

DALLAS SCHOOL DISTRICT

# Board approves \$32 million budget with 5 percent tax hike

By SARAH HITE  
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The Dallas School Board approved a 5 percent tax hike in a 6-3 vote Monday for its proposed final budget.

Board members Dennis Gochoel Jr., Maureen Matiska and Karen Kyle voted against the tax increase while Russell Bigus, Richard Coslett, Bruce Goeringer, Gary Mathers, Charles Preece and Catherine Wega voted in favor of the spending plan.

The \$32 million preliminary fiscal plan for the 2011-12 year was presented to the board back in Feb-

ruary with an increase from 11.0118 to 11.5624 mills. Business Manager Grant Palfey said this could translate to an additional \$85 per property for taxpayers in the district.

A mill is \$1 for every \$1,000 in assessed property value.

In addition to the millage increase, the budget also calls for a \$10 per capita tax, a 1 percent earned income tax to be shared between the district and municipalities and a \$52 emergency services tax, of which the district receives \$5 with the remainder going to the municipalities that have enacted such a tax.

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ly since the release of Gov. Tom Corbett's state budget in March - Palfey had anticipated about \$340,000 in state funding cuts for the February budget, but the board had to deal with a nearly \$900,000 state funding shortfall.

Actions to close the funding gap included using current staff to replace retiring teachers, which in-

cludes the appointment of Paul Reinert, assistant superintendent and director of curriculum and instruction, to replace Kathleen McCarthy, principal of Wycallis Elementary. Reinert will keep his title as director of curriculum and instruction, and his position of assistant superintendent will be phased out of the administrative

roster.

Other penny-pinching tactics include eliminating before and after-school tutoring programs in math and reading, reducing the district speech therapist position to an hourly rate and decreasing individual building budgets for each school and the administrative wing.

All the changes added up to an \$826,000 savings for the district, and Palfey said the tax increase is largely caused by the completion of the new high school building which is set to open in mid-September.

The budget is currently available for public viewing in the dis-

trict's administration offices next to Wycallis Elementary. The final budget must be passed at the board's June 27 meeting.

The board tabled a decision to enter into an agreement with Chief Gathering LLC that would cause the company to relocate certain aspects of natural gas activities from the school district service area.

For months, the district has had legal representation at Dallas Township zoning board hearings in Chief Gathering LLC's application for special exceptions to build a natural gas metering station off

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BACK MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

## Talk of regional police force returns

By SARAH HITE  
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The Back Mountain Community Partnership discussed an issue brought up in past years but never before came to fruition during a meeting last Thursday - regionalizing the area's police force.

Vice Chairman John Wilkes Jr. said the partnership was recently notified by the Governor's Center for Local Government Services about an opportunity to utilize a police regionalization study to be conducted in Back Mountain municipalities.

"I don't know how the Back Mountain feels about this, but this study may bring results that are positive," said Wilkes. "It's a free grant."

Lehman Township Supervisor Ray Iwanoski said he would look favorably on such a study, but reminded the partnership a similar study was done more than 10 years ago and never materialized into any sort of action.

Wilkes added the study can be done between at least two municipalities, and it's up to the supervisors whether or not they would like their police forces to be involved.

Dallas Borough Mayor Timothy Carroll said a police regionalization study was done for Dallas Borough and Dallas Township a few years ago, and while it seemed like a good idea at the time, not everyone was on board for the change.

He said he wouldn't be in favor of the study because he believes not everyone would agree to the proposed changes.

Tom Yoniski, of state Sen. Lisa Baker's office, said when he was part of a police chiefs' association, talks of regionalization often sparked heated debates.

"I don't even want to repeat what was said at those meetings," he said.

Yoniski continued that police officers should be included in the discussion, even if just to give them a head's up to proposed changes.

Iwanoski said police force consolidation doesn't always translate to cost savings, but it could give Back Mountain police departments the opportunity to have more and better services for residents.

