

Cheektowaga Bee Local News

ROOFING
 Celebrating 47 Years in Business
 FREE Estimates
 Satisfaction Guaranteed
 Fully Insured • Owner-Operated
Castle ROOFING & SIDING
 716-683-0826
 www.castlesidingandroofing.com

Thursday, May 12, 2022

3

Sloan budget hearing focuses on educating the whole child

by DAVE PARISH
Reporter

Back in 2013 when Cheektowaga-Sloan Superintendent Andrea Galenski and Business Manager Wayne Drescher started working together, they decided to make the annual public hearing for the budget about more than just the numbers.

Galenski wanted to show how the programming and financial piece of the district went hand in hand.

Both were on hand Tuesday night at Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School for the annual budget public hearing with Galenski discussing the programming and highlights from all four district schools over the past year, while Drescher outlined the proposed \$38,154,824 budget that the Board of Education adopted, last month.

Galenski said she and Drescher have formed a unique relationship over the years and while she focused on her desire to educate the whole child through not only academics, but art, music, and sports, Drescher discussed how the district pays for those programs while remaining fiscally responsible and limiting the tax impact within the district.

“To be fiscally responsible to our taxpayers, finances and programming have to go hand in hand,” she said. “You have to make difficult decisions.”

The proposed budget represents a 2.46% increase over the current fiscal year’s budget of \$37,239,731 with the proposed tax levy increase of \$149,921 or 0.97%.

Drescher said that while final assessments for both

towns in the district won’t be known until mid-June, the tax increase on the average home in each district will be roughly \$14.53.

Drescher said that the low tax levy increase continues a decade long trend within the district that has seen the levy rise a total of 4.45% over the past 10 years.

“We like to think we can’t really be beat by any school district in this area,” he said. “We like to think we did a good job of not only spending the dollars wisely, but also doing what’s right for the community while still giving them a great education.”

Under the proposed budget, the district would spend roughly \$23 million or 60.4% on salaries and benefits and another \$7,457,925 or 19.5% on contractual appropriations, including utilities, transportation and other various expenditures.

Drescher said that like all businesses and families nationwide, the district was impacted by inflation, with not only the price of supplies and utilities going up, but their transportation costs increased as despite having a contract with First Student, they will still see a 9% increase next year corresponding with the increase in inflation from last May to this May.

Aside from inflation, Drescher said that the increase was also driven by both the higher number of students from the district attending charter schools, as well as an increase in the amount each district has to pay for those students.

The third factor contributing to the increase was additional security at both

the middle and high school, which both Drescher and Galenski said was something the district refused to skimp on, considering it a top priority.

Drescher said the district has work to limit the increases over the years, saving nearly \$2.3 million a year over the last seven years through a number of cost-cutting measures including eliminating 22 teaching positions primarily through retirements as well as the fact that there are fewer students in the district than there were 15 years ago.

They also maintain a lean administrative budget with Galenski doubling as director of personnel and Dre-

scher, who is technically an employee of BOCES, working just two and a half days a week in the district. They have also partnered with BOCES for management of computer operations and other technology things, which Drescher says allows the district to get BOCES aid back.

Galenski said that her strong relationship with Drescher allows them to make the tough decisions on programs they may want versus the fiscal responsibility they feel toward the taxpayers

But she added they still put students’ needs first and can meet the high academic standards she created for the district.

“Educating the whole student is very important to us,” she said. “I always say that I think we have a hidden gem here and I mean that from the bottom of my heart. Our students are very successful when they leave here whether it’s in the work force, the Navy, the Army, wherever college, career and beyond, wherever it might take them.”

The budget vote will be held Tuesday, May 17 from noon – 9 p.m. at John F. Kennedy High School Gymnasium.

Aside from the budget vote, there will also be a district wide art show, student music performances and an ice cream and hot dog sale.

Central student named Volunteer of the Month

Jacieleigh Easterling has been named the Volunteer of the Month for April by the Cheektowaga Youth Engaged in Service program.

The freshman at Cheektowaga Central High School joined the program in November and has since participated in 13 activities, amounting to approximately 25 community service hours. Easterling regularly volunteers at library craft events and holiday celebrations.

“It’s a pleasure to have Jacie at activities,” said Alicia Hark, Cheektowaga Y.E.S. program coordinator. “She’s very friendly, kind-hearted, personable and makes everyone feel welcome.”

According to the announcement released by officials at the program, Easterling is known for her enthusiasm and



Jacieleigh Esterling has been named the Volunteer of the Month by the Cheektowaga Youth Engaged in Service program.

willingness to help with any task, including making crafts with children, face painting, helping prepare for activities or leading a group with cleanup.

“Her adaptability does not go unnoticed. Jacie is a role model to all of the program participants and fellow Y.E.S. volunteers,” said the announcement.

do you...
su | do | ku

© 2009 Park & Homer Puzzles

see our Classifieds for our popular Sudoku puzzles

3-6PM MON.-THURS.
LARGE PIZZA
 CHEESE & 1 REGULAR ITEM
\$15 + tax

Buzzy's Pizzeria
 716-901-7800
 2990 Union Road
 Cheektowaga

SCAN & ORDER FROM THEIR MENU!

11AM-9PM Sun.-Thurs.; 11AM-10PM Fri. & Sat.

Athens RESTAURANT
 BREAKFAST • LUNCH • DINNER

2801 Harlem Road (near Genesee) • Cheektowaga
 716-892-5019

10% OFF
 Your Entire Order
Not valid on takeout

NEW HOURS!
 7AM-3PM Sun., Mon., Tues. & Wed.
 7AM-9PM Thurs., Fri. & Sat.

DOORDASH GRUBHUB

BANQUETS & CATERING AVAILABLE

Our Always Fresh Soup & Salad Bar **IS BACK!**

Jim's
 DINE IN TAKE OUT
 TRUCK PLAZA

Smoking and Nonsmoking Sections Available

open 24/7 • 365 days

2125 Walden Ave.
 Cheektowaga
 716-683-9908

Best Truckin' Food Around!

PAYING TOO MUCH FOR INSURANCE?

SHOP AND SAVE

Shop Many Quality Companies with One Call or Visit.
 Auto • Home • Life and much more!

Cheektowaga Agency, Inc.
 3 KELLY DRIVE | CHEEKTOWAGA | CHEEKTOWAGAAGENCY.COM
 call 716-558-2850 for a QUOTE

Proudly Serving WNY Since 1955