

*****UNOFFICIAL MINUTES*****
Williamson Central School
Board of Education
Virtual Meeting Transcription for May 6, 2020

Okay. Alright, so we are already in open session. We just left an executive session, so we're just going to reconvene right into open session and we'll start off with announcements. I have no one else. Okay. Go into reports to the board. Reports from district administrators, um, already been pre submitted and are under, um, public content.

Okay. A district committee reports wellness committee was April 29th virtually reports from that. Okay. I did not attend, I had a work meeting, but I believe Ashton did. I tried to log in and no one was there, and then about 30 minutes later I got an email saying, are we still meeting? And so I don't know that it ever actually happened.

I wasn't there. I'm not sure. Okay. Well, maybe that'll get rescheduled. Alright. District events. Um, again, seconds, four minute in a row. That, uh, sad to report. There are none. It's kind of the highlights. Well, the highlights talk about, um, next is the, uh, four County school board association. Angela and I both attended virtually.

Um. The last meeting, which was this past last Monday afternoon, and it was a board of directors meeting where we voted on a new slate of officers. And we also, um, discussed, um, um, budgetary stuff. And, um, w. Is this pretty much, that was like the purpose of the meeting, but we didn't talk about any real, uh, miss Misbah stuff, right, Angela?

With the new, no, not really. Okay. Um, one of the things that, um, we wanted to, uh, have a conversation about tonight is if we want to continue, um, our membership in Fort County school board. And, um, Angela and I, I think have, um, our feelings have changed on the value we get from four counties. Um, last year there were some fantastic meetings, some really great things to participate in.

And, um. We felt since the fall through to the winter, a lot of that has really changed. And of course now it's even more difficult for them to hold those types of events. And we're moving into a pretty tough budget time and it's not an inexpensive endeavor for us. And we just wanted to, you know, have a conversation to hear your thoughts about perceived value.

I mean, I would say I would default to you and Angela has opinion based on you guys are the ones who attend most both of the events. Um, I don't have a strong opinion either way. I trust your guys's guidance. If you think we're not getting the value out that we're putting in, um, I can support not moving forward with that.

You know, there's, there's some great parts of Fort County, there's some fantastic networking opportunities. And, um, it's really great to spend time with other presidents and vice presidents of other boards and to get a feel for how their boards operate. And if you have a problem, let's just make this connection to, um, you know, just discuss some issues you might be having and, you know, hear how they work through problems.

So there's value there. Um, but I think that we've also, you know, made some strong connections that we don't necessarily need to rely on for County to facilitate those sort of like, relationship building pieces. Uh, Angela, do you want to just chime in? I mean, how do you, well, I, I think the other thing I know we saw this year, there were a lot of things that we.

Looked forward to when their original schedule came out and said, Oh, this would be good to go to, and things got canceled, postponed, rescheduled. Um. I think one of them was the discussion with region Norwoods and that is now they discussed going to be, he's not even presenting live, so there can't be any interaction with him.

It's more he's going to sell them a video ahead of time and they're gonna play it during their, um, you know, a meeting. So the value of having access to people like that to, um, advocate or. Network, or gain understanding and information about different issues. It's not what I expected it to be. Um, I believe that even if we're not members, I think a lot of that stuff comes out.

Um. To all the, like the trainings. I think we would still be able to attend if we saw some session that, Hey, this is a really interesting topic, or it's relevant to Williamson, we want to send somebody and we just, I think pay a different price to go to those events. But I would guess if, if next year is, like this year was if we were to pick and choose that there were one or two events that we wanted someone from our board to attend, it's probably going to cost us a lot less than the membership to have the full access.

Yeah. The only thing I want to make sure. You know, we don't put the district, you know, in a bad place by joining and then we don't join and then we joined and then we don't join. Are we committed or not committed? Um, and so I guess I would just leave non, you know, Greg empty and Gary for your sense there, is it?

No, it is a part now that they're under the bus. Kosar you know, it's another partnership with both CS and I don't know how it's. I don't want to do damage to any relationship, if that makes sense.

I would think that there would probably be some hard feelings, especially because they were under the impression that we had joined for two years. Um, I've been working on clearing that up with them and let them know that we were having a discussion tonight. Um, so it. It wouldn't be in good faith to stay, but you know, he doesn't have to weigh the dollars and do we really, we didn't join for two years then.

So the closer, um, agreement that we signed and sent in. Said two years, but I had told them that we didn't want to join for multiple years. And what you voted on was just for this school year, or you didn't approve 2021. Mmm. So that's a little sticky. So our aid ratio is what, 78%? Mmm. In that ballpark? Yes.

Okay. And so, and that's approximately a \$6,000 fee to join. We will just be starting to get, uh, our aid back in this upcoming year for this past year's membership, which would then, but our membership costs, it was about \$1,200 a year, right? Mmm. I know, I forget occasionally that we have the state aid piece of that because that does make a huge difference.

I really, you know, I don't wanna I don't want us to join and then Angela and I provide, Angela gets reelected to the board still those four County next year. I don't want us to join in and have us not participate because we don't feel that there's anything you want to participate in. Um, and, and waste the districts.

Now there's there, but I also don't want to do any ill will with relationships with, um, some of our main partners over at both cities. Is it, is it fair to say that not only would, well, we would kind of be avoiding the expense this year, but we also get the revenue pickup from the state aid reimbursement for last year.

So it was kind of like a little bit of a double value for the school district to, to, to not do it on a tough budget year. I mean, I realize you kind of netted it out and said 1200 but we get the revenue regardless, because that's for last year of sixpence. Yeah, that's true, Bob. And it also, it makes it more difficult to join here.

Right? So if they do start doing great things, then when we come back in, we wouldn't have that revenue from the eight coming to offset the cost. Um, the other thing that I thought about reflected on is we worked really hard to get them to go to be closest closer so that we could reduce the cost. And I'm thinking maybe we should honor that for a second year.

Um, and, you know, maybe maybe express some of what we would like to see and see if we get there. So either way, um, this is just a discussion we would need to put it on. Um, the next board agenda for, uh, approval. Okay. The other thing I would say is, um, you will have at least one if not two new board members, cause there's two of us whose terms are ending this year.

