

MPCSD SPECIAL BOARD MEETING – OCTOBER 24, 2016 9:00 a.m.

CHILD:

If we could get started, I'm going to call this meeting to order. This is a Special Board Meeting of the Menlo Park City School District Board of Trustees. Everyone is here, so I'll start off with Item 2, which is Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda, and so far I have one card from Joan Smithline.

JOAN SMITHLINE:

I'm a 30 year resident of Menlo Park and my children were educated here in our exemplary schools. What a shame that last Tuesday evening I sat with more than 47 educators listening to a tedious presentation that outlined the potential dismantling of many school programs, increasing school size and eliminating teacher positions. What a shame that we had to listen to our educators defend those exceptional programs now on the chopping block including Foreign Language, Physical Ed, Art, Music, Summer School, Aides in the Library. And for 27 teachers, their positions might be eliminated and pink slips issued next March. What a shame that countless hours were obviously spent drawing up this potential budget slashing instead of focusing on a positive approach to keeping our stellar schools. So my questions are: Why, when the parcel tax failed in March 2016, didn't the important work to secure funding for this shortfall begin immediately? We have passed many parcel bills and bonds. Education in this town was a top priority. Why didn't the School Board and Superintendents initiate a new plan to ensure passage, which included reaching out to the parents and the educators who know first-hand how to engage the community in support? Why didn't my neighbors whose kids are enrolled in Menlo Park schools knock on my door to encourage me to vote for this tax? Senior residents like myself benefitted from sending our kids through school here and we know the importance of quality education. It's time to pay it forward, and our outstanding schools keep the values of our home high, which is directly related to our future nest egg. Why weren't banners flying over Santa Cruz Avenue with signs like "Save Our Schools. Vote YES on the Parcel Tax"? Why weren't the realtors in this community engaged in this movement? They advertise Menlo Park's as their best schools. They reap the benefits of our rising home prices. How fast the homes sell here, and they earn their incomes buy buying and selling our homes. Why weren't the local businesses and our community partners promoting passage of our parcel tax by posting flyers simply in their windows to inform the community that our platinum schools were in jeopardy of losing funding. We must get a new parcel tax passed. We should be talking about enhancing our school programs, striving for smaller class size, getting higher salaries and benefits for our teachers so we can continue to keep the top-notch educators here. They are the best of the best. Yes, many of them can't afford to live here, but let's keep their compensation packages more competitive so they will want to drive here and teach our children. We need to roll up our sleeves and get busy. The first step in this election is a vote for those candidates who support our schools and not tear them down. Yes, we missed the opportunity for larger voter turnout this November, but that's why we need everyone on board. We need to educate our community, educate our parents, and educate our voters, then it's a win-win. Thank you for listening.

CHILD:

We have one more card. Charles Preuss...

BURMEISTER:

That would be an example of information, or excuse me, public comment related to the Board agenda, so...

CHILD:

Are you OK on that, so we'll move to 3?

CHARLES PREUSS:

OK, it said 2 or 3, it wasn't clear to me. OK.

CHILD:

So, I don't have any other cards for Items Not on the Agenda, so we'll now turn to Item 3, which is the Community Input Session and Discussion. Before we start, I just again want to reiterate what I said last time. These are sensitive issues, these involve peoples' jobs, peoples' careers, they involve our children. I want to make sure we're respectful of one another and positive response is fine. I don't think negative response to someone who's talking, personally, is appropriate, so I would appreciate that. Thank you.

GHYSELS:

Thank you, Jeff. Last Tuesday night we reviewed the specter of reductions, and on November 9 staff will come back and talk about more details of the recommendations and priorities of those recommendations for reductions. That is the expenditure side of the process that we've been talking about and planning, and now today, and the same meeting is also available tomorrow night, we are going to be looking at the revenue side of...the potential and possibilities of generating revenue. And to review last Tuesday night, terms of reductions and to set up the input session for Public speaking on revenues, potential parcel tax, I'm now going to introduce to you Assistant Superintendent Erik Burmeister.

BURMEISTER:

Thank you, Dr. Ghysels. For those of you who may not know me, my name is Erik Burmeister, I'm the Assistant Superintendent of the Menlo Park City School District, and today my role is in relationship to the role that I serve as the Chair of the Superintendent's Advisory Committee on Communications. I'd like to introduce our team to you as they are supporting me in helping to bring this experience to you in partnership with the Board. We have our two Board members that serve on our Superintendent's Advisory Committee, Stacey Jones and Terry Thygesen. We have parent Jill Kispert who's in the audience, and Stacey Wueste, who joined me at the table on 9/27. We have another one of our committee members joining me today at the Community Advisory Committee on Communications table, that's Parke Treadway, a community member and former parent in the district. And we have three staff members: myself, Lanita Villasenor sitting at the Board table, who's the Assistant to the Superintendent, and Al Hart, our Director of Technology. Our purpose is a team to advise the Superintendent on issues related to communication, and to lead efforts to improve communication within and without our organization. Our role today is to serve as an unbiased facilitator of the process by which the Board will gather input from the community regarding our financial planning. As a reminder, this is the process that we have been focusing on over the course of the last several weeks. On September 13, the Board was giving a review of our current situation regarding our structural deficit, and potential opportunities for us in relationship to the failed Measure A and Measure C parcel taxes. At the September 20 Board meeting they gave us direction to begin this process of gathering input, and between the September 20 and October 18 Board meetings of last week, we engaged in a staff input process regarding recommendations for reduction. That process was joined by an additional process led by our Communications Advisory Team to gather input on both what we learned from the failure of Measure A and Measure C, which occurred on September 27, and today and tomorrow's community input session on both a reaction to the recommendation cuts and alternative options to reductions. At today's meeting, you are more than welcome to give input on either your reaction to reductions, or your

input on possible revenue opportunities, which would include going out for a parcel tax. Today and tomorrow's session are both the same meeting, they just occur at different times to try to accommodate as many members of the community as possible. Today's meeting is at 9:00 AM, tomorrow's meeting is at 6:00 PM here in Hillview's PAC. Following these sessions, our team will gather all of the information and present it in a typewritten document that is presented in the public meeting of November 9, which is the Regular Board Meeting, at which time we anticipate that the Board will give us additional direction regarding potential parcel tax, timing and structure should they decide to move forward, as well as direction as to what cuts we should begin making. Additionally, our Superintendent will be presenting at the November 9 Board meeting, more specific information regarding prioritization of the cuts that were initially presented to you at our October 18 Board meeting. Should you require another Board meeting on November 30, we have tentatively scheduled a Special Board Meeting for November 30.

At this time I'm going to review where we are currently as it relates to a summary of the Board meetings thus far. My role is simply to report where we are. It is not to give you direction one way or another, and I hope that you all will participate during today's public input time to give input as you see fit.

To review our structural deficit, it's important for us to understand what it means to be a community funded district. I apologize for those of you who have seen these slides before and heard this before, but as we have more people involved in the process, it's more essential that we have everybody understanding the same information.

