

LT board appoints Minick C.J. MARSHALL / Published: June 20, 2018



STAFF PHOTO/C.J. MARSHALL

Robert Minick, left, is sworn in by Magisterial District Judge David Plummer on Monday as the newest member of the Lackawanna Trail School Board.

Property owners will be paying more in taxes in the Lackawanna Trail School District to support its budget.

The Lackawanna Trail School Board voted 6-3 on Monday to approve a budget of \$22.4 million for the 2018-2019 school year.

The board also set property taxes at 93.8 mills - an increase of 2.19 mills - in Wyoming County; and 165.68 - a increase of 3.25 mills - in Lackawanna County.

Voting against the budget were board members Joseph Strauch, Adrian Bianchi, and Robert Minick.

All said they believe more could have been done to reduce the budget and decrease the burden to the local tax payers.

Before the vote was taken, Minick was sworn in by Magisterial District Judge David Plummer as the board's newest member. Minick was picked by the school board on June 18 to fill the unexpired term of Karl Beichler, who passed away on May 22.

After the budget vote was taken, board member Michael Mould praised the efforts of the administration, the teachers, and others in the district for their efforts in putting together the budget. Mould said that the district is facing ever-mounting expenses - such as a 434 percent increase in its pension contributions since 2009.

The state is very good at mandating programs, he said, yet ranks 47th in the nation in providing financial support to its public schools.

He also predicted that the district's payout to cyber schools will soon eclipse \$1 million.

During his report, District Superintendent Matthew Rakauskas said that according to the annual 'report card' issued by Times-Shamrock Newspapers that appeared recently in Scranton Times-Tribune, the district scored 61.1 percent in comparison to the 36 other school districts in the study.

Rakauskas said that while he does not dispute the information presented in the study, he does contest how it is applied. As an example, he pointed out that study indicates Trail did not meet state average in the student's SAT scores. He said the district is only a couple of points behind the state average in SATs. But the way it is presented in the study, he said, it appears as if the district is failing to meet the needs of its students in that area.

In other business, the board:

- *appointed Mould as school board treasurer for 2018-19;
- *approved the appointment of Lauren Hales to teach Extended School Year in July and August;
- *approved the contract for Tara Crum as the Confidential Administrative Assistant, for 2018-19
- *acknowledged the resignation of Michelle Getts from her position as Guidance Counselor,
- *approved the following student meal prices: High School Lunch \$2.90 (No change); High School Breakfast Free (previously \$1.90); Reduced Breakfast (H.S.) Free (previously \$.30); Elementary Lunch \$2.65 (previously \$2.55); Reduced Lunch (District-wide) \$.40 (no change); Elementary Breakfast Free (no change);
- *approved student handbooks for the Elementary Center and the High School;
- *acknowledged the retirement of Thomas James, Wastewater Treatment Operator for the School District,
- *approved the professional operation of waste water services provided by Hester Wastewater Services LCC from July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019.
- *acknowledged Sandra Hayduk's resignation as the assistant track and field coach effective;
- *agreed to next meet for a work session on Aug. 6.