

[MUSIC PLAYING]

I'd like to welcome everyone to the May 14th meeting of the Croton-Harmon Board of Education and recommended action that the-- I'm sorry, recommended action that the Board of Education approve the agenda as presented.

So moved.

Second.

All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Aye, aye, aye.

Aye.

Opposed, abstaining? Motion carries. OK. And we will move on to ongoing business. And recommended action that the Board of Education can give us a second meeting and adopt the following board policies as presented.

So moved.

Second.

[INAUDIBLE].

OK, I'm-- I guess heard no comments on any of these policies, since we had them last before us. So presumably, everybody is OK with them. And if there are any questions that need to be answered, I'll be glad to answer them. I would point out that all of these policies in this-- I think everybody knows this-- have been reviewed by administration, and they've given-- they've said they're fine with them as written.

Does anyone have any further questions for you? OK, all in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Aye.

Opposed, abstaining? [AUDIO OUT] OK, and now we'll move on to the second point of the meeting, which is recommended action that the Board of Education adopts the 2020-2021 Croton-Harmon Union Free School District-- Union Free School District budget in the amount of \$49,424,525. But before we get to, actually, the action, I think the administration would like to bring us up to date on some further budget updates.

Yes, thank you.

I will turn it over to you after [INAUDIBLE].

Thank you. Can you hear me?

Sure.

I can.

You can? OK, I'm sorry. My sound is-- people are breaking up a little bit. But you can hear me, yes. So Tracey, can you share your screen with Denise?

Yes, it's ready.

So Denise, OK, great.

Can you see that?

We can, so--

We can.

So good evening. So before we take action, we'd like to have an opportunity to have a budget discussion. And we have, again, just a few slides that we'd like to go through and put forth a proposed budget. As we know and have talked about, over many, many weeks, this budget has gone through many, many iterations, based on information available at the time and the financial situations that are before us.

So I'd just like to thank the board for being so available and really traveling this journey with us and

all together as we continue to present the budget scenario in the most-- in what we feel are the most fiscally prudent manner. So if we could go to the second slide, we never want to lose sight of the fact of what drives our decision making and our budget development processes. And it's always keeping the student in the center.

Our mission and vision is very strong, and our strategic coherence plan helps us make decisions towards allowing our students to meet what we call the attributes of the profile of the graduate. And throughout the budget process, we kept our line of sight on what we called the budget streams, which helped us frame our thinking and decision making relative to the budget. And those streams you see in the visual or the buckets or currents, as we called them, because staying with the theme of the river in the buckets you see there.

Denise, if you go to the third slide, please. Thank you. Again, keeping our vision in mind is what drives our budget. Next click. There we go.

So if any of the people and folks know that we don't stray far from our vision and mission, and looking at a few of those pieces on the right, my right, on mission, again, it's our continuing to challenge our students, fostering respect, keeping teachers as essential, and that second bullet there of community partnerships. Next slide, please.

So we've been talking about strategy over the last weeks. So Denise, if you would just forward those, please. Thank you.

Sure.

It's easier to see it all together. Thank you. We've looked at this budget in a great many ways, as the board knows. And we've looked at ways to mitigate what we feel we need to respond to with COVID-19. The February budget we started with is nowhere near where we are now, because throughout, we had to look at ways to reduce the expenditure budget. We'll be talking about that again.

We've had several iterations, which are leading us to coming in with a levy that's under the allowable limit. Tonight, we're going to reiterate how we plan on using additional fund balance and reserves to offset expenses. And tonight, we'll review, once again, how, through state aid projections, how the governor has reminded us that we have measurement periods, which will, in fact, present a possibility of our state aid picture, reducing over time. And we'll talk a little bit about that tonight. So next slide, please.

So Denise, I'm going to ask you to pick it up here. But again, thanking the board for being with us as we've tried to continually come up with ways to mitigate the financial situations that are before us.

So we've been through a lot of these slides before for the last four to six months. But I'm just going to give you an overview. Please feel free to stop me if you have any questions. So our first column here is where we were back in this year of 1920. The second column represents the state aid factors and figures from February. And then the blue column is the March-April release of the governor's budget.

As you can see, the red, it is down \$200,000 from February. And we also see the lower portion with the pandemic adjustment and federal CARES restoration. Essentially, the governor took it out of the state funding, and then it was restored through federal funding. But the net effect of this was a \$200,000 reduction.