So what is a community funded district? In the State of California, there are two different types of funding for districts. The first is State funding or Revenue Limit Districts. A district whose base funding level, which is the amount guaranteed by the State is not met by local property tax alone is considered a Revenue Limit District. The State is required to provide additional funds to achieve the guarantee. Funding is provided on average daily attendance and enrollment. Examples of districts that are Revenue Limit include Redwood City, Ravenswood, San Mateo Foster City, San Carlos, San Carlos, San Bruno, Pacifica and Millbrae. Revenue increases for State funded districts include an increase in State funding, enrollment increases because as more students come they receive more funding for each student; daily attendance increasing, meaning the more students attend school, the more money they get. Revenue Limit Districts get about \$30-\$50 per student for every day that they attend, so as students have better attendance, they get more money. They can also engage in parcel tax elections, and also seek donations. By contrast, a Community Funded District or Basic Aid District is a district whose base funding level (the amount guaranteed by State) is met and often exceeded by local property tax. The State does not provide any additional funds to meet the guarantee, and funding is not determined by attendance or enrollment. Examples of Basic Aid or Community Funded districts are our district, Menlo Park City School District, the Sequoia Union High School District, Palo Alto, Las Lomas, Portola Valley, Woodside, Hillsboro and Los Altos. In order to get revenue increases, Basic Aid districts must have enrollment decreases, meaning the number of students they are serving decreases such that the amount that they are funded per student increases; they can also have property tax increases if the economy is booming and house prices increase, and more houses sell; they can also pursue donations including those donations through educational foundations; and they can also move forward on parcel taxes.

So, where does a district like MPCSD get its revenue? You can see in this diagram which has been presented in previous Board meetings that about 62% of our revenue comes from property taxes, and about 15% comes from parcel taxes. Another 8% comes from the Foundation, and about 13% comes from various state and federal funding opportunities. Were we to move forward and have Measure C

expire in July 1 of 2017, our parcel taxes would be reduced by the amount of \$1.6 million per year, and you can see that the total figure is about \$6.8 so that would take us down to about \$5.2 million per year.

So how do we compare to our neighbors? In both per pupil funding and per pupil spending, Menlo Park spends the least and gets the least amount of money compared to our comparable districts. The reason is a combination of different factors including the fact that we have no rental income; also including the fact that the percentage of parcel tax...excuse me, property tax that we take in is less than our comparable districts. You can see in 2014-15. which is the most current data that we have from Ed Data, 2015-16 is not available, Menlo Park received \$13,720 in per pupil funding compared to Palo Alto's \$15,700, Las Lomas \$16,400, Portola Valley \$27,000, and Woodside \$21,100. You can see though that our spending is more than our funding because we are currently in a planned spend-down of our reserves, which just a couple of years were over 20% and so we're engaged in a planned spend-down. But even when you compare us in terms of spending levels, Menlo Park is less than all of our comparable districts. \$14,200 compared to \$15,500, \$15,700, \$19,800 and \$21,700.

So how does MPCSD spend its resources? Nearly 90% of all of our expenses are in the area of salaries and benefits. 11% of our budget is spent in all other expenses. Which means, as we are looking to cut \$5.5 million over five years, there is no way we can do this on programs alone. Our structural deficit which has been described many times, and I'm not going to spend too much time belaboring the subject today, over the course of five years will become about \$5.3 million. That includes planning around the expiration of Measure C, increased STRS and PERS costs, which are the retirement benefits for our classified and teaching staff where the State is requiring much more of a burden from the districts than they have in the past, rising from 8% to 19% over a course of about a five year period; in addition, our increased enrollment. These are the three realities causing the structural deficit currently: the Measure C parcel tax expiring in 2017--this is the 2010 Measure C, not the 2016 Measure C; and increases including continued and projected enrollment group; and State mandated increased pension costs. This graph which we have shown several times takes into account and sort of exemplifies the situation that we're in, that by 2018-19 we will no longer have the necessary level of reserves that we are required as a Basic Aid district and according to Board Policy 3470, and you can see that we are very quickly eating into the reserves, and many people ask us why we don't just use the reserves to cover the losses that we're encountering, and the bottom line is these are one-time funds, and those one-time funds dissipate very quickly when you lose Measure C and you plan for the increased enrollment that we have. So what...operating deficit is \$5.3 million by 21-22. Our district reserves fall below the mandated 10% in 2018-19, and the district cannot sustain current operations beyond 2018-19 without significant cuts or revenue increases.

So, at the October 18 board meeting our Superintendent went over preliminary reductions and we heard lots of feedback from community members during Public Comment. Just to review, our Superintendent presented \$5.76 million in potential reductions. This graph shows you where each of those areas were and the amount of money that those areas represented in terms of the potential reductions: 9.2% reduction in staffing at the administrative and district office level; 12.1% reduction in non-staffing programs; 21.2% planned reduction in compensation; a \$1.6 million or 28.2% decrease in staffing which includes elective, specials, and support; and then a 1.69% decrease in staffing based on class size. I'm not going to go over these in too much detail. These reductions are the line items reductions that were proposed. The first area is Admin and District Office. I do want to clarify that there were some comments in the blogs that people didn't understand what the \$230,000 in Education Service reductions. That's the equivalent of the cut of the Assistant Superintendent position. In addition to eliminating TOSAs and business office staffing. We also had a proposal of increase in class size K-5

from the average to 1:24, that means one teacher to 24 students, which would amount to about \$1 million in reductions, and at the middle school 1:27 would amount to \$650,000 reductions at the middle school. In addition to those staffing reductions by class size and administration, we also talked about reducing Hillview electives, fourth and fifth grade Music, modifying the Library program to get rid of certificated librarians and replacing them with classified aides, eliminating the district's K-5 World Language program, modifying the Elementary Art program to get rid of certificated teachers and replacing them with classified personnel, elimination of the elementary Science aides, reduction of instructional aides except for kindergarten, and custodial reductions of at least one full time equivalent-- that is also in addition to the one full time equivalent we've already made this year. We talked about non staffing reductions; reducing the Technology budget by \$150,000; eliminating middle school mini courses; reducing site budgets by approximately 1/3; eliminating summer school; reduction in professional development by 1/3 to 1/2; reduction in district instructional online subscriptions. We also talked about slowing compensation, planned compensation by .5% each year over four years would amount to \$800,000 savings; a reduction in Principal, Director, AP or Administrative work days by 5; and reducing the teacher work year by 3 days, which would be eliminating three professional development days. We also talked about the possibility of an early retirement incentive; half-day kindergarten as an option; and eliminating and outsourcing transportation, all three of which we will continue to pursue, but whether or not they provide us an opportunity to save much money remains to be seen. Our Superintendent further communicated that this was not an initial one year cut, that in 17-18 we wouldn't make all of these reductions at one time, we would do them over time, in the amount of about \$1.5 million each year as an average over three years, and this graph speaks to that. This is in addition to the \$900,000 in reductions we've already made in the 2016-17 school year with the note that reductions early on result in compounded savings and provide a higher return to help us solve the \$5.3 million. The Board and the public will note that the amount of cuts needed over the three year period of time amount to about \$5.3 million. We proposed a larger piece of leather so that you guys could help us sort of prioritize where we wanted to see those cuts, and that inevitably some of those cuts could be saved.

