

HOME PAGES

POCANTICO HILLS SCHOOL - COMMUNITY INFORMATION BULLETIN

MAY 2007

Pocantico Hills Budget Overview

The Facts and Figures:

- Proposed budget: **\$21,604,610**
- Proposition calling for purchase of 2 school buses: **\$50,000**
- Current budget: **\$20,392,021**
- Percent Increase: **5.95%**

Our proposed 2007-2008 School Budget Plan continues the following student and community services:

- Implementation of the Technology Plan
- Small class sizes
- Foreign Language study beginning in grade 2
- Instrumental music lessons beginning in grade 4
- Academic Enrichment Programs
- School library funding
- After-School Program
- Summer Recreation Program

Did You Know That . . .

- Pocantico Hills is losing approximately 11% of its assessed property value, which accounts for an approximately 11% increase in taxes above and beyond the 3% tax levy increase adopted by the Board of Education.
- The District has been actively reserving money to pay the refund portion of these tax cert settlements. This year Pocantico Hills is going to pay nearly \$2.5 million dollars in order to refund tax overpayments.
- The proposed 2007-08 budget is the result of numerous public forums that sought input from the community before the Board's adoption of the budget on April 10. The budget meetings included one forum held with the PTA and six Board of Education meetings. The budget was significantly revised by the Board several times during this discussion phase of the process.
- The proposed budget provides for the debt service payment to purchase two new school buses replacing two older school buses. The purchase of the new school buses is contingent upon passage of a separate May 15th proposition.

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

By now, you have probably heard more than you thought you would have ever needed to or wanted to know about tax certiorari (also known as tax "cert" for short.) Unfortunately, tax certs will have a dramatic impact on our 2007-2008 school budget and the Board of Education is committed to clarifying any lingering doubts over them. It is important now, more than ever, to understand the changes in the Pocantico Hills tax rolls and the impact these changes will have on our 2007-2008 school taxes.

Over a year ago, the Board of Education formed a committee to communicate with the district and to gather opinions on how to manage the tax cert situation. In addition, the Board dedicated the fall neighborhood meetings to discussion of tax certs. It was during these forums that the Board received affirmative support from our residents to supplement

our tax cert reserve on an annual basis. While our community support appears to be unwavering in this regard, tax certs still remained a confusing topic—one that needed to be revisited prior to our 2007-2008 school budget vote.

A tax cert judgment or settlement is the result of a property owner suing and subsequently proving that he or she has been over-assessed. This judgment or settlement can be divided into two parts. The first part involves paying the property owner a refund for any overpayments made in the past. The second part reduces the property owners assessments in future years. Pocantico Hills, as a district, is losing roughly 11% of its assessed property value and is subsequently facing an 11% increase in taxes above and beyond the 3% tax levy increase the Board has adopted. At this point, it is important to acknowledge the separation of this 11% increase—due to reduced assessments, from the 3% tax levy increase—due to increased spending.

The 11% increase is out of our control and is the direct result of commercial property owners asserting their right to pay only their "fair" share of our community's tax burden. It is significant to point out that had *(continued on page 2)*

The Board of Education has listened carefully to the community and has adopted a budget that will allow us to continue educating our children in a positive, exciting, and progressive manner.

REMEMBER TO VOTE!

Tuesday, May 15th, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.
School Library

For questions on the 2007-2008 Budget please e-mail us at budgetinfo@pocanticohills.org

(continued from page 1) the commercial properties been reassessed more frequently, the changes in our tax rate would have been spread out over several years creating smaller, more tolerable increases.

The remaining 3% is what we can control and compares favorably to increases in other school districts in Westchester County. In addition, it is important to remember that Pocantico Hills homeowners continue to pay one-third to one-half of what other Westchester homeowners are paying in school taxes for a comparable home, even with the new increases in place.

It is the second part of the tax cert judgment or settlement that is currently affecting us as a community. A portion of the district's tax burden is shifting from commercial property owners to residential property owners. This shift—a reduction in commercial property assessments—is the part that is hardest to prepare for. We can't save for it, we can't borrow money to make it more tolerable, and we can't accrue the increase over time.

