



MINUTES
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Washington County School District
121 W Tabernacle, St. George, Utah 84770
August 11, 2015
4:00 p.m.

Reverence offered by Craig Hammer.

Present: Board President Laura Hesson, Craig Seegmiller, Debbra Zockoll, David Stirland, LaRene Cox, Kelly Blake, Superintendent Larry Bergeson, Business Administrator Brent Bills, Richard Holmes, Craig Hammer, and Lyle Cox.

Excused: Barbara Beckstrom

Minutes: Kajsia Boyer

WORK SESSION

Procedure for Joint Evaluation Committee – Cheri Stephenson

Cheri Stephenson shared information on the Joint Evaluation Committee. The committee consists of equal numbers of classroom teachers, school administrators, and district office administrators. There are currently three open vacancies for classroom teachers. There has not been a standard procedure to follow with vacancies in the past. She shared a proposal that would standardize the procedure anytime a vacancy comes open. It would be similar to a community council election. Those interested would respond with a one-page bio of qualifications. If more than three individuals interested in the position, a nomination election would be held and voted on by peers. The nominations would be brought back to the Board for appointment. These are the people who will help guide the evaluation process and will be essential in getting information out. She would like to fill teacher positions by September 1st. There are no term limits specified in the rules. Cheri Stephenson said the WCEA asked for special consideration to keep the association president as a member of the committee. The Board agreed to the proposed process.

Member Seegmiller presented a motion to go into a closed session at 12:22 p.m. Member Blake seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Present: Board President Laura Hesson, Craig Seegmiller, Debbra Zockoll, David Stirland, LaRene Cox, Kelly Blake, Superintendent Larry Bergeson, Business Administrator Brent Bills, Richard Holmes, Craig Hammer, Lyle Cox, and Kajsia Boyer.

CLOSED SESSION

Property and Personnel Items

Member Blake presented a motion to go into a working session at 1:05 p.m. Member Zockoll seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

WORK SESSION

Board Training – Laura Hesson

Laura Hesson shared a brief video on the Code of Ethics. The group discussed the video and how it is wrong for members of a board to share information discussed as a Board. Board members should support decisions made by the Board.

District Goals – Larry Bergeson

Superintendent Larry Bergeson reviewed the District Goals for Board input. Goals include:

1. Growth - Effective planning and management of growth
2. High levels of learning for all
3. Responsiveness from District Office to schools
4. Technology infusion into learning – making us more effective and efficient, looking at BYOD options
5. 5x5 and RTI

Kelly Blake said one concern with BYOD would be pornography. We can't control the content that is already on those devices as they enter into our schools. Superintendent Larry Bergeson said Charlie Roberts is very concerned about managing, filtering, and security with all the outside devices being brought in. He mentioned that we are looking at BYOD as an option because technology is proving to be beneficial with the acceleration of learning, but we don't have the finances available to provide the devices for all students. Student technology use also provides training for the world we live in. It provides preparation for post secondary education. The Board expressed concern about the disparity it could create by having student bring their own devices. Superintendent Larry Bergeson said staffing is another big concern in the future. We are going to reach a point where we will need to be proactive in assuring that every classroom has a highly effective teacher, for student achievement. There will be a shortage of teachers. Kelly Blake suggested the district also address other concerns parents have such as registering students and paying online. With so many parents working, they need to be able to be involved in their child's education online. There have been several complaints this year about registering at the secondary schools. Superintendent Larry Bergeson said he would check to see what happened with registration this year.

