



UNATEGO

District Newsletter

www.unatego.org

Volume 35, Number 2

Budget Issue, May 2020

2020-2021 Proposed Budget



BUDGET VOTE

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, voting will be done through absentee ballot mailed to District resident homes. Please mail your ballot back postmarked by June 9, 2020.



Unatego Central School

2641 STATE HIGHWAY 7, PO BOX 483

OTEGO, NEW YORK 13825-9795

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(607) 988-5038

Superintendent's Message on behalf of the Unatego Board of Education

As I write this message in early May, the only thing certain about the 2020-2021 budget is uncertainty. Late Friday afternoon of March 13, 2020, the Otsego County Department of Health ordered all schools in the county closed for a public health emergency. On March 18, Governor Cuomo ordered all schools in New York closed for what turned out to be the rest of the academic year. During the period of time when our buildings were closed, instruction continued with teachers and support staff working from home and students learning on district-provided devices. We also continued to provide more than 1,200 meals each week to our students at no cost to their families. We are now engaged in planning how to safely reopen our buildings in the fall.

Our 2020-2021 budget is up only \$15,510 over the current school year, or about .07%. With no increase in state aid, we are requesting voters to approve an increase of 1.12% in the tax levy. Although state aid is promised to remain at 19-20 levels, the governor has reserved the right to withhold payment if revenues drop below projected levels. He has mentioned a 20% reduction in aid if the state fails to receive additional funding from the federal government. As Unatego receives more than 2/3 of our revenue from state aid, or about \$14.3 million annually, a 20% reduction in aid would result in a cut of roughly \$2.8 million! In developing the budget for the upcoming school year, the Board of Education is hoping for the best but preparing for the worst. The \$22,831,405 spending plan will allow us to continue to maintain program for our students, including AP and college courses, Robotics and other STEM offerings, as well as no-cost breakfast and lunch for all students, regardless of income. We have also identified possible spending cuts should the state reduce promised aid payments in mid-year and will do everything we can to contain costs throughout the school year.

Over the past six years, the District has worked hard to be fiscally responsible while expanding opportunities for our students. This year's proposed budget includes the appropriation of approximately \$740,000 in reserves and fund balance which we have saved for a rainy day, allowing us to maintain program while keeping the tax levy increase to a minimum and staying within the tax cap of 1.12%.

We remain committed to providing our students with a first-rate education while keeping costs to the community as low as possible. We feel that, under the current circumstances, the proposed 2020-2021 school budget does just that. Please vote (by absentee ballot only) before June 9, 2020. If you have questions about the budget or any school related area, please contact me or the School Business Manager, Patti Loker, at 607-988-5038. In the meantime, stay safe and be well!

Dr. David S. Richards
Superintendent of Schools

Board of Education

James Salisbury
President

Richard Downey

Jay McDermott
Vice President

Ken Olsen

Byron McMichael

Cindy O'Hara

David Clapper

Administration

Dr. David Richards, Superintendent

Julie Lambiaso, High School Principal

Patricia Hoyt, Middle School Principal

Mike Snider, Unatego Elementary Principal

Brian Trask, Transportation Director/Computer Coordinator/Buildings & Grounds

Patricia Loker, School Business Manager

Katherine Mazourek, Director of Special Programs

Kim Corcoran, BOCES Food Service Director

Budget Presentation

The development, review, and consideration of the 2020-2021 Unatego Central School budget was completed with a detailed review of the revenue and expenditure items that make up the budget. This was done within the context of the District's mission, goals, and financial policies.

We are proud to publish and disseminate budget information to our community. We welcome the opportunity to present and discuss our plans and related financial impact with all concerned parties. Interaction among interested groups consistently leads to educational improvements which become available to our students.

Our most important concern in the presentation of budget data is to provide information to our community about the District's educational programs and services for the 2020-2021 school year and how the budget supports these programs and services. The material in this document includes information that has been suggested by the Board of Education, community members, and staff. A line item budget is available online at Unatego.org. Questions regarding the budget should be directed to Dr. David Richards, Superintendent (988-5038) or Patricia Loker (988-5038).

