran shared their views on the success of the program. In addition to these two (2) reports, each building principal reported on recent happenings in their prospective buildings. A common thread throughout these reports was an update on progress made thus far on their building action plans.

The Board of Education again considered the bus stops within the Whispering Woods complex. After hearing that the conditions within the complex have improved and the new management is responsive to concerns, the Board decided against the previously approved stops. Students within the complex will be picked up at their homes, the same as all other district students. Also under Old Business, the Board approved the construction management contract with Watchdog Building Partners, Inc. for the Capital Project.

Under New Business, the Board of Education approved first readings of six (6) policies and the elimination of one policy. The Board accepted, with regret, the retirement resignation of Gary Marshall, Middle School Teacher. Gary, who has served as Middle School Science Coordinator and unofficial “Mr. Science”, has recorded thirty-six (36) years of service with Williamson Central School District.

The Superintendent began the first budget workshop by sharing the following facts of importance:

- The governor’s proposal for state aid shows no increase in the state’s contribution towards education within the district
- There are many fixed costs such as retirement contributions, insurance, utilities and health care that have rate increases in the double-digit range
- The usual delicate balance of power between the governor and legislature has tipped in favor of the governor because of a recent Court of Appeals ruling which gives the governor more control over the state budget process
These three (3) factors create a situation at this time that puts the budget process in a very difficult position. After hearing that an additional $100,000 on the budget side would raise the assessed tax rate an additional 1.4%, the Board of Education discussed a range where they would like to see the first draft of the budget fall. This first draft, along with any cuts it might encompass, will be presented at the March 9th Board of Education Meeting.

At this point in the evening, High School Principal Douglas Lauf presented a much needed “Bright Spot” which aired that evening on Channel 13 news. This clip showed how the High School Principal had been “canned” by students who had collected food for local pantries. The entertaining clip shows Principal Douglas Lauf walking on cans to navigate across his office.

Prior to closing, the Superintendent also recognized Michael Bixby and his crew for the numerous hours that they recently volunteered to install the lift for the wrestling mat in the High School.