



Board Briefings

ITEMS FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD'S MARCH 9 BUDGET WORK SESSION/MEETING

(conducted in-person & remotely via Webex)

• **2022-23 BUDGET** — The board's second 2022-23 budget work session focused on enrollment, the tax levy and expenditures. Total district enrollment is projected to decline from the current 3,345 to 3,323 next year, continuing a trend of the past several years, said Assistant Superintendent Colleen Kaney. A review of current and projected enrollment at the elementary schools showed Armor decreasing by two grade level sections next year; Union Pleasant adding one special education classroom; no changes to the total number of sections at Boston Valley and Charlotte Avenue. With enrollment projected to decrease at both the Middle School and High School, the district is exploring ways to reallocate resources to meet the changing needs of learners. Actual enrollment will be continually monitored through August, using class size guidelines at the elementary level to finalize the number of sections. Regarding the property tax levy, Superintendent Michael Cornell noted the difficulties of persistent underfunding by New York State. 2022-23 will be the 17th consecutive year that the district won't receive the funding that it should based on the foundation aid formula. In the last three years alone (including 2022-23), the district has been allocated \$4.6 million less in state aid than it should have received. He said it may be appropriate in the future to consider taxing less than the "tax cap" allows if the state honors its full aid commitment for at least three years; if there's reduced reliance on appropriated fund balance as revenue in the district budget; and there's stability in the inflation rate and rate of required contribution to the NYS Teachers' Retirement System/Employees' Retirement System. Turning to expenditures, Assistant Superintendent Barbara Sporyz projected a 2.87% spending increase for general government support, instruction, pupil transportation and undistributed benefits. This leaves a \$452,988 gap between projected expenses and revenue. The proposed budget will continue to be refined as information becomes available. The board must adopt the budget by Friday, April 22. Public voting on the spending plan is on Tuesday, May 17.

• **TECHNOLOGY** — Hamburg students at all grade levels are using robotics as they explore, experiment and create, said Patrick Wirth, the district's Technology Integration Specialist. This technology lends itself to modern learning by encouraging students to take risks to solve challenges, while instilling persistence and resilience. Union Pleasant Elementary teacher Mindy Wolf and her first graders Arianna Smith, Stefan Ernst and Walter Gang demonstrated their skills in coding Sphero robot balls with St. Patrick's Day-themed leprechaun getaway cars. Another example of students learning coding is taking place in Armor Elementary's Tinker Tank, where third graders are constructing a scale model of the Village of Hamburg. Other grade levels will piggyback on the project as Spheros are programmed to navigate the streets.

• **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT** — Mr. Cornell reported that the district is continuing its commitment to students' well-being by certifying/recertifying every employee, and others who provide services to the schools, in youth mental health first aid. Hamburg is the only school district in Western New York having this expansive level of training, he said, crediting Ms. Kaney with initiating and leading the effort.

• **2022-23 SCHOOL CALENDAR** — The 2022-23 school holiday/recess calendar was approved, showing Wednesday, Sept. 7 as the first day for students. Aug. 31, Sept. 1 and Sept. 6 are designated as Superintendent Conference Days for staff attendance.

• **PERSONNEL** — Appointed to the staff were Melissa Betrus, senior clerk typist, Armor Elementary; Penny Gorman, Food Service helper, Armor Elementary and Marissa Rich, clerk typist (part-time), Administration Building

• **PUBLIC COMMENT** — Speakers addressed masks and vaccination issues.

• **NEXT MEETING** — Tuesday, April 5 at Armor Elementary - budget session at 6 p.m./regular meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Michael Cornell, Superintendent
March 10, 2022