And then looking at overall revenues, we see-- and back in March, we reduced our estimated sales tax and interest earnings based on the county and statewide shut down. So that brought us down, between interest and sales tax, down to a loss of about 300-plus thousand dollars. In response to that, the board wanted to make significant cuts.

So we went back to our budget managers. We combed through the budget. We pulled out anything that was not entirely essential. It was a difficult process, but it was a process that everyone was willing to go to the table for.

And we identified \$350,000 in reductions. And we revised the budget. At that point, we brought in-- our original budget was 49,774, and we brought that down to 49,424, the second column there. So budget to budget, the increase went from, I believe it was 2-point something. I'm sorry the numbers have changed so frequently--

It was 2.8.

--but I'll share that in a later slide. 2.8?

I believe that's what it was, yes.

OK, yes, thank you, Neal. Down to a budget a budget increase of only 1.8%. And this is just a different view showing our salaries and benefits. As you can see, that's 71% of our budget. And then with debt service, it's another 8.3%, so it's about 80% of our budget is just salaries, benefits, and debt service.

So just to take a different look at things, so this is our salaries budget. The yellow represents

transportation. The blue screen is our instruction, and pink is administration. Almost half of our budget is salaries. Then we have non-salary expenditures. So these are things like [INAUDIBLE] services, supplies and materials, et cetera. That's another \$23 million.

Overall, you can see administration is the pink. Instruction is the blue. Yellow is transportation. The dark blue is our benefits, and then we have the green, which is our debt service. And that brings us to our new total budget, which is \$49,424,525.

To just do a district overview, so these are our expenditures. As you can see, instruction is the largest portion of our budget. Then we have our revenue, so-- sorry about that. So as you can see, \$41 million is our property tax base.

Then we have another \$5 million in state aid, \$700,000 in other revenue sources, which is interest income, sales tax, et cetera, and then the \$1.83 million in the green. That is the reserves and fund balance that we allocate, the designated fund balance that we allocate to the budget. This revenue wheel is representative of the budget that we presented several weeks ago.

This past week, we have been conducting our regular fund balance reserve analysis, and it wasn't until late last night that we finally got all of our books closed and figures in, and the numbers were identified. And in light of the shutdown, we are looking at an anticipated fund balance ending at or around \$22 million.

This is our projections from March. This is about a million up from our projections from March. And it's about \$2 million over our three-year average. We generally fall between 1.5, as far as an operating fund balance, to three years ago, I think we were at 2.6.

So in light of the fund balance that we are looking at and the surplus related to COVID-19, I thought it would be wise to have a discussion about what we-- if we wanted to consider reducing the tax levy in light of the crisis and in light of the surplus that we're looking at. So we can open the discussion now, or I can proceed. It's up to the board.

My--

[INAUDIBLE].

Go ahead, [INAUDIBLE].

I was going to say, if anyone had any pressing questions with regard to what Denise just presented,

perhaps it would be best to just finish going through your whole presentation for us.

Thank you.

I agree.

OK, so I just want to take you through the budget iterations as of today in response to COVID-19. So in February, we presented a tax levy [AUDIO OUT]. That was the maximum allowable. Then on May 8th, we reduced the tax levy by \$50,000, bringing it below the levy, and to a levy to levy increase of [AUDIO OUT] that we consider reducing the levy by 500,000 to bring the levy to levy increase to [AUDIO OUT]

Denise, your sound.

In addition, in February, we came in with a 2.6% budget to budget increase, May 8th, after 350,000 in [AUDIO OUT] we went back to 1.88%, and we are still there today. The reserves allocated [AUDIO OUT] when we reduced it by--

Denise, you're having some [AUDIO OUT]

I'm sorry. Your sound is breaking up.

What's that?

Your sound was breaking up.

Oh, OK. So in February-- can you hear me now?

Yes.

OK, in February, our reserves allocated were \$1.7 million, and then in May, after the \$50,000 reduction, it was closer to 1.8. And then today, we are recommending a designated fund balance and reserves of \$2.2 million.

Also on the ballot is our bus proposition. The bus proposition this year began at \$375,000, when we looked at our fleet and our obligations to our students. We traveled to approximately 32 schools. That is also increasing this year.

So-- but in response to the board's commitment to sustainability and to our community, we went back to the drawing board, and we looked at those buses and those numbers, and we determined that we

could bring that down to 225,000. It will consist of purchasing a hybrid seven passenger vehicle, a 65-passenger bus, and a Chevy van.