Truth-in-Taxation – Brent Bills

Brent Bills said the 2015-2016 budget planning included 2% from Truth-in-Taxation, which would generate \$658,000. After putting that toward expenses, it left us with 3.32% left. Of that amount, 3% was put toward salaries, leaving .32%. Previous conversations included putting that .32% toward a Christmas bonus, knowing that if the Board did a higher increase the bonus would be a higher amount. Half of the legislative money under SB 97 has been included in the budget revenue. The other half of the legislative money, about \$600,000, should still be coming, but there has not been a special session held to discuss sending the money out. Brent Bills said he has heard from legislators that if they don't go back into a special session, the legislation would pass the base budget during the first week of the legislative session in January, which would include an amendment to the current year budget. Brent Bills explained that each percent is worth \$330,000 to the District. Brent Bills reviewed the District's board levy history. In 2014, our certified rate brought in \$30,444,037.00. Overall, new growth has brought in 5.1% in new property tax money from 2008 to 2014, less the local replacement dollars for charter schools. Our new students growth was 5.2%. The District is getting the same dollar amount per student from 2008 to 2014. New growth is not helping or hurting the District. Brent Bills reviewed the impacts of inflation. Nationwide the wage inflation has increased 23% since 2007, the retirement contribution rate has gone up 66.6%, the consumer price index has gone up 17.89%, and insurance trends show an increase of 150% in insurance costs in the

State of Utah since 2007. By inflating what we spent for salaries, social security, retirement, and insurance in 2007, we would show a 40% increase in costs for the District. The District has not seen that increase because we have decreased spending in other areas, helping to balance the budget. The state is giving less for inflation in 2014-2015 than they did in 2007. Much of the new money is being given to charter schools through local replacement funding. State charter school funding has increased 356.7% since 2007. We are getting a lot less money per pupil. The District has dealt with the lower funding per student by using our fund balance. In 2011-2012 our fund balance was about \$20,000,00 and over time has dropped. During that time, there hasn't been much done with wages and some employees actually lost part of their salary due to cuts of contract days, and our insurance has degraded causing deductibles to increase, retirement benefits have been cut, and capital spending has been dramatically dropped. We have moved capital outlay money to M&O to help sure up the M&O funds. Taking the money from the capital project budget has left us tight in the capital budget and limits the projects we can do. Several positions in the District were also eliminated and funds have been taken from non-salary budgets. To deal with increasing costs, it would help to go to Truth-in-Taxation every year. Although we are spending the least amount for students, our students are scoring well on tests. That says a lot for our teachers and personnel. Brent Bills reviewed our academic efficiency in dollars. There were four districts with slightly higher graduation rates than ours, but none of them were even comparable to our demographics. When you look at what we are doing, we are doing a great job. We have the lowest certification to student rate in the state. Our teachers and staff are doing an amazing job with the limited funding. The Board discussed the pros and cons of doing Truth-in-Taxation yearly. The proposal would be for a 3% Truth-in-Taxation increase. Brent Bills will make a point about our bond rating being affected by the Truth-in-Taxation.

World Language – Richard Holmes

Richard Holmes reviewed the World Language credit proposal for 8th grade students. It started out with Dual Immersion schools, but may be a discussion in other 8th grade subject areas, allowing students to earn high school credit. Robert Proffit said there are many 8th grade dual emergent students who speak a language better than high school students, but we can't offer high school credit to them. There are also students who want to earn other subject credit earlier. When you look at acceleration as a strategy for meeting the needs of learners who already got it, there is a lot of research around on letting kids move forward faster and learn at their own pace. This just makes it so transcripts reflect knowledge that is already there. In non-accredited schools, we cannot give high school credit, but we could offer basic CLEP tests that would tell you the level of proficiency. Richard Holmes said the state has already written the tests, but they may not be available in all subject areas. District policy would allow accredited schools to offer high school credit. Robert Proffit said the Board of Regents has not changed their requirements. Students working toward the scholarship would still need to take two years of a foreign language during 9-12 grade. Robert Profit said he would like to see students who are proficient in a language get high school credit that shows on their transcript, even if they don't take a class in high school. It was suggested that it should also apply to math, English, and even CTE classes. Richard Holmes said to improve the integrity of the system; it should be tied to already approved state tests. Craig Seegmiller mentioned how the grade of the test could affect a student's GPA. Parents need to know the risks. We would need to education the counselors to counsel appropriately, and assign a letter. This would give students some flexibility and rewards students who made the extra effort at a young age. Richard Holmes suggested visiting with Granite School District over the next few months, and then bring any policy changes back to the Board. This would need to be in place before February for the following school year.

