

Media Release 10/27/23 - Budgeting Updates

Dear Community Members,

On Wednesday, October 25th the Mellen School Board approved the annual budget for 2023-24. Gross total projected expenditures are \$5,849,562 (an increase of 4.18% from last year) with estimated deficit spending of <\$319,340>.

The approved tax levy is \$907,585 (a decrease of 6.96% from last year) with a mil rate of \$5.11 per \$1,000 of property value (a decrease of \$1.30 from last year's mil rate). Overall, the Mellen Community has had a decreasing mill rate since 2017 at \$10.84 to \$6.25 in 2023

Without inflationary increases for per pupil aid from the State of Wisconsin, the School District of Mellen will continue deficit spending in an effort to maintain current programming; as the expense of operating a school district continues to rise.

The District has contracted with Baird Forecasting to assist in budget projection scenarios, CESA 10 to complete a Facility Needs Assessment and assist with communication, and School Perceptions to draft a Community Survey and analyze the results.

It has been determined that the District's upcoming capital projects through March, 2026 are able to be funded through Fund 46 and the current Fund Balance (not to fall below 30% of Fund 10 expenditures as dictated by Board Policy 6235).

To address the projected deficit spending in future years the Mellen School Board is considering the possibility of an Operational Referendum in the Spring of 2024. Between October 2021 and April 2023 there were **249** school referendums; between October 2019 and April 2021 there were **182** school referendums; between October 2017 and April 2019 there were **228** school referendums. Mellen has not gone to referendum since 2000 which was to issue debt for boiler upgrades.

In the next few weeks, our school district will be mailing a community survey. For your convenience, we will be emailing the survey to you as well. The goal of the survey is to gather input on how to best address our operational needs. It will also provide feedback to the Mellen School Board as they make the very difficult decision regarding the possibility of going to an operational referendum in the Spring of 2024.

I am sharing this information with you to ensure that our School Community is well-informed about the upcoming challenges that the School District is facing. I am confident that the Mellen Community will continue to support our School, ensuring our students receive a high quality education.

If you have any questions please contact Superintendent Rhonda Elmhorst-Friemoth at 715-274-3601

Respectfully submitted,
Rhonda Elmhorst-Friemoth
Superintendent
Mellen School District