

Library aims to sustain programs through levy increase

To sustain programming and staffing amid a challenging year due to inflation and cost-of-living rates, the Phoenix Public Library is seeking \$75,917 in additional funding during an upcoming referendum vote.

"The Phoenix Public Library relies on our staff to meet the needs of our community, from children's programming to computer help," said Phoenix Public Library Director Natalie Curran. "The proposed increase will be used to help provide the competitive wages and benefits we need to recruit and retain personnel with 21st century skills."

Since 2011, minimum wage has increased \$5.95 per hour. Despite the jump in minimum wage, the library hasn't requested a substantial increase in additional taxpayer funding until now. As costs continue to rise and with no other guaranteed revenue sources flowing in, the library is requesting the public's support for its proposed

tax levy increase. If approved, the projected taxes on a \$100,000 home would be \$10.91 higher than in previous years.

"After 11 years of operating with our current funding, the library is no longer able to provide the level of service the community deserves," Curran said. "The proposed increase will allow the library to implement the programs and services outlined in our board-approved strategic plan, and also to adapt to new trends and technologies as modern librarianship continues to evolve."

The funding would also help ensure the 30-year-old aging building is properly maintained. It currently has a leaking roof and needs repairs, Curran said. However, the library isn't eligible to receive NYS construction grant funds, which makes the additional funding through this levy increase vital to the building's maintenance.

The library offers a variety of services to the community. Its summer reading program promotes literacy among students and teens, while its adult programs provide community members with knowledge and resources in numerous areas. In 2021, the library served thousands of community members; providing 6,096 library visits, 455 computer sessions, 3,052 wireless sessions, 2,297 grab-and-go craft kits,



and circulating 13,208 physical items.

"We exist to provide an environment where lifelong habits of learning, self-improvement and expression are encouraged and where patrons can meet their educational, informational and recreational needs," Curran said. "From library visits to technology integration, we are truly here for our community members, and we are always grateful for their support."

The proposal will be on the ballot during school elections May 17, from noon to 9 p.m. at EJD. For more information about the library or the referendum vote please call (315) 695-4355.



Phoenix Central Schools

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Mission Statement

The Phoenix Central School District is committed to a challenging educational program that promotes academic and personal growth for all students. Each student will become a confident, productive, responsible individual with a strong academic foundation, and the ability to make positive ethical choices. Our goal is to cultivate a sense of pride, character, and accountability in our students and community. The Board of Education, staff, parents, students, and community share responsibility for this mission.

Students become world travelers in Cassella's class

While many travel plans were hampered in recent years, the pandemic hasn't stopped Emerson J. Dillon Middle School teacher Jim Cassella and his students from traveling the globe.

Since the 2018-19 school year, Cassella's fifth-grade classes have made 27 stops as part of a virtual learning initiative that links Phoenix students with their peers around the world. The remote connections are facilitated through the CiTi Distance Learning program and offer students a glimpse into classrooms in other cities, states and countries.

According to Kristin Edwards, CiTi's Distance Learning specialist, Cassella has been at the forefront of these opportunities, which have provided his students with Zoom connections to classrooms across the US and in countries such as Norway and Hungary.

"We always start by playing Geography 20 Questions," Edwards said. "Students ask 'yes' or 'no' questions of one another until they find each other's location. Then, time permitting, the classes also always just simply converse — as children, as humans. It's magical."

The conversations also spark an interest in global events, and Cassella encourages his students to ask questions that provide them



with a greater insight into the world around them. Recently, when the opportunity arose to make a potential connection with Russia, Cassella saw a chance for a greater lesson in humanity.

"Hopefully this will produce even more empathy for humanity than we could ever hope for from a regular year," Cassella said. "When my students see they're just beautiful young people who are trying to have a good life, they might shift away from the negative generalizations about Russians."

Whether the connections are tied to current events or simply pair one geographic region with another, the students always have

an experience and memories to take away from their virtual travel opportunity. Those memories stem from the teacher who leads the lesson and embraces the distance learning initiative, Edwards said.

"Jim believes in not only teaching his children academically, but he believes in supporting them socially too," she said. "His calling — not job, but calling — is to be an educator. I really cannot say enough about this man as an educator and as a human being. He turns the globe into his classroom, and it leaves a lasting impact on his students."