Security Cameras in Middle Schools – Charlie Roberts

Charlie Roberts reported that security cameras have been installed in the high schools. The systems

are IP based that is connected to the Internet. The cameras can be pulled up anywhere with the right IP connections. The network has been built up over the past several years and supports IP camera technology. Several schools have installed less expensive systems, but half of the cameras are not working. The middle schools do not have the money to purchase the more expensive cameras. It is costing about \$50,000 to install a camera system at the high schools. The picture of the high-end cameras is a lot more clearly. Some intermediate and middle schools are purchasing cheaper systems, but then they have problems and call Charlie for help. It was suggested that schools be required to meet specific criteria when purchasing a camera system. Brent Bills said the schools could not afford it if they had the same system requirements as the high schools. The District can't afford it either. The schools are not required to have cameras. Richard Holmes feels it is important to have cameras at the middle schools due to the nature of students and the size of the facilities. Superintendent Larry Bergeson said, as a principal it is comforting to have a system that you can see what is going on and who is involved. Brent Bills said one issue with IP cameras is the cost of the server to store images on. Principals have been told that if they purchase according to specific specs, technology can support it. If not, they may be on their own. Superintendent Larry Bergeson said middle schools would need to have 20-30 cameras. A high school would need 40-50. Administration can spend a lot of time looking at camera footage, trying to identify who is on the camera image. The high school systems are paid using capital projects funding. The Board needs to decide if we are going to provide for intermediate or middle schools and how it would be paid for. Craig Hammer suggested limiting cameras to entrances and exits. Brent Bills stressed that there is no funding source to pay for it. Board members would like to have camera systems in the middle schools. Laura Hesson suggested that the schools could be required to help fund the cost. Schools should not expect that the District would just give them a system. If it is important to them, they can help fund it. Charlie Roberts pointed out that as we get more cameras, there would also be maintenance to support them. The Board asked the administration to look at the concern and determine how to best handle it. Craig Hammer mentioned that principals are getting pressure from the local police departments and some principals have concerns about protecting their new buildings.

Procedure for Joint Evaluation Committee – Cheri Stephenson

Discussed at the beginning of the meeting.

ETS – Kitty Hughes

Kitty Hughes shared information on the ETS program. A big part of the program includes college tours. The program is federally funded through the Department of Education. The program serves 825 students. They receive \$379,019 a year for five years. ETS provides four full-time advisors and two part-time advisors in the high schools. The intent of the program is to get students to attend college. They serve students from 8th – 12th grade. Each year, 25% of the students are new to the program. One requirement is that 2/3 of the students in the program need to be low income and first-generation college graduates. In 2013, 78% of the ETS seniors enrolled in college. Kitty Hughes said some of the program objectives include: Student mobility persistence in moving from one grade to another, a regular diploma, and a rigorous program of study. They also run the Upward Bound program and Student Support Services. ETS provides workshops and activities throughout the year. Upward Bound has 90 students and a summer component. It was suggested that Kitty Hughes consider including Water Canyon.

Open Discussion of the Board/Follow-up

UHSAA Update – Craig Seegmiller

Craig Seegmiller said he has a meeting later this month, so there is not a lot to report on now. The Board discussed enrollment numbers and boundary changes that may be needed to keep high schools in the same region for play.

USBA Update – Barbara Beckstrom and Kelly Blake

Kelly Blake mentioned the Leadership Academy coming up in September.

The Delegate Assembly is scheduled this weekend. Kelly Blake and Laura Hesson will be going. The District has three votes. LaRene Cox said she would be in Salt Lake and could attend as well.

MBA Update - Laura Hesson

Laura Hesson sent out an email with the July and August assignments.

