

**KINGWOOD TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
PRELIMINARY BUDGET MEETING
March 9, 2021 7:30 p.m.**

TIME AND PLACE: The preliminary budget meeting of the Board of Education was held on March 9, 2021 by the Board of Education of the Kingwood Township School District, Hunterdon County, virtually from the Kingwood Township School, 880 County Road 519, Frenchtown, New Jersey 08825.

PUBLICATION OF NOTICE: In accordance with the provisions of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P. L. 1975, the Kingwood Township Board of Education has provided adequate notice of the date, time, and location of the meeting. A copy has been filed with the Kingwood Township Clerk and published in the *Hunterdon Democrat*, on August 28, 2020

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Board President, Paymon Jelvani at 7:40 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT:	Paymon Jelvani	Russell Pitzner
	Kevin Bloom	Sara Daly-Padron
	Brandon Chadwick	
	Donna Herbel	Shannon Sklodowsky
	Sara Daly-Padron	

ABSENT: Andrew Russano and Nicole Kempf

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS

PRESENT: Rick Falkenstein, Superintendent
Michele McCann, Business Administrator/Board Secretary

PUBLIC: No Public was present

Action 21-046

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education approved the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Kingwood Township Board of Education recognizes school staff and Board members will incur travel expenses related to and within the scope of their current responsibilities and for travel that promotes the delivery of instruction or furthers the efficient operation of the school district; and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12 et seq. requires Board members to receive prior approval of these expenses by a majority of the full voting membership of the Board and staff members to receive prior approval of these expenses by the Superintendent of Schools and a majority of the full voting membership of the Board; and

WHEREAS, a Board of Education may establish, for regular district business travel only as described in NJOMB Circular Letter 06-14, including amendments or revisions thereto, a threshold amount below which Board approval is not required; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education establishes, for regular district business travel only, an annual school year threshold of \$1,500.00 per employee as described in N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3B and where prior Board approval shall not be required unless this annual threshold is exceeded in a given school year (July 1 through June 30); and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education finds that a mileage reimbursement rate equal to that of the NJOMB mileage reimbursement rate is a reasonable rate: and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Board of Education approves the amounts set forth for regular district business travel and statutorily authorizes travel expenditures, provided that such expenditures are within the annual maximum travel expenditure amount.

Moved by S. Sklodowsky, seconded by, R. Pitzner, on roll call vote, resolution was ADOPTED as follows ayes, 8; nays, 0.

Action 21-047

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education approved the 2021-2022 preliminary budget:

WHEREAS, the 2021-2022 preliminary budget includes sufficient funds to implement the proposed planning process as described in this district’s Annual Report pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A and N.J.A.C. Title 6 and 6A and to provide curriculum and instruction which will enable all students to achieve the Core Curriculum Content Standards;

BE IT RESOLVED the Board of Education approves the 2021-2022 preliminary budget in the amount of \$7,915,402.00 and authorizes its submission to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools for approval as follows:

General Operating Expense	\$ 7,600,399
Special Revenue Fund	\$ 72,003
Repayment of Debt	\$ 243,000
Total Expenditures	\$ 7,915,402

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the 2021-2022 preliminary budget is supported by the following revenues:

General Fund Revenue		
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Local Revenues:		
Budgeted Fund Balance	\$ 239,445	
Local Tax Levy	\$ 6,041,569	
Miscellaneous Revenues	\$ 378,150	
Total Local Revenue		\$ 6,659,164
State Revenues:		
School Choice Aide	\$ 190,695	
Transportation Aide	\$ 166,282	
Special Education Aide	\$ 259,824	
Equalization Aide	\$ 293,413	
Security Aide	\$ 31,021	
Total State Revenues	\$	\$ 941,235
Total General Fund Revenues		\$ 7,600,399
Special Revenue (Grants)		\$ 72,003
Debt Service Fund Revenues:		
Local Tax Levy		\$ 243,000
Total Revenues		\$ 7,915,402.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Kingwood Township Board of Education acknowledges that the 2021-2022 preliminary budget as described above results in a General Fund Tax Levy in the amount of \$6,041,569 and Debt Service Tax Levy in the amount of \$243,000.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the preliminary budget will be advertised in the Hunterdon County Democrat newspaper in accordance with the form suggested by the State Department of Education and according to law; and

NOW, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a Board of Education meeting be held on April 27, 2021 at 7:30 p.m. for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on the budget for the 2021-2022 school year.

Moved by S. Sklodowsky, seconded by, R. Pitzner, on roll call vote, resolution was **ADOPTED** as follows ayes, 8; nays, 0.

Action 21-048

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education approved the following resolution:

WHEREAS, P.L.2020, c.44 ("Chapter 44") requires the School Employees' Health Benefits Program (SEHBP) to offer plans, beginning on January 1, 2021, for medical and prescription benefits coverage including the New Jersey Educators Health Plan (NJEHP); as adopted and implemented by the School Employees' Health Benefits Commission; and

***WHEREAS,** Chapter 44 established reduced premium contributions for any employee who selects, or is placed into, the NJEHP as his or her health care coverage option; and*

***WHEREAS,** The SEHBP applies to the following employers who elect to participate in the SEHBP: local school district, regional school district, county vocational school district, county special services school district, jointure commission, educational services commission, state-operated school district, charter school; and*

***WHEREAS,** The provisions of Chapter 44 also apply to these same employers even if they do not elect to participate in the SEHBP; and*