So today, what's new in this presentation is what we might consider in terms of revenue considerations, or revenue conditions. Were we to go out for a parcel tax, there are three conditions that the Board is interested and the Communications Advisory Team is interested in getting feedback from the community, so this is really important for you to understand when you give your comments, what would be most helpful to us. If you are in support of a parcel tax measure, we would need your input on the following three conditions: timing, amount and structure. So there are four near term options for a parcel tax election that are regularly scheduled by the San Mateo Elections Office. They are March of 2017 where polls are open and there are absentee ballots. Polls open meaning you actually go into a poll on the election day and make your selection. There's also May 2017 and June 2017, which are mail-in only. The cost difference between the two is not significant to the district, just so you know. They're about the same cost for us whether we were to go in March or May or June. We also have November 2017 where the polls will be open and absentee ballots available again.

So, our committee has sort of summarized what some of the benefits and challenges are for each of the timing of March, May and June, and November. We tried to make these pretty objective so that our community can understand what the benefits and challenges of each are. At this time, our committee is not making a recommendation as that is not our role, but we certainly invite the public to provide input to the Board about what they see as the best timing for us to go out should you support going out for a parcel tax. The benefits for a March 2017 election is that it occurs just prior to the March 15 deadline for releasing teachers. This is State Ed Code, it is not Menlo Park City School District guidelines. We are required to notice all teachers by March 15 who maybe...who we plan to not retain for the following

year. So, a March 2017 election would allow us for the potential of no or limited pink slips should a parcel tax pass. Also March 2017 is the earliest option and it offers us a potential to act and to move beyond our current situation so that we can focus on teaching and learning as well as preparing for next year. And January and February are the least demanding of our volunteers' time, thus our committee feels that it would be easiest to get the 80 volunteers that we would need to see a parcel tax be successful were it to be in March. The challenges are is that it is right around the corner, and does it leave a campaign enough time to be successful? That's a question that we must ask ourselves. Some might consider this a rush to a solution, and the decision to move forward must be made by the current Board and does not include the newly elected Board members in an official capacity. We would recommend to our current Board, however, that if you were leaning in this direction, that you would seek out support of the newly elected Board members after the November 8 election should you decide to move in this direction, and the reason that you all would have to make this decision prior to the new Board members being selected is because everything needs to be in to the Board of Elections for a potential parcel tax prior to the new Board being seated at the December Board meeting.

May or June 2017, we lumped these together because the benefits and challenges of both are pretty similar. The benefits of May or June are that they provide more time for a campaign to organize, communicate and succeed. The decision to move forward could be made by the future Board including the two new Board members in an official capacity because our deadline would be later, after they are seated. And while pink slips would have to be given on March 15, we could rescind them in enough time to begin hiring in the summer. The challenges are that they occur after the March 15 deadline for releasing teachers, thus we must give pink slips to teachers. Even if we think we're going to be successful, we must pink-slip those teachers in case we are not. And the reality is that because we are in a vast teacher shortage in the State of California, we would likely lose a portion of the great new teachers that we've hired because they would very likely go and get jobs in many of the other districts that are hiring and begging for great teachers like the ones that have come to Menlo Park City School District. We wouldn't be hiring, should the parcel tax succeed, until summer when most of the candidates have already signed contracts in other districts, and during a teacher shortage that is a really difficult challenge. And it's very difficult, as we found out last May, to engage volunteers in April, May and June because they are very busy seasons for our volunteers. And there was a perception of mail-only ballots that somehow they were more expensive, that somehow they weren't...that we were trying to sort of pull the wool over the community's eyes by having mail-only ballots. I just want to remind you that this is not a special election, they are regularly held elections, but by the Board of Elections guidelines, they are mail-only, so we would not have a choice.

November, the benefits are that they provide more time for a campaign to organize, communicate and succeed. The decision to move forward could be made by the future Board including the two new Board members in an official capacity, and November is a regular election and is perceived as a regular election, whereas March, May and off-year June elections are often perceived as special elections even though they are not. The challenges are that they occur after the March 15 deadline for releasing teachers, which means we still must give pink slips. In addition, Menlo Park would need to lay-off a number of...all of these layoffs would be permanent layoffs and we would have to eliminate programs for at least one year. This would not be considered a renewal, it would be a new parcel tax even if it is the same amount as the 2010 measure, and that is because we allowed the 2010 Measure C to lapse. And Menlo Park would go an entire year without the 2010 Measure revenue, which is about \$1.6 million.

So today, we hope and invite the community to give us feedback on timing of either March, May, June or November.

The next consideration that we would like feedback on is the amount. The solution to our structural deficit is likely going to be addressed with a balance of both revenue and reductions, so we would like to know what amount on both ends seems reasonable to our community. The amount of reductions ultimately will be determined by the amount of a potential revenue increase via a parcel tax, and what we really need to know is what our community is willing to agree to. On November 9, we are going to give you much more detailed prioritization of the cuts, as you requested at the October 18 Board meeting, but just to review the parcel tax scenarios that were offered to you at the October 18 Board meeting, I want to remind everybody that a no-parcel tax renewal would mean \$4.5 million in cuts, which over time would solve the projected deficit of \$5.3 million by 21-22. A straight renewal of Measure C would mean that we would need to reduce about \$2.7 million out of our budget. A renewal with an increase of \$93 to \$300 per parcel would require about a \$1.9 million in reductions. An increase to \$400 would necessitate \$1 million in reductions. And were we to go to where both Measure A and Measure C would have taken us had they passed, an increase to \$515 per parcel would mean no reductions in current services. That just gives you the Board and the public an idea of the relationship of reductions to parcel tax increases.

The third component that we need feedback on is the structure. You may remember that last year Measure A and Measure C were, first of all, two separate measures, which we had not tried before, and it's honestly kind of rare in public education of parcel measures (*inaudible from audience member*). Oh we did? OK, thank you, sorry. In 2016 we had two separate measures in Measure C. One of the measures was criticized for being somewhat complex--at least that's what we've heard from our community. As you'll remember, the measure basically was related to...the amount that we got each year was related to increase in enrollment and how much we would increase in enrollment. And also Measure A and Measure C were criticized for being evergreen, meaning they did not have an expiration date. So, related to structure, it is important that we ask our community what they are willing to agree to.

Just want to review again the process. We are having these special meetings to engage the community and get their input regarding alternative options to reductions, and we are also open to any comments during these two open sessions regarding that cuts that were proposed on October 18. On November 9, we will bring all of this information to you as Board members in the public Board document for you to consider. And at this time, I'm going to turn the microphone over to one of our committee members who's going to talk a little bit about our commitment to you as the Communication Advisory Committee, and then turn it back over to Jeff, President Child, for public comments.

PARKE TREADWAY:

Good morning. So, as our role on the Communication Advisory Committee, our commitment to you is that we will record your input objectively without bias and present your input to the Board in an organized and thoughtful manner for their consideration. We will continue to eagerly seek, record and objectively report input as it is provided to us via email, our online input form, or orally at any meetings regarding financial planning. Is there a place where they're going to (*inaudible*), OK. We will submit written transcripts of all input to the Board on November 9 as part of public record, and we'll post videos of input sessions to the district website following each meeting. So everything you say tonight will be transcribed from the recording of today. OK, what we ask of you so that you can help us: Assume positive intent--we all want what is best for our students and the community; respect others right to be

heard regardless of whether or not you agree; try to keep the comments focused around each meeting's specific topic. And we are on the October 24 meeting so the topic we're discussing is: Should the Menlo Park City School District pursue parcel tax to minimize the impact of the cuts?. Keep your public comment to the three minute limit. I believe Lanita keeps track of that for you, to help. And provide us a written copy of any prepared comments if you have prepared them in advance, that would be helpful to us, too. And here are other ways you can give us your input. We have an email: comadvisoryteam@mpcsd.org, that goes to all of us on the committee. And there's also an online input form if you go to the district website: district.mpcsd.org, that goes to all of us on the committee. And there's also an online input form: if you go to the district website district.mpcsd.org, the front page, you scroll down to the Announcements section and you can click on the online feedback form. It's there at least twice for you to click on in different places, and that form is open until October 31. We have quite a few comments already and it's a really great way to show your input. And let anyone else you know who is in your circle and who couldn't make these meetings, about these other ways to share input with us too, that would be great.