DXATC Update – David Stirland

David Stirland had nothing to report.

FCAOG Update – LaRene Cox

LaRene Cox had nothing to report.

Items for Board Review

Enrollment

David Stirland received information on a proposed archeology park in Hurricane. Anasazi ruins were found in the area. The organizers would like to excavate the area and have students to be a part of the excavation, making it more interactive for students. More information will be coming.

A regular meeting of the Board of Education of the Washington County School District was held after due, legal, and timely notice being given to all members and interested parties. Board President Laura Hesson called the meeting to order and welcomed all visitors. Board members present were Craig Seegmiller, Debbra Zockoll, David Stirland, LaRene Cox, and Kelly Blake. Board member Barbara Beckstrom was excused. Staff members present were Superintendent Larry Bergeson and Business Administrator Brent Bills.

OPEN MEETING – 4:00 p.m.

Board President Welcome – Laura Hesson

Pledge of Allegiance – Member Stirland

Reverence – Member Stirland

Dave Gardner reported on CTSO competition results. He noted that Skills USA student, Ike Urquhart, took first in the nation for CNC Milling. He also mentioned again how well the 9th grade students did on the Microsoft Office Specialist certification. He recognized Joan Platt and several FCCLA students from Enterprise High who placed in the Gold Division. Joan Platt introduced the students and the area of participation: Jackie Holt and Jolyn Holt competed in the junior Sports Nutrition, and Ashlee Humphries in the senior Sports Nutrition; Rachell Bingham and Jessica Farnsworth competed in the Chapter Service Project Display; Danielle Hess competed in Job Interview. All six students received gold medals. The competition was held in Washington D.C. The Board congratulated the students for their participation and recognition.

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes

1. June 16, 2015 – Meeting of the Board of Education
2. June 25, 2015 – Special Meeting of the Board of Education
3. July 28, 2015 – Special Meeting of the Board of Education

B. Financial Report

C. Personnel Items

Laura Hesson said the minutes from the July 28, 2015 Special Meeting of the Board of Education are being removed from the Consent Agenda approval.

Member Seegmiller presented a motion to approve the Consent Agenda items A through C, taking off the July 28, 2015 minutes. Member Stirland seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON BOARD ACTION ITEMS

No public comments were given on Board Action Items.

BOARD ACTION ITEMS

Policy 0000 Board of Education – Lyle Cox

Lyle Cox said the state requires that the District make adjustments and address how the board will fit within the eligibility of the retirement system. It needs to be in policy to be in compliance with Utah Code. No additional comments have been received over the past 30-days. The policy will be changed to 0005.

Member Blake presented a motion to approve the changes and accept Policy 0005 Board of Education. Member Cox seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Policy 9201 Guidelines for Gifted Accelerated Student for College Level Program – Colin Metzger

Richard Holmes explained that the changes would reflect name changes to Dixie State University. Changes will make the high school credit the same, regardless of whether the course is taken on campus or off campus. The credits will be consistent.

Member Seegmiller presented a motion to approve Policy 9201 Guidelines for Gifted Accelerated Student for College Level Program. Member Zockoll seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Washington Fields Elementary Site Contract

Brent Bills explained that preparation work is being done for an elementary site in Washington Fields. The contract is to complete the building pad, which will help speed up the construction when the school is needed. The recommendation of the bid committee is to award the bid to Interstate Rock for \$847,022.70.

Member Blake presented a motion to award the bid to Interstate Rock for \$847,022 for the Washington Fields elementary site work. Member Seegmiller seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2015-2016 Final Budget

Brent Bills reviewed the 2015-2016 Final Budget. The budget book has been available online. He mentioned that the District received the Meritorious Budget Award for the past nine years. He reviewed where the revenue: 47% comes from the state, 38% from local property taxes, less than 1% from school lunch sales, about 9% are federal funds, and 5% from other local funds.

The money is spent in the following areas: 46.31% on instruction, 12.41% on debt service, 15.28% on facilities, 3% on food service, 21.45% on support services, and less than 1% on non K-12 programs.