**"I don't know how the Back Mountain feels about this, but this study may bring results that are positive. It's a free grant."**

John Wilkes Jr.  
Partnership vice chairman

"It's more professional," he said. "You can have K-9, drug, detective units."

Wilkes said the group should table the decision until its June meeting, but in the meantime discuss the possibility of the study with their individual boards.

Iwanoski asked those from Jackson and Kingston townships, to consider partnering with Lehman Township to request a weight limit to be imposed on Hillside Road and Old Route 115.

He said large trucks traveling to and from Williamsport are using the route as a short cut from State Route 118 to State Route 309 and vice versa.

Iwanoski said the road's windy path and school traffic for the Penn State Wilkes-Barre campus and Lake-Lehman Junior/Senior High School are issues for large tractor trailers and heavy haulers to contend with.

He said Lehman Township has requested a weight limit on the roads in past years, but that has not happened because the roads are also located within Jackson and Kingston townships.

He said the parts of the road located in Jackson and Kingston townships are maintained by the county, while Lehman Township's road department is responsible for repairing the road damage in its territory.

"Those roads are always ripped up," said Iwanoski.

Solicitor Jeffrey Malak suggested the three municipalities write a request to appropriate officials for a weight study to be conducted on the roads.

In other news, the partnership agreed to make a \$100 donation to the Margaret Reino Scholarship Fund of the Penn State Wilkes-Barre campus. Reino, who passed away May 17, was the wife of partnership chairman James Reino Jr.



Surrounded by cool and stately wooded areas, this country garden was designed with tender loving care featuring shrubs, annuals and plenty of perennials including daylilies, yucca, rudbeckia, astible, coreopsis, monarda, lupines, hosta and loosestrife. This private garden is one of six that will be featured during the Back Mountain Bloomers 2011 "Tour of Back Mountain Gardens" on July 2.

## Bloomers' Garden Tour is July 2

The Back Mountain Bloomers will present their "Tour of Back Mountain Gardens" from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, July 2.

The tour will include six private gardens and a chance to see the new Shakespeare Garden at Misericordia University. Proceeds benefit the Anthracite Scenic Trails Association (ASTA).

The gardens offer a variety of unique and creative features, including beautiful stone walls built by the homeowner; multiple gardens highlighting a single property; a unique retreat created with boulders; a sparkling pool combined with a large patio and stone-built waterfall; an ultimate country garden; perennial beds offering plenty of year-round color and new home landscaping offering instant curb appeal in a wooded setting.

All of the gardens are in the Back Mountain.

The Shakespeare Garden at Misericordia University was dedicated in June 2010 in memory of beloved English professor Regina Kelly, RSM. It is designed in the English garden style and includes water features, arbors and brick pathways that wind around a central knot garden. All the plants are species of plants which were named in various Shakespeare plays.

A full schedule of garden, na-

ture and landscaping workshops and demonstrations is planned by some of the region's most recognized master gardeners, professional landscapers and arborists.

The Back Mountain Bloomers will also hold a Standard Flower Show and Special Exhibits feature that day in Sandy and Marlene Insalaco Hall at Misericordia.

Tying into the Shakespeare Garden tour, the theme of this year's Flower Show is "Expressions of the Bard" and will include three table design classes, three miniature design classes, five sections of horticulture with 25 classes and special exhibits.

The Special Exhibit classes will include Adult Educational, Youth Educational, Youth Horticulture, Artistic Crafts and Invitational. Entries are welcome. A complete Flower Show schedule, including detailed rules, entry specifications and directions, is available on the Back Mountain Bloomers website, [www.backmountainbloomers.org](http://www.backmountainbloomers.org) or by contacting Louise Mattas at 674-5973.

Back Mountain artist Sue Hand will paint at the Shakespeare Garden during the day of the tour. Her painting will be offered at a Silent Auction at 4 p.m.



You've heard of bodacious? Come see boulderacious! Boulders form the base of the supporting walls, cascading streams, bubbling fountains and even outdoor tabletops. This landscape is all about boulders and yet it is as if it were painted by an artist using plant material as the medium. This garden in Dallas is one of seven to be featured during the Back Mountain Bloomers 2011 "Tour of Back Mountain Gardens" on July 2.

that afternoon. Bids will be accepted throughout the day at Insalaco Hall.