Some of the benefits of a fleet replacement plan-- the financial benefits are that it's 35% aidable. It has zero impact on the 2021 levy. It will not take effect until the following year. It allows for predictable future costs, less spikes in taxes and spending. It's proposed by the Office of the State Controller as a fiscally responsible way of budgeting, and our well-maintained vehicles allow for cost effectiveness.

Operationally, we have safer vehicles for our students and drivers. For the last 15 years, our district has had quality safety ratings, one of the highest. Replacement also ensures that vehicle oversight and standards are met. Increased resale value of our fleet-- we've discussed the electrification of our fleet in the future. So the fact that we have well maintained and highly sought after vehicles will certainly help us. And of course, it reduces repair and inventory costs and increased availability.

So next steps toward sustainability-- so the district has, as you're aware, we are going through an energy performance contract. We are preparing the bid specifications as we speak. And we have incorporated infrastructure upgrades for our transportation department in that upcoming EPC contract. As we've spoken, despite the cost of electric vehicles, which is-- a regular school bus is about 130. An electric vehicle is approximately \$325,000.

But even more so challenging for us is the fact that our bus garage is at capacity, and what's entailed with regard to electricity and space and so forth seems to be an equal struggle for us. So we've incorporated that into the ETC, and I'm very excited about what opportunities that will present for us. We are also pursuing funding opportunities for incremental bus electrification through the EPA and some of our local utility companies.

And then, of course, we're going to continue to rally our community efforts towards Go Green, Ride Yellow, and Walk and Ride to School. One thing we always need to discuss is the contingency budget. So if our budget were to be defeated on June 9 with a subsequent no vote, we would go to a contingency budget. Contingency budget means that we are only allowed to operate and maintain school buildings and preserve the property of the district and ensure health and safety of our student.

Some non-contingent and prohibited expenditures are equipment purchases and leases, community use of buildings, and certain student classroom supplies. If we were to-- and renovations. If we were to go to contingency, it would require an additional budget cut of approximately \$1.13 million.

So if we approve our budget this evening and adopt it, what are some of the challenges that we face ahead? The governor has established three measurement periods to re-evaluate his fund balance. If there is a variation of 1% in the revenue or expenditure side, he has said outright that we should expect some expenditure- some state aid cuts.

So in preparation of that, we have a few proposals that, should those cuts come down, we would look at staffing efficiencies, possibly reducing contingent positions. The point is that we need to remain incredibly flexible now with this new funding process, possibly reducing electives or eliminating non-mandated positions is absolutely essential. We could also utilize reserves to offset costs. Later in June, we're going to be recommending the reserve allocations, and we have positioned ourselves in this area to offset costs in 2021 with reserves.

Building maintenance-- we could defer building level maintenance projects and upgrades. We also have a debt service fund with approximately \$70,000 in there that we could use instead of spending that-- instead of paying for those debt principal and interest through our general fund, we could pay it out of the debt service fund. Also, we are issuing a spending moratorium at the beginning of the year until we get through another measurement period. And then we're going to do quarterly assessments with our principals and directors to assess their needs and their spending patterns.

And then lastly, we have some replacement cycles for building maintenance and also technology. And we could look at postponing them or freezing them if we needed the additional revenue.

So our budget propositions are proposed district budget of \$49,424,525, transportation vehicle BAN of 225,000, election of our trustees and the Croton Library levy of 869,674. Balanced budget proposing far below the cap with a zero deficit.

Some upcoming budget dates. We have our public budget hearing on May 28, which is a Zoom meeting. And then we have our budget vote and board election mail-in ballot on June 9, and we will talk more about that in the upcoming meetings to give some guidance to our community. Any questions?

A question in terms of the [INAUDIBLE] proposed or recommended increase in the use of the fund balance. It's your estimation that we will have now \$2 million more in money that will be allocable for the fund bal-- for various reserve funds for the 100 [INAUDIBLE] restricted or unrestricted because of decreases in expenditures. So \$500,000 will be allocated by your proposal into reducing the tax levy cap, replacing the tax levy.

The remainder of that amount, I guess some of it is to be held, because we may well need it if state aid is reduced more. Correct? And other than that, how do you-- if you have an idea yet about how that money might be apportioned among the various reserve, unrestricted or restricted reserves, or is it too early to ask that question?