Brent Bills reviewed revenue and expenditures for each of the individual programs included in the budget book.

- Maintenance and Operation, page 44 – The total budget projected for 2015-16 is

\$185,000,000.

- Debt Service, page 54 – Property tax money. All of our debt services come due within 15 years.
- Capital Projects, page 58 – We are projected to issue 35 million in bonds this next year.
- Non K-12 Programs, page 68 – Preschool and adult education programs.
- Food Service, page 74 – Some of the rules have changed this year. We are no longer required to serve fruit and vegetable with each meal, but now we just have to have it available on the line. Superintendent Larry Bergeson said we are no longer providing lunch for the charter schools.
- Student Activity, page 80

Brent Bills said the information section provides payment schedules on the bonds.

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

Student Achievement – Brad Ferguson

Brad Ferguson shared the preliminary 2015 Sage results. He said there is no data on all the districts yet, but we have our District and can compare the data with last year and the state average.

Elementary students gained in every area from last year and are at or above the state average.

Intermediate students were also above in all areas and well above in science. Middle school students were up in all areas, especially in math. High school students also had nice gains, especially in math and science. Brad Ferguson will continue to share information as we get more. Laura Hesson asked how the seniors who took college level math did. Brad Ferguson said he would look that information up share it with the Board.

Instructional Technology – Charlie Roberts

Charlie Roberts discussed the BYOD Initiative. BYOD stands for Bring Your Own Device. The initiative is very limited for this first year. Information was sent to principals and the feedback was very positive. The initiative is a school level initiative and he will support them in any way he can. The District will never be able to afford 1 to 1 technology, so this is the best solution. The initiative will provide schools with information on how implement BYOD. Schools will need a lot of training to support BYOD. The support side of the initiative for Technology is to provide the connectivity. He will make sure that there is wireless connectivity in the school for students to safely connect to and he will know who is attached to the network. Even guests will have to register to use our network. After registering, an email or text will be sent to on how to connect. That is the Technology cost for the initiative. Technology support will not be provided for student devices. Students will need to know how to use their devices and take care of them. The District will have control of the devices owed by the District, but would not have control over what is being shared with devices from outside of the district network. We have no control of outside devices unless they are connected to our network. The policy does not allow the use hot spots. Technology will watch for hot spots. We can't control if they are connected to cell tower. Teachers will need to pay attention to devices being used and how they are being used. Training will be a big issue to make this work.

CTSO Competition Results – Dave Gardner

Reports

Superintendent

Superintendent Larry Bergeson reported on the administrative teams visiting the schools today and tomorrow. Every school will be visited by one of the teams. The teams are taking a treat and talking about test performance and how well we are doing, and about the financial status and talking with legislators. We are seeing a lot of growth and are making preparations to keep up with the growth.

Board

Laura Hesson excused Barbara Beckstrom and expressed condolences on the loss of her husband.

Association

Kathleen Cheshire, WCEA, is no longer serving as president. Amy Barton is now serving as the president. WCEA is looking forward to a continued relationship with Board.

PTA/PTO/Community Council

No comments were given.

PUBLIC OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE BOARD – 3 min. each

Peggy Thomson

No comments were given.

Nick Whitney

Nick Whitney, owner of Tread Armament, a company that provides Kepler products for law enforcement came to introduce his company. He is now expanding to school districts. He briefly shared some of the products available and said the company would do consultations with schools and training on how to use products properly. He said he would like to schedule time to meet with the District on other products available. The company works alongside the law enforcement to keep them informed of what they are doing and what they provide. He mentioned a blanket that could easily be placed over a door to protect the school in an active shooter situation. It could also help protect against burglaries. The company works with programs and can help write federal grants to provide more security for schools. Products are less expensive than replacing with ballistic glass. The products they offer will provide more protection for our students.

Meeting adjourned until 6:00 p.m. for Truth-in-Taxation Public Hearing.