So there may be value while the, the current five of us sitting on the board today might say, no I don't, I don't need to participate in that. Or I don't see the value. Someone new coming in. May want to take more advantage of that stuff or use it as a way to bring themselves up to speed by attending some of those things.

So a new board member may find more value in it or have more of an interest in, Hey, I want to go do the legislative stuff with four County or some of those other kinds of areas. Yeah. That's a very good point. Um, I also have a really good relationship with Marla. I could, uh, have a

conversation with her about what some of the, what, what we see value in and what we would like to see more of.

Normally we approve it. I think we normally do it at our reorg meeting in July, but since save now. Gone through both and the Kosar, does that move that, huh? It does because they like to have coasters set by early may. Okay. That way they can do their budgeting. Okay. Yeah, I think considering like a gun, I, I defer to Angela and Jamie of course, um, on this one.

Um, but I think when you consider the net cost of the, you know, the, the 1200, assuming that's like close to accurate, that's a, that's a different story than 6,000, I think in the current cycle. Um, what seems reasonable to me. You know, when we started the conversation last week, uh, Angela, you know, had a brief aside with Greg about this, I was not thinking about the fact that we're in the bushes coaster now, and that's a huge difference.

So, um, that's, you know, you can very quickly recoup that in, um, just a couple of meetings. Right. And it's, it's entirely possible too, that now that we've been through recent events, the priorities at Fort County may shift and there we may see more advocacy and those kinds of efforts than we've seen over the past year because of current.

I think that it's the advocacy and the lobbying that I'd like to see more of. And they, they have, um, stepped up since we talked on Monday. Um, they've been collecting some data on what the budget vote through, uh, ballot mail and ballot is costing each district. Um, so they're, they're trying to do some advocacy there.

So I think you're exactly right, Angela, that w issues coming up, they may start to do more of that. Okay, great. We can put it on the next agenda for a vote. We had to do the inner reorg though. No.

Okay. Onto a professional development. Um Hm. I sent that email from onboard newsletter about grading. That I think was a timely, I always, you know. The articles always come out, just as we're starting to have internal conversations are helpful. So thank you for everyone who read that and gave us some, um, feedback.

I appreciate it. Um, anybody else have any other professional development? Constantly talk about, uh, Jamie, I don't want to interrupt if somebody has comments about professional development, but I wanted to go back to reports from district administrators really quickly. If we could. Sure. Uh, because I did want to give some input.

I just wasn't quick enough to get in. Um, so I just wanted to thank some people by name. Um, these people are coming in every day to make and deliver meals for our students, which is just as super heroic efforts. So I wanted to say thank you to our directors, Chuck O'Neill, um, and, uh, Brenda Patra Selleck.

And the, the people who have been helping them, petty styles, Pat Smith with the deliveries. Amy Reinders during Bowman petty Kissinger, penny Eller, Alexandra Durfee and Vicki Denner in the kitchen. So many thanks to those people who are coming in every day. And I'm just going above and beyond to make sure our kids have, uh, excellent, by the way.

Very well prepared breakfast and lunches. Great. And I would just add to that, that I see them just about every day and they're doing it cheerfully and with energy and care and, um, they, they really are amazing. So thanks for bringing that up empty.

Okay. Great. Okay. Anything else? Professional development wise? I read the, um, article that came out late yesterday evening where Cuomo was re-imagining education. It was a onboard extra. I thought that was interesting. Um, have some various thoughts on that. Um, but yeah, so. I did do that. I think that, uh, as that point, a few comments, um, can we talk a lot?

I read through that, Monica. I thought it was good. I think it, it, it kind of just illustrated a lot of things that already happened, right? Like, how do districts leverage technology to improve special education and in AIS? And so, so while a little bit of it might have been, um. Uh, controversial. Um, I think there's a lot of it that was just kind of stating things that say Williamson and many other districts have been doing for free for years, to be honest.

Um, you know, it still makes a good splash. Yeah. I think sometimes it's his delivery that isn't necessarily, um. The best. Um, I read an article today for work where indicated that, you know, we basically have gone from two years of technical advancement in terms of working from home in two months. Um, so I think there's a lot to be said for that.

And I think that we as a district have done a great job of it. Um, it just, again, how he sometimes delivers it is, is, um. It's unfortunate because there is a lot, in my opinion, uh, to students being in a classroom. So, but thank you for giving me that moment to share that, Monica. I love that thought about two years of technological advancement.

In two months, you are like 100% right. You know, um, it's working in the tech field. You find that people are reluctant to jump into technology right away. This has literally forced those people's hands. Like they don't have a choice. They've had to jump in. And even by like, you know, when you have a little of an issue with something or whatever, um, tonight, it's just really interesting how we've all had sort of become these like technology support people.

Our teachers have had to become, um, you know, the first line of technology support for their students. They never had to do for, so not only. You know, are we asking the teachers to, um, become experts in teaching remotely? But you also have to help diagnose and help your students become technicians. And we've literally, two months had to throw people in, which would take years in a traditional setting of training.

And it's, um, I think, you know, where. Um, governor Cuomo is probably thinking in that space, is that we did it, we accomplished it. And you know, while this isn't perfect and I don't like this space for our students, we are able in these times to quickly change the educational space, which usually takes years and years and years to make a change.

And so I think that's probably more where he's coming from, some of his comments. Um, but yeah, the delivery. I think we're extremely well, like I think districts are going to be extremely well positioned for out years, right? Like, sure, end of year bumpy, no one signed up for this, but, but, but let's say the fall comes and live classrooms are not an option.

It will be going into it eyes wide open with good experiences under our belt and all the learnings that folks have had. Um, I, you know, I think we're going to be better off in the future because of this experience with that question. Great discussion. Hey, anything else for professional development? Mm Hmm.

All right. Move into, um, board reports. I need a motion to approve the CSC case summaries.

Second.

Any discussion? All in favor? Aye. Aye.

Passes five. Zero.

Um, would you mind, uh, doing what's, I dunno. I think Margaret had raising the hand when we vote too, so I can get a visual. Um, that'll help me as well cause we're a little bit of a delay here, so. Okay. Onto the budget presentation. Okay.

Well, tonight, uh, the board is, hopefully we'll approve the budget, which, um, you have received it, waiting for the screen to come up there. Um, a detailed, uh, budget. With your packet. So, um, and so with that, we've, we've come a long ways. We've had to make a lot of changes in including, uh, to the budget calendar, which we'll be talking about.

