

Port Jefferson School District – Budget Advisory Committee
2012-2013 School Year Budget

Budget Advisory Committee : 2012 – 2013 School Year Budget
January 18th, 2012

Attended: Robert Ramus (Chair), Sean Leister (Administrative Liaison), David Okst, Richard Ward, Donna-Marie Scott, Arnie Lustig, Francine Feinstein, Vince Ruggiero, Jim Tsunis, and James Laffey

The Budget Advisory Committee met on January 18th, 2011, in the Large Group Room of the Elementary School. The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm and adjourned at approximately 9:00pm. The presentation material is attached:

Mr. Leister presented the first-draft budget to the committee. This budget includes reductions of \$300k in the elementary school, \$800k in the high school and middle school, and an increase of \$740k for capital repairs. Discussion ensued.

The general consensus amongst the committee was that it's interesting to see the three budget scenarios of 0%, 1% and 2%. However, they suggested that the Board strongly consider the 2% budget scenario as this fulfills current requirements in facilities, equipment and other non-instructional areas, preserves the most program, and protects against future budget shortfalls.

The committee made the following suggestions that the administration should take into account for this budget year as well as future years:

- Given that we have not made any major repairs to facilities in recent years, and the capital improvement budget has been cut resulting in a funding shortfall and some needed repairs become more evident, the committee suggested that the district identify a dollar amount that can be committed to a Capital Improvement Fund (or similarly purposed fund if the law requires it to have a specific name) each year in order to build the dollars needed.

- The district should take caution not to cut academics in favor of facility needs. The consensus was that if repairs are safety or compliance related then there is a need to address them, but other improvements should not be undertaken if academic cuts are needed to achieve a budget target.

Committee members agreed that clear communication about the 2% budget is essential for public understanding. The administration needs to ensure the public has a complete understanding of what the tax cap means to Port Jefferson, the effects this has on all aspects of school operations, and the relationship between the school budget, the tax levy, the tax rate and what this means to the average household.