Present: Board President Laura Hesson, Craig Seegmiller, Debra Zockoll, David Stirland, LaRene Cox, Kelly Blake, Superintendent Larry Bergeson, and Business Administrator Brent Bills.

TRUTH-IN-TAXATION PUBLIC HEARING – 6:00 p.m.

Brent Bills explained that Truth-in-Taxation is required for any tax entity to collect more taxes year over year for the same property. Property taxes remain flat without Truth-in-Taxation. Since 2006, the School Board has only done a Truth-in-Taxation one time, which was last year where a 6% increase was approved. During that time there have been a lot of inflationary factors that have had an effect on the School District. The average wage in the US has increased by 23%, the average consumer price index has increased 17.89%, the retirement contribution rate that is required by the state for retirement of state employees has gone up 66.6%, and the insurance trend for the State of Utah is up 150%. Those amounts are hard for a school district to absorb. Our main two funding sources come from property tax and state revenue. Since 2007, the amount of funding received from the state has increased by 13.4%, while the number of students increased by 19%. Growth from new construction properties, after the 25% adjustments for charter schools, has increased by 5.2% and property tax has gone up by 5.1%. The District is proposing a 3% increase on the levies controlled by the School Board. The levies include the basic Board Local Levy, the Voted Levy and the Capital Levy. Since 2006, this would give a 9% adjustment. The district has made changes to deal with funding, including a four-day cut to contracts with the down turn of the economy, the insurance has slowly degraded, which was one of our benefits in recruiting teachers, and there have been cuts to capital projects and discretionary budgets by 30%. We have cut everything we possibly can. To insure quality education and keep our bond rating due to the reduction of our fund balance, we need to recapture our inflationary adjustment.

Board President Laura Hesson opened the hearing for public comment.

The following comments were given:

Amy Barton, WCESD teacher, president of WCEA, and a taxpayer, expressed appreciation for conversations and for engaging public, teachers, and the Board in this process. She also appreciates that the School Board is looking to classroom teachers as experts in creating and maintaining great public schools for students. She said there is an essential link between strong public schools and a strong economy. Investing in public schools stimulates the economy as school employees spend their paychecks on groceries, clothing, supporting local businesses, and assist in the economic recovery of our county. When businesses look to relocate or expand, a top reason given for choosing one location over another is education. Businesses want to operate where they can find a qualified pool of employees. A study from World Bank shows that a taxpayer's return on investment in public education exceeds returns generated by the stock market. Over 10 years, the long-term return on common stocks was 6.3%, while the public return on investment in education was 14.3%. Our children and future are worth it.

Edith Lang, educator at Springdale Elementary and a taxpayer, feels that in funding education, we need to begin to fill the gaps of the funding provided by the state. The best retirement option is to ensure that the youth of today have had all the resources of a world-class education, as they become the decision makers of tomorrow. Today we need technology, critical thinkers, and highly trained educators. She encouraged the Board to approve the tax increase.

No name given - Shared that she is a widow in her golden years who has firm ideas about the value of public education. She shared that even with her limited income, she supports the proposal for the increase in property taxes. Her children benefited greatly from public schools. She feels that all children need to be educated and learn to live together regardless of their ability or income level. As a former teacher in Alpine School District, she knows the expense teachers go to with their own money to enhance education. They may have a minimum amount of supplies given them, but that does not begin to cover what is taken from them in money, effort, time, and pay. She asked about the advertisement saying the increased tax revenue would be 7.96% above last years tax revenue, but she is also hearing an amount of 3%. She asked about the yearly adjustment and equitable funding. Business Administrator Brent Bills explained that the yearly adjustment is done by the County Assessor's Office. They look at each property and reassess the value, which determines the amount a homeowner pays. It doesn't change what we collect. The 7.39% is the way they calculate under Truth-in-Taxation and includes total revenue collected through the levies in one year compared to the next year. A small portion includes new growth, which we would receive anyway, but is included in the calculation. The second is a change by the state legislation in the basic rate that all districts are required to levy to provide a statewide equalization program that helps districts with really low assessed value per student. The money actually goes to the state and is redistributed to districts with low assessed values. That is also included in the number, but the Board has no control over that. The Board is only looking at and can only change the Board Local Levy, the Voted Levy and the Capital Levy through Truth-in-Taxation.