No, not at all. So are you referring to what the allocations will be, Neal?

Yeah, I mean what you're thinking in terms of every year, we put a certain amount subject to what we're allowed to do to the unemployment insurance reserve fund, the tax [INAUDIBLE] fund, the et cetera, et cetera. Do you have an idea how that's going to play out?

So yes, so we are looking at-- let's see. Give me one second. So we are looking at our capital reserve in the amount of 829,000, additionally adding approximately 200,000 to our unemployment. I'm sorry-- our worker's compensation reserve. An additional 500,000 to our legal liability reserve. [AUDIO OUT]

You broke up. We didn't hear any of that.

Oh, where did you-- where did you leave me?

After legal liability reserve.

So we have confirmed that the legal liability reserve can be utilized to pay [INAUDIBLE] litigation and stipulations. So that is a fund that we could use to offset some special education costs.

OK, and so that's something that we have been doing previously? We have--

We have not, but I have-- I've spoken with our attorneys and a few other districts that are utilizing it in that [AUDIO OUT] And then also retirement for ERS, an additional 600,000 [AUDIO OUT] is not as restrictive as the TRS reserve. I will say that I'm uncomfortable with that. It has no cap or no proposal for calculating the allocation to that account. So I have a call in to our attorneys and also [AUDIO OUT] increase that by 600,000 in light of what we are looking at as far as increases to ERS and TRS in future years.

And then lastly, \$135,000 to the TRS reserves established last year, bringing that up to \$385,000, which is at close to the max of 2% that's allowable.

And just so we understand about the ERS reserve and the TRS reserve, assuming that the investment

returns for the current fiscal year-- And I believe their fiscal year is a calendar year, or is it July 1st to June 30th year?

I think it's July 1st.

OK, so when will-- let's say by June 30th, there is still a significant loss. When does that start-- that is in investment returns, generally-- when does that hit the five-year moving average for--

That will hit the following year.

Following year being 21-22.

21-22. 21-22.

Gotcha. So-- and that will, as we know, will carry through for the next five years no matter what happens. So we know the TRS and ERS rates will be much higher in those coming years.

Yes. And we've seen what a spike in that rate can do to our budget.

Yes, we have. I don't know if there are any other questions. I have what I needed to know answered.

Anyone else have any other questions for Denise regarding this new proposal?

I would, Denise, just like you to touch on, again, about why we wouldn't go lower, why your recommendation isn't lowering it even more if we have the money. I know-- I know its long term effects, but I just think it's important for the public to hear straight from you about how you came to this sweet spot in your recommendation.

Right. So the loss-- remember, with the tax cap, whatever you levy becomes your starting figure. So [AUDIO OUT].

You're breaking up [INAUDIBLE], Denise.

Oh, so sorry.

No, no worries.

Is that any better?

For the moment.

I think it happiness when it's picking up your key sounds.

Oh, I'm not-- I'm not doing anything.

Oh, weird. OK. Go ahead.

Maybe it's my keychain.

Maybe.

OK. So whatever we levy today becomes our starting point for tomorrow. So yesterday, our levy was, let's say, \$41 million. If we approve the budget with the levy reduction today, it would be \$40 million 5. 40 million 5 then becomes our starting number. So right out of the gate, moving forward from next year on, we have lost that \$500,000.

We've lost that \$500,000 for the purpose of x percent increase in a tax levy, so it'll be, let us say, 40.5 plus 2% instead of 41 plus 2%. And that's compounded. That loss is compounded over the years.

Yes. And never to be recovered. So where we would have next year, say our levy to levy increase would be a million dollars, the effect of this is our levy to levy increase is going to be \$500,000. And as you know, if I can manage to take us back a slide, our salaries and benefits are, year to year, are close to 600-- between \$600,000 and \$700,000 and possibly more, certainly once the TRS takes effect, and potentially, our health insurance rates rise.

So our levy for the next few years will not even cover that. So by supplanting reserves and fund balance today, we are making a longer term commitment to fund those-- that difference from here on in. And we can close the gap, but it will take time, and it will take financial planning so that we will slowly begin to have to reduce our expenditures, and then reduce the offset of our revenue supplements, our fund balance supplement.

It can be done, and as I've stated, we have some of the healthiest reserves in the county, because we've been very fiscally responsible. And those reserves are going to come in handy today when we need it and for the next few years as we shrink the gap that would be presented or created by supplanting \$500,000 this year.

