

# Mt. Pleasant Central School District Citizens Budget Advisory Committee

2018/19 Proposed Budget  
By: Sara Beaty, Esq.

April 9, 2018



# *Meet the CBAC*

## **9 Members from our Community representing a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences**

**Kevin:** Public Works Manager for City of Yonkers; recently moved to this District and has four children who are or will be attending our schools

**Thomas:** Accountant and CFO with over 25 years experience in financial and accounting matters

**Lena:** Director of Benefits and Compensation also previously served on our District's Facilities Committee

**Theresa:** Former member of our own esteemed BOE and currently a bus driver in our District

**Kristina:** Small business owner and lifelong member of our community raising three children in this District

# *Meet the CBAC*

**Vincent:** Business Development Officer with over 30 years experience in Finance and Business. Also, a former member of our BOE and the Westchester-Putnam School Boards Assoc.

**Celia:** Inpatient Billing Manager at a Children's Nursing Home with experience in finance

**Karl:** Marketing Analytics and Asset Management

**Sara:** Attorney in this community for over ten years, currently working as a principal court attorney for a Judge in the Ninth Judicial District and previously served as labor counsel to the Yonkers Board of Education.

# What did the CBAC do over the last 4 months?

- Learned about School Budget Process
- Gathered information from each other and our community to share with the Committee
- Provide feedback to the District Administration re: proposed 18/19 budget
- Attend proposed budget presentations



# Major Items Learned Through Meetings

- Tax levy vs. tax levy cap vs. tax rate
- Components of a school district's budget
- How our District compares to other Districts in the Town in terms of tax rate/\$1000 of assessed values
- The external factors that play a role in the budget (i.e. state aid, tax cap, changing demographics, retirements, enrollment, tax reform, etc...)



# What did the CBAC do with this information?



- Informal Community Outreach
  - Neighbors
  - Friends
  - Other parents in District
- Shared information
  - Verbally
  - Via Social Media\*
- Formed smaller subgroups within the committee to come up with priorities and expectations from the budget

*\*Note: One member presented a list of community concerns that came from Facebook so that the District could address the concerns at the meeting and the member could report back with the District's responses on each item.*

# CBAC designated priorities and untouchables

## Priorities → More funding

- K-2 aides/monitors
- Facilities Improvements
- STEAM and IB programs
- Professional Development for staff
- ***SAFETY\*\* (will be discussed separately)***

## Untouchables → must at least remain status quo

- Special education staffing and services
- Class Sizes
- Specials & extracurriculars
- Technology

# General Comments on the 18/19 Budget

- The Administration listened to the CBAC
- It is another tax cap compliant budget- 7 years in a row, if passed
- We are asking the taxpayers for an additional \$2.4 million over last year plus we are using a large amount of reserves/fund balance which gives the CBAC concerns, however:
  - The District is maintaining all of its programs and services **AND**
  - Continuing to improve our District's facilities, both of which were CBAC priorities/expectations
- There was some concern expressed with respect to salaries (especially since salaries/benefits make up approximately 61% of the budget), however we understand that salaries are largely governed by CBAs and that salaries of unrepresented management did not seem to increase



# Specific Comments: CBAC designated priorities



## K-2 aides/monitors

- Concerns about supervision at these grade levels, especially on buses
  - No addition of bus monitors
- Proposed addition of 3 FTE aide/monitor positions at HES

## Facilities Improvements

- Presentation by Facilities Director supports the continued work on our buildings in line with the 5 year capital plan
- Eventually would like to see:
  - Facility space being increased, not just improved, to accommodate for increased enrollment based on growing population/new developments
  - Improved locker rooms for girls at WHS

# Specific Comments: CBAC designated priorities

Continued...

## **STEAM and IB programs**

- Absolutely supported by proposed budget
  - i.e. STEAM committees in each building

## **Professional Development for staff**

- Also supported by proposed budget
- I.e. Ongoing PD in Foundational Literacy, Science Programs and STEAM, as well as IB

# Specific Comments: CBAC designated untouchables



## Special Education

- Supported by proposed budget
- Understand that this is a variable - must anticipate student needs and cannot ignore statutory mandates
- Proposed budget adds necessary positions in Pupil Support

## Class Size

- Understand variables - can only project enrollment
- Goal is to keep classes in desirable or acceptable ranges, despite projected enrollment increase
- Might lead to adding more sections which in turn means increases in staffing → BALANCING
- However it appears at this point that no classes exceed acceptable range

# Specific Comments: CBAC designated untouchables

Continued...

## Specials and Extracurriculars & Technology in the Classrooms

- Integral for well rounded students
- Technology → innovation
- Want to see more devices in classrooms, especially in elementary level to get students accustomed to computer/tablet use at early ages
- All programs and services appear to be, at a minimum, maintained
- Did not see any additions or increase in funding

All mitigated by the **ongoing and increased support for programs such as IB and STEAM**

# School Safety as a Priority

Proposed Budget appears to contemplate Security Improvements and lists the following general items:

- Door Replacements
- Window Shades
- Camera Replacements and Additions

CBAC proposes the District undertake a safety study to re-evaluate the current safety systems in place and make recommendations on how to improve

- Lockdown or panic buttons?
- Bulletproof windows?
- Better notifications systems in event of emergencies?

**It is a cost worth spending!!**

# In Conclusion

## **Proposed Budget is Passable!**

- Tax Cap Compliant
- Services and Programs all maintained
- Fiscally responsible way to maintain the best education possible for our students
- Some items we want to see added in near future, as discussed