BURMEISTER:

Thank you, Parke. I do want to let you guys know that already we have received 170 online input forms, which is a wonderful number, and we appreciate very much the community's engagement. Our committee has a lot to do prior to November 9, to provide you guys the summary of information that we received, so I would anticipate the November 9 Board packet to be quite thick. At this point in time, I'd like to remind everybody that this community input session is being recorded, so if you are speaking, we ask that you speak directly into the mic as clearly as possible, and as Parke said, if you have written feedback that you would like to present, it's always easier for us to transcribe your written document than it is the audio of today's meeting, so please feel free to help us out in that manner, and we will get the videos and typed transcripts as quickly as we can turn them around. And so at this point, President Child, I'd like to turn the mic back over to you for public comment, and remind everybody that in order to speak there are blue cards on the edge of the stage over there behind Lanita. Lanita could you raise your hand? This is Lanita and there's blue cards right behind her. If you want to speak, please grab a blue card, fill it out and turn it into Lanita, and President Child will call your name. Thank you very much for your time and your attention.

CHILD:

Great. OK, before I turn things over to public comment, there was some new material presented to the Board which we had not seen, and I want to know if Board members have questions of materials that Erik presented, or just...things about where the process...I'll just give you my sense of where we're headed, Erik, just to sort of give everybody direction. Ultimately, we've sort of got, I would call it kind of a range of options, but I'll bracket them with three options if you will. One would be to say we're not going to do a parcel tax, and you'd be looking to us to say: What cuts are you going to make and...what cuts do you recommend and when?. The second would be the complete opposite side of that, which would be: Geeze, we can't stomach any cuts and based on the feedback we received, we think the community will support a parcel tax that will be required for no cuts. And the third is somewhere in the middle, which is: We think the community will support a parcel tax of "X" but not the full amount, and then to make that happen, here is the cuts we would have to do. I think in any case, we're going to have to...because you had given us a set of cuts that is greater than what is required (*Burmeister: That's right*). I think in any case, the Board is going to have to give you prioritization on the no-parcel tax--in other words, this is what is going to happen...if the Board is thinking about heading towards parcel tax, this is what is going to happen if the tax fails. These are the cuts that will be put in place. Even if the tax passes, these are cuts potentially that would be put in place. I think that's where we're looking to get

somewhere in November, I'm not going to put that date yet, but between I guess November 9 and November 30, we're looking for at least movement towards that direction. Do you agree? I want to make sure the Board members are in agreement that that's what we're trying to do through these sessions input, hearing where the community is, and then, you know, we're going to be making decisions.

BURMEISTER:

Our team would agree with you, yes. I don't want to speak for the other Board members.

CHILD:

Is everybody on board with that?

THYGESEN:

The thing I would say, you said it's staff recommending the prioritization of cuts, the Board giving input and approving that, but it's really a staff recommendation.

CHILD:

Well, they're going to give us, I think, a bigger...I mean they so far have given us a bigger piece.

THYGESEN:

Right, but there's prioritization. And there's no prioritization that says if you're going for this much of a parcel tax, then these are the cuts that would happen; if you're going for this much, these are the additional cuts that would happen and so on, and I think that we need to have a staff recommendation to us...

CHILD:

...on prioritization. But the Board is ultimately going to make that decision.

THYGESEN:

That's right, but we need a staff recommendation to be able to act...

BURMEISTER:

And at the October 18 Board meeting, I did invite you all to provide input to our team as we sort of, you know, seek to put those prioritizations together, so if you have input we are more than welcome to hear that. But on November 9, to Terry's point, we anticipate providing very specific information about prioritization and where those cutoffs would be based on the amount of parcel tax that we would get.

HILTON:

I just want to clarify something. (*Inaudible*) serving on many different committees, the "we" you used when it comes to recommendations and doing the analysis on the potential cuts, it is the Assistant Superintendent, the Superintendent and the CBO (*Burmeister: Yes*). The Communications Committee has nothing to do with it.

BURMEISTER:

Sorry, I meant "we" the cabinet.

CHILD:

So let me know turn things over to public comment. And I've received a number of cards, you can continue to give me cards, I'll just take them in the order that I receive them, and the first person that I received is from Nancy Seeger.

MARIA HILTON:

Can I just check in on our norms, which is that this is an opportunity for the public to share, and while it might be of interest to engage in dialogue, it becomes something if you're not consistent then we're not having the opportunity to give people their chance to be heard from their perspective. And from my experience and my colleagues' experience, we do listen and we do take notes, and we do follow up with staff. And what I would hope here is potentially, Jeff, we could, after all the public comment maybe summarize as Board members some of the things that heard that we would like the staff to follow up on and clarify. And in particular, if you have heard as a community member something raised in either your own comments or others that you would like to get a response on, please don't hesitate to leave an additional note that said: Could someone respond to me? We would happily do that, but I think it gets a little bit too squirrely when we try to engage in a dialogue which is, in fact, not the venue and the forum to do that.

CHILD:

That's fine. I also want...you know, we've got 15 cards here, we received 150, so I want to make sure everybody's voice is equal here. I'm not sure I'm going to have the ability after just this--I want to see what everything is including the transcripts, and then ask more questions. So I think we're going to get that package.

BURMEISTER:

Yes, we're going to provide--this "we" means the Advisory Team, is going to provide you with the documents as quickly as we can prior to the Board meeting. But as soon as each transcript is done, it's being put on the website and we hope to...we're closing down the online input form on October 31, so that give us a little bit of leeway so that we can present you a few days in advance of the Board meeting the online input as well.

CHILD:

OK, great.

THYGESEN:

The other thing I'd recommend, Jeff, is why don't you read the first three names so that people can line up and then it minimizes the amount of time between comments.

BURMEISTER:

Can I just for a moment translate a little bit of what Member Hilton just said. One of the pieces we as a team got from the September 28 feedback time was that people were confused about why the Board wasn't responding to their questions, and I just wanted to translate a little bit about that. Member Maria Hilton was just saying is that, our role--their role today and our role as a committee is to make sure you have a venue and a voice. If you want to hear the Board's discussion in public about these issues, please come to the November 9 Board meeting. They may have some discussion today, but really today is about hearing from you. Of course, at any time you guys are able to have discussion, but a lot of that discussion will happen at the November 9, and even following November 9, Board meeting. So, just so you know the nature of a community input session versus as regular Board meeting .

CHILD:

OK, great, thank you. So, Terry, per your comment, Nancy Seeger is first. I'm sorry, then I'm just going to give the next two people: Alison Fleming and Charles Preuss .