I will also say that probably five or six years ago, we faced the same situation. And the board refunded the taxpayer's-- I believe it was close to \$600,000. And we recovered from that within four years, three to four years. And our reserves were not where they are today.

All right, thank you, Denise. And getting back to what you were saying before, unfortunately, looking ahead to these cuts, we have to really remain flexible. You know, this isn't-- unlike other years, we don't get to vote on a budget that's going to stay-- may not stay the same for the rest of the year.

That's a good word, Andrea.

Also--

I'm sorry. That's a good word, Andrea, with flexible. Thank you for bringing that up. These are extraordinary times.

Right. I just wanted to-- I just wanted to comment that yes, they are extraordinary times, but we still have the same task before us, which is to educate the students in our district to the best of our ability. And I-- it's going to be difficult. There are some things that obviously we want to avoid as much as possible-- cutting into anything that actually impacts the academic process for our students. And I think this does a pretty good job of that.

Of course, we don't know what's going to happen in two months, three months in terms of what actually happens to state aid. And we may have to look at it again.

That's very true, Josh. I'm in agreement. I also think there's something else that we should remember and the public should remember. Everything we've talked about, and particularly what Josh has mentioned concerning our mission, and I don't use that in mission and vision, but our job to educate our students with our resources that we have, which are capped, as we've been talking about, is going to be there no matter what happens in terms of student population and individual student needs.

I know one of the things we talked about is that presently, we've got enrollment projection based on people who have registered for the 105 students in kindergarten. One of the things that was mentioned last meeting is the possibility that we may have to add another kindergarten section in order to maintain our class size guidelines, which are not hard and fast rules but are guidelines.

If more students move into the district, we've got to educate them no matter what's there. And if we have more special ed issues or whatever comes up, we have to be able to deal with it, which is why I am-- the hallmark that Andrea said, flexibility, is there, has to be there, and I'm very-- I'm very pleased with where we've positioned ourselves and knowing that those challenges next year, year after year after may be daunting.

I have a question, though, on a different subject, and that has to do with Denise's discussion about

the energy performance contract and infrastructure improvements at the transportation facility, linking back to the move towards electrification of the bus fleet. Now I know that we have 17, I think it is, full sized vehicles in our fleet, and then we have another 30 something that are not full size. They're either vans or 34 passenger smaller buses, whatever.

Do you have an idea, Denise-- and I know the RFP has not been completed-- what kinds of infrastructure improvements are being considered in the bus-- for the transportation facility and how those may tie into a move towards electrification of our bus fleet?

So we're going to be looking at possible solar on roofs, awnings over the bus fleet, and also, primarily, looking at the electricity in the building and possibly leveling out a portion of the property to-- right now, we are jam packed. We have nowhere to move. We have to pull vehicles out in order to move them, so we're looking at the lot itself, what the potential is there, and also looking at energy efficiency solutions that would enable us to have charging stations and whatever else is needed. But also, energy conservation and possible solar panels on our roofs.

So all of that sounds to me, if I understand correctly, as preparatory work for acquiring and putting on the road electric buses, because if you don't have charging stations, if you don't have room for those vehicles, if you don't have the supplied electricity needed to charge those vehicles, how many electric bus or some electric buses doesn't do you a whole lot of good. Is that--

That is absolutely correct, and they have said that the challenge is primarily an infrastructure challenge for most people implementing the electric buses.

Thank you.

Any other questions with regard to the budget proposal?

Excuse me. I wanted to say something.

[INAUDIBLE].

Denise, you had a slide up that particularly resonated with me tonight. If you can go back to the slide that has the bus-- the budget, the bus proposition, like what the vote will be on. I think it's like three or four slides back. This one here. Yeah.

As everyone knows, I've been struggling throughout the budget process, particularly once the pandemic hit, with trying to find the right balance between making sure the district had sufficient

resources to carry on the important work that's done there, and at the same time, being cognizant of what our community members may be facing.

And it's been really hard for me. It's been a real struggle because of some of the things I've been-- when I talk to people about what the circumstances are. And I think without a doubt, the community supports our school district. There's just no question in my mind that we have a very supportive district. And people want to support the district, no matter what their circumstances are, as much as they can.