I want to start off with this first slide. Like we usually do stating our budget guidelines, beginning with our mission statement. And people can take a minute to read that, but um, I'll read some of that. I guess to provide a learning community that inspires character, service, knowledge and wisdom and the, this budget shall be aligned with the board of education goals and both be both.

Educationally and fiscally sound and the budget shall reflect prudent financial planning while balancing the needs for all students, instructional goals, improve technology facilities, and doing all this while minimizing the impact to the taxpayers. So that has always been our guideline and we feel like, uh, we really, we really work hard to, um, stay within those guidelines.

So this year, our goals. To the right there. Um, and this is where we've, um, through the process that really began in the winter with our board meetings in January. And as we put our budget together, um, we found herself selves really having to tighten our budget. Uh, we, we began with a. A short fall, we closed that gap between projected revenues and anticipated expenditures for the year 2021.

Um, only to find out in on April 1st. Um, when we're weeks into our closure. And. The state passes a budget and we get our pronounced and our state aid isn't quite what we expected it to be. And on top of all this. We know that people are hurting out there. So we've responded, and I want to say that this budget, which you have, um, reflect some of that, uh, some of some of the boards and the community's concerns about, uh, business as usual because we know it's not.

So what we've done is tightened up our budget. We've, uh, committed to, um, holding our budget increased from one year to the next to a bare minimum. And we'll see in a couple of slides that, um, where, where that is. We've also, uh, made some adjustments to where we can, uh, uh, reasonably put to the voters, uh, a budget that will minimum minimize the tax.

Rate increase this year. The tax rate, I will say is not set until August. Right now. Um, we've tightened that, um, where it was going to be close to 2%. We're now projecting under 1% on our tax rate. So we've done a lot of, um, further belt tightening from where we were just a few weeks ago. Um, and part of our goals is to always maintain or enhance program whenever we can.

Our goal has been to maintain our bus replacement schedule that may be very key on the road, but as we look for, um, um, uh, um. W ways to transport our students in a safe way. And also the continue with our capital outlay. Many projects, that's a hundred thousand dollar appropriation within our, when our budget, and we get building aid on that.

So we get a lot of value for our dollar. And we have some slides, a slide on that towards the end of this presentation. Okay. So here we talk about our new revised timeline. Okay. So the budget calendar timelines have been reviewed. Revised, uh, do, do the disclosure. So generally though, the dates are set back between two and three weeks.

So tonight, um, the board, uh, is expected to adopt this budget. It was originally, um, scheduled for April 22nd. That's now, uh, for tonight. The budget hearing where we get some feedback and hope too from the community. Um, that's gone from, uh, May 6th now to May 27th. So that's about a three week delay there, but that will put us on schedule to have a, a budget vote via absentee balloting and June 9th.

And, uh, that's the second Tuesday in June. Normally that's done the third Tuesday in may. Right? So we've got to adjust a tagline and it's fitting in nicely, and we'll have all of our public budget documents available like we normally do. Um, and being as transparent as possible. We'll have this information out to the public on our websites.

Um, everywhere that we're required to, to have that information, um, all in a timely way to give our community, um, time to digest this budget and, and vote on it, um, and they, and intelligent way. So, um, this slide. Here we are with our budget. Um, uh, on the right side. That's our appropriation expense side of the budget.

And we show him the left side, the revenues to support that budget. So, uh, we do have at this time, a solid budget, uh, going forward, um, a balanced budget. Okay. So, um. You can see where the bulk of our budget is. It's with instruction and it's in a, uh, you know, we're a people organization. So those are largely, largely salaries and benefits.

Really, that's about 75% of the budget. So, um. And we have these other categories that service transfers are general support, which includes solid bar, um, utilities, maintenance, uh, administration and so forth. And then we have our transportation piece of the pie there. So next slide please.

Okay. And we always, uh, show a comparative bucket from, from year to year. So I'm looking at our general functional categories, general support and instruction, transportation, benefits that service, community service and Intercon transfers. So I'm just looking at the dollar and percentage changes from one year to the next.

Um, we'll shoot right down to the, our bottom right. Our budget to budget increase is just one point. 1% now we know inflation is higher than that. Uh, cost of living. We started out with a projection of over 4%, uh, budget to budget. So through, um, re reductions and carefully trimming a budget where we could, uh, we did our best to, um, keep this more of a flat budget.

Um, so it's down to just 1.1% of an increase. You see, uh, the largest increase there's in debt service. Um, however that is, that is due to our, um, building projects that we have underway and is largely, um, um, offset by our building aid.

And it might be difficult, but I'll try to pause now and then if anybody has any questions. Along the, um, revenue side, comparative look, I on the budget, our state aid right now, it's, um, just under 1% increase overall. So that's not where, where we expected it to be. Even the governor's proposal had us at over 2% increase in state aid.

But, um, you know. Do the, the States, uh, revenue projections, uh, those, those estimates were scaled down by our state legislature when they passed the budget. So, um, but, uh, it, it was reduced giving us about 12 point \$3 million estimated state aid. That is an area that we've been told we'll have to keep an eye on.

Uh, as the state looks to take a snapshot every quarter this year to, to review their revenue projections. So we've always said that we are going forward with a, um, with a budget knowing that it may be a flexible budget. We may get further bad news about. That age. So the 12 point

\$3 million showing we're gonna cross our fingers, we're gonna hope that that holds true throughout the year.

It may go down and we may have to adjust our budget, our anticipated expenditures accordingly, uh, during 20, 21 school year. So that's the real, um, catch there that that's something we're going to have to, um, pay a lot of attention to. As, as we note this economic uncertainty. Okay. The other, um, categories of revenue, um.

Two things I want to mention is our reserves. We're applying an extra hundred thousand dollars of reserves from what we originally intended. We wanted to keep our level of reserve funding to balance this budget, um, on an even keel, but, uh, to achieve, um, a reduction in our taxes and coupled with, um, re reductions on the expense side, um, that was necessary to increase.

Our reliance on our reserves. Um, fairly modest, roughly at a hundred thousand dollars. But as you can see, that's, uh, just about a 30% increase in our reliance on reserves. The other point I want to make, um, other revenues that consists of a lot of categories, including tuition charges, um, missions. But the big reduction there, I want to point out is, is I think most people are aware of interest rates.