Fortunately, we have been actively reserving money to pay the refund portion of these tax cert settlements. This year Pocantico Hills is going to pay nearly \$2.5 million dollars in order to refund tax overpayments. This entire amount will come from the reserves we have built over time. These reserves have eliminated the need to borrow money which would have led to an additional 2.5% increase—an increase which would

have become a part of our school budget until the debt was repaid. The last time Pocantico Hills was called upon to make tax cert payments of this size (over 10 years ago) the district—not having the foresight to reserve funds—had to borrow money to pay these judgments. Now, because of fiscal responsibility, we are in a much better position and our reserve fund will take care of our current settlement issues.

Despite the daunting process of how to deal with our tax cert situation, I encourage the community to also keep in mind all of the educational progress we have achieved so far. The past few years have seen many upgrades throughout the school especially in the areas of technology, curriculum, staff development, and in the library. Because of these changes, our children will be taught in new and exciting ways, which will further enhance their overall academic achievements.

The Board of Education has listened carefully to the community and has adopted a budget that will allow us to continue to educate our children in a positive, exciting, and progressive manner. I urge everyone to become well acquainted with this final version of our school budget so that an informed decision can be made on May 15.



CHARLES S. MINTON, SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENT

Proposed 2007-2008 Budget Summary Estimated Budget and Tax Rate Increase

		% Budget Increase	Estimated Greenburgh Tax Rate Increase	Estimated Mt. Pleasant Tax Rate Increase
Budget	\$21,554,610	5.70%	13.88%	13.37%
Proposition: Purchase of two school buses	\$50,000	0.25%	0.33%	0.34%
TOTAL	\$21,604,610	5.95%	14.21%	13.71%

Note: Budgeted amount for purchase of school buses reflects interest and principal costs to be paid over a five-year period.