I've always commended the administration on the hard work you put in to trying to find the balance and continuously attempting to present something that voters could support, but also that can keep the district fiscally sound. This budget-- the proposal you gave tonight, Denise, in particular where we are-- your budget with reduced expenditures, that was one of the first things that the district did was looked at ways that you could reduce the amount of expenditures, and you brought a budget [AUDIO OUT]. The initial budget that was presented to us in February, you took-- there were some reductions so that the March and April budgets were lower, just in terms of what the actual budget dollar was.

And then next efforts were made to figure out how you could utilize fund balance and come under the levy as much as possible below the tax cap. What you've done tonight is remarkable. It looked at the fact that we have not had to use as much of the budget as we proposed for this current year, and used some of that funding to see how we can help the taxpayer going forward [AUDIO OUT] cycle. And that's what's helping the below the tax cap factor.

I think that really is sensitive to what the community-- for people in the community who are struggling can see that there's a real concerted effort to do everything to-- and I'm not saying that before there wasn't. I'm just saying that this just is a remarkable statement of the district's commitment [AUDIO OUT] trying to make sure we deliver the best education possible. And at the same time, realize the circumstances that we're in.

And so I, for one, am very [AUDIO OUT]. I'm really happy that we can relieve some of the pressures that I know people are currently going through without damaging the district.

Well, thank you, Iris, for saying that.

[INAUDIBLE].

Yeah, we haven't stopped. We just keep going back and back and back, so thank you very much for sharing those thoughts.

And also, on top of it, we may have to go back again.

[LAUGHTER]

That's where we really kudos to our administrative team for really taking the-- looking at the present and the long term for this year and the following years. It's really a challenge. And we've been looking for what we say is the sweet spot, and I guess we'll all go around, and I don't know, Sarah. What's the next step? Do we [INAUDIBLE]?

If there are no other questions, I think we can [INAUDIBLE].

Would you mind? Would you mind if I just played a brief video?

Go right ahead.

Oopsie. It actually skipped the video, but I could include this. This is what [AUDIO OUT] children, so I thought it was important to share this. And no sound?

I was going to say, yeah, we lost your sound there, again, for a minute.

I need a new computer. So I did want to-- yeah, I think it's just-- I'm sorry. I think it's just my computer says, I'm very tired, Denise. Leave me alone.

I tell you, that visual you have right there is beautiful, though. It does remind us that we keep the student first.

Absolutely. Yeah, your computer's been very busy crunching numbers. I wanted to take a second to thank and commend the administration for continuing to look at this, and I think that this latest proposal puts us in a really good spot, where we can be mindful of the things, the pressures facing the community. But we are also still [AUDIO OUT] the uncertainties, given the uncertainties [AUDIO OUT].

I think Zoom has had enough for today.

Yeah, I think that's what it is.

[INAUDIBLE].

This [INAUDIBLE].

Probably next week [AUDIO OUT] and again in June and our [AUDIO OUT].

We're losing her.

We lost you, Sarah. We lost you.

Yeah. Yeah, you know, I think we are in a good spot, so we'd be able to weather these. Nope? OK. OK, then. All right.

Poor Zoom.

Yeah. It's a little tired. OK. Well, at that point, if there are no other questions.

May I make a motion to adopt the budget?

Please do.

I so move.

Second.

All right, all in favor.

Aye.

Aye.

Aye.

Oppose? Abstain? Motion carries. All right. Thank you, everyone. Thank you again. Thanks to the administration and the board for all of the work that we've all been doing to really deliberate on this budget. I know it's been a tough one for all of us [INAUDIBLE]. Next, we will move on to new business.

And we have a policy for first reading, the policy 5100, attendance. Neal, I don't know if you wanted to give us a brief overview of this.

Sure, very brief overview. NSBA had suggested that as a result of the issues that we are dealing with with regard to attendance, e-learning, et cetera, that it was a time to look at our attendance policy and make some changes. Our attendance policy, though, had not really been reviewed and changed for probably six years, seven years, something like that. So there were a number of different changes that were recommended from prior releases by NSBA as well as things that I had seen that I thought needed to be considered.

The policy draft was provided to Mr. Griffiths. It was reviewed by administrative counsel. Comments, input changes were made by each of the-- were recommended and most were accepted by each of the building principals. There is a lot in there, and there is a lot of issues-- there are a lot of issues relating to how we record attendance, how we-- corrective actions we take if there are attendance deficiencies in a student, a student's record when we take it, whose responsibilities those are.

