



recommends a millage rate of 9.84 mills, or \$9.84 for every \$1,000 of taxable property value. Under the proposed budget, the owner of a home assessed at \$100,000 would pay \$738 in taxes, after homestead exemption and will realize about a \$47.02 decrease in their taxes for education (6% reduction for education to the homeowner).

He explained that what makes the process confusing is that the district is going to have to advertise a tax increase due to the comparison of the Non-Voted Millage to the Rollback Rate. Those new millages that have been established are greater than the Rollback Rate, therefore; the ad in the newspaper will reflect a tax increase.

Mr. Tougaw, Planning & Budget Officer, provided an overview of the 2003-2004 Executive Summary Budget and reviewed the four major funds included in the district's budget:

- General Fund
- Special Revenue Funds
- Debt Service Funds
- Capital Project Funds

He stated that the total Millage Rate to be levied exceeds the Roll-Back Rate computed pursuant to Section 200.065(1), F.S. by 4.32%.

He reviewed the following schedules showing proposed millage rates, millage comparisons, and budget hearing notices as required by law.

Schedule I – Notice of Proposed Tax Increase

Schedule II – Percent Change Over Rolled Back Rate 2003-2004, which is advertised as a tax increase of 4.32%

Schedule III – Comparison of Proposed 2003-2004 to the 2002-2003 Actual Millage Rates

Schedule IV – Budget Summary Notice

Schedule V – Budget Ad Percent Over Prior Year Expenditures

Schedule VI – Historical Summary of Financial and Demographic Data

Schedule VII – Notice of Tax for School Capital Outlay

Schedule VIII – Budget Appropriations Approved for Advertisement, with a total budget of \$271,726,495

Motion by Mrs. Turner

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the administration's recommendation to approve the 2003-2004 proposed Tentative Budget and Millage for advertising.

Mr. Eubank believes that a discussion from OPPAGA was that since the revenue for Free and Reduced Lunch exceeds the paid lunches they were going to recommend raising prices. He requested that carefully budget any expenses the district incurs for School Food Service.

Mr. Tougaw indicated that he has not received a final recommendation

from OPPAGA.

Pastor Kevin Thorpe, Faith Missionary Baptist Church of Gainesville Florida, also serves on the Board of the ACTION Network, which is a group made up of 15 churches and represent 5,000 families. A meeting was held March 3, 2003, to discuss concerns in the area of after school programs for middle school students. The group is urging the Board to assist with implementing after-schools programs in every middle school in the county that would provide recreation with a strong academic requirement by including \$50,000 in their budget for this program. The ACTION Network has met with the County and they have included \$50,000 in their current budget. The City has already drafted a plan for pilot programs to initiate the after school program, and have concluded that a partnership between all three governmental entities—County, School Board and City is necessary.

Mr. Tougaw reported that staff has been working jointly with the City and County to address needs and enhance offerings to middle school student. He pointed out that it is a very tight budget year and the School Board currently has many middle school programs in place.

Dr. Gunnar Paulson, president, ACEA, urged the Board not to limit citizen input during the Public Hearing on Thursday, July 31, 2003, 5:30 p.m.

The question was called. Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

The Special Board Meeting was recessed and a Public Hearing convened.

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AMENDMENT TO  
POLICY 5. 11, SCHOOL  
ATTENDANCE  
ZONES/AREAS/CHOICE

Mr. Jim Robinson, staff attorney, presented a summary of Board member comments presented at the July 14, 2003, Board meeting during the first reading.

Mr. Eubank referred to item 3, which deals with crowded schools and assigning students to “overflow schools,” and suggested some flexibility in terms of busing students to the overflow and neighborhood schools.

Mrs. Childs referred to Item 2, regarding reviewing the policy each Fall for the following year not the current school year. Also concurred with Mr. Eubank regarding Item 3, that there is some need for flexibility in terms of transporting students from crowded to non-crowded and may change the zone lines for a particular school the following year when the policy is reviewed in the Fall. Referred to Item 5 and suggested adding a line that states the policy would not give the students the right to continue attendance, but they would have the option to request a zoning exception to continue attending, if space is available.

Mr. Tougaw referred to Item 2, and stated that staff has discussed the issue of projected enrollments and reviewing the policy for the next school year. He also referred to Item 5., and suggested the Board consider adding a “grandfathering” option for Seniors.

Mrs. Sharpe requested a copy of the draft minutes of the July 14, 2003, meeting which includes several comments she made regarding the policy. She expressed concern that her comments were not included in the summary of comments presented by Mr. Robinson.

Mr. Robinson apologized to Mrs. Sharpe and stated that staff discussed whether or not to include her comments due to the fact that she was not in support of the policy or scheduling a public hearing. The summary of comments from other Board members include suggestions and changes to the policy revision. Staff gave careful consideration to her views, but only listed comments of the Board members who recommended changes to the current policy for further consideration and public comments.

Mrs. Sharpe stated that these are public hearings and whether or not she voted to have a public hearing, she feels her remarks deserved a place on the summary sheet along with other board members.

Superintendent Chambers stated that staff will review the minutes from the previous meeting to ensure her comments are not overlooked.

Mr. Eubank recommended that the policy should include a “grandfathering” option for all school levels.