2007-2008 PROPOSED SCHOOL BUDGET

Categories	Budget 2006-2007	Proposed Budget 2007-2008	Increase or Decrease from 2006-2007		
BOARD OF EDUCATION					
BOARD OF EDUCATION	\$11,650	\$5,500	(\$6,150)	Members of the Board serve without compensation. This code covers expenses incurred by the Board in the performance of its duties inclusive of the annual district election and District Clerk's office.	
DISTRICT CLERK	\$16,000	\$13,000	(\$3,000)		
DISTRICT MEETING	\$5,700	\$9,500	\$3,800		
Total Board of Education	\$33,350	\$28,000	(\$5,350)		
CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION					
CHIEF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION	\$141,605	\$153,812	\$12,207	These categories cover day-to-day management of the school district that is the responsibility of the Superintendent and Central Administration. Included are costs for District-wide administration, contract matters and legal services, district publications and general business functions.	
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION	\$295,007	\$302,179	\$7,172		
AUDITING SERVICE	\$62,875	\$62,000	(\$875)		
TREASURER	\$38,369	\$37,402	(\$967)		
FISCAL AGENT	\$650	\$0	(\$650)		
LEGAL SERVICES	\$202,300	\$217,513	\$15,213		
PUBLIC INFORMATION	\$30,600	\$23,050	(\$7,550)		
Total Central Administration	\$771,406	\$795,956	\$24,550		
CENTRAL SERVICES					
OPERATIONS and MAINTENANCE	\$1,137,270	\$1,238,716	\$101,446	Expenses in this category reflect custodial, maintenance and operational costs for district buildings. Also included are expenses for district wide postage.	
CENTRAL PRINTING and MAILING	\$40,799	\$43,262	\$2,463		
Total Central Services	\$1,178,069	\$1,281,978	\$103,909		
SPECIAL ITEMS					
INSURANCE	\$51,579	\$56,066	\$4,487	Expenses in this category reflect various types of insurance such as liability and student accident insurance; school dues, and our share of BOCES administrative costs.	
CONTRACTUAL EXPENSES	\$86,017	\$80,201	(\$5,816)		
BOCES ADMIN. CHARGE	\$40,521	\$44,272	\$3,751		
Total Special Items	\$178,117	\$180,539	\$2,422		
INSTRUCTION					
SUPERVISION	\$240,349	\$258,969	\$18,620	This category reflects the majority of the school district's costs for operation of our regular and special education programs, athletics, co-curricular, health services, library, computer instruction program, psychological services and attendance.	
INSERVICE TRAINING	\$55,600	\$58,598	\$2,998		
TEACHING-REGULAR SCHOOL	\$8,857,180	\$9,345,337	\$488,155		
SPECIAL EDUCATION	\$2,776,675	\$3,428,047	\$651,372		
ACADEMIC INTERVENTION	\$150,036	\$167,966	\$17,930		
SCHOOL LIBRARY and AV	\$191,415	\$171,966	(\$19,449)		
COMPUTER ASSISTED INSTRUCTION	\$444,464	\$595,195	\$150,732		
PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES	\$351,742	\$347,080	(\$4,662)		
ATTENDANCE	\$3,080	\$3,080	\$0		
INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS	\$49,465	\$45,398	(\$4,067)		
Total Instruction	\$13,120,006	\$14,421,636	\$1,301,629		
TRANSPORTATION					
DISTRICT	\$623,393	\$639,464	\$16,071		District Policy states that no student shall walk more than one-quarter mile to a bus stop or school of attendance, and extra consideration is given to children in grades PreK-2. The district provides monitors on large buses for grades PreK-8 and to special education schools as determined by a student's Individual Education Plan.
CONTRACT	\$500,439	\$512,320	\$11,881		
Total Transportation	\$1,123,833	\$1,151,784	\$27,951		
COMMUNITY SERVICE					
COMMUNITY RECREATION	\$140,100	\$161,754	\$21,654	These expenses are associated with the community pool program, summer day camp, after-school program, and census.	
SUMMER DAY CAMP	\$289,520	\$260,688	(\$28,832)		
AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM	\$50,708	\$52,948	\$2,240		
CENSUS	\$22,988	\$0	(\$22,988)		
Total Community Service	\$503,316	\$475,390	(\$27,926)		
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS					
EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT	\$116,840	\$127,692	\$10,852	Expenses in this category reflect mandated or contractually required costs for employee benefits.	
TEACHER RETIREMENT	\$430,863	\$442,885	\$12,022		
SOCIAL SECURITY	\$484,684	\$509,664	\$24,980		
WORKERS COMP	\$57,723	\$60,800	\$3,077		
EMPLOYEE BENEFIT FUND	\$111,937	\$113,270	\$1,333		
MEDICAL INSURANCE	\$1,223,220	\$1,357,128	\$133,908		
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE	\$2,100	\$8,000	\$5,900		
DISABILITY INSURANCE	\$8,391	\$2,855	(\$5,536)		
LIFE INSURANCE and ANNUITY	\$31,758	\$31,758	\$0		
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS	\$2,100	\$2,100	\$0		
Total Employee Benefits	\$2,469,616	\$2,656,152	\$186,536		
DEBT SERVICE					
BOND PRINCIPAL	\$340,050	\$407,220	\$67,170		Expenses in this category reflect the repayment of funds borrowed for tax certiorari claims, and for the purchase of new school buses
BOND INTEREST	\$149,259	\$130,955	(\$18,304)		
Total Debt Service	\$489,309	\$538,175	\$48,866		
TRANSFERS					
INTERFUND TRANSFERS	\$525,000	\$75,000	(\$450,000)	Expenses in this category reflect the District's subsidy for the school lunch program, capital projects, and the District's costs for extended special education programs.	
TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS	\$20,392,021	\$21,604,610	\$1,212,589		

Summary of Proposed Tax Rates

	Tax Rate Per \$1,000 Assessed Valuation 2006-2007	Proposed Tax Rate Per \$1,000 Assessed Valuation 2007-2008	Tax Rate Increase Per \$1,000 2007-2008	Total % Increase 2007-2008	% Increase without Assessment changes
Greenburgh	\$217.54	\$248.46	\$30.92	14.21%	3.36%
Mount Pleasant	\$476.03	\$541.29	\$65.26	13.71%	2.90%

Tax Rate Impact 2007-2008 Proposed Budget: GREENBURGH

Fair Market Value	Assessed Value	2006-2007 Taxes	2007-2008 Projected Taxes	Annual Increase	Monthly Increase
\$100,000	\$3,050	\$663	\$758	\$95	\$8
\$250,000	\$7,625	\$1,659	\$1,895	\$236	\$20
\$500,000	\$15,250	\$3,317	\$3,789	\$472	\$39
\$750,000	\$22,875	\$4,976	\$5,684	\$708	\$59
\$1,000,000	\$30,500	\$6,635	\$7,578	\$943	\$79

