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\$96 million Pine-Richland budget holds line on taxes; no program, staff cuts



TONY LARUSSA | Thursday, May 6, 2021 2:34 p.m.



TRIBUNE-REVIEW

The Pine-Richland School Board is considering a budget for the 2021-22 school year that keeps property taxes at their current rate without the need to trim programs or staff.

The unanimous May 3 vote gave the OK for the district to advertise the budget and place it on public review.

The board is expected to vote on the final budget at its June 7 meeting.

The nearly \$96 million spending plan anticipates revenues of a little more than \$94.7 million.

About \$1.25 million left over from this year's budget will be earmarked next year to cover the cost of capital improvements.

Of the \$94.7 million in revenue the district expects to receive next year, 65% will be generated by property taxes, with the remainder funded by wage and other local levies as well as state subsidies to cover certain operating expenses, special programs and other costs.

Revenue from the federal government funds 1% of the district's budget.

The bulk of the district's costs — 65% — pays for salaries and benefits. Costs associated with transportation and tuition payments to outside organizations is the second largest cost at 11 % of the budget.

The remaining 24% of the budget is used for professional services, supplies and books, equipment, debt service and other expenses.

A mandated increase in the amount the district must contribute to the state-run employee pension fund will cost the district an additional \$282,219 next year.

School Director Christine Misback thanked the district's financial officials for chipping away at the initial \$1.9 million budget deficit the district faced to reduce it to about \$1.235 million.

"We'll continue to process additional changes between this evening and June 7 when the final budget will be available," said Dana Kirk, the district's director of finances and operational services.

If the final budget is approved without increasing the current 19.5867-mill rate used to calculate tax bills, the owner of a property assessed at the district's median value of \$258,500 will continue to pay \$5,063.16 a year to fund school operations.

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