***WHEREAS,** Many school districts had previously negotiated health benefit agreements with lower net costs compared to the plan design and cost-sharing requirements under "Chapter 44," and/or have staff that previously declined coverage but now are choosing to enroll in the NJEHP due to its low employee cost-sharing provisions; and*

***WHEREAS,** A significant number of school districts will experience a net increase in their health care costs because the NJEHP premiums are higher than the premiums for the collectively bargained plans previously offered by the district, which is further exacerbated by reduced employee contributions under Chapter 44; and*

***WHEREAS,** Other school districts will experience a net increase in their overall health care costs even if the NJEHP premiums are lower than that of the previous plan offerings because the reduction in employee contributions will offset any overall premium savings, resulting in increased net costs to the district; and*

***WHEREAS,** The low employee contribution requirements under NJEHP encourage employees who had previously waived or declined coverage to enroll thereby increasing the districts' health benefit costs for the balance of fiscal year 2021, continuing into fiscal year 2022 and likely beyond; and*

***WHEREAS,** These costs may exceed districts' ability to address within their budgets owing to the limitations of the 2% property tax levy cap; and*

***WHEREAS,** Chapter 44 was a well-intentioned proposal that aimed to generate hundreds of millions of dollars in savings for school districts, school employees and taxpayers; and*

***WHEREAS,** While some school districts may indeed be realizing savings due to the provisions of Chapter 44, many are experiencing the opposite effect and witnessing an increase in their health care costs, which may result in cuts to critical programs, services and staff in order to balance their budgets; and*

***WHEREAS,** Since Chapter 44 essentially froze the level of health benefits and employee contributions for the seven-year period following the law's effective date, districts are unable to control cost increases through the traditional collective bargaining process; and*

***WHEREAS,** It is incumbent upon the Legislature and Governor to address and correct the*

unintended financial consequences districts are experiencing due to Chapter 44 and ensure that all districts share in the anticipated savings.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Kingwood Township Board of Education requests that the State Legislature and Governor provide relief from the increased health care costs experienced by school districts due to the implementation of Chapter 44; and be it further

RESOLVED, that relief from Chapter 44 should include direct, short-term assistance from the state to ensure that all school districts are held financially harmless in both the current and subsequent fiscal years; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Legislature and Governor should expeditiously begin to explore long-term structural reforms that reverse the unintended consequences of Chapter 44 and generate lasting savings for school districts, employees and taxpayers; and be it further

RESOLVED, that any proposals to amend or revise Chapter 44 include input from all affected stakeholders before moving forward, including feedback from representatives of local boards of education, school business administrators, superintendents, building-level supervisors and school employees; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this resolution be delivered to Governor Phil Murphy, State Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney, Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin; and the Kingwood Legislative District's representatives in the state Senate and General Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be sent to the New Jersey Association of School Business Officials and the New Jersey School Boards Association.

Moved by D. Herbel, seconded by, S. Skolodwsky, on roll call vote, resolution was ADOPTED as follows ayes, 8; nays, 0.

Action 21-049

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education approved the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Kingwood Township Board of Education recognizes that the United States, the State of New Jersey and local health authorities, as well as the World Health Organization, have declared a public health emergency regarding the Coronavirus or COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the federal and state authorities have put in place guidance detailing the precautionary measures schools must implement to stop its spread of this disease; and

WHEREAS, public schools have a profound impact on millions of students, families and staff and are charged with the care, education, nourishment of their students and are an integral part of the health and safety of our communities; and

WHEREAS, our district has responded to the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, providing students and staff members with the technology and resources necessary to

ensure the efficient delivery of instruction, virtually and in-person; and

WHEREAS, the board has a substantial public interest in protecting the health and safety of its students, staff, and community and ensuring that the district can provide staff and students with a safe and effective educational environment that supports student achievement; and

WHEREAS, the board recognizes that this health emergency made it necessary to close schools and reinvent the educational programs in a virtual setting and that this may have an adverse impact on student achievement and the emotional and social wellbeing of students; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 Vaccination Plan published by the State of New Jersey Department of Health (December 15, 2020, pgs. 36-37) prioritizes the availability of vaccines to “essential workers” in Phase 1B of the vaccine protocol; and

WHEREAS, school district staff at all levels are essential to the day-to-day operations of this district, responsible for the thorough and efficient education of all students and their social and emotional wellbeing, are critical for virtual and in-class instruction and are “essential workers;”

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Kingwood Township Board of Education finds a substantial public purpose exists to request that Governor Murphy give appropriate priority in the statewide administration of the COVID-19 vaccine to all public school district personnel.

RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution shall be forwarded to the member of the insert legislative district number legislative district delegation, Assembly Speaker Craig J. Coughlin, Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney, Governor Phil Murphy, and to the New Jersey School Boards Association.

Moved by D. Herbel, seconded by, S. Skolodwsky, on roll call vote, resolution was ADOPTED as follows ayes, 8; nays, 0.

NEW BUSINESS - Demographic study funded by state for consolidation was discussed.

OLD BUSINESS -

RECOGNITION OF THE PUBLIC -

Action 21-050

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education adjourned the board meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Moved by D. Herbel, seconded by, R. Pitzner, on roll call vote, resolution was ADOPTED as follows ayes, 8; nays, 0.

Respectfully Submitted,



Michele McCann

School Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Minutes remain unofficial until Board Approval on March 23, 2021

Approved:

