The February 25, 2015 meeting of the Williamson Central School District Board of Education was opened by Vice-President Angela DeFisher with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence. Gary Barno, School Business Administrator presented an update on the budget process for the 2015-2016 school year. He reported that Governor Cuomo has tied aid for schools to proposed education reforms such as increasing the number of charter schools, changes to the teacher evaluation system and making the tax cap permanent. State aid numbers will not be released until the state legislators act on his proposals and as a result the District still does not know the amount of aid that we will receive making it difficult to create our budget. Mr. Barno reviewed that approximately 94% of the District’s revenue comes from taxes and state aid combined. It is estimated that the tax cap will be 1.9%. He also reported that the health insurance rate increases are slightly less than expected and the teacher retirement rate has also declined which is helping to keep the expense increase lower. The current projected shortfall is $375,000. District administrators have begun the difficult task of looking at the areas where programs, services and staff may need to be reduced or eliminated to close the gap. He informed the board that the budget propositions will be presented for approval at the March 18 board meeting.

Student representative Ciara Chelini reported that the high school is in transition. Some students are starting new classes this semester, the winter sports season has ended and select choir performed their last Cabaret. She reported that Zach Curran, Pole Vaulting and Corey Cristales, Wrestling are sectional champions. They are participating in state events this weekend.

Marygrace Ferrando, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, highlighted the Homework Committee for their work on the new comprehensive homework plan. The draft will be shared with the stakeholder groups for feedback before final publication. The plan is a collaborative effort between students, parents and teachers based on research and best practices. She expressed her appreciation to the team - Janice Raspudic, Kevin Cavanagh, Robin Mason, Patrick Verbridge, Jane Brown and Deb DelPlato. Karen Hoody, Assistant Principal, Elementary School, reported that the Elementary School will hold its first Math Night on March 11 at 6:30 p.m. The event will feature math activities that students are doing every day in UPK through 4th grade. She highlighted Carol Fox for a current class activity using Normal Rockwell paintings to encourage students to engage in dialogue and learn inference skills. Kate Avery, High School Principal, reported that Sally Schillaci, Guidance Counselor, coordinated another Cookies and Careers day which focused on careers in law enforcement. She also reported on the students that won Sectional titles and highlighted the students who were successful at All County Solo Fest – Dennis Mowers 1st chair trumpet, Samantha Zimmerman 2nd chair trumpet and Leanna Hess 2nd chair saxophone. There were more students that made it into All County, but these are the students that had the highest scores. Ellen Saxby, Elementary School Principal, reported that teachers are currently performing assessments for reading and reviewing student progress. She expressed her appreciation to the PTSA. As a result of the Box Tops for Education program coordinated by the PTSA, the Elementary School has a mobile cart with 25 iPads that can be used for instruction in the building. Some 1st grade classrooms are using the iPads for a unit in astronomy. She also reported that Technology Director Tim Tyler has found a way to repurpose unused mini laptops by turning them into Chromebooks for classrooms. This conversion was at a minimum cost to the District but is another technology tool for use in the classrooms. She highlighted Ian Thomas, Special Education teacher for also taking on the role of technology coordinator for the building. He uses technology in his classes but also provides assistance for
teachers and staff within the building. John Fulmer, Middle School Principal, highlighted Ann Dewhirst who is working with 8th grade students on high school planning and career exploration. He also highlighted Deb DelPlato’s health class where students were learning CPR and discussing the negative effects of drug use. He expressed his appreciation to the custodians, maintenance staff and bus drivers. Regardless of the challenges presented this winter at the start of the school day 98% of the students are in class ready to begin.

Wanda Miller, Director Pupil Personnel Services, highlighted the special education teachers – Rachel Liberatore, Nancy Shay, Scott Kingsbury, Shaye Tanner and Diane Greco – for taking a ½ day to participate in a workshop on student Individualized Education Plans (IEP). It was a successful day of training. Gary Barno, School Business Administrator, also expressed his appreciation for the dedication of the maintenance staff. He commented that they have done a remarkable job keeping up with the daily needs of the buildings while monitoring new issues as a result of the extreme cold weather. He thanked John Drake and Lynda Lonis who came to the Middle School over the weekend to assist with building leaks and to monitor the situation. Superintendent Macaluso updated the Board on the efforts of the Legislative Committee. He reported that our local legislators have given their support to the bi-partisan bills introduced to remove the Gap Elimination Adjustment. He also reported that the committee worked on its talking points to present to the local legislators when they meet on Lobby Day in Albany on March 10. He referred community members in attendance to view the information on the District News web page for more information about GEA. He expressed his appreciation to the buildings and grounds department for their work on site as well as the Town of Williamson Highway Department. Both groups are doing a great job to make it safe for our students and employees to get where they need to go every day regardless of the weather conditions.

Under Board Committee Reports, Dr. Macaluso updated the Board on the WFA Negotiations Session and informed them of the next meeting date. Marygrace Ferrando reviewed the Quarterly Achievement with the board and provided a comparison to the data presented last year. The areas of concern are being addressed within the building by administrators, counselors and teachers. Gary Barno reviewed the Treasurer’s report and commented that the Food Service program is doing well.

The board accepted the resignation of Yvonne Forget, Food Service Director effective June 30, 2015 with 24 years of service. The board expressed their appreciation for the many contributions she has made to the food service program during her time here. Other consent agenda items included the resignation of Carol McMahon, History Bowl coordinator, the appointment of several volunteers, classified substitutes, and the following additional appointments:

- Probationary appointment of James Sergeant as a part-time bus driver effective February 23, 2015
- Extra-Curricular appointment of Kiera Carlson, Accompanist Middle School Musical for the 2014-2015 school year
- Long-term substitute appointment of Jeannie Petrosky, student aide effective February 10, 2015 for the remainder of the 2014-2015 school year
- Long-term substitute appointment of Jill Steurrys, student aide effective February 10, 2015 for the remainder of the 2014-2015 school year
- Long-term substitute appointment of Alyssa Lennox, cleaner effective February 23, 2015 for a period of at least two months or more
- Spring coaching appointments:
  - Jeff VanHoover Varsity Boys Track
  - Carl Comstock JV Boys Track
  - Dan Sackett Varsity Girls Track
  - Mary Freischlag JV Girls Track (.5)
  - Joanna Alexander JV Girls Track (.5)
  - Deb DelPlato Junior High Track
  - Jack Matthys Junior High Track
  - Brian Steurrys Varsity Baseball
  - Mark Ameele JV Baseball
  - Ian Thomas Junior High Baseball
  - Scott Kingsbury Varsity Girls Softball
  - Jeff White JV Girls Softball
  - John Vitalone Junior High Softball
  - Kevin Delehanty Tennis
Under Old Business the board approved the second reading of Policy 7210 – Age of Entrance. Board Trustee Patrick Wright updated the Board on the progress of the 259 School Ballot referendum for the library. Under New Business the board approved the changes to the course offerings for the High School for the 2015-2016 school year for science, social studies and Project Lead the Way, the 2013-2014 Extra Classroom Activity Fund Audit Correction Action Plan, the Refunding Bond Resolution and the Adult Education Spring Instructor Fees.