PHOENIX

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Budget Edition

VOTE DATE
May 17th | noon to 9 p.m.
at EJD Middle School



PUBLIC HEARING
May 3rd | 7 p.m.
District Office Conference Room

TOTAL BUDGET
\$50.3 million
(+1.7% or \$848,126)

PCSD 2022-23 Budget, Propositions on the Ballot May 17th

Dear Phoenix Central School District Residents,

We are pleased to present the Phoenix School District community with the enclosed 2022-2023 budget information. Within this budget brochure you will find a breakdown of comparative information regarding the 2022-2023 proposed budget revenues and spending. Through the efforts of many, and oversight of the Board of Education, we are able to provide residents with a conservative spending plan while maintaining effective programming for our students.

The information presented here is based upon the recently approved New York state budget. Through the efforts of governor and the NYS Legislature, we are able to maintain all programs and activities with a levy increase of 1.0%, well within the legal tax cap of 3.0%.

This year's budget vote will include the budget proposal, bus proposition, establishment of a capital reserve fund, and the public library levy (see inside). The bus proposition will ask voters to continue with our bus replacement schedule by replacing four (4) 66-passenger buses. These purchases are 90% aided by New York state. The District will also be asking for the authorization to establish a Capital Reserve Fund #2. The first reserve fund was used in 2017 capital project to offset the local tax impact. It can no longer be legally utilized. Establishment of a second reserve fund will allow

for future capital projects to offset local tax burden.

I would like to thank the Board of Education for all the hard work and countless hours dedicated to making every opportunity possible available to our students. The Board and I are pleased by this proposed budget as it demonstrates the balance between education and school taxes. I am very proud to have served the Phoenix community as your Superintendent over these past six years. I want to thank you and our staff for all the support you have given to the children of the district, especially through these recent challenging times.

The Board of Education and I encourage you to take part in the budget process by attending the public hearing on Tuesday, May 3, at the District Office and by coming out to vote at the EJD Middle School on May 17 between the hours of 12 noon and 9 p.m.

As always, please feel free to contact me at cbyrne@phoenixcsd.org or 315-695-1555 anytime you have a question or concern.

Christopher Byrne

Christopher J. Byrne

Superintendent of Schools



TAX LEVY

\$17.6 million
(+1% or \$174,000)

LIBRARY LEVY

+100% or \$75,917

PROPOSITIONS

1. Budget Adoption
2. Buses (4); 90 percent state aided
3. Project Reserve Fund
4. Library Levy

3 OPEN BOE SEATS

There are three open seats on the Board of Education. Candidate information, in the order in which they appear on the ballot, is listed inside this newsletter.



Library proposal Q&A *(additional information can be found at phoenixnylibrary.org/budget)*

Q: What is the library asking for with this referendum vote?

A: The library is appealing to our community for a funding increase in the amount of \$75,917 for a total amount of \$151,834.

Q: How will the funding be used?

A: Cost of living increases & building maintenance

The proposed increase will be used to help provide the competitive wages and benefits we need to recruit and retain personnel with 21st century skills. It will also serve as funds to maintain the building in future years.

Q: How much will the increase cost me as a homeowner?

Home Value	Current Rate	Proposed Rate	Difference
\$50,000	\$5.46	\$10.92	\$5.46
\$100,000	\$10.91	\$21.82	\$10.91
\$150,000	\$16.37	\$32.73	\$16.37
\$200,000	\$21.82	\$43.64	\$21.82
\$250,000	\$27.28	\$54.56	\$27.28

Q: What is the library's portion of the latest property tax bill?

A: The library tax is a separate line item on your school tax bill.

The tax is separate from the school tax and is not part of the school district budget. All money collected from the library tax goes directly to the library.

Q: Why a referendum instead of a loan or a grant?

A: Placing a referendum on the school ballot is a sustainable way for the library to ensure it has the means to provide high-quality service to our community. It allows the voters a direct voice in the funding process, and if approved, it's funding the library can rely on year after year.

Q: What will happen if the referendum does not pass?

A: Reduction in hours, service and potential staff cuts

Some of the services that would be eliminated or reduced include grab and go crafts, children's programs, new books and opportunities for public use of library spaces. Potential building projects and maintenance could also be delayed indefinitely.

