

Following budget defeat, West Valley School Board must determine next step

By Rich Place, Managing Editor | Posted: Wednesday, May 18, 2016 6:02 pm

WEST VALLEY — The West Valley School Board of Education is expected to meet soon to discuss options following the defeat Tuesday of its proposed \$8.9 million budget that would have decreased the tax levy by 7.68 percent.

The budget was defeated, 329-271, a significantly large voter turnout in a district with an enrollment of less than 300 students.

Voters also turned down by a 288-309 tally a decision to purchase a new school bus and voted current school board president Michael Frascella out of his seat in favor of challenger Timothy Ploetz, a 1989 West Valley graduate.

Following the budget's disapproval, the board is now faced with the absence of a spending plan for the upcoming school year.

"They could resubmit the defeated budget or they could revise the budget," said Ann O'Brien, business official for the district. "Either one of those, depending on what they decided, could be put up for a second vote. That vote would be held on June 21."

A third option would be for the school board to adopt a contingency budget that would limit spending in certain categories. Should a second vote be defeated, the school board would be forced to adopt a contingency spending plan.

"The determination of which items fall under ordinary contingent expenses rests with the board of education," explained O'Brien.

District Superintendent Eric Lawton said Wednesday he was unsure what decision the board will make but said school officials, including the business office, audit committee and school board, "were very thoughtful in our approach to putting the budget together."

"I would say the logical thing in my mind would be to go back with the same tax levy and give people the opportunity to (vote again)," he said. "If they were trying to make a statement, they made a statement. Maybe cooler heads will prevail and they'll say (this budget is) a pretty good option."

Lawton said Wednesday he suspected some voters were fueled by the progress — or lack thereof, in some voters' opinions — of recent annexation and merger discussions.

“I think part of it might have gone back to the fact that they talked about getting the 300 signatures (on) a petition to do an annexation with Ellicottville,” said Lawton. “I think the group feels we are not moving fast enough on this project.”

The board at its last meeting directed Lawton to contact nearby Ellicottville Central School and Springville Griffith Institute to inform them West Valley will fund its own pre-merger study with the two districts.

However, Lawton disagreed with those who believe the district isn’t moving fast enough with talks to merge or annex.

“It’s a huge decision and they want to make sure they have all the facts straight before they make that decision,” he said about the school board. “In that regard, they’re progressing forward in a way they feel they will have all the facts in front of them.”

O’Brien said the proposed budget included a reduction in the tax levy by \$250,000 and credited the increase in state aid as a reason why the board had leverage in decreasing taxes.

“We recognize our tax rate is high in this district and — now that we are starting to see state aid again — our board is looking at trying to take the burden off the taxpayers that was put on it as a result of all the cuts in state aid,” she said.

When it comes to its tax base, West Valley differs from other school districts in that it is home to the **West Valley Demonstration Project**, which rests on about 3,300 tax-exempt acres, according to O’Brien.

“It’s been very difficult; we don’t have a lot of property wealth to basically raise taxes in a way another district might raise them,” she said. “Having the nuclear facility in our backyard has made it even more challenging; not receiving an increase in our PILOT in 18 years from the state of New York has put more of a burden on us.”

Lawton said he was not surprised with Tuesday’s voter turnout — calls for voter registration earlier in the year had hinted many would vote, he said — but admitted he did not expect both the budget and bus purchase to be voted down.

The bus purchase would replace an 11-year-old vehicle with 100,000 miles on it, he said.

It is expected the West Valley School Board will hold a special meeting to discuss its options for the 2016-17 budget, although no date had been set. Lawton said he expects the board will meet “in the next week or so.”



CHBWV achieves safe work record

May 30, 2016 - Business News, News - Tagged: CHBWV, safe work hours - no comments

By Submitted to the Journal

WEST VALLEY—CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley LLC employees and their subcontractors achieved 2 million safe work hours without a lost-time accident on May 18. At a rate of approximately 46,000 man-hours per month, CHBWV achieved this goal over the past 30 months.

“Safety is our number one priority at the project,” stated Jeff Bradford, president and general manager. “We encourage our workforce to maintain a questioning attitude and to watch out for the safety of their co-workers each and every day. Reaching this important milestone is proof that we take safety seriously”.

The Department of Energy for the West Valley Demonstration Project selected CHBWV in August 2011 to perform cleanup activities. “I am constantly impressed with our team,” stated Bryan Bower, the Department of Energy director at the West Valley Demonstration Project. “This team is committed to delivering results while preserving worker safety as our shared value.”

Since contract start, CHBWV has deactivated 94 percent of the vitrification facility and 49 percent of the main process plant building, constructed an interim storage pad and relocated 35 of 275 high-level waste canisters to an on-site interim storage pad, shipped nearly 50 percent of all legacy waste, completed demolition of 14 out of 47 additional facilities, performing all work safely and compliantly.



DOE Issues Draft Request for Proposals for the West Valley Demonstration Project Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement Support Service

Cincinnati – The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today issued a Draft Request for Proposals (RFP) for the West Valley Demonstration Project Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (WVDP-SEIS) procurement that will provide support to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP), and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) in developing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the WVDP and Western New York Nuclear Service Center. This procurement is 100% set-aside for small business competition and has a base period of performance of three years and two one-year options if exercised.

The U.S. DOE is seeking interested parties to thoroughly review the Draft RFP sections and provide comments, questions, suggested changes, and feedback via email to Jodi.Gordon@emcbc.doe.gov by July 6, 2016. Interested parties should continue to monitor the WVDP SEIS website for specific details regarding this procurement at: https://www.emcbc.doe.gov/SEB/WVDP_Technical_Services/.

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Route 240 is a disgrace

Editor:

Namely to those pictured in the Springville Journal on May 28.

While I applaud your efforts to include the county of Cattaraugus and the towns of Ellicottville, Ashford Hollow and West Valley into the prestigious membership of the Scenic Byways, I also suggest you drive a 10-year-old pickup truck and traverse Route 240 from Route 39 to Route 242 several times per week. This significantly

traveled highway is a disgrace to modern transportation.

The condition of 240 does not lend itself to the distinction of a Scenic Byway. It seems that improvements in the town of Ashford are difficult to come by. Surely millions are being spent on cleaning up the nuclear dump, but this nuclear dump has been a black eye for the town of West Valley for more than 50 years. Drive into the town of Ashford from

any direction, 240, Road 55 Gooseneck, Ashford Hollow Road and you will see and feel the neglect of the roads. If you want 240 to be a scenic byway, instead of an ugly bypass, give its maintenance the same attention you gave to have it named a Scenic Byway. Route 240 is not a showcase highway.

Patching potholes only creates more potholes.

John Pfeffer
West Valley

WEST VALLEY DEMONSTRATION PROJECT QUARTERLY PUBLIC MEETING

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22, 2016

6:30PM - 8:00PM

**ASHFORD OFFICE COMPLEX
9030 Route 219, West Valley, NY 14171**

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) will hold a public meeting to provide an update on the WVDP project activities and to discuss progress on the Phase 1 Studies. NYSERDA and DOE will provide the public with an opportunity to ask questions and provide comments.

**For further information, please contact
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