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Lackawanna Trail Board of Education passes proposed final budget Board to vote on final budget June 26

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FACTORYVILLE — Members of the Lackawanna Trail Board of Education voted, 6-2, to approve a proposed final budget of \$20,884,000 for the 2017-18 school year during a regular meeting May 8. Adrian Bianchi, Michael Mould, Kevin Mulhern, Joseph Ross, Philip Stark and David Thorne voted in favor of the budget, and Karl Beichler and Joseph Strauch voted against it.

According to Business Manager Keith Glynn, Lackawanna County's anticipated tax rate is 162.43 mills, a 2.44 percent increase and Wyoming County's tax rate is anticipated to be 91.61 mills, a 3.18 percent increase.

A mill is \$1 for every \$1,000 in assessed property value.

"Last year, we raised taxes to the Act 1 index plus exceptions," Glynn said. "This year, we went to the index of 3.2 percent."

The district's 2017-18 final budget will be approved during the board's next regular meeting at 7:30 p.m. June 26 at the administration building, 179 College Ave.

Glynn added the district is \$383,000 over budget from last year.

"The increase is mainly made up of increased PSERS (Public School Employees' Retirement System) contributions and salary increases, and decreases, wherever possible, through supplies and attrition," he said. "I anticipate that can change slightly, based on a few factors, but it should be within a very close proximity to what we have in the budget."

According to Glynn, rising costs to fund students in the district who attend cyber charter schools continue to make it more difficult to balance the budget.

"Cyber schools are taking a large chunk of our budget every year and it's growing quite significantly," Glynn said. "In the (proposed final) budget that was passed, there is \$929,000 of anticipated cyber school costs. That's with only a growth of five students anticipated from this year when we were in the \$800,000 range. Five percent of our entire budget is spent on cyber school. The district makes a lot of efforts to try to keep kids in our buildings and we hope the state finds legislation that supports giving the district a better avenue to keep students in our schools."

In other business...

- Special Education Director Amie Talarico announced the district's high school Life Skills class attended a field trip, made possible through a Pennsylvania Farm to School Mini-Grant, at Creekside Gardens in Tunkhannock.

"They did some planting and created a Mother's Day gift," Talarico said.

- Members of the board approved the agreement between Lackawanna Trail School District and the Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit for the 2017-2018 school year.

- Members of the board approved the appointment of Kelly Services for substitute teacher and support staff calling services for the 2017-18 school year.

- Members of the board approved a maximum of three days summer employment for each guidance counselor (Leanne Lombardi, Timothy Ronchi and Michelle Getts) at a total payment of \$3,605.

- Members of the board approved the resignation of Dramatics Director Nancy Brown, effectively immediately.

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