Budget Process and Significant Change

The budget process commenced with the development of the student enrollment forecast for the 2020-2021 school year. These forecasts predict our enrollment for next year will be about 720 students.

Resources to Support Operations

The financial support for district-operated programs and services are substantially derived from state sources and the property tax. The tax levy is increasing by 1.12% for the 2020-21 school year.

Object	2019-2020 Budget	2020-2021 Proposed Budget
NYS Aid	14,943,712	14,249,440
Property Tax Levy	7,338,909	7,420,915
Other Revenue	377,550	416,950
Use of Reserves	155,724	120,100
Fund Balance	0	624,000
Total Anticipated Revenues	\$ 22,815,895	\$ 22,831,405

School and District Report Cards

School and District Report Cards are produced to inform the people of New York State about the performance of public schools and districts. School and District Report Cards for Unatego can be viewed by following the link on our Board of Education page on the Unatego School website, *Unatego.org*.

The Three Part Budget

Chapter 436 of the Laws of 1997 requires school districts to divide the budget into an administrative component, a program component, and a capital component. The Budget must also categorize revenues, and compare the proposed budget to the previous year. A detailed, line item budget may be viewed on the Unatego website, *Unatego.org*.

Board Candidates Bios

Three members for the Board of Education of the Unatego Central School District are to be elected for three three-year terms most recently held by David Clapper, Byron McMichael and Cindy O'Hara, whose terms expire at this time. Candidates for these positions are David Clapper, Byron McMichael, Cindy O'Hara and Rene' Treffeisen. (Listed alphabetically.)

DAVID CLAPPER

I am David Clapper and I am asking for your vote to once again be a member of the Unatego Board of Education. A lot has been accomplished at Unatego over the past three years that I am proud to say I have been a part of. Some of these accomplishments include keeping school taxes down, free meals for ALL students, and the sale of the Otego school to Oneonta Christian Academy.

I bring to the board a unique perspective as I own a construction business in Otego allowing me to offer additional financial knowledge to the district. Above all else, I will always be looking out not only for the children in our district (I have three children in the district ages 16, 13, and 6) but also for the communities that the children and families in our district call home.

Now more than ever I understand the impact that the decisions the school board makes have on our children and our Unatego community. As we move forward through these difficult times this pandemic has caused I promise to always keep the health and safety of our children and our community my number one priority.

Thank you for your consideration and stay well.

BYRON MCMICHAEL

Hi - My name is Byron McMichael and I am a current board member at Unatego who has served the last three years. I live in Otego with my wife and two boys (ages 2 & 7) and currently work for IBM as a North American Executive focusing around next generation technologies. We as a district accomplished many things over the last three years with the help of our community, teachers, staff, and administration. We now have a solid financial balance sheet with a healthy savings, went out last year at a zero percent tax increase, and have offered all of our students free meals so no child goes hungry. I will continue to fight for our children's education along with keeping the tax payers in mind as I am well aware of the financial burden our school tax puts on families in this community. This has been an eye opening experience for me and while we have accomplished a lot we still have more to do to which is why I am running for school board again this year. Thank you! Byron

CINDY O'HARA

I am Cindy O'Hara and it is my desire to remain a member of the Unatego Board of Education for another term. Having served for these past three years has provided me the opportunity to acquire a much clearer understanding of all the complex issues that rural schools such as Unatego face. This board has worked well with and supported the Superintendent, school administrators and the community in an effort to provide quality education while keeping tax payers in mind. Through a lot of hard work and some stressful times, the district was able to successfully sell the Otego Elementary school - and the school will remain a school! The district now offers free meals to all of our students, and has been able to keep taxes down, going out with zero percent tax increase this past year.

The district is again faced with some very difficult decisions to make in our effort to bring all students to one central campus, and now in our effort to safely bring our students back to a school where they can learn and be safe. There are very tough challenges ahead for our district, but I feel this board has been an effective group. We've had many healthy, at times, very difficult discussions but have been able to make tough decisions and stand behind them as a unified board.

I once again ask for the opportunity to serve again as a Unatego Board of Education member and appreciate your vote.