Mrs. Childs also concurred that Seniors should be afforded the opportunity to be “grandfathered” in and also suggested affording the same option to Juniors in a special program at a particular school, i.e., football team, cheerleading, etc. at the discretion of staff.

Mrs. Cawthon suggested adding the Superintendent to Item 6 as the person a parent can appeal to regarding the denial of a zoning exception.

Several parents/citizens addressed the Board with the following suggestions:

- Add “grandfather” option for Seniors
- Schedule public hearings during regular School Board meetings during evening hours when it is televised.
- Supports concept of the proposed school zoning policy, which guides future rezoning in the direction of a more positive and educational sound system. As written, the policy provides for convenience of access of through the reduction of busing, increase of easy access to walkers, increase of parental involvement. The establishment of a defined geographical area

for students for each school could decrease busing, improve financial and administrative efficiency and increase professional diversity. The impact of the change on east side schools could result in major educational achievement and personal educational growth of students. The development of the factors to be used to accomplish this policy, should have maximum community participation. The policy includes the use of school choice options and establishment of magnet programs. The decision to use either of these programs should be developed with detailed thought to ensure the success of the school zoning policy. The need for continued community involvement in the development of the process is crucial. Assure communication between communities and the district.

- In favor of the proposed amendment but against busing and supports neighborhood schools.
- Supports diversity
- Disbursement of information is crucial
- What is best for students should be top priority
- Address quality of programs at all schools
- Address underenrolled schools on the east side by improving programs
- Design magnet programs to enhance the current system.
- Does not agree with busing students from east to west when students on the west are not being bused to the east side.
- Does not agree with magnet programs because at the elementary level all children should be receiving the same education and there should be no special programs at the elementary level.
- Address the racial divide
- Supports parental involvement
- Against busing, which takes away from family time
- Shift students slightly east without busing and still have neighborhood schools
- Feels the process has allowed for great parental participation and commended the Board for making information available
- Encourage staff to seek parental participation in the process
- Neighborhood schools build strong communities
- Supports the sale of Terwilliger Elementary if it can be done in a way that benefits the current community and supports the move to the west or north to relieve overcrowding.
- Focus on immediate and long-term solutions
- People who profit from the growth should help fund new schools, i.e., general contractors, realtors, etc.

Mrs. Turner explained that due to conflicting summer schedules, it was difficult to coordinate schedules and Superintendent Chambers accommodated the Board's schedule. She apologized to the public and assured them that the remaining public hearings are in the evening and

the Board will accommodate the public as much as possible.

Mrs. Sharpe for the record requested that her comments from the last Board meeting be included on the summary sheet with other Board member comments which was presented. Also, in the future no one should take it upon themselves to believe that because someone votes in the minority that their comments should not be included and from that point on what they said or what they will say is not important.

Secondly, she also pointed out there was a task force, and if the Board is not going to pay attention to the task force recommendations, then why should the Board go through the process of appointing them in the first place. The very first theme from the task force was balancing socio-economic diversity and she does not see it included in the policy. The policy that was presented states promotion of diverse school enrollment. She feels the word "promotion" is weak, and she feels it should be ensured. If the Board wants to be fair it should reflect what a district should look like. She restated that it was not listed as neighborhood schools, however; it was to treat neighborhoods as intact units, and that was scratched through, but at the last meeting it was added back to the summary of suggestions. The Board should not let neighborhood schools be used as a buzzword to resegregate the school system, and that is what could happen if the district is not careful in the way the policy is developed. This is a policy that is going to direct the way this school system is going to operate in the future. She is not referring to black and white, because socio-economics or diversity is more compelling than race. She believes that all black kids are not poor, and all white kids are not rich and that is reality.

She points out that the policy refers to intact neighborhoods and the policy does not state neighborhood schools, but she interprets it to mean that. The demographics in Alachua County will not support neighborhood schools if it is to look right and if the Board wants to do the right thing, as far as diversity goes. She believe that socio-economic diversity is more compelling. Neighborhood schools has not worked in the past and will not in the future and has never guaranteed parental involvement. The schools at present have parents that would not be involved with their children if the district built a school in the middle of their homes—it is no guarantee. What happens is when you have diversity, people of other socio-economic classes tend to care for those who do not have people caring for them. It is healthy and right to have a healthy mix unless, as she previously mentioned, that is not what this school district is about. She believes that Alachua County takes pride in its diversity, but when it comes down to certain issues, it is always easier to say that we want a neighborhood school. What does that actually mean? Is the district going to have diversity, all white schools, all black, a mix of socio-economic students, or all poor kids?

When you have all poor kids isolated, research indicates that when you isolate poor kids and have them all to themselves they cannot learn from each other—they learn from their peers and it is a good example of what socio-economics can do. Some of these students are exposed to everything in addition to being academically inclined. The others do not have the wherewithal, they do not have the parental involvement to do the things that the others do. They listen and learn from their peers. She feels it would be wrong for the Board to go in any direction that would cause this not to happen.

She did not vote for this because she did not think it should go to public hearing, but she is also on record as saying some of the things she did agree to. She did not agree with all of it because it feels like something she cannot support and she still cannot support it unless it takes into consideration what she is asking for here today.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:02 p.m.