NANCY SEEGER:

Hi, I'm here just...I wrote out three points. I'm in support of the Art program. I'm a retired Art teacher from the Art Institute in Chicago for many years (40), and I'm now helping Anna Kogan in her wonderful program here as an Art teacher. So, this is what I have written, it is what I think and I hope that people will respect. Our teachers engage students who may not be able to, or have difficulty working at school and most other ways. The Art program builds independent thinking and problem solving. It can truly help kids who feel lost, or who feel alone, or those who are super perceptive and searching. I feel it's a vital to any kind of academic program, particularly in a district like this. My second point is that Art classes foster creativity in a school environment that is structured with learning facts and techniques. This gives kids a place to form an identity that can be different from what they do the rest of the day, or most of the rest of the day, and it gives them needed relief. OK? And my third point is that Art classes give children an opportunity to work with their hands and their minds together to go beyond the digital reality of today. It gives them contact with the physical world. And I think the Art program here is exceptional, and I've also worked at Laurel School and at Encinal School as a volunteer. I've been here five years from Chicago, and hope that these programs remain. Thank you.

ALISON FLEMING:

Hi, my name's Allison Fleming and I have a daughter at Hillview in seventh grade, and I'm here today, of course, to urge to not drop one item from the list, but to balance that, I thought I should also suggest one that I'd been fine with you cutting. That way, not everything's negative. So, when I was trying to look at this list that was out and think what should be cut, I thought: Well, what is important to a good education, how can you really distill it down to a few things? And I came up with a really good education teaches a kid how to think clearly and critically, and how to write very well, and that's really important. So based on that criteria for a good education, I really think it's a mistake to get rid of all our librarians and replace them with teachers' aides. So, I've been working since the first week of school, three afternoons a week, from after lunch to dismissal in the Hillview Library. So I see what the librarians do, and what they do is they actually teach. The other teachers bring classes over to that room, and those librarians are teaching the kids how to work on their research project: How do I find information, where do I go to get good information? And if this is the information I have, is that a credible source or not? So they're teaching them to evaluate things critically. And it may teach the kid an important lesson of what is plagiarism and how do you avoid plagiarism by citing references correctly. And they teach the kids how to construct a bibliography by using MLA guidelines. And so this kids are very well prepared to go on to Hillview, and they get a lot of feedback from kids at Hillview who say: Thank you for teaching me this. And this is something that definitely cannot be done by a teacher's aide. I don't think a teacher's aide has this sort of knowledge. And just in my own experience, my first job out of grad school was to write a white paper on an area that my company was interested in pursuing. If I hadn't had a good education and known how to write well, I would have failed miserably, and that would have been the first impression that anyone had of me, my peers, my boss, my bosses' boss. Also, I'd just like to say these librarians, because they're two librarians that job share, are just dedicated to getting our students to **-BREAK IN AUDIO** - They bring in new books constantly, they try to bring the new books, the books that are "in", books that are hot topics. And that's...my job is I catalog those books and get them out on the shelf within about three days, so they're there for those kids immediately. And kids come in and are constantly asking for these books. And I find that's really important because I've noticed with kids when they get to middle school they often want to stop reading or they just don't read as much because it's

not new anymore. And so whatever we can do to keep our kids reading is important, because reading is how you really learn to write. You have to read good examples, otherwise you don't know what good writing is. So I think that, like I said before, I do not think that teachers' aides would fulfill these tasks very well at all. Now, to my other promise of what I think you could cut: I really think you could cut the 1-on-1 iPad program. It is cool, but it's not really doing anything that you can't do with good old fashioned paper and pencil. And quite frankly, it can be a hectic thing. We get a lot of anxiety in our house, all of a sudden she can't upload to Showbie, it's going to be late, she can't print out something at home because our WiFi's not working, and she needed a color printer and she doesn't have access to a color printer. Also, you have what happened today: "Oh my god, did I put my iPad in my backpack?" Turn around, go back to the house, grab it. So, I think it really is nice, but I can't honestly give you one reason to keep it. What does it do that paper and pencil can't do. Thank you.

CHARLES PREUSS:

Thank you for taking the time to listen to all our feedback, really appreciate it. I'm a long-time resident. I actually attended Laurel first through third grade, and (*inaudible*) though sixth. And now I have two daughters, one in first and one in third in the district. And I just really don't want to see...minimize kind of, sacrifices to education to our children. And obviously we're dealing with a budget crises and and would we do that? I don't want to see programs cut and teachers let go and increases in class size, but again we have to address the budget deficit. And I strongly believe that going forward with the new parcel tax is part of the solution. I think a lot of things were learned from the past one, Simplifying into one I think would be a great idea. Sunsetting, I have a lot...since I grew up in the community, I have a lot of, you know, my parents and friends who don't have current children, that was one of the biggest concerns is no sunset, and so you know, adding that in I think would be very valuable. I also think as far as what Erik was talking about as far as the structure of the parcel tax, timing was one of them. I think the open, either in March or November with the open polls I would recommend. This is news to me so I'm still processing that information. He mentioned, you know, not to...the mail-in was, some members of the community thought it was pulling the wool over their eyes, or whatever. Whether that's true or not, it might be perception, so I think just going with the open poll will help to say, 'Hey, this is our transparency, this is...we want your feedback, we want your input, we want your vote on this'. And then as far as amount, you know, I would suggest around...I don't know, I'm not a numbers guy, but \$400-\$500. I think you do need to balance it, especially in light of everything, with some reductions, try to minimize those, maybe make up the shortfall in extra fund raising. But what can we do to get over that hump until the parcel tax passed because there's the deadline of March 25 with the pink slips, as I'm understanding it. And this is a perfect time, this is why we have the reserves. I understand from the graphs we don't want to indefinitely pull in reserves because there's no indefinite reserve. But as my understanding is, we do have a 17%--and I could be wrong on the numbers--but 17% reserve. My understanding is that the recommendation of the State is a 6% maximum, so we have way above the kind of maximum reserve, and a 3% minimum. So I see this as just temporarily, to protect and reduce the amount of budget cuts until we can pass the parcel tax, draw upon those reserves and then as the economy and as things get better we can hopefully move to replenish it. But this why the reserve is there, to hopefully not sacrifice, you know, to minimize the sacrifice on education for our children. And, checking notes, thanks for your patience. And then, you know, as part of that, I think one thing also that's very helpful, that would be kind of a champion to the community, educating the community, whether it's a PR campaign, outreaching the local media to get to the community, understanding that this is what we're doing as far as the parcel tax, these are the reasons in detail on why we need it, but then also showing: Hey we're also looking at these reductions. So the community sees that we're working toward that so community members maybe not with children will have more buy-in. So, anyway, thank you for your time.

CHILD:

OK, Peter Carpenter, Aimee Mathenia, I'm sorry, I missed one. Peter Carpenter, Jen Wolosin and Aimee Mathenia.