So we originally had \$100,000 budgeted in the current year, and for the next year. For interest rates. Those interest rates have gone down to near zero in the last couple months. So over the course of the year, I've talked, I've been talking about investments in CDs we can. No longer, um, actually invest in those CDs because they're basically have almost a zero return.

So our money is, um, uh, pretty much in our, um, premier money market account, which has very little interest and our interest bearing checking and savings accounts. So, um. That, that, that's just another area. Um, in the grand scheme of things, um, it, it's still material. So we've, we've reduced that interest line item on the revenue side by about \$90,000.

So that represents that drop in the other. We're maintaining our fund balance, a appropriation of fund balance of \$150,000 sales tax, um, is staying even as it usually does from year to year. Um, and our payments in lieu of taxes is just about the same. So our, our revenues from year to year as it is with the appropriation side budget to budget is projected at one point, one increase in total revenues.

Any questions on that?

Okay, so here's a look at our reserves. What you, what reserves do we use to balance our budget? We have other reserves, but not all of those reserves are available for funding our budget. These are the reserves that we do utilize to help balance our budget. We are, um, uh, appropriating a hundred thousand dollars from our debt service reserve.

A hundred from our liability reserve, and that does take a voter approval. Therefore, it's on our, um, proposition to approve the budget along with a hundred thousand dollars from that liability or reserve. So the voters that directly approve that transfer from our liability reserve, it's just a, uh, each reserve has, has its own, uh, legal requirements.

This is one for that liability reserve. We don't need it for some of these other reserves that are available for us, like the debt service or the ERs reserve, as long as we have expenditures to, um, that related expenditures. Um, for example, that service expense or ERs retirement expense, um, um, that, that meet or exceed the amount that we're funding from our, uh, from those particular corresponding reserves.

So I think that might've sounded a little confusing. Bottom line is, um, these are the reserves that, that we are using to help fund our, um, our budget. Okay. And that amount, same piece by a hundred thousand dollars.

Okay. We showed our slide on the star exemption, the effect of, uh, what star has on, um, a homeowner, uh, whether they received the basic star or the enhanced star. And I just wanted to, um, provide this slide again because it is updated for our reduced tax rate and, uh, the, the star exemption amounts, um. You change generally every year.

Sometimes they don't change it all, but, um, the exemption amounts are just slightly lower this year than last year. So, um, so for instance, uh, a homeowner, uh, whose house is assessed at a hundred thousand dollars, would receive a \$29,400 exemption off their property value. So they are taxed at our rates.

Yeah. 70,600 okay. So although our estimated tax rate is, uh, at \$25 and 41 cents per thousand, the effect of star will bring that effective tax rate down to \$18 from 25 to \$18. Okay. And you can see the numbers there. If you're a senior and you, um, are under the enhanced star, which has a greater exemption.

So, uh, I would like to make a point on the star for the community is, um, the note on the bottom.

Um, people should look at the community, should look at, um, www.taxthatnewyork.gov. Four more star information. So, um, new homeowners, um, they're, they've been going for less couple of years directly to the star credit. Um, and that is an option for anyone who's been on the star program prior to that. And over time, you would generally save a little bit more money because, um, under the normal exemption there, there is a cap on that.

So that's why there is a line up there. The maximum 20, 21 star savings. It really presents a cap. But, um, if people do take a look at, um, um, the star website, the New York state start website, um, there's a lot of information on there. I won't put myself out as an expert on star. But, uh, it may pay for some owners to consider switching to the star credit.

So I just kinda wanted to make that point. I'm there and it's the, it's mentioned there at the bottom, Gary, are there deadlines that people have to adhere to to make that change? Yes, I think there are, and there they are explained on that website. So there's a lot of detail about star. There's a, there's a nice Q and a, um, on the website about star that I think would help people.

I would also say that, um, some of these star questions can be directed towards our town assessor's office. Okay. Thank you.

Okay. And the board has, um, uh. We'd gone over, um, our reductions to get our budget in line to where it is now. Here is, um, kind of a summary of those reductions and staffing. We've tried to do most of it through attrition, through grant funding. Um, but we've had to take a close look at, um, other areas, and we try, have tried and we'll always try to keep, keep our reductions as far away from instruction as possible.

So we've got a total of, um, five positions, five. Full time equivalent. That's what they, FTE stands for. Full time equivalent positions that have been reduced in this budget. Other reductions, um, have to do with security too. So, um, we've also, um, made some additional reserves, which, which I've already explained.

And in the red. Section just to, um, keep, keep in mind that we will be going through this year with the potential for further cuts in state aid and we would have to react to, uh, those, those cuts. But right now, um, we, we do have, um, a budget in place and, and hopefully, uh, that, that will be maintained throughout 2021.

Okay.

So we're sticking with our, uh, uh, financing plan for buses. We're proud to say that we can effectively, um, maintain a bus purchasing plan, um, from year to year. That does not have, um, an effect on our tax is because we receive, um, a good deal aid. Um, the, uh, on the purchase of, of these buses. So this is basically, um, showing us, uh, our financing mechanism for purchasing buses, bands, or band anticipation notes.

These are short term notes. They mature every year. So every year we would pay down on a principle portion of those bands. And we also, um, use some funding from our bus purchase reserve. So what you see here is, um, at the beginning of, um, 2021, we have bond anticipation notes for these buses of \$875,000. Um, and after, um.

We include funding from our bus purchase reserve. Uh, we make our payment, we have our new bus purchase authorization. Uh, that is a second proposition for the voters of \$395,000. Um, then we end up with a new bond anticipation note in the amount of \$890,000. So we really go on that borrowing from eight 75.

Up to, uh, another \$15,000, uh, \$890,000. And, uh, with that, we're able to replace four aging buses and replace them with four buses.

Another commitment that we've made in this budget is to continue with our capital outlay projects. These are a very nice. A budgeting tool for us to, um, take care of our facilities. And these are projects of less than a hundred thousand dollars. Um, we, um, we will receive aid of approximately 86%. Um, on the, on that \$100,000, um, in the following year.

So, you know, in 2021, we will receive most of the aid that we committed for the, um, high school classroom improvements, which were done during, um, this current year. And for 2021, we've got a small project, um, at the elementary library and to, um, improve upon, uh, that flooring. It's. It's, um, enhancing and replacing of flooring.