RENE' TREFFEISEN

I have been a Unadilla resident for 35 years. My husband and I have 3 children one who is still in school and is a Jr., the other 2 are graduates of Unatego. I have an Associates Degree in Business Administration, and for a few years was a manager of a local insurance company. I now run a website for Otsego County for Genealogical purposes and run many message boards for Ancestry.com. I have past experience on the school board. For four years I was board President, the other 2 learning the ropes. Being involved with the school and school board to me is important. It is something that I found to be extremely challenging and something I was good at.

We are involved with some challenging times right now and I think that I am the person you want to represent you. First and foremost, I want to do whatever I can to fulfill my promise to the Otego community to get their children on one campus. Second, it is our job to listen to the community when we have committees and projects where we are all working together, and to dismiss their thoughts and feelings is not something that a school board should do. Third, the education of our children, there can never be enough said about this. We have to constantly evolve and not be behind but ahead of the times. We also have to consider our teachers. We are at a point where losing any more teachers or aides is a huge detriment to our school and we must work really hard to turn this around. We need more programming more electives, more involvement. Our teachers are important and they need to know that as well. On top of all of that we have Covid, we have to figure out the best way to educate, keep our kids safe, and get them back to a routine that is healthy for the whole child.

I want to see our school board leading the way, whether it's a path to Albany, or if it's just a path to our own door where you see us at open houses, and all school events, we are the faces along with students, faculty and administrators. We need to be out and about seeing and getting input, being involved. We need to let Albany know that a 20% cut, doesn't cut it with us and what that will do. We have to be involved and leading the way with the other school districts.

It is also important that we see a balance on our board. As of right now there are 6 members who live in Otego and one who lives in Unadilla. I believe that it is important that all of our towns be represented. I am asking to be at least one more member from Unadilla.

I have the experience, I have the drive, I have the motivation to see some more good changes at Unatego, so please consider voting for me on June 9. Remember every vote counts.

Thank you,
Rene' Treffeisen



EXPENDITURE BREAKDOWN

Administrative Component

The Administrative Component provides for the overall general support and management activities of the district. This includes BOCES Administration and Capital Budgets, insurance, audit and legal services, printing and newsletter costs.

Category	2019-2020 Adopted Budget	2020-2021 Proposed Budget	Dollar Increase/ (Decrease)
<u>Board of Education/District Clerk/District Meetings and Election Inspector Salaries</u> District Clerk and election inspector salaries, contractual expenses, materials, and mandated board of education training, and School Association dues	20,800	21,250	450
<u>Office of the Chief School Administrator</u> Superintendent & Secretarial Salaries, contractual expenses, materials for the Office of the Superintendent	194,742	186,896	(7,846)
<u>Business Office/Auditing/Treasurer/Tax Collector/Purchasing/Fiscal Agent Fees</u> Business Office salaries, auditing fees, tax collection expenses, contractual expenses including Medicaid reimbursement processing, materials, BOCES Services (Cooperative Purchasing and Central Business Office)	379,356	407,420	28,064
<u>Legal Services</u> School attorney & other legal services required by the district	6,500	8,500	2,000
<u>Personnel and Records Management</u> Contractual expenses, materials, BOCES services, parent broadcast system and personnel advertising	52,056	52,895	839
<u>Central Printing and Mailing</u> Copier paper, postage, postage meter rental, BOCES printing services	193,375	169,728	(23,647)
<u>Central Data Processing</u> Broome-Tioga BOCES network support services	606,587	621,473	14,886
<u>Insurance</u> Property, liability, and student accident insurance premiums	71,000	76,000	5,000
<u>BOCES Administration and Capital</u> District's share of BOCES administrative and capital costs. Based on a weighted student allocation. Includes BOCES Project	490,340	508,366	18,026
<u>Supervision of Instruction</u> Building principals & secretarial salaries, contractual expenses, materials & supplies, research, planning and evaluation	474,100	503,441	29,341
<u>Employee Benefits</u> Retirement system contributions, social security, health and dental insurance, workers compensation insurance	505,684	435,613	(70,071)
Total Administrative Component	\$2,994,540 (13.1% of budget)	\$2,991,582 (13.1% of budget)	(2,958)

Program Component

The Program Component represents the largest portion and the focal point of our budget. Included are all instructional expenses for our school including K-12 programs, special programs for students with disabilities, occupational education, and an alternative learning environment. Student support services included are health services, various counseling services, instructional media and technology, athletics and co-curricular, and pupil transportation. Associated employee benefits are also listed.