Note: Assumes same assessed value in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008

Tax Rate Impact 2007-2008 Proposed Budget: MT. PLEASANT

Fair Market Value	Assessed Value	2006-2007 Taxes	2007-2008 Projected Taxes	Annual Increase	Monthly Increase
\$100,000	\$1,400	\$666	\$758	\$92	\$8
\$250,000	\$3,500	\$1,666	\$1,895	\$229	\$19
\$500,000	\$7,000	\$3,332	\$3,789	\$457	\$38
\$750,000	\$10,500	\$4,998	\$5,684	\$686	\$57
\$1,000,000	\$14,000	\$6,664	\$7,578	\$914	\$76

Note: Assumes same assessed value in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008

Projected 2007-2008 Revenues

	2006-2007 Budgeted Revenue	2007-2008 Budgeted Revenue	\$ Change
State Aid	\$728,570	\$858,045	\$129,475
Incarcerated Youth	\$2,116,657	\$2,577,104	\$460,447
Other Revenue	\$770,636	\$775,259	\$4,623
Fund Balance Transfer	\$340,000	\$440,000	\$100,000
Total Tax Levy	\$16,436,163	\$16,954,202	\$518,039
Total Revenue	\$20,392,026	\$21,604,610	\$1,212,584

IMPORTANT BUDGET, VOTER REGISTRATION AND OTHER DATES

May 7, 2007

Budget Hearing, 8:00 p.m., School Library

May 8, 2007

Deadline for filing applications for absentee ballots with the District Clerk, if the ballot must be mailed to the voter.

May 10, 2007

Last day to register to vote. Voters may register to vote at any time up to May 10th at the District Office, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

May 14, 2007

Deadline for filing application for absentee ballots with the District Clerk, if ballot will be delivered personally to the voter.

May 15, 2007

Budget Vote 7:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. School Library
Absentee ballots must be received no later than 5:00 p.m.

June 1, 2007

Deadline for filing STAR (New York State School Tax Relief Program) applications with your town assessor's office. STAR includes a school property tax rebate program and a partial property tax exemption from school taxes. All New Yorkers who own and live in one-, two-, or three-family homes, condominiums, cooperative apartments, manufactured homes, or farm dwellings are eligible for STAR on their primary residence. For more information about the STAR rebate program, please visit the website of the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance, www.nystax.gov, or call 1-877-6-STAR-NY (1-877-678-2769). To contact your local tax assessor: Greenburgh 914-993-1520; Mt. Pleasant 914-742-2345

Some Notes on the Vote

This year there are three decisions for voters to make:

1. The vote on the 2007-2008 budget
2. The proposition to purchase two buses
3. The election of two Board of Education members

This is what you will see in the voting booth:

PROPOSITION NUMBER ONE:

Shall the Board of Education of this school district be authorized to expend the sums set forth in the proposed 2007-2008 Annual Budget in the amount of \$21,604,610 and to levy the necessary tax therefor?

PROPOSITION NUMBER TWO:

Shall the proposition set forth in the notice of this meeting authorizing the purchase of two 60 passenger school buses, at a maximum estimated cost not to exceed \$100,000 each, totaling \$200,000; and providing that such sum shall be raised by a tax levy to be collected in annual installments, with District obligations to be issued in anticipation thereof, be approved?

VOTERS WILL BE ASKED TO DECIDE ON:

The election of two (2) Board of Education members which will take place at the same time as the vote on the school budget. The Board of Education members are to be elected for a term of three years commencing July 1, 2007 and terminating on June 30, 2010.

Who Can Vote?

Members of the community may participate in the school election if they are:

- United States citizens, 18 years or over as of May 15th, 2007;
- Residents of the School District at least 30 days prior to May 15th, 2007;
- Voters registered with District or County Board of Elections.

Voter Registration.

• Residents may register to vote daily during regular school hours in the Main Office of the school located at 599 Bedford Road, Sleepy Hollow, NY.

• Please note that the last day to register to vote on this budget is May 10, 2007

If you would like more information about this year's budget or the upcoming vote, please email us at budgetinfo@pocanticohills.org.



POCANTICO HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL
599 Bedford Road
Sleepy Hollow, NY 10591

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