So our next slide shows our budget propositions. Proposition one, shall we approve the 2021 budget and the amount of 24, 24 million, 630,000, \$729. And, um. Appropriate a hundred thousand dollars from the liability reserve. As I mentioned before, that's the piece that's included in the proposition due to a legal requirement to, um, to expend monies that the voters have to authorize, uh, monies to be expended out of that liability reserve.

Uh, the proposition two is for those buses. Okay. So there's two propositions this year.

And that summarizes the, uh, the budget presentation and our budget for this year. So, um, I will entertain any questions that the board has and you will have the opportunity to any deed to vote on the budget tonight. Uh, carry a couple of questions. More so around the vote and how that's going to work. Is that something that you can comment on now, or do you, is it, um, I realized that it's new information coming out readily, but what prominently comes to my mind is, you know, I've read that the, uh, elections and et cetera will take place via absentee roading, our ballot.

How will that, will that still be counted by, um, the election committee? Okay. Well, thanks for asking me that question, but I am going to defer that. Um, Kelly and Greg and Mary grace, who, um, uh, you have, have more of that responsibility. We've all talked about it, but I know that they can fill in, in better detail than I can.

So there's a lot, uh, up in the air, still around the budget vote. Um, there's not the, the. Executive order that the governor put out is, is complicated. And I know that in case, and others in Albany are working to get some changes on that. Um, so what we say here may change, just so you know, but, um, for the most part, other than the absentee ballot, most will look, uh, the count will look the same as it has in the past.

Okay. And I appreciate that and I really recognize that it could change. I just think about, you know, informing the community as quickly or as, you know, as early as possible. Right? So they

have an idea of what is this piece of paper that's coming in the mail versus getting something and then just recycling it.

So I'm just a thought, but thank you. Yes.

Okay, Angela, how are, but no, I just was going to say, I don't have any questions, Gary, but thank you to you and Greg and mg, or I know there was a lot of work put into this and it's almost like you had to go through the process multiple times and for indulging all of our questions and inquiries along the way, and, Hey, can we do this or have we thought about that?

So thank you. I know that it's been probably more trying than. A normal budget process, but I appreciate all the work you guys have done to get us to this point. Thank you. You took the words right out of my mouth. That's where I was going. So thank you. I also appreciate, um, your attention to, you know, the community's feedback and how they're feeling right now, um, and finding a happy medium, um, in that space.

So thank you. How would I go, Angela and Jamie as well? I know there's a lot of hard work, a lot of revisions, and it's very much appreciated. I agree.

Anything else.

All right. Thank you, Gary. Thank you. Moving on to the consent agenda. I need a motion to approve the consent agenda. Items five through five D as recommended by the superintendent. So moved. Second. Any discussion? All in favor? Aye. Opposed? Passes five zero. Okay.

Okay. And to old business. Yes. In a motion to approve the second reading of policy,

I was actually going to move that we waive the second reading and approve it as it's presented. For both of those policies. Kelly says, hold on just a minute. Oh,

I second that. If I can make that change.

Okay. Any discussion?

All in favor?

Opposed is five zero.

Alright. And do a greeting discussion.

Uh,

so, um, I know we have talked a lot about grading. I've shared some of our plans with you. Um, we continue to talk and refine, uh, what we believe will be the best thing to do. So I'm just looking for your input. I'll take notes and we'll make sure that that informs our work moving forward.

Um, so I'll go first. Um, G I read through the information you gave us, the articles that Jamie forwarded that was in our onboard. Uh, yeah. I personally am comfortable with the original Pathi laid out LA at our last meeting. Um, there's some things I like about it. Um, as I read through your, um, yeah, I think it was a presentation, but the E the information in the email you sent us, um, I do like that we're.

Purposely using a method that's familiar to students and families as opposed to changing things up midway through the year. Um, and I like that. You are, I can tell from the work you've put in, it's very thoughtful, purposeful. Um, you're being flexible, uh, with both from the staff perspective and the student perspective.

And I appreciate that as well. So I can say I'm, I'm comfortable with the plan you laid out at our last meeting and emailed to us. Between meetings. Okay. Um, I would like to share and say thank you for, again, supplying that information. Jamie, thank you for sharing that article. Um, you know, I've had some conversations, um.

Over the last week or so, a lot of them have been unsolicited where I've been part of a conversation where I'm not necessarily part of the conversation, but I'm overhearing the conversation and that's where a lot of my concern started to, to come in. Um, so one of the things you had mentioned is, you know, does accountability matter?

And I think accountability 100% matters in the perfect scenario. So what I w what I struggle with is. Accountability and a not perfect scenario. And we know that not everybody is in the same scenario, right? So I've heard the comment that we're all in this together. We're all in the same boat. Well, we're all in the same storm, maybe not the same boat.

So how do we expect those to be accountable when they might not have the ability to be accountable? So that's something I'd like to share. And then, um. Yeah. Whatever way we decide to go out. And you know, again, I echo what, um, Angela mentioned you've put a lot, if the committee or whoever put this together, I know that you've put a lot of time into it and ultimately will support what is decided.

Um. But one of the things that has always been a big thing with me is communication to the families and the communities and making sure that when we do that, um, we do so, um, you know, maybe it's a YouTube video so that they can stop it, rewind it, restart it. Um, you know, with visuals or something. So, um, those are some things that I, I wanted to share.

I know you, you talked about, um.

I hate to use the word cheating, but we talked about how we, you know, that's possible in any situation. Um, and hopefully it kind of goes back to that accountability, right. So, um, hopefully, but those are my thoughts on that. Okay.

Yeah, I. Well, obviously, uh, appreciate all the hard work that's going in here. And so, and so, any, any concern that I'm sharing is out of concern and not out of questioning people's judgment. Right? Everyone knows that. But, uh, I, I, it feels appropriate to say that in the front end. Um, I think Monica's analogy there, uh, we're not all in the same boat, but we're all in the same storm.

I think that's really, really important. Um. You know, I got the question of accountability, obviously. Right? That's a key. That's a key skill that, that I expect everyone is building throughout children's careers, starting in UK and all the way through graduating from high school and onward, right?

