

**LTSB hints at minimal tax increase**Brooke Williams / Published: May 8, 2019

The Lackawanna Trail School Board will vote on a proposed final budget for 2019-20 next week.

At Monday’s work session, business manager Keith Glynn said the proposed budget totals $21,585,674 and includes a roughly 0.6 percent tax increase.

The increase would be spread across Lackawanna and Wyoming Counties, with a 0.97 percent increase in Lackawanna County (increase of 1.6 mils) and a 0.17 percent increase in Wyoming County (increase of 0.16 mils).

Along with the minimal tax increase, the administration recommended that the board eliminate the per capita tax.

“Our per capita rosters have been getting sparser and sparser each year and there’s really not a reporting mechanism in place that is sufficient for what we need,” Glynn said. “So in order to have that not be a nuisance to anyone else, we’re going to recommend that.”

In Lackawanna County, an average household would pay $20.68 more with the 1.6 mils increase, but without the per capita tax, residents would realistically only see a $0.68 increase.

“In Wyoming County, the average increase would be $3.17 I believe on average, and they will see a $20 reduction on average per household and per capita tax, for a little under $17 of a net decrease in real estate taxes,” Glynn added.

The per capita reductions assume an average of two people per household.

The new taxes would hopefully generate around $120,000 for the revenue budget, Glynn said.

The proposed budget includes increases in funding for basic education and special education, totaling around $75,000.

There are cost savings across the board, Glynn said, including with in-state tuition and travel reductions.

The proposed budget also includes adding Chromebooks to both schools and replacing some of the Smartboards.

The high school would invest in servers to back up its infrastructure, the business department would replace its aged out lab and the business office would request a personnel module.

A new controller for the high school HVAC system is also included in the budget, as well as new weight room equipment and band instruments to invest in both sides of extracurriculars, Glynn said.

Next week, the school board will also vote on a resolution authorizing third party fees to be added to outstanding debt due to the district.

“When the board awarded the bid for cafeteria debt management, there’s an 18 percent fee that’s added to that debt when they collect it,” Glynn explained. “This would allow us to pass on that 18 percent fee to the parents who chose not to pay that debt.”

This resolution could also apply to other areas such as senior obligations.

If solicitor John Audi does not have the resolution prepared for next week, the board will push the vote to June.

Wyoming County requested that the board exonerate a piece of property that has been abandoned from real estate taxes totalling $1,543.86.

The unpaid taxes have been holding up the process of selling the property, which only has a trailer on it.

The board will also vote on advertising rates for the 2019-20 school year in the high school and elementary center gyms.

This includes $250 for 3x4, $300 for 4x6 and an annual renewal cost of $75.

A one-year naming rights renewal for the high school library with Tri-County Insurance for $2,500 is also up for a vote next week.

While First National Bank’s naming rights to the high school auditorium was not on Monday’s agenda, Glynn said that since the district put out a financial services request, FNB only plans to renew its sponsorship if its relationship with the school district continues.

The board will also vote on the following next week:

\*Financial Services RFP with an undetermined organization, effective July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2022

\*A 2019-20 special education services contract with the Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit

\*A maximum of five days of summer employment for each guidance counselor, totalling $5,865.65

\*The appointment of Kelly Services for substitute teacher and support staff services for the 2019-20 school year

\*A first reading of Policy 251: Homeless Students

\*Adoption of Policy 806: Child Abuse

\*The appointment of Dr. Rajah Mulloth as the district physician for the 2019-20 school year at a stipend of $10,000

\*Tuition waivers for 21 non-resident students for the 2019-20 school year

\*A contract for Tara Crum as the confidential administrative assistant

\*Retroactively approve unpaid medical leave for Rebekah King (April 24) and Matthew Zumbach (March 4-April 2)

\*Long-term substitute Jessica Norris’ in-part unpaid leave of absence from May 9-21

\*Acknowledge the retirements of paraprofessional Gail Wydeen, effective June 11, and library assistant Dorothy Shaw at the end of the 2018-19 school year

\*The appointment of Lauren Hales to teach for the extended school year, July 8-Aug. 8

\*Approve John Lynn as the junior high head wrestling coach at a stipend of $3,750 for the 2019-20 school year

The Lackawanna Trail School Board is scheduled to meet again on Monday, May 13 at 7:30 p.m.