Clint Frei, a local public employee, said he appreciates all the teachers and agrees they deserve adequate compensation. However, he said his salary has not increased 9% in the last two years and doubts the average middle class salary has increased 9% in the last two years. He feels this is asking too much with the increase last year and the bond approval. He feels there are other ways to compensate teachers through administrative cuts or things of that nature. He feels this is asking too

much of taxpayers.

Sue Hasenwinkel, a teacher and taxpayer in Hurricane, recommended looking at the 3% tax increase in the context of how much it will actually cost a taxpayer. The average house valued at \$230,000 at a 3% increase will cost less than a dollar a month or about 95 cents a month. It costs more than that to buy a coke. She suggested individuals drink one less coke a month and support the schools.

Lisa Rutherford, Ivins resident, said as a former teacher she has respect for school teachers. She said she is not totally against the idea of an increase. She appreciates the efforts that have been made to keep costs down. She said she has spent \$21,000 over the past 15 years to support Washington County Schools with no children here. She wants to make sure the money is spent well. She is concerned about water in the area. She feels the public school should set an example to the public and to the students they are educating for the future of this county. She noted one of the charter schools watering new sod in 100-degree weather. She feels that was a bad decision on the part of educators. She would like to make sure schools are trying save money in the way they are landscaping and holding down on water costs. If the District is doing what they say they are doing, she supports teachers and supports the increase. She did ask if the state is giving more money this year, why is the public being charging more than the school money.

Business Administrator Brent Bills said the state increased the weighted pupil unit by 4% this year, which makes up about 56% of the M&O budget. This is the first increase we have been able to put toward wages. We are trying to do the same with property taxes to help us give a raise. He said that 85% of the M&O budget goes toward salaries and benefits. He also mentioned that the District has been on a strong water conservation cycle for 13 years. Systems have been put in playgrounds to measure water content to determine how much water to water them. Watering has been dramatically scaled back. Water costs in the District have stayed about the same as costs were going up elsewhere. Schools are also being built with water conservation equipment.

Lisa Rutherford said she would also like to see water education go beyond the fourth grade.

Kathleen Cheshire, Hurricane resident and teacher, said she was concerned when she saw that the notice was more than 3%. She said she called the County Office for clarification. It is confusing to citizens without further explanation. She received a call back explaining that the school board is only asking for three, but with the equalization tax, funds from the local level are taken and given to the state make the additional percentage. Property taxes are identified as most the reliable and stable source of revenue. The role of property tax in education funding has been greatly diminished over the past decade as a state. It used to be about 25% of public education funding, but has been reduced to about 16%. The state minimum education tax levy has been cut in half. The current system forces continued reductions in the state rate and further erodes the situation. Because there is no inflationary adjustment the District is actually losing money, so she encouraged the Board to continue to do small amounts year after year to keep funds at an even level. The investment in our children is an investment in our future. We need to put our money into our students to education citizenry.

Elizabeth Mackay, Ivins resident, said she appreciates teachers that do a good job. She is concern that a raise in taxes is a cut in her budget. She appreciates what the county is doing to hold it. The schools statewide just keep asking for more money. She would like to keep her money in her pocket. She wants it on record that she is opposed to the increase.

Brent Holloway, St. George resident and taxpayer, pointed out that Utah has been the lowest funded in the country for almost thirty years. Our property taxes should reflect the education we want for our children. Don't we believe in these kids and don't we want the best for them. It is such a miniscule percentage that is being asked for. He was grateful his kids were raised in an area where they funded

public schools. We can't expect to get the best results from our students by giving them the lowest resources.

