

T/E school board gets look at \$96.4M budget

By Jason F. Smith

Mike Azzara, T/E's chief operations officer, presented a briefing concerning the district's projected \$96.4-million budget last week.

The overall impact on the average T/E homeowner is a proposed property tax millage increase of 0.53 (or 3.37 percent); the average assessment of a T/E home was found to be \$245,000; and the average annual tax increase to T/E homeowners was calculated to be about an additional \$130 per year.

The budget will be passed at the June 11 board meeting.

T/E School Board President Kevin Mahoney recommended that anyone who may have any concerns or questions about the proposed budget could comment at the June 11 meeting.

"We think we put together a reasonable budget that maintains the quality of our school district," said Mahoney. "We try to keep the burden on the tax payers as low as possible."

The proposed final budget for the T/E School District's 2007/08 fiscal year is based on a local sources tax (currently at 15.73 millage) of \$80,104,206; state: \$11,162,355; and federal: \$518,519, which is a total revenue projection of \$91,785,080 (an increase of 1.4 percent).

Total expenditures increased by 4.6 percent to \$96,496,758 and is projected to outweigh revenue by \$4,711,678, the difference of which is expected to be supplemented by a proposed local tax increase from millage increase, 3.37 percent (\$2,616,769), and pro-

posed uses of fund balance transfers, including: excess of expenditures (used for expected expenditures) over other revenues at \$1,064,909; watch position contingency at \$530,000; and budgetary reserve contingency at \$500,000 (only created to be spent in occasions referred to as unforeseeable events).

The millage rate is probably going to increase by 0.53 percent, as indicated by the proposed local income tax increase from millage, which is under the Act 1 state index.

The tax-collection rate is perceived as increasing from 90 percent to 97.23 percent.

A summary of major funding sources indicates that real-estate taxes will increase from 2006/07 at \$73,009,268 to 2007/08 at \$75,652,361.

In another matter, Foundation for Learning in Tredyffrin/Easttown (FLITE) Chairman Dr. Tom Coleman thanked students from Valley Forge Elementary School who helped with a lemonade sale and Valley Forge Middle School students who operated a fund-raising carwash that raised about \$700; both events were to raise money for the foundation.

"FLITE is an education foundation that was started in the spring of 2006 to support excellence in the T/E schools, assist students who need extra help and to help students take full advantage to all of the programs and what is offered," said Coleman, who mentioned that FLITE is independent of the school district, although the foundation works closely with the district. "FLITE funds programs, not run them."

FLITE is a United Fund/United Way program funded primarily through donations

from area residents and local businesses. The foundation has a 28-member board of trustees compiled of T/E residents and has attracted many volunteers for its first year.

For more information or to make a tax-deductible donation call 610-240-1860 or check out www.flite-pa.org/info@flite-pa.org.

"I'm just thrilled that we're not spending the whole night talking about Act 1 again," said Coleman.

It was also announced that mileage (not millage) will now be reimbursed to T/E employees who are traveling for work-oriented reasons.

School-board member Betsy Fadem attended a hearing on May 14 at Radnor High School hosted by Congressman Joe Sestak on the topic of the No Child Left Behind Act. Fadem, as well as the rest of the board, continues to contra the mandate, considering the district to have a better sense of what its pupils should undergo and be evaluated by. Considering the district's academic track record, it must already be doing a number of things well without federal mandates, according to board members.

The main topic of the hearing focused on how to change consequences and interventions for schools that fail to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), which is the main accountability measurement used by the U.S. Department of Education prescribed by the NCLB Act.

Most of the school-board members have expressed great concern and a general sense of dissatisfaction with the AYP standards as they are.