Accountability matters and how it adjusts. But I think in this state that we're in, um. Different, the tools to be accountable. Again, just to kind of reiterate what Monica said is not everyone has those same tools. Um, I, I'm not, I'm not confident that our current proposal is equitable across our. Student base, right?

Um, you know, I know we, we focus on, I'm going to kind of segment students into three broad segments, and I realize there's thousands of segments. Well, I'm gonna put them into three. The high performers, the middle 80% and the bottom, you know, in the bottom performers that really, really struggle for whatever reason, whether that's accountability, whether that's family structure, whether it's many socioeconomic factors that they have to deal with.

Um. I really worry about, I'm going to save the bottom of that middle portion and the, and the bottom portion itself. Um, and the support that, you know, uh, folks have or may not have, the students may have or not have at home and whether your parents are home or not. I think, you know, Monica, we were talking about this in a, in a different session where you're working doubled almost the hours that you normally work while you're working from home.

And the availability and the willpower that parents have is probably extremely drained, um, on top of all the other stresses. And I think the added stress of grading per se. It just, it just seems like one more item. And given how, like if we were at midpoint of the year, I think I would have a very different perspective than I have now.

We're very late in the year. Um, I read, you know, I don't remember if Jane, if this was in Jamie's art, I'm sorry, I'm being long winded, but this is, this has been weighing on me a lot since our last conversation. Um, the, I think it was in the article that Jamie sent around, which I thought was really good and articulated right, is.

It's not, it's not grades. It's not pass, fail. It's, we're moving the children along with a solid report that is, that is competent. Um, that is a, what's the word I'm looking for? Not, um, uh, not competency-based, but uh. The curriculum standard. Thank you. Thank you. Envy that standard base that reports whether they are, you know, have met the standard or whether they need improvement in the standard cause.

I think the key here is making sure that when we get to whatever next year is normal will be, it will definitely be better than this. Even if it's different distance learning, it will definitely be better than current state. And. If we can best arm next year's educators with what standards the students have met and are doing well on and what student and what standards those students have not performed well on or not met expectations on.

That's some of the best work they can do rather than trying to solve for a grade. And I realized we have students that. Perform great in the beginning of the year, in all year long. We have some that come on at the end of the year. We have some that fall down at the end of the year. Right. We have all of those situations.

Um, the idea that, that this type of environment for the last two months, you know, ish of it, and we all know the end of the year is kind of a chaotic, blessed month of the year. It's kind of chaotic anyhow. It's not like straight, uh, you know, classroom work in a normal year. Anyhow. Um, it, it. I don't, I, I'm struggling to understand the value it brings to assume that normal, uh, impact should be considered.

It's, I really struggled to, to, to understand that.

okay. Bob, do you, do you draw any distinction between the various, uh, grade levels? Like, I know, uh, MDs presentation laid it out K through four or five through eight, nine through 12, with some exception for like eighth graders who are in advanced courses. But yeah, I think my concern was actually more at the higher, like, I think you're kind of already executing in what I'm talking about at the lower levels.

So I, I wouldn't say I'm narrowing it to that eighth grade accelerated through the high school to say, I think we're being too regimented there or expecting too much regiment there. So I'm going to make a counterargument, I guess I would call it. Um, I, I agree with you at the K through eight level and when I say eight, well, I'm just going to remove the accelerated.

Piece of the compensation high school courses, we'll call them. Um, because I think that in some ways. If we have a group of kids at the high school level, from what I have seen, um, in the documentation that M G Davis and just in the communications coming from all the buildings, um, both to families, to students directly, um, on the website, uh, stuff in Schoology that has been posted by administrators.

I think we've. We're giving those kids in that higher level, high school courses, much more flexibility than they would normally have if they were sitting in the classroom. And I think that we have, I hope that we have taught them in the first eight years to advocate for themselves. In a way that if they need help, they reach out to the teacher for help in, in a normal course of a normal school year.

They would be doing that at 10th period or study halls or, but I think that teachers, from what I have seen, have given kids even more opportunity to do that now. And I think if we don't encourage them to do that and just say, Hey, you're going to pass because. Of the situation that was dealt to you. We're in some ways doing them a disservice because if we've done the right thing as an institution, up to that point, we've taught those kids, Hey, if you need clarification on directions, you go to the teacher.

If you need extra help in a course, you go to the teacher or you go seek out that assistance and advocate for yourself, communicate that you're having trouble and so forth. Passing them along and not giving them the opportunity to practice those. If anything. I think this situation has given kids, even at younger ages, opportunities to hone those skills and and learn to start saying, Hey, I don't understand these directions.

And I don't have a teacher live in front of me that I can talk to him necessarily, but I can email the teacher, I can send them a chat, I can go to their virtual office hours. Um, I can email them. There's, there's a lot of ways. So I think, uh, a kid who's a senior should, I would expect they should be advocating for themselves to say, Hey, I need extra help.

I know we're giving those kids, I believe all at all levels. Um, you can redo as much as you want to try to learn the skill or the standard. So in my mind, I think it's a little different because I, I expect that a, uh, a high schooler has some more of those skills than say, a fifth grader. My, my, my kind of initial, those are all great points.

Angela, obviously, I don't think any, I agree with everything you said. I think that's all true. All accurate. I don't, I didn't hear anything that relates to why the grade is important to all those things you just said. Right. I think in my, in our, a lot of our grading conversations, grading committees that I attended, we spend a lot of time talking about, it's not about the grade, it's about, it's about work, it's about mastery of scale.

It's about meeting the standards. It is not, it is not the grade. That is the important thing. And I think, you know, when we did all of our readings and learnings on grading, it was take the importance of the grade off because the goal of school is not to get a grade. Right. That is a tool to evaluate how well folks are doing.

Um, and so I think by continuing it in this time, we're putting emphasis on a grade that we're tracking, that we've been working kind of hard, I would say, to deemphasize and focus on the standards based learning, not grading. And we've, we've, you know, uh, you know, I've been

part of those conversations that mg has led multiple times of decoupling those things, and that's really hard.

And that's breaking a, a mindset that has been around for decades and decades. Um, I think this is actually cementing that in further rather than taking the opportunity to pull those two apart and focusing on. You know, the, the evidence of mastery of those skills and what competencies I've, you know, met or not met as a student.