Category	2019-2020 Adopted Budget	2020-2021 Proposed Budget	Dollar Increase/ (Decrease)
<u>Regular Education</u> Teacher and aide salaries, contractual expenses, instructional materials, textbooks, BOCES services including English as a Second Language, legal services	\$4,823,050	4,979,887	156,837
<u>Students with Disabilities</u> Teacher, 1:1 Aide & LTA salaries, contractual expenses, instructional materials, tuition for special schools, BOCES services.	3,688,870	3,736,453	47,583
<u>Occupational Education & Special Schools</u> BOCES services including Occupational and Alternative Education, an Alternative Learning Environment, and Driver's Education	664,916	658,343	(6,573)
<u>Instructional Media & Technology</u> Salaries, contractual expenses, library books, hardware and software, BOCES services	449,019	421,714	(27,305)
<u>Counseling & Attendance Services</u> Counselor office salaries, contractual expenses, and materials	301,755	315,086	13,331
<u>Student Health Services</u> Nursing salaries, contractual expenses, materials	80,550	85,200	4,650
<u>Psychological & Social Work Services</u> Psychologist and Social Worker salaries, contractual expenses, testing materials	64,905	88,532	23,627
<u>Co-Curricular</u> Advisor salaries, contractual expenses, materials	60,800	63,620	2,820
<u>Athletics</u> Coaching salaries, equipment, contractual expenses including sports officials, materials, BOCES services	245,117	272,672	27,555
<u>Transportation</u> Bus driver, mechanic, and supervisor salaries, equipment, diesel & heating fuel, insurance, bus repairs, contractual expenses, bus parts, materials, BOCES driver training services and garage maintenance	1,258,460	1,306,776	48,316
<u>Community Services</u> After School and Summer Program	70,000	56,000	(14,000)
<u>Employee Benefits</u> Retirement system contributions and incentive costs, social security, health and dental insurance, workers compensation insurance	4,545,371	4,325,254	(220,117)
Total Program Component	\$16,252,813 (71.2% of budget)	\$16,309,537 (71.4% of budget)	56,724

Capital Component

The Capital Component is defined by the New York State Education Department as primarily the operation and maintenance section of the district budget. This is where a majority of the heating fuel is budgeted. However, debt service (principle and interest payments) on building projects and some special items are also included.

Category	2019-2020 Adopted Budget	2020-2021 Proposed Budget	Dollar Increase/ (Decrease)
<u>Operations and Maintenance</u> Salaries for custodial workers, supervisor, heat, electricity, service contracts, replacement equipment, and custodial supplies	995,170	1,027,590	32,420
<u>Special Items</u> Refund of real property taxes for corrected tax bills	8,000	0	(8,000)
<u>Employee Benefits</u> Retirement system contributions and incentive costs, social security, health and dental insurance, workers compensation insurance.	254,172	251,296	(2,876)
<u>Debt Service—Buildings</u> Principal & Interest on Capital Projects	2,311,200	2,251,400	(59,800)
Total Capital Component	\$3,568,542 (15.7% of budget)	\$3,530,286 (15.5% of budget)	(38,256)





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Otego, New York 13825

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Annual District Budget Vote and Election of Members to the Board of Education

Unatego Jr./Sr. High School
2641 State Highway 7
Otego, NY

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, voting will be done through absentee ballot mailed to District resident homes. Please mail your ballot back early enough to ensure that it is received in the District Office no later than 5:00 p.m. on June 9, 2020. Ballots delivered after 5:00 p.m. on June 9 cannot be counted.

If you did not receive an absentee ballot and would like one, please contact Sheila Nolan, District Clerk via email snolan@unatego.stier.org or by telephone 607-988-5038.

Voting Qualifications

In order to vote, a person must fulfill all of the following requirements:

1. Be a citizen of the United States.
2. Be at least 18 years of age.
3. Be a resident within the district for a period of at least 30 days preceding the meeting at which he/she offers to vote.