Many of them are delineated in the commissioner's regulations or Section 104.1. Some of them are things that we have some choice over, and the administration has reviewed that policy with an eye towards what would work best for our district.

So if there are questions about the changes, which are in red line form, so you can see where they are, please feel free to bring them to me. And we can review them. I think it would be good if we could adopt the policy at our June business meeting. And I will-- you know, any questions people have now or any questions that people have in the coming weeks, please let me know.

No questions now?

OK, thank you. Any questions for Neal? All right. Yep, if anyone has any questions before this comes up for a second reading, just send them to policy committee, OK? And next up, we have an item 3.2 is recommend [INAUDIBLE] that the Board of Education votes on the Westchester-Putnam school board's associations nominating committee slate of officers and directors for 2020-2021 on the accompanying ballot as presented.

So moved.

Second.

There's a question.

I just will note that our president for the last two years, Victoria Chip from Chappaqua, will become a former president, and Frank Shnicker from Osening has been slated to become the president of NSBA. We have worked closely with Frank in advocacy areas. Josh, I think you know Frank well, Matt, as do I.

And I think he is a very forceful and dedicated advocate for public education in our region and beyond. And he is very well versed in those issues. I think he will serve our organization well.

You know, I think that's the main comment that I would have, obviously. The other people have

stepped up and said they are willing to take on responsibilities. But I just wanted to say that about Frank.

Anyone else? OK. All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Aye.

Opposed? Abstain? Motion carries. OK, and the next-- before we head to the closing of the meeting, which will be just a moment, I did have a board member who very kindly reminded me that, actually, during the end of Tracey's presentation, where she had a-- Denise's presentation, where she had [INAUDIBLE] move with regards to the school board trustees that I believe, if I could turn it over to our district clerk for a moment, she could give us the list of candidates for board trustee.

OK.

If you don't mind. Sorry to put you on the spot.

No worries. OK, so we have three trustee seats at large. And we have received five candidate petitions. Two returning candidates are Sarah Carrier, Neal Haber. We have Beth McFadden, Karen Zevin, and Maria Slippen. And their names will be put on the ballot alphabetically.

OK, thank you very much, Tracey.

You're welcome.

All right. So at this point, we would now be moving to closing of the meeting. OK, and so we'll be going into executive session and expect that immediately following executive session, we will adjourn the meeting. So after I make a motion-- I'm sorry, Andrea.

Sarah, I know, and I actually didn't get-- I don't know if you had a chance to see the email that we were-- I was wondering if I could just talk about a couple things that came up in the meeting today.

Oh, absolutely. [AUDIO OUT]

Iris [INAUDIBLE] something, and Iris, if you want to start, because I know it has to do with you were completely focused on the election. You may cover what came up at the meeting I was in today. And

you were also in a meeting, Sarah, right?

Yes, I was on the NSBA webinar with regard to the mailing, along with Tracey. I think-- was that the webinar that you were on as well, Iris?

Yes, it is.

OK. [INAUDIBLE] I spoke with Tracey briefly with regard to that, and I think we are in good shape with regard to all of the very many details we need to cover in order to get the ballots out to the community and in a timely manner with a way for getting them back in a timely manner as well. So if you wanted to give a brief update with regard to the [INAUDIBLE] town hall that you attended, that would be great, Andrea.

OK, well, it was just a couple of things. I'll send notes that talk more about graduation plans and all these different things. But just a couple of items came up related to the vote. So that's why I wanted to bring it up tonight. And what this call was, it was districts from all over Westchester discussing what was going on in their district.

So one item was that Harrison got approval from legal to say on their card, in the information that they put out that they could include the words that the number is under the cap, that that could be included, because they thought that that's kind of a hard time right now for passing budgets. They just wanted to-- we can actually point out that our number is under what it could have been. So that's one thing.

And that was advice that Harrison got. We didn't necessarily review that with anybody [INAUDIBLE].

They put that out there that it was approved by legal, so they--

Their legal, yep.

Yeah, their legal. And then about seven or eight of the districts are using lockboxes, and the feeling was after-- there was a lot of discussion about that, because it would help-- the feeling was it would probably help mitigate the vote, that it is-- that there would probably never be any problem, legal problem with that. And so they discussed about how staff would be used to monitor the box outside the district, and the district would be emptied and brought back into the district office every night.