Um, so I think everything you said about building, you know, building the access, advocating for self and reaching out, those are all like, obviously I'm not going to disagree with any of those values or skills that hopefully our students have, but I don't think grades are required for any of those.

and Angela, I just want to say, I agree. You make very good points. And I think the part I struggle with, because I'm very much, you know, our household is belt built on accountability. You know, the kids are doing their things well, we're working, et cetera. It's not about me. What I'm having a harder time. I think grasping is expecting the accountability to happen during a time of crisis and the mental health surrounding that you can, a child who is in perhaps, you know, a state of depression or et cetera because of the school year ended.

Can they, do they feel strong enough to, um. Speak up for themselves or advocate for themselves. So, again, great points. I just, I wanted to share that, so thank you.

M G I a I have some questions around, um, what the state has recommended and the state's guidance. If you could speak to that a little bit. I would like to know if the state has provided any specific guidance or they're just leaving up to schools. So grading is a local decision. And, um, and just so you know, I've been having conversations with other districts about what they're doing.

I don't think we live in a bubble. I think we can learn and get good ideas from elsewhere. Um, and the range is spectacular. I mean, it's spectacular what other districts are doing. And so I really think that what we have to do here is just be very thoughtful. Uh, knowing the work we've done around grading, knowing, um, what we are trying to do in terms of the learning for our students right now, it isn't business as usual.

We've really paired it down to the essential standards. Um, and. Talk about the best way to reflect that. And so we are having conversations about, um, you know, is there a way to do a, hasn't met standards and give the students an extended opportunity who, uh, to finish out. But then, you know, we say, well, what would that look like?

Because if they're struggling with virtual learning, we don't see the end to that in the foreseeable future. So how can we better support those kids who are struggling. Um, and as Monica said,

the social, emotional wellbeing of our kids right now is paramount. And the supports that that they have at home, we know are not equitable.

But I would say too, they're, they're not equitable during the school year either. They're just compounded now. So that when, when we talk about how complex this situation is and this issue is, it truly is complex. And. The one thing that I can tell you comes out of every conversation that we have is we want to do what's best and most supportive for our students.

Um, and initially we did not believe that the past fail was, uh, that or the pass pass. Um, but now we are also out for the remainder of the year, which is an additional. Thing to consider right there. There's no coming back and catching the kid up. So, uh, so we're continuing to have those conversations. But I think during those conversations, we have to also be careful not to the value, um, perseverance and resilience and those kinds of things as well.

So it's finding the balance. Um. And obviously your input is his input that we will consider and think about. Uh, but there, but everything you've said are all things that we believe in, have considered. Yeah, I think mg and you, you brought up the equity at home is not the same in any, like it wasn't the same six months ago and it isn't the same today.

I think, you know, and again, I think Jamie, the article you sent from this book was great. It was like spot on. You know, one of the best equalizers is the classroom and the additional services that students, you know, the AIS services students can get the additional support, the support of their classmates.

Um, that is just zero existence right now. Um, and like, not, it's, it's, there's no substitute. Um, and I know like we're working from home and we're all making it work and function, but like, we're in a once in a century item right here. This isn't just a unique, this isn't just a unique situation. Right? Like our, our pipes didn't burst.

Our furnace didn't go out. This is a lot more than that. Yeah, absolutely. There's total agreement. Yeah. I think it's, you know, like you've mentioned, finding that balance and that, that makes your job even more tricky. You know, there's, I've read a ton of articles about grading since this happened. Um, I think that one that I shared was probably the most concise, uh, pointed one that I've read.

But you know, the school of thought, right? That if you. Um, don't, if you don't have any grading happening, those kids who are semi checked out are going to be even more checked out because what's the, what's the point? Right? And so, um, you need to balance that with the kids that are trying but struggling.

And I get it. I think that these conversations every time we have them are probably helpful. I think your point about, um, the school district not intending to be closer to the rest of the year. And continuing, I don't want to say business as usual because clearly it's not, but you know,

business as usual with the intent that if students come back in June, um, we have some face time with them sometime to help them.

But, you know, we don't have that now. And so I think that that's probably. You know, and it's another consideration. And by the way, a summer school, you know, the availability to be able to help kids during the summer. So there are, there are a lot of things, um, under consideration. Another thing I think we have to consider is.

I don't want to see us keep moving the target or the expectation for kids cause they're already outside their norm. So if they're, I mean, that's one of the things that I think you pointed it out in your, um, documents on G right now. We've stuck with a system kids are familiar with and we've communicated that that's the plan.

So then if you shift, if we keep shifting, I mean, you still have two months left of school. Um, if you keep shifting how they're measured and how, what those expectations are, that could just cause more angst and confusion. Um, and maybe it's that when we're, um.

If we are, if we're doing this just through the end of this year, um, and next year we start up and things don't look the same or they look similar to what we're going through now, not back to normal. Um, maybe then that's when you make some of those larger shifts because people ha, you're starting the year fresh people.

You can lay those expectations out. From the beginning, whereas here we've kind of already, you're changing the rules in the middle of the game and you don't want to keep every penny. Yep. Agreed. So one, one thing that I just want to mention and it, it goes back to what, um, you were saying earlier about technology.

I think Bob and Jamie both said it. I think the same is true with grading. Is it situations like this that really. Move your thinking forward and move things forward. And I think that our teachers have really shifted their thinking to a more standard space. One, especially our secondary level teachers who were the ones that we were really working with to try to start to have that standard spaced perception.

Um, so I think that it, that is a good outcome of this is that we, I do believe we have moved that so. Um, so there are positives that come out of this, um, grappling with the way things are versus the way we wish they were and the way they should be for an emergency or a crisis. Right now. I would just like to say thank you if I did not say so enough.

I do appreciate everything that you have done, the time you've put into it, the explanations I don't want. Um, they're not too many, you know, show an appreciation for what you have. So I do appreciate that. And I want to say thank you to the rest of my board members because you know, these are the hard conversations that you sometimes have to have.

Good stuff comes out of it. So thank you for having those difficulties. Conversations. So could, could we hear, um, Ashton, sorry to put you on the spot, but, um, I'd be curious if you know, uh, your opinion as well here. Sure. Um, I'm so, I'm a little bit removed from this just because mine are in Elementary school, so there's this very much more like either participating or not sort of thing.