What is on the Ballot?

Propositions before PCSD voters May 17th

PROPOSITION #1 - BUDGET ADOPTION

“BE IT RESOLVED that the proposed budget of expenditures of the Phoenix Central School District for the school year 2022-2023 in the amount of \$50,361,271 and for the purposes shown in the statement of estimated expenditures adopted by the Board of Education, be and the same hereby is approved and the amount thereof, or so much thereof as may be necessary, shall be raised by a levy of a tax upon the taxable property of the school district, after first deducting the monies available from State Aid and other sources as provided by law.”

PROPOSITION #2 - PURCHASE OF BUSES

“Shall the Board of Education of the Phoenix Central School District be authorized to purchase and finance four (4) 66-passenger school buses at an estimated cost not to exceed \$512,588, all to include furnishings, fixtures and equipment required for such purposes and all other necessary costs incidental thereto and to expend a total sum not to exceed \$512,588 which is estimated to be the total maximum cost thereof, and levy a tax which is hereby voted for the foregoing in the amount of \$512,588 which shall be levied and collected in annual installments in such years and in such amounts as may be determined by the Board of Education and in anticipation of the collection of such tax, bonds and notes of the District are hereby authorized to be issued at one time, or from time to time, in the principal amount not to exceed \$512,588, and a tax is hereby voted to pay the interest on said obligations when due.”

PROPOSITION #3 – Project Reserve Fund #2

“Shall the Board of Education establish a Project Reserve Fund for capital improvements to the District’s buildings and facilities from time to time approved by the District voters with a term of ten (10) years and a maximum amount of \$7,000,000, to be funded from (a) a transfer of the balance on deposit in the District’s current capital project reserve fund #1, which has legally ended and will be closed; (b) fund balances as the Board of Education may designate from any general fund balance remaining at the end of each fiscal year; (c) funds from other sources including revenues that are not required by law to be paid into any other fund or account and (d) such amounts as may be authorized by the District’s voters from time to time.”

PROPOSITION #4 – Library Levy

Resolved, that pursuant to Education Law, Section 259, the Board of Education of the Phoenix Central School District is authorized to levy and collect an annual tax, year after year, separate and apart from the annual school budget, in the amount of \$75,917 (in addition to the current annual appropriation of \$75,917 for a total of \$151,834 annually), which shall be paid to the Phoenix Public Library for the support and maintenance of the library, with this appropriated amount to be the annual appropriation until thereafter modified by a future vote of the electors of the Phoenix Central School District.

What Might my School Tax Bill Look Like Next Year?

The information below is intended to help residents understand the estimated effect on property taxes if the proposed budget is approved based on current assessed values and a township with full 100% assessed value. An assumption is made that the homeowner has applied for and receives the basic STAR exemption.

Full Value Assessment	Estimated 21-22 Tax With STAR	Estimated 22-23 Tax with STAR	Estimated Increase with STAR
\$50,000	\$480.34	\$492.84	\$12.50
\$100,000	\$1,732.67	\$1,757.68	\$25.01
\$150,000	\$2,985.01	\$3,022.52	\$37.51

** Updated assessed values and equalization rates are not finalized until August. STAR is capped at current law.*

ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET

Represents the Supervisory, Clerical & Business Operations support for Program & Capital Services.	2021-2022	2022-2023	\$ Change	% Change
Board of Education Board of Education, School Association District Clerk, Annual Meeting, and Elections	\$27,690	\$27,690	0	0.00%
Central Administration Superintendent’s Office	\$262,419	\$269,075	6,656	2.54%
Regular School Supervision Building Offices, Principals & Clerical, Directors of Athletics and Curriculum	\$1,721,238	\$1,745,373	24,135	1.40%
Finance Business Administration, External Auditor, Internal Auditor, Tax Collection, and Treasurer	\$532,468	\$557,843	25,375	4.77%
Personnel Legal Services, Personnel Office, and Public Information	\$196,068	\$204,838	8,770	4.47%
Data Processing & Central Printing Student Information & Financial Systems, Printing	\$408,074	\$422,104	14,030	3.44%
Liability Insurance & Unclassified	\$139,095	\$139,095	0	0.00%
BOCES Administrative Charges Local share of BOCES Administrative Expenses	\$819,035	\$876,566	57,531	7.02%
Employee Benefits	\$685,926	\$682,914	-3,012	-0.44%
TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE	\$ 4,792,012	\$4,925,498	133,484	2.79%

