



Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

February 15, 2023 | 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. | Pioneer Center

Members Present: Bob Maxwell, Diane Hodge, Jim Evermann, Nathan Roberts

Members Absent: N/A

New Business:

2025 Levy Discussion

Cory Plager presented election trends and tax rate history for our district. Pullman School District's support during levy and bond elections is usually above 70%. The Maintenance & Operation Levy is now called an Education Programs and Operations Levy (EP&O). A levy may be attempted twice in a twelve-month period and requires a simple majority (50%+1).

Levy success rates have declined since the McCleary decision claiming schools are now fully funded. However, schools are not fully funded. Diane gave the example that we are funded for approximately 12 custodians, but we employ approximately 22 custodians. We use our enrichment funds to pay the additional staff beyond funding.

Cory discussed Whitman County's assessed valuation increased 2.2%, which is minimal compared to other counties and State Schools Tax that we have no control over.

The committee addressed the need to possibly increase the amount of the Technology Levy due to increased needs and the amount of the EP&O levy that has not been increased since 2014. There is currently a need to increase both the Technology Levy and the EP&O levy due to inflation. Bob and Diane will work on a recommendation amount to increase. Nathan Roberts stated he trusts the recommendation we come forward with. The voters previously approved a rate of \$2.25 per thousand dollars of assessed value, but the rate is currently \$2.00 per thousand. If we asked for what they approved last time, that would give us an additional \$650k. Bob and Diane will review our needs in more length and determine an amount.

Diane reminded everyone that we need to also have a pro and con committee, which will be new to us during the next levy. Cory went into more detail as to what will be required. We need to advertise for those who want to be on the con committee.

Jim Evermann asked if there is any state or federal funding for school security. Bob said there may be some grants, but we are not given state or federal funding for that specific need.

Nathan Roberts expressed his concern for the lack of bus drivers and increasing their hourly rate to attract more drivers. Diane talked about benefits offered and how hard it is to find people wanting to drive bus.

Bond Refunding

There was no discussion on the bond refunding.