Um, but I definitely could see both sides where, I mean, I work from home and I can completely relate to what you guys were talking about earlier, where. I don't really have a start and an end date, a time anymore to my Workday. Um, it kind of just flows through whenever things need to get done and balancing that with supervising your children.

It's almost like the grades are a reflection of how involved the parents are. Um, which I think can be extremely, extremely difficult for some. Um, so I could definitely see where looking at like a, a pass, either a pass fail or maybe an incomplete would have a lot of value and maybe taking a lot of pressure off of.

An already extremely stressful situation. Um, I've seen it probably shared across our website in many things like, this isn't homeschooling. This is, you know, trying to learn through a crisis. And I think that we need to keep that in mind that, um, I'm completely agree with accountability and how poor and all that is.

But at the same time. Well, yes. I don't want anybody to get the wrong impression. Accountability is important, but my goodness, it is absolutely a backseat to the wellbeing and health of our students. And I don't think anyone thinks that. You don't think that at all. I think

you guys are the only ones that saw the people out there listening. You know, w we know. Um, and we're really just thinking about all of those different parameters. Yeah. I, there's, it's, it's a balance. I mean, you want people, you know, who are maybe slipping off at the end of the year and not to completely lose interest because there's no grade.

Um, but you also don't want it to be a source of additional stress and in a really challenging time. So, I mean, I don't know that I would go one way or the other. I support. Obviously you guys have kids that are right in the middle of it, so you kind of see a little bit more than I do on the interaction and the workload.

Um, but I definitely appreciate these conversations we have and all of the work that MGU put into this, and, you know, hearing all of our opinions and taking them all into. Uh, it's a team effort, so thanks to everybody for your input and sharing resources. And the administrative team. Uh, Greg has been wonderful.

Uh, we've had so many conversations. We've spent a lot of time and every time we do, just like when you have conversations here, we hone in a little bit more. So. Can I, can I add one more? Like this is going to be, this is not our district specific, but you know, I have a lot of folks in my

group at my company, and obviously we're doing lots of check-ins because we've been home for a couple of months working and in homeschooling is.

Homeschooling. That's not even the right word, right? Like whole mash schooling is, is really it. Triaging is, is the biggest, one of the biggest dress that our employees list for them. Right. That have kids that are, you know, within a certain age. And, and I, and I was thinking it was going to be all the, you know, the under six grade, maybe like all the ones that require a lot more attention, but to be honest, you know, like, I'm getting.

I have hundreds of pieces of feedback from there. And folks are struggling from seniors to kindergartners, right? Some kindergartners are independent as could be and loves to sit down and do their work every day. And some high schools, high schoolers require you to like be on them every second that they're working.

And. Like, it's not a, that's why I'm not drawing the line, kind of, as we discussed earlier, say at ninth grade, because it's not always relevant to how much, you know, teachers know this firsthand, right? Like they know the student, they have to be on a hundred percent, 150% of the time, and then they're only going to get 70% out of them, right.

Whether that's an ability or an effort or a will or a whatever. Um, there's a thousand reasons that that happened. So like, this is, I think. We're talking about the stress of the kids, but it's also the stress of the parent, like the mental health of the parents. This is significant. Yup.

Okay. Thanks everyone. Yeah, thank you. No one has any opinions on that stuff. Yeah, no opinions whatsoever. It's like cheerleading outfits all over again.

I'm just kidding. Ran a little, little, uh, you know, some lightness here to the conversation. Alright. Um, can we move on to new business? Okay. I need a motion to adopt the 2020 2021 Williamson central school district property tax report card. So moved second and discussion. Hmm. No. That was my boat. That was gonna be my boat.

Hand. All in favor? Aye. Opposed passes five zero. Angela. I thought you were trying to vote yes and no on that. Didn't take my hand down fast enough. Keep them below the screen where we can't see them. I need a motion to approve the adoption of the 2020 2021 Williamson central school district budget in the amount of \$24,630,729 so moved.

Second. Let me discussion.

All in favor? Aye. Aye. Opposed is five zero. I need a motion to approve the acceptance of an AFS USA student for the 2020 2021 school year. So moved.

I need discussion. All in favor? Aye. Opposed? Passes five. Zero. I need a motion to approve the MOA for coven 19 extracurriculars payment

second. Okay. Any discussion? All in favor? Hi. Hi. Hi. Opposed passes. Five zero motion. I need a motion to approve the MOA for coven 19 CSCA vacation payout. So moved. Second. Any discussion? All in favor? Aye. Hi. Opposed passes five zero. I need a motion to approve resolution resolution for administrators, directors, and a confidential employees vacation payout.

So,

okay. Any discussion?

All in favor? Alright. Bye. Post passes five zero. Okay. And two meetings. Upcoming district committee meetings does not look like we have any. I have a question. Do we have any policy committee meetings scheduled for now to the end of the year? I felt that we did. We have one in June, I think. Okay. We'll hold that virtually.

We don't have one in June. I thought we had one in June.

No, they have one on March 18th but we canceled due to the closure. And was there one scheduled after that? Nope. That was supposed to be our last one. We can certainly schedule one.

I think we probably should continue our work there. Mmm. Yeah. Kelly, can you maybe work to get that scheduled, um, before a meeting in June? Yes. I think our last meeting is June 17th okay.

All right. Upcoming district events. Um, we don't have any scheduled, uh, closing items. Board of education highlights.

I, um, all I have a quick one. Um, we often highlight the, um. Administrative team directors, um, teachers. I'd like to take a minute to highlight all of the parents that are at home, um, doing everything they can. I signed on to, um, our meeting a little bit early, a little after five, and just MGI were in there chatting.

And, um, I'm struggling myself as a parent, uh, to get everything done. And so huge shout out to all of our Williamson families that are. Just doing everything they can every day, um, to help our kids move through this. And it's not just the educational piece, it's the, you know, dealing with your children, not being able to see their friends and their teachers that they love.

Um, and having gym and recess and a playground to go to that they love to play on. So, um, huge, huge, huge kudos to all of our parents for doing everything that you are doing, um, for our kiddos. So thank you. I agree. I agree too. Agree. Um, I echo Jamie, what you had said. And the only other highlight I will say is it is teacher appreciation and staff week.

So thank you very much to the teachers and staff and administration for everything that you do.
Um, so thank you.

Um, anticipated executive session.