PETER CARPENTER:

Peter Carpenter. First I'd like to thank the Board and staff for the time and effort that they've put into this outreach program. I think it's an incredibly important thing to do. Second, I've spent a lot of time in the last six months looking over the history of the district, and the decision of the voters to put in place three permanent parcel taxes. And I think that was a very strong commitment by the community to help the school district to establish a much higher standard of performance. And I think a lot of credit goes to both the Board and the staff for having responded to that by achieving the level of performance that you have. I'll probably surprise many of you by my next recommendation. My next recommendation is that you go out for a parcel tax for March of next year, that you do it at the \$515 level, and the purpose of that is to say to the community: We have established a level of performance which we think is appropriate for our community, and we would like your endorsement for us to continue to do that. Now, to be successful, I think that parcel tax vote would require that there be a major effort on the part of the entire school community--the Board, the staff, and the parents, to educate the rest of the community as to the importance of this parcel tax, the fact that it is...the revenue facts and the expenditure facts have to be much more fully disclosed and discussed, and there also has to be a concomitant commitment on the part of the Board to fiscal discipline. That this is simply not going to be the next shoe of 100 other shoes. And I would see that parcel tax probably sunseting in something like six years, so that the Board would have an implicit commitment that in that six year period there would be no additional parcel taxes, and at the end of that six year period the Board would come to the community for reaffirmation that where you are now, where you will be at that point is in fact where the broader community wants to be. I think it can be done, but it has to be a community-wide effort, and it has to be an effort by the people in this room who are very close to the school community, reaching out to the people who are not in this room, and convincing them that that's an investment we ought to make.

AIMEE MATHENIA:

Hi there, my name is Aimee Mathenia. I'm very proud to be a teacher here at Hillview. I've been in the district for 15 years. For many of those years I taught sixth grade core, and for the past two years I've been teacher librarian at Hillview. So today, I'm speaking to the proposed modification of library programs to be staffed by library aides rather than being staffed by teacher librarians. I want to address what this modification means to both students and teachers, particularly at Hillview. As a teacher librarian one of my jobs is, of course, to check in books, check out books and shelve books, but in reality that is a small fraction of my job. Most of my time spent as teacher librarian at Hillview is teaching information literacy and research skills to all of the sixth, seventh and eighth graders. In fact, nearly 75% of our time throughout the year is teaching nearly 1,000 students at Hillview. With the proposed modification of replacing teacher librarians with library aides, this will in effect eliminating the valuable research program we have built at Hillview. As teacher librarians, Tracy Piombo and I have developed a very strong research program. We work with sixth grade, seventh grade and eighth grade in Social Studies, Science and English Language Arts classes. We teach them lessons here in the library, and we also teach them virtually using screencasts and Project Pathfinders that they access at home. We're one of the few teachers at Hillview and maybe one of the only teachers at Hillview that sees all 1,000 students or nearly 1,000 students as they progress year after year at Hillview. When I was teaching sixth grade core, I highly valued this research program. In fact, teaching research was one of the strongest units and most important units that we taught the students. My students learned the importance of

note taking, organizational skills, they learned how to cite sources, avoid plagiarism. When my students went on to seventh grade, they built on those skills with research units in Social Studies and Science. And then again, when the students went on to eighth grade they continued to build on that foundation. While the students are at Hillview, they learn skills they'll use at middle school, and at high school, and at college. We often hear from students who have graduated that say how the programs that we teach them, the lessons that we teach them here, help them at M-A. My own children go to Encinal, and as an aside I do want to thank the Board and the community for allowing teachers' children to attend Menlo Park schools. I've worked really hard here at Hillview for 15 years and I'm so excited my son will be able to reap the benefits of my hard work, and this makes me work even harder. My older son is in fifth grade, and as a parent I see that he absolutely needs these research skills and this strong foundation in research. Since Tracy and I work with all three grade levels and with several different subjects, we're able to design a strong, systematic approach that builds on skills from one research project to the next. To staff the library with librarian aides instead of teacher librarians would eliminate this strong program and solid foundation we built here that prepares all of our Hillview students for high school and college. Thank you for your time and encouraging and listening to our concerns.

JEN WOLOSIN:

Good morning everyone, my name is Jen Wolosin and I am a Laurel parent. I have a first grader and a third grader. Thank you for holding these important meetings. I've spoken previously about my son, a first grader who has some special needs, and I wanted to just let you all know that before we came to Laurel, we actually explored a lot of private schools for my son. We were very worried that the class size and that the environment of public school might not meet his needs, and that he might need more one-on-one attention. We were willing to pay the extra money for this kind of fancy education to give our son what we needed. Sadly, but actually fortunately, he was rejected from all of the schools we applied to, but it has turned out to be one of the greatest blessings for our child. Laurel and Menlo Park City School District has given him such a phenomenal education. He is mainstreamed, he does not have an IUP or a 504, and I attribute his success to the phenomenal teachers at Laurel School. Ashley Reagan was his kindergarten teacher and he now has Nari Yee in first grade. And because of the small class sizes and the excellent teaching staff that Linda Creighton has hired at Laurel School, my son is thriving in public school, something that having looked back on if we had sent him to private school, I don't if that would have been the case. Public school has to take everybody and private school doesn't, so when we look at, kind of choices that some families have to make where we don't have a choice, it's amazing that our child can come to our public school. And because my son is in a small class size with phenomenal teachers, I don't feel like he's taking away the experience from other children, because every child in the classroom is getting what he needs. So please, when you look at potentially making any cuts, please take care of our teachers. Keep the classroom education top priority. And I do encourage you to go out for a new parcel tax, particularly in March, again, especially thinking about our teachers and any notice that they would need to be given. And we would not want to lose any of these phenomenal teachers that we have. Our family will continue to give to the Education Foundation, and continue to support our school in any way that we can, volunteering and giving our time and energy, and we appreciate all the the community support and what the school has given our child. Another line item that I just want to comment on really fast is the busing program, the residential busing program. I encourage you...while I think classroom education is the #1 thing that's "don't mess with please", the residential busing program is so important. Traffic and safety on our streets is such a concern to me, and when I think about a bus with 60 or 80 kids, or whatever, are crammed on those buses, those are 60 or 80 fewer cars that are on the roads getting to our schools. So that's just something to consider. Thank you.

CHILD:

Thank you. OK, the next three are Theanne Thomson, Scott Saywell and Steve Shaw.

THEANNE THOMSON:

Hi, so my name's Theanne Thomson, and I have three children who have been so fortunate to go through this district. I have a sixth grader at Hillview, a senior in high school, and a sophomore in college. And I first want to thank the Board and the committees for the incredible work they've done today in outlining very thoughtfully all the options that we have before us in terms of how to maintain our educational programs going forward. I want to comment on three things. One is community, two is our children, and third is our teachers. First of all, we are a community that values education. That's why I moved here 20 years ago, it's why I became involved in the Menlo Park Atherton Education Foundation as co-President. I've been involved in the fund raising for these public schools, and the educational program and legacy that we have here is tremendous. You can see by the numbers we do more with less than our neighboring districts, our teachers are the hallmark of our program, and our children are the beneficiaries of that. So I would encourage you as you look at options to be aggressive and preserve the educational program that we have here in place. We have increasing enrollment and we need to maintain the level of funding that is needed to maintain the educational programs we have. And so, I recommend that we go forth with the March parcel tax at the \$515 level. I would encourage you to consider sunseting as part of the partnership with our community because there was resistance to lack of sunseting last time, but I would like you to consider that as an option, and just lay that out. Because our partnership with the community is a very important one. And then, regarding our teachers. Our teachers need the specialists, they need the professional development, they need that collaborative timing time that the specialists afford them to do. So, please, do everything you can to preserve our teachers, not lay them off. Let's not move them to other districts because we need them here, teaching our children day-in and day-out. We need to preserve the classroom experience that our children have every day. And I just want to thank you all for your time.

