

The Board of Education

Town of Brooklyn
119 Gorman Road
Brooklyn, CT 06234

Mae Lyons, Board Chair
Keith Atchinson, Secretary
Tana Jolley

Melissa Perkins-Banas, Vice-Chair
Justin Phaiah

Mission: The Brooklyn Schools will foster a drive for learning within each student to reach his/her greatest potential. To achieve this mission, the school will continually improve its educational programs and services to meet this community's expectations for a quality education for all.

The Brooklyn Board of Education held a budget workshop virtually on March 24, 2021 via Zoom Webinar. In attendance were Mrs. Lyons, Dr. Perkins-Banas, Mr. Phaiah, and Mrs. Jolley arrived at 6:37 p.m.. Also in attendance was Mrs. Buell, Superintendent and Mr. Otto, Board of Finance, and Mr. Ives, First Selectman. Mr. Atchinson was absent.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Brooklyn Board of Education will conduct a virtual meeting in accordance with Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7B.

The Brooklyn Board of Education will hold multiple budget workshops to determine the needs and priorities for the 2021-2022 school year. There will be as many meetings as necessary to agree to a budget to be shared with the Board of Finance. Each budget workshop will be via Zoom and the public is welcome to attend. We will not be able to respond to questions live, but welcome comments or questions at budgetquestions@brooklynschools.org.

Budget questions and answers will be posted on the Brooklyn Public Schools website at www.brooklynschools.org.

This budget will be passed by the Board of Education once they have finished discussing the budget.

1. Attendance, Establishment of a Quorum, Call to Order

Quorum established. Mrs. Lyons called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

2. Budget Discussion

Mrs. Buell stated that all budget documents will be posted on the Brooklyn Schools website at www.brooklynschools.org. Anyone that has comments or questions about the budget to email budgetquestions@brooklynschools.org. Budget questions and answers will be posted to the Brooklyn Schools website as well.

Mrs. Buell stated the Superintendent's Proposed Budget was presented to the Board on January 13, 2021 for the 2021-2022 school year for \$19,980,834, which is \$806,842 or a 4.21% increase over the 2020-2021 school year. Mrs. Buell stated that there have been discussions at the budget meetings and there have been no action to approve any budget items at this time.

Mrs. Buell stated that there have been adjustments made to the original budget requested. Some of the adjustments are due to high school enrollment, and change in insurance due to CT-Chip being dissolved. Mrs. Buell discussed some other adjustments for the Board to consider.

Mrs. Buell stated that the changes would bring the Superintendent's Proposed Budget for the 2021-2022 school year to an increase of \$19,629,374 or 2.38%, which is a \$455,383 increase over the 2020-2021 school year for the Board to consider.

Mrs. Buell shared plans for the ESSER II and American Rescue Plan Funds and stated the intent of the law is to support the unfinished learning of Brooklyn students due to COVID. Mrs. Buell stated that through the needs assessment, specific priorities have been identified. Of the American Rescue Plan, 20% is mandated to curriculum, assessment to address learning loss with Summer learning, Kindergarten Camp, and Summer Camp. Brooklyn Public Schools is working in collaboration with the Brooklyn Parks and Recreation to offer a shared camp experience where students would attend Summer Academy and then shift over to Summer Camp at no cost to residents.

Mrs. Buell stated that the Board of Education is expected to present the budget to the Board of Finance on March 31, 2020.

Mrs. Lyons asked about the Kindergarten Camp for the kindergarteners, is it for the incoming kindergarteners or students that are currently in kindergarten this year? Mrs. Buell stated it is for both current and incoming kindergarteners. The Summer Academy is based on using the needs assessments for the students that are struggling and not meeting the level they should be. She stated there will be approximately 10 to 15 students per grade level.

Mrs. Lyons asked if Summer Camp is free to all children and Fridays will be open to all students? Dr. Perkin-Banas stated that Summer Camp through the Brooklyn Parks and Recreation will be offered free to the community through ESSER funds. Mrs. Buell stated that Summer Academy will be Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and Summer Camp will be Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Students that are in Summer Academy will have the option to stay in Summer Camp until 4:00 p.m. There is no Summer Academy on Fridays and students can participate in Summer Camp on Fridays if they would like. Summer Academy will be for 4 weeks and Summer Camp is 6 weeks. Both schools are looking at the student performance data and will send out invitations to those students at that grade level and they are hoping to have information out to families by April 1, 2021.

Mr. Otto stated that the Board of Finance is considering moving the Town of Brooklyn Budget Hearing and the Town of Brooklyn Budget Meeting back as far as July as they can. The Budget Meeting might be in the last week of June and the Budget Hearing would be 2 to 3 weeks before that. Mr. Otto stated that if the extra time of having 2 to 3 weeks would allow a firmer view of the budget and how the American Rescue Plan funds can be used, a second Board of Education review can be scheduled or move the March 31, 2021 into April. Mr. Otto stated he is concerned about the budget being presented to taxpayers and not knowing how the funds can be spent and would like it to be a little firmer presentation of the budget. He also stated that it is hard to know what expenditures will be funded by these special grants and all of those expenditures need to go away in two years. He stated that taxpayers will be suffering severely if some of the things that are being proposed to spend money on, will remain permanent expenses after the grant funds go away.

Mrs. Lyons asked Mrs. Buell if she has reviewed everything and this is the best percentage, are there any outstanding grants you don't know about? Mrs. Buell stated that she has gone line by line, she believes this is the best and our budget to operate moving forward. Mrs. Buell stated the operating budget meets our operating needs. She stated the grant is giving Brooklyn Schools the opportunity to provide learning recovery or continued learning for our students.

Mrs. Lyons asked if all the numbers are in, insurance is in and not changing? Mrs. Buell stated these are the numbers. This is the budget to provide the quality of education that Brooklyn and the families expect.

Motion to approve the Superintendent's Proposed Budget for the 2021-2022 school year for \$19,629,374, which is \$455,383 or 2.38% increase over the 2020-2021 school year. (Perkins-Banas/Phaiah)

Mrs. Jolley abstained due to not having enough information to review the figures.

3 approvals/1 abstention

Motion carries

3. Public Comment

Mr. Otto stated that three Board of Education members voted for the budget and it may have been approved by this committee, it isn't a quorum of the Board of Education and the question needs to be brought to the Board of Education meeting following this meeting.

4. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 6:50 p.m.

(Perkins-Banas/Phaiah)

No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna L. DiBenedetto

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Board Clerk