

LT taxes could go up

by Reggie Sheffield

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Lackawanna Trail's school board on Monday approved the district's proposed 2017-2018 final \$20,874,152 budget by a 6-2 vote.

The proposed budget, if approved in June in its present form, would result in an anticipated tax rate for Lackawanna County of 162.43 mills for a 2.44 per cent increase while Wyoming County is anticipated to see a millage rate of 91.61 for a 3.18 per cent increase.

"I do anticipate that could change slightly based on a few factors, but it should be within a very close proximity," district business manager Keith Glynn told the board.

Board members Karl Beichler and Joseph Strauch cast dissenting votes.

Responding to a question from a community member relayed via board member Strauch, Glynn said that property owners and not renters would be responsible for paying property taxes and that property lot owners, such as those in trailer parks, would also be responsible for property taxes. Glynn also said that it is the county's responsibility to collect taxes and not the school district's.

The board also unanimously awarded low bidder K.I.T. Communications a \$24,593.91 network cabling contract for the high school.

Because of the district's participation in the federal ERate Program, a Department of Education program designed to help schools better afford computer networking costs, the district will get a 60 percent discount on the project, resulting in a final cost of only \$9,500. The next lowest bid came in at \$34,000.

The board also unanimously agreed to solicit bids for short term financing as a Tax and Revenue Anticipation Note, or TRAN, not to exceed one year "to provide the cash flow during the 2017-2018 school year."

The request from business manager Glynn was made for permission to advertise, in the event it would be needed, to cover any fiscal shortfall in the event the state budget does not come in on time.

Glynn had previously informed the board that each TRAN costs about \$2,000.

In other business, the board:

*Announced that the board met in executive session prior to Monday's regular meeting.

*Approved on a 7-1 vote with Strauch dissenting an agreement between the district at the Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit for the 2017-2018 school year.

*Approved the appointment of Kelly Services for substitute teacher and support staff calling services for the 2017-2018 school year.

*Approved the appointment of Dr. Rajah Mulloth as the district physician at a stipend of \$10,000.

*Approved three days maximum of summer employment for three guidance counselors at a total payment of \$6,008. A previous request requested five days.

*Approved new advertising rates for the high school and elementary gyms.

*Approved the separation agreement between the district and Linda Lombardo and the resignation of the Dramatics Director.

*Approved Kelly Buck as an interim junior high softball coach for the remainder of this season at a stipend of \$3,350 prorated; and Sandy Spott, Kellie Martin and Michelle Fahey as volunteer junior high field hockey coaches for 2017-18.

*Approved a list of proposed Broadway Field trips at a cost not to exceed \$100 per field trip.

*Had a first reading of policies on service animals in schools and a district wellness policy.