CHILD:

I'm going to move one person in, Anna Kogan, who's one of our teachers who's on break, so you can talk quickly, and then you can back to class.

ANNA KOGAN:

Yeah, thank you, actually we have break right now. Thank you so much for letting me come, I can't come tomorrow night. I'm the Art teacher here at Hillview, and I wanted to comment on cutting back on the electives if the parcel tax doesn't pass. Just to tell you a little bit about myself, I have a Masters in Art and Art Education, a Bachelors in Fine Arts, and National Board Certification. And I've taught at some of the best private schools down East Coast, Midwest and California. And I feel like Hillview is the best school I've ever taught at because the kids get such a well rounded education and it's so innovative. And they really have a chance to find themselves in the electives and get involved. And I feel like Menlo Park School District provides students with one of the best educational experiences in California, and arguably in the country. As part of an outstanding education, I feel like the Arts are essential. Indeed, school districts that we compare ourselves with all have a strong Art program. Palo Alto, Las Lomitas School District, Woodside...I'm sure you know. I also feel like Art is not a frivolous subject. I take it seriously as a teacher at the middle school level and strive to challenge my students with projects that some might find in a high school or college level Art class. I try to design projects that resonate with my students at this time in their lives. They are working hard in Art class, but in a very different way than their other classes. They are moving around a studio, using a variety of medium, dealing with setbacks, thinking about balance and physics, and trying to say something through their creations. And for some students, this is where they feel free to express themselves. And some of them have told me that this is

the only place where they really feel comfortable in school. They wouldn't know what to do if they didn't have Art. I know that most of my students will not go on to be artists, but I think a lot may go on to be innovative thinkers, designers, engineers, people who will use creativity on a daily basis. And they will exercise and practice their creativity in my classes, a skill that they may not find in other courses. Thanks very much.

SCOTT SAYWELL:

Hi, I'm Scott Saywell. I have a kindergartner and a second grader at Laurel. I'm President of the Site Council at Laurel, and I also was born and raised here in Menlo Park, in fact I went to school with Charles, wherever he went. So the first thing...and I think Jennifer made this comment at the meeting last time, I think it's important to keep in mind that by definition as a community funded district, the community determines the size of our budget, and that we need to work within that budget that they decide. But they can decide it can be as big as they want it to be. Second, because I'm also obviously a candidate for the School Board, I'm out there talking with a lot of people, and by now I've actually talked to 100s of people and all different types of people, and I think my (*inaudible*) is starting to get representative. And universally, what I would say is confirmed to me is that our community really values and supports our education system and I do think they will step up and provide the budget that's required for schools. I would thank Erik for reiterating the definitions of a community funded district. I still think that's something we need to continue to emphasize because there is still a lack of awareness around that, even though I know you've been trying to communicate that. There's also, I think, a lack of awareness about the pension increases, and I think that's a very important component of our structural deficit. And, you know, let's not just talk about growing enrollment, let's really emphasize...and, you know, the expiring of the parcel tax, I think you really need to emphasize the impact of the pension. With regards to structure, I do think an interesting compromise between evergreen and a sunset of six years might be a longer term range, perhaps 10-12 years. That provides you a little bit of longer runway before you have to go back and raise more money. And then second of all, with regards to the size, I certainly would support the \$515, but I think it's important to communicate how long would you expect that level of a parcel tax to fund us, and when would you think you would need to expect to come back and ask for more as the pension continues to increase, as enrollment may or may not increase. We do know the expense structure won't stay constant for a long time, and so how long would you expect it would be until you'd need to come back and ask for a bigger budget from the community? Thank you.

STEVE SHAW:

Parent of a seventh grader here at Hillview and a sophomore at M-A. I just wanted to start, likewise, with a thank you, and I'm hoping this is the last time I am publicly before Maria and Jeff, and I wanted to kind of single you guys out since you're retiring. Thank you for your service. I know both of you have done multiple terms here, and I can't imagine how much work it is, so thanks for helping out our community. I'm going to start with saying there's...I came to the Valley over 30 years ago. I worked in the semi conductor industry for a number of years, I went through a number of companies that went up and down. Two words I hate: layoff, pink slips. I think they have a really negative impact to your employee community as a whole. I think to the degree that you can avoid those words, you'll be better served. I realize that you have to communicate openly and honestly with your staff, and you have to make them aware of the fact that reductions are possible, but as much as possible I think you need to tone that message down. In 2010, my older daughter was in third grade, learning under a teacher who was brand new to the district, and I remember she was one of those who received a pink slip that year. She happens to be the Assistant Principal at Oak Knoll right now. I think we're pretty happy that we kept her. I don't think she ever got so nervous that she started looking outside, but she certainly appreciated when parents would come to her and say: Stay calm, we're going to get through this. So to that end, I

agree with Scott and some other people who have spoken here, that I think you do need to go out for a parcel tax. I think the community will support it. I think, you know, you encountered a situation last time where there was maybe not the best communication done with respect...there certainly was a lot of confusion, but minimally replacing the expiring parcel tax seems to be a no-brainer. I'm surprised by how much support you're hearing already for going out for a much fuller parcel tax at \$515. I don't know what the magic number is, I'm not that smart, but it seems obvious to me that the community will support at a minimum a renewal, and I think Erik articulated all the reasons why you go in March. And it goes back to that message I started with, trying to avoid the mention of layoffs or the actual providing of pink slips to any teachers. I do think that...I again support the idea of sunseting that parcel tax. I was talking with a realtor a couple of months ago, maybe it was longer than that, shortly after the tax...those two measures went down, and I was surprised to hear him tell me that sort of unilaterally the realtor community doesn't really favor parcel taxes that are non sunsetted. I was like: why? He said, well you know you're creating this tax structure in perpetuity. It seemed like a relatively small amount relative to tens of thousands of dollars people pay in their ad valorem tax, but it was still out there and it was a piece of the equation that I had never really considered. I do think you'll get more community support in a sunsetted measure. Scott makes a great point, though, it's a longer term solution that you need to work towards. The other thing that Scott brought up, I don't think the community understands pension issues. I think City deals with this, right? I think any public agency is dealing right now with the expanded cost of pension benefits to their employees, and I think that needs to be better communicated, and I think it needs to be better understood in terms of what's going to happen long term, right? It's gotten bad. I'm pretty convinced it's going to get worse, so understanding what that profile in terms of your percentage of pension cost, how that grows over time, and what that's going to do to impact the financial structure of district I think is important as well. That's about it. Thanks.

CHILD:

OK, then the next three are Laura Lane, Kelly Morehead, and Angela Evans.