All proceeds from the day's events will benefit ASTA, an organization developing and maintaining the Back Mountain Trail, a 15-mile former railroad bed that has been transformed into a recreational trail for hiking and biking. Five miles of the trail located between Luzerne Borough and Dallas Township have been constructed and are open to the public. The trail will eventually contact to Ricketts Glen State Park. To date, the Bloomer's Garden

Tours in 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2009 attracted more than 1900 people and have raised over \$23,000 for ASTA and the Back Mountain Trail.

Tickets for the 'Tour of Back Mountain Gardens' are \$20 per person if purchased on or before June 25. The ticket price is \$25 per person after June 25.

A Garden Tour Brochure with ticket request form is available online at [www.backmountainbloomers.org](http://www.backmountainbloomers.org) or by contacting Julie McMonagle at (570) 696-5082 or e-mail [jjmcm@frontier.net](mailto:jjmcm@frontier.net).

Tickets will be available June 1 at the following outlets: Back Mountain Library, 96 Huntsville Rd., Dallas; Wild Birds Unlimited, Dallas Shopping Center, Route 309, Dallas; The Lands at Hillside Farms, Hillside Road, Shavertown; and Perennial Point, 1158 N. River Rd., Plains.

Tickets will also be on sale the day of the tour at the Back Mountain Library and inside Insalaco Hall at Misericordia.

### NO HARP TODAY

Harp Heffernan's column "Harpin' on things" does not appear today. It is expected to resume in the June 5 issue of The Dallas Post.

## 'Tearin' it Up for the Tear Down' today

"Tearin' it Up for the Tear Down" will be held from 1 to 11 p.m. today, May 29 at the Luzerne County Fairgrounds.

There will be live music from area bands, including Echo Whiskey Charlie, Mother Nature's Sons, Strawberry Jam, Concrete Road, Dymond Cutter, Southbound, Bus 5, Studio 309, RJ of Stealing Neil, Headlock and more.

There will also be food and plenty of festivities for the whole family, including pony rides, free petting zoo, face painting for the kids and special

guests. There will be hourly raffles with great prizes from local businesses. As the sun goes down, a fireworks display by Piz-za Paul will light up the sky.

'Tearin' It Up for the Tear Down is being held in conjunction with the demolition of the current Dallas High School building and is an opportunity to reunite with old classmates, teachers and friends. The event is open to the public.

A no-alcohol policy will be in effect at the fairgrounds. All proceeds will benefit Make-A-Wish,

with a video message to be played from Make-A-Wish CEO Dave Williams, a 1977 Dallas High School alumnus.

Tickets can be pre-purchased at a discounted rate of \$15 for adults, \$10 for children ages 12 to 17 and free for children under 12. Family passes are also available for families of four and can be purchased at the following Dallas locations: Kern Bros., Dallas American Legion, Dallas Tap and Grille, Wayne's World and Appliance Parts Etc., George Avenue, Wilkes-Barre.

## Memorial Day parade Monday

Daddow-Isaacs Dallas American Legion Post 672 will hold its traditional Memorial Day Parade on Monday, May 30.

The parade will begin at 9 a.m. from the Dallas American Legion Post building and continue to the center of Dallas. It will then continue to Woodlawn Cemetery and then to Chapel Lawn Cemetery for abbreviated services.

Honorary Parade Marshal will be Sally Mock, daughter of Walter Galka, deceased member of Post 672.

Marchers will include Boy

Scouts, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts and Brownies, American Legion baseball team, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, Brownies, Lions, Shepherds, the Dallas High School Band, fire trucks, ambulances, antique cars and more.

The Rev. William Lewis, a retired Army chaplain and chaplain of Post 672, will be the main speaker. The Lions Hometown Heroes Project will be recognized.

Joe Kelley is Post Command-

er.