So because there are a lot of concerns about the mail service, you probably heard a lot, too, but all of Westchester is going through White Plains. So there is a feeling that these lockboxes will be helpful

in terms of whether people will have the opportunity and a timely way to vote.

There was also a question about whether extra ballots could be on hand, if people showed up at the lockbox and said, I have not received my ballot. That was an open question still to be answered.

And then the other thing that came up was there is a question about that there's 24 hours to count the vote. But that was 24 hours after the vote has been approved by the election officials. So it doesn't have to be 24 hours after 5:00 PM on June 9th, so that was-- and that's it. But I just didn't want to hold that back.

But Andrea, you do remind me, there was a question that came up during the seminar I wanted to find out, which is they mentioned the fact that if you plan on using the county optical scanner, you would have one type of ballot. If you planned on [AUDIO OUT], you might be putting together different. And I realized I have no understanding as to, do we still plan on using-- Denise, do you know, or Tracey-- do we still plan on using the scanners that we contracted with the county to use?

Denise, I'll answer if you want. No, iris. We are not using those scanners, because the ballots that are being made are not made for those scanners. We have an absentee ballot in Westchester board of elections are not giving those scanners to the districts. Maybe an aid scanner for handicapped accessible. But our ballots and most ballots aren't going to be able to be read through that scanner.

So we don't-- we do not plan to use scannables? That means that we're planning on counting individually each ballot?

We'll be logging them and tallying them on a sheet. Most districts are doing it that way.

OK, because that's one of the things they did discuss during this meeting is to try to use optical scanners, if you could, because they count faster. And the human toll is less. So I just was unsure as to what our plan was. And they also mentioned trying not to use the yellow absentee color paper. Use clear, white paper.

Correct.

OK, cool.

Yeah, Tracey and I went over this today. We were calculating how many seconds it took for a ballot and how many we were expecting that we had ample opportunity to bring in as many people as we could. And we figured that if we had about 2,000 [INAUDIBLE] 15 or 16 people, that we could

probably cover it in a couple of hours. But we are finalizing the exact plans and procedures for this process in the coming week.

The printer-- the printer was saying that-- oh, I'm sorry. Who's--

No, no, you go.

Oh, no, I was just going to say the printer that they had on this call-- Denise, did you watch it also?

I did. I caught a piece of it only.

Yeah, he was saying that the district should be trying to get stuff to their printers by, like, Monday.

Yeah, which is why we're meeting tonight. But just one last thing with the lockbox is one district was just doing it for the last day of the election. And other people were planning on having it out for several days. So another option.

So that brings up a couple of questions. The first would be, since you want to have security for that lockbox-- we would have to decide if we were going to use it-- where that box will be placed so that it cannot be tampered with. I mean that's something that you all will figure out.

What districts talked about was having it at their district office. A lot of schools have an overhang, and then having a staff member, who, perhaps-- maybe one of our couriers or somebody that's not working a full time position right now to even have shifts of somebody being there. So that is reason why maybe it would be the last day of the election. For example, they felt that they could have enough staff to staff to staff it for one day.

OK.

Yeah.

All right.

We do have a lockbox outside of the district office, and there is someone here every day that can certainly check that.

But that would be, in essence, a lockbox that has a certain capacity. And if it's off hours, it could get overstuffed. You don't know. But that's fine. The other question I had, though, and it's, I guess, mechanics, you mentioned having enough people to count. As I recollect, in past years, we have appointed an election chairperson and inspectors.

Yep.

Which we haven't done yet. Is that something that will be done at the meeting on the 28th?

Yes, Tracey is working on the inspectors [INAUDIBLE] currently.

OK, so we should have that on the 28th or June 2nd at the latest.

Yes.

June 4th at the latest, rather. OK.

Great. All right. So no one else had anything? I can move to-- head into executive session then.

For what purposes?

OK, recommended action that the Board of Education [INAUDIBLE] into the executive session to discuss the employment of a particular person or persons.

So moved.

Second.

All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Aye.

Opposed? Abstain? Motion carries. Thank you very much. To anyone who logged in to watch our recording, we will be adjourning the meeting following [INAUDIBLE], so we will stop our [INAUDIBLE] now.

One last thing, which is I know how our--

Thank you all.

--audio has been a little hinky tonight. We apologize for-- if anybody really didn't get to hear everything that we all said, because it was important, and I'm sorry that we kind of froze up a little.

OK, see you later.