Glen Andersen, Ivins resident and teacher, mentioned that one thing done in the School District is using money wisely in the District with power energy cost savings. His classroom temperature is kept higher. He appreciates what is being done. There are many things being done with Risk Management to keep those costs down. He feels we do need to invest in our students. It will help our county be better. It will take care of our kids locally and will take care of their families, as they grow older. It is important for our local level to have good education. It is a small amount, and although he is not a big fan of taxes, he will always do what he can for education. Kids are the future. It will also help our District be competitive in attracting and keeping great educators. We have pretty amazing things happening in our District and he wants to keep it going.

Lisa Rutherford explained that she left profession because of waiting lines for teaching positions out of state. Teachers there were paid well. Teacher pay does make a difference.

Howard Stephenson, a taxpayer in WCSD, the chair of the Education Appropriations Committee in Utah Legislature, and president of the Utah Taxpayers Association, said he wanted to add information to statements made. He said that Utah has, after adjusting for inflation, doubled their spending per student since 1970. We have far more employees per student. When comparing to the rest of the nation we need to put it into perspective. Many districts out of state lose students, but don't have the courage to close buildings that are part of a community center and are spending far more on overhead than we do on a half empty building. We are very competitive with administrative overhead costs here in Utah and we should be proud of the way our school districts use our money. However, we don't face half empty buildings in Washington County School District or the overhead costs would be extreme and less would be spent in the classroom and on teacher salaries. The average size of some of the districts in the Midwest is about 500 students. The cost would be extraordinary and less would be spent on teachers and less on education in the classrooms and more on overhead and administration. He said he personally went to bat for Washington County School District giving a million dollars more in this District and now the District is asking for another million with a local tax increase. The Utah Taxpayers Association supported the WCSD bond, because they knew that the District had growing student populations and it was needed. They explained to the taxpayers of this county why this was appropriate for them to vote yes. He has continued to work for equalization to get districts with lower assessed valuation per student more funding to bring them up and get support. He said that they are doing all they can to support the District and feels that this tax just adds insult to injury. The idea of adding a tax is insensitive to those who have supported the District most.

Sue Porter said for twenty years the comments used to be to catch up to Mississippi, now it is to catch up to Puerto Rico. We are 52nd in what we spend on students. In the past, she constantly heard from legislators that we would have to make a local effort to support our schools if we wanted to have the things we needed. She applauds what WCSD is doing to make that local effort and have quality schools. We haven't touched class size to make things balance, which is the next thing to be sacrificed, but that is too high of a price to pay. She encouraged the Board to vote for the increase.

Claudia Empey said even with teacher pay increases, new teachers still qualify for free and reduced lunch.

Craig Seegmiller stated that there are powerful arguments on both side. The tax increase is not just about teacher salaries, inflation has eaten away a lot of our spending ability. He is not a big fan of the excuse that it only raises \$10 a year. Every taxing entity uses the same argument. It is a very tiring

excuse.

Kelly Blake said as a School Board, it really comes down to doing what is best for kids. No one likes to have their taxes increased, but when teachers have less spending power than years ago it is not a good thing. If we don't take the necessary steps now we won't have the good teachers we need to fill the jobs.

BOARD ACTION ITEM

Adoption of Tax Rates and Adoption of 2015-2016 Final Budget

Brent Bills reported that 2% has been built into the budget. The Board discussed that the District does need to increase the rainy day fund and accomplish things that have been put aside for years. It was also mentioned that the bond ratings could be affected by not passing the tax increase.

Member Blake presented a motion to adopt the tax rates as listed in the Truth-in-Taxation notice with a 3% increase. Member Zockoll seconded the motion. Member Seegmiller opposed the Truth-in-Taxation increase. The motion by majority vote.

Board President Laura Hesson adjourned the meeting at 6:51 p.m., as there was no further business to discuss.

ADJOURNMENT – 6:51 p.m.