

**BETHPAGE UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Bethpage, New York**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Public Hearing/Agenda Meeting**  
**November 22, 2016– Bethpage High School - Auditorium**

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Michael Kelly called the meeting to order at 7:32PM and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

*Present:* Michael Kelly, President; Sandra Watson, Vice-President; Anna Israelton, John Lonardo, James A. McGlynn, Kurt Spears and Marie Swierkowski

*Also Present:* Terrence Clark, Superintendent; Patricia Hantzidiamantis, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services; Caroline E. Lavelle, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Joseph Marchesiello, Assistant Superintendent for Business; David Schneider, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and Technology; Laura Granelli, Esq., Jaspan, Schlesinger, LLC.; and Laurie Baum, District Treasurer

Approximately 75 members of the community were present.

Mr. Paul Zaino sang God Bless America

Mr. Clark began the public hearing on Veteran & Volunteer Firefighter Property Tax Exemptions by thanking the community for attending. He then proceeded with a power point presentation to explain how the exemptions would work and the approximate savings to veterans and firefighters. Also, Mr. Clark explained how the rest of the community (who would not be eligible for these exemptions) would be impacted. The savings to the veterans and firefighters would have to be made up by the rest of the community. The money is not paid to the District by the County, State Education Department or the State. It would be paid by the remainder of the community in their property taxes.

Mr. Clark then let the community voice their opinions on the subject of Veteran's Tax Exemptions.

Terry Catapano Black stated that she is a business owner and homeowner in the community. She fully supports the Veterans Property Tax Exemptions.

Mr. George Hudak, VFW Commander stated that he is a 50 year veteran and hopes the board will approve the tax exemptions.

Mr. Paul Zaino stated that he had started in the Service in 1939 in the Air Force and then went overseas. He feels that the Board should approve the exemptions to the Veterans.

Mr. Frank Dombek is also a veteran who is legally blind. He has been in Bethpage 25 years. He is in support of the exemptions and would like the Board to approve it. He does not know how the exemptions are calculated but feels the Veterans should receive this discount.

Mr. David Serana then spoke. He is an Iraq War Veteran. He spoke about the things he has seen in war. He has seen friends die. He is a nurse and still can see the horrors of war with flashbacks. He feels the Board should approve these exemptions and feels it would be a total shame not to. He would like the Board to have a heart and approve the exemptions. People have sacrificed their lives for our freedom.

Mr. Bruce Weiss also expressed that he would like the Board to approve the tax exemptions for veterans.

Mr. Peter Meehan is a 27 year Navy veteran who is 100% disabled. He supports our troops and feels this is not asking for much and he feels that this is a great incentive and would be a wonderful thing to approve. He can no longer work and would appreciate this reduction in his property taxes.

Mr. Mike Tremarco spoke of how since 1979 he never voted down the school budget. He is a Vietnam veteran. He is thankful that he is in better shape than some of his brothers in the service. The volunteer firefighters and veterans deserve these exemptions and feel it would be a disgrace not to approve it.

At this time, the community would have a chance to give their opinions on the volunteer firefighters and EMT's property tax exemptions.

Ms. Teri Catapano Black spoke. She stated that feels that the volunteer firefighters put their lives on the line for this community and she strongly feels that this is her way of personally contributing to this community. She is in favor of the exemptions.

Mr. Jack Minogue is a Captain at Station 4. He thanked the Veterans and the Board and Fire Commissioner. Mr. Minogue spoke about how the firefighters take care of the families of members who have died in the line of duty. He recalled that in 1978 the Bethpage Fire Department lost 2 members of this community and how the department takes care of those families left behind. Firefighters put in hundreds of hours of training and must continue that training to stay active. The firefighters take time away from their own families to service this community. Firefighters get up in the middle of the night to respond to emergencies and fires. That break in sleep can cause heart attacks. Mr. Minogue mentioned how 9/11 has affected firefighter and first responders. There have been 129 firefighters that have died from cancers attributed to 9/11. Mr. Minogue asked that the Board approve the exemptions. He feels it is the right thing to do and he thanked the Board for their time.

Mr. Jack Delaney thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak. He spoke about the commitment and sacrifices the members of the Bethpage Fire Department and EMT's make on a daily basis. He spoke about the fire in 1978 where two members of the fire department were lost. He mentioned how the firefighters respond to all types of emergencies such as carbon monoxide alarms, snow storms and hurricanes as well as car accidents. The fire department has a deep commitment to our schools with fire safety and instruction. The Board should support these exemptions for our firefighters and EMT's. It is also a way to recruit new members in the department and to our community.

Ms. Coleen Smith is very appreciative of the Bethpage Fire Department. It means a lot knowing that they are there and so she asks that the Board approve and give them the exemptions.

Ms. Gina McGovern spoke. She stated that the Board's business is educating children. We educate them, we lead by example. As one of the veterans said, support our troops and country by talking the talk and walking the walk. The men and women respond to a fire and they do it as a volunteer. What are we saying to our children? I have volunteered for many things but I never had my life on the line while volunteering. Please vote the right way.

Ms. Kathy Fanel stated that she has been a firefighter and paramedic for 20 years and bought a home in Bethpage. We want these men/women to stay in the community. Please approve the tax exemption, as that will help people to stay in Bethpage.

Mr. Minogue spoke again and mentioned how recruiting starts with junior firefighters which promotes socialization and community activism.

Mr. Bruce Weiss expressed how he would like the Board to approve the exemptions.

Mr. Kelly asked if there were any other comments regarding the exemptions. There were none and Mr. Kelly stated that the Board will take all the comments under advisement and will vote on the 29<sup>th</sup>. At this time, Mr. Quaremba mentioned how he was not liking the new Agenda format. He will look it over and discuss at the next meeting what his concerns are.

Mr. Clark thanked the community for their input and thanked the Board for bringing up the topic again to be discussed. The State recently changed the exemption to include Cold War Veterans and the Board felt that it should be discussed again.

**ACTING DISTRICT CLERK**

MOTION by Mrs. Israelton, seconded by Mr. McGlynn, that the Board of Education appoint David Schneider as acting District Clerk Pro-Tem.

All aye. Motion carried (7-0).

**BOARD ENTERS EXECUTIVE SESSION**

MOTION by Mrs. Swierkowski, seconded by Mrs. Israelton, that the Board enter into Executive Session for discussions on employment history of particular personnel and a specific contract.

All aye. Motion carried (7-0).

The Board enters Executive Session at 9:02PM.

**.BOARD EXITS EXECUTIVE SESSION AND RECONVENES PUBLIC SESSION**

MOTION by Mr. McGlynn, seconded by Mrs. Israelton, that the Board exit Executive Session and reconvene Public Session.

All aye. Motion carried (7-0).

The Board exits executive session and reconvenes Public Session at 10:28PM.

**ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION by Mrs. Israelton, seconded by Mr. McGlynn, that the Board of Education adjourn the Public Hearing/Agenda Meeting.

The Board adjourned the Public Hearing/Agenda Meeting at 11:03PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elena Becker  
District Clerk

David Schneider  
District Clerk Pro-Tem