PROGRAM BUDGET

Represents the Instructional, Support & Extracurricular Needs of Students.	2021-2022	2022-2023	\$ Change	% Change
Regular School Program Instruction, Library & Media, Instructional Technology	\$14,488,158	\$15,307,796	819,638	5.66%
Special Education Program Instruction for Students With Disabilities	\$4,434,507	\$4,518,236	83,729	1.89%
Special Schools Reading Summer School, Home Bound Instruction, BOCES Summer School & Multi-Occ Programs	\$439,864	\$526,124	86,260	19.61%
Pupil Services Guidance, Health and Psychological Services Extracurricular, Athletic & Performing Arts Activities	\$1,807,320	\$1,842,153	34,833	1.93%
Transportation Student Transportation Services	\$2,184,240	\$2,184,240	52,634	2.41%
Interfund Transfers	\$87,500	\$87,500	0	0.00%
Employee Benefits	\$9,034,176	\$8,994,499	-39,677	-0.44%
TOTAL PROGRAM	\$32,475,765	\$33,513,182	1,037,417	3.19%

CAPITAL BUDGET

Represents the Custodial, Maintenance & Capital Improvement Costs for Building & Grounds Facilities.	2021-2022	2022-2023	\$ Change	% Change
Custodial Operation of Plant	\$2,686,502	\$2,796,421	109,919	4.09%
Maintenance of Plant & Grounds	\$822,055	\$899,978	77,923	9.48%
Debt Service (Loan payments for building projects and bus purchases)	\$7,804,202	\$7,297,240	-506,962	-6.50%
Employee Benefits	\$832,609	\$828,952	-3,656	-0.44%
Transfer to Capital (Capital Improvement to MAM, EJD, & JCB)	\$100,000	\$100,000	0	0.00%
TOTAL CAPITAL	\$12,245,368	\$11,922,591	-322,777	-2.64%
	2021-2022	2022-2023	\$ Change	% Change
TOTAL BUDGET	\$49,518,145	\$50,361,271	843,126	+1.71%

What are the Revenue Sources?

Revenues	2021-2022	2022-2023	\$ Change
Payment in Lieu of Taxes	97,000	96,000	(1,000)
Sales Tax	2,500	2,500	0
Charges for Services	8,500	8,500	0
Use of Money	10,000	2,500	(7,500)
Sale of Property	15,500	15,000	(500)
Refund of Prior Year	300,000	300,000	0
Miscellaneous	10,000	7,000	(3,000)
State Aid - Basic Aid	28,451,801	29,278,760	826,959
State Aid - BOCES Aid	2,600,000	2,588,500	(11,500)
State Aid - Textbook Aid	99,513	100,640	1,127
State Aid - Tech & Library	120,150	65,998	(54,152)
Federal/Medicaid	326,308	45,000	(281,308)
Interfund Transfers	50,000	50,000	0
Appropriated Fund Balance	0	200,000	200,000
Calculated Tax Levy	17,426,873	17,600,873	174,000
TOTAL REVENUES	\$49,518,145	\$50,361,271	843,126

Who is Running for the BOE?

Board of Education Candidates

There are three open seats for the Board of Education, each of which will carry a three-year term. The following candidates have completed all the necessary paperwork and will appear on the May 17, 2022 voting machines:

- 1. James R Brooker**
- 2. Keith Renfrew**
- 3. Robert Southworth**



OTE DATE
May 17th | noon to 9 p.m.
at EJD Middle School

Who Can Vote?

Voter Qualifications

- U.S. Citizen
- 18 years of age
- School district resident for 30 days prior to May 17, 2022
- Registered with Oswego/Onondaga County or School District Board of Elections



Students shine during Music in Our Schools Month



The Phoenix Central School District Board of Education, its officers and employees, shall not discriminate against any student, employee, or applicant on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, religion, marital status, sex, age, or disability. This policy of nondiscrimination includes: access by students to educational programs, counseling services for students, course offerings and student activities, recruitment and appointment of employees and employment pay, benefits, advancement and/or terminations.