LAURA LANE:

Hi, I'm Laura Lane and I have a daughter at Oak Knoll, and first of all I wanted to say how wonderful it really is. I'm really impressed, and I think one of the things I'm really impressed with is it's just a safe place for kids, a safe place to be themselves, a safe place to express themselves, and therefore a safe place to learn, and therefore a very nurturing environment, a way to build confidence, self esteem, and to put themselves out there. And therefore that's what we want our kids to feel, so that they can learn all the facts and figures and be creative, and hey, just be successful in the world. And so, what I think about the cuts, I hate the thought of cutting anything, but I hate the thought of cutting to the teachers, and they're the most important players in this whole system. They're the ones who our kids see every day, and greet them and encourage them. And for our experience, it's really just been just the key factor in our daughter's happiness and excitement when she goes to school every day. We had Mrs. Andolina last year in kindergarten, and wow, what a godsend, she's just brilliant as a teacher, and she's doing what she should be doing in life. And so the teachers at Oak Knoll in the district are so dedicated to the profession, and I know that if we cut their compensation, I don't think it would impact the way they perform in the classroom, but I think we need to tell them that they are the more important role, they're the most important player, and to cut their compensation or benefits would not be sending that message. Also...I'm just kind of mingling questions in my mind. Well, first of all, also I think as far as the parcel tax vote the last time, I was concerned that there was not a sunset clause, and I think a sunset clause is really key to a check-and-balance in the system, our way of saying...kind of like we vote for the presidency ever four years, did we like what you did or did we not? So I think that's really crucial, essential. And so two lingering questions in my mind because I'm not an expert and knowledgeable in

this whole field is, first of all, we're preparing to donate to the Foundation before November, and in my mind the marketing for that or promise is that the Foundation pays for specialists, and I just don't know how it all adds up and how the numbers are crunched. And also, my second other kind of pondering is, does increased number of residents...increased number of students, that kind of come with increased revenue from more property tax? Again, I don't know how that works out. So thank you very much.

BURMEISTER:

President Child, as the next speaker is coming up, I'd just like to address for the audience, thank you so much for those questions. Our team is actually putting together a Frequently Asked Questions list that's going to be posted on the website by the end of this week, and those two questions are ones that are going to be addressed on the FAQ, so we recognize that those are two really important questions for the community, and we have a three hour meeting tomorrow to finalize the FAQs and get those up on the web for you.

KELLY MOREHEAD:

Hi, first of all, thank you much for all of your work, and I especially want to thank you for offering the multiple ways for input, having two meetings and the online questionnaire. I think the community really appreciates that, as not everyone can come at the same time. My name's Kelly Morehead. I've lived in Menlo Park for 20 years. We actually moved here specifically because of the quality of the schools. My oldest is a seventh grader here at Hillview. I have three boys in the district. We supported the schools long before we even had children, and we're going to continue to do so. I don't think that you're really hearing anything here today that you don't already believe. I think you know the value of these programs. I think you know the value of Arts and Music and Drama to a well rounded, robust education. I think you've all read the research about the brain development that Art and Music provide, and how it enhances traditional education. So, I think you're faced with a budget deficit. It's not a question that do we want to cut these things, we don't want to cut them, but we don't have the money to pay for them. So I think we have no solution other than to either make these cuts or raise revenue. The only ways that we have to raise revenue in a public school district is through a parcel tax. So I definitely think you need to go out for another one. I think that last year's--I'm not sure why this was, but I think it came as a surprise to the community. I don't think people saw it coming, and all of a sudden...we thought that we had all these amazing programs, and our district was so awesome, and then all of a sudden we're being asked for more money, and it was a quick turnaround and we just didn't...I don't think people understood that it was such a need. I think if you are going to go out for another one, you need to do it in March. This issue is current and the community is engaged around it, and you're going to get the best, I think, turnout and response if you go out now while it's fresh in people's mind. I think that you should go out and ask for the full amount. I think it's important, too, to make sure that people realize that while we're talking about \$500, it's actually \$300 more than what we're paying right now, because what we're asking for is that C would continue and then we need 300 additional dollars. That, by my math, is about 86 cents a day, so if everybody wanted to reduce their coffee to a Tall instead of a Grande, I think we can easily cover that. And the other note that I wanted to make is about the numbers and the ratio of students-to-teacher. I think it's important to realize those are averages, so it's very likely that actually class size, that some of them will have 30+ students in them. So, it's important to keep that in mind. Thank you.

ANGELA EVANS:

Thank you, my name is Angela Evans and I am a mom of very happy two kids Oak Knoll, and we absolutely love the school, its administration, its programs, its teachers. The proposed cuts that we've seen on the district website and here are heartbreaking and I think incongruent what many of us and

certainly I view as the importance of a well balanced education. One that not just teaches the basics like Reading, Writing and Math, but one that offers a robust Art and Music program and a diversity of electives at the junior high level. I do strongly support a new effort to renew and increase the parcel tax so that we do not have to make these cuts, period. That would be the \$515 level. I think that we can do this by March 2017. Yes, it's quick, but yes we are a community...many of us are business leaders, non-profit leaders, community leaders, we can think and perform strategically in a very fast matter, so let's get this done. In the meantime, please do not propose cuts to the Art and Music programs including the one to replace the credentialed Art teachers with aides, and the one to reduce fourth and fifth grader music time by 50%. The arts, as we've heard from other people, I do not believe are disposable. Not in an age when we want to value and encourage creativity, innovation, and diversity of thinking and expression. Many of us are dismayed about the current national political discourse that seems to suggest in our country widespread Islamophobia, homophobia and xenophobia. Robust Art and Music programs encourage children to think outside the mainstream, to better understand other cultures, to express themselves in ways that may not have been previously accessible to them. Art also encourages innovation. When kids are encouraged to express themselves and take risks in creating art, they develop a sense of innovation that will be important later on in their adult lives. We need an innovative next generation to tackle the urgent issues we are facing as a human society. Moreover, studies show that young people who participate regularly in the arts are far more likely to be recognized for academic achievement than those who do not participate. So let's renew and increase our parcel taxes. Let's get this done. I personally will volunteer my time to help. And please do not touch Art and Music. Thank you so much. I do believe that these are important building blocks of a creative, innovative, and diverse next generation. Thank you.

CHILD:

OK, the next three: Karen Dearing, Hillary Easom and Joan Smithline. I'm sorry, Joan was already (*inaudible*). Excuse me.

KAREN DEARING:

I'm Karen Dearing. Personally (*inaudible*) public speaking, and I find myself up here a lot. I'm I think reiterating points that were said. I absolutely think you need to go out for another parcel tax. I think it needs to be in March, exactly as Kelly said, while you have all of this community engagement and momentum behind you. I do think it needs to be for the full amount with a caveat. I think part of what the community was communicating last year with the failures of A and C was a desperate need, as I said in my comments last Tuesday, for much more visibility into the district budget and what is at stake. And I think the (*inaudible*) from that is that whether you...whatever amount you go for in terms of a parcel tax, don't just go for what you see you need based on what you have now. The community is asking for a very thoughtful consideration of the programs at play. I understand there is a process taking place where administrators and school personnel are helping prioritize the list of budget cuts. Take that list to heart, let that guide what amount you're asking for in the parcel tax. Don't just take \$515 as lock-stock-and barrel. Please make it clear to the public that the number you're asking for has been very carefully considered. OK, we know we do a lot with a little relative to our competing districts, but I think that point's really important. I'm going to reiterate two points I made the other night. One is that the detail about what we stand to lose has to be part of the communications in the campaign for a new parcel tax. In keeping with Peter's comments about...I was surprised by your comments and glad to hear them, but I was in agreement with you last spring when I was looking for more information than was being offered. And I'm somebody who implicitly supports the school district. You don't need to convince me, but convincing sure can help a lot of other people in our community. And the third case, it's got to be a part of the campaign, and I said this last week as well, is some sense of the history of where our school

district has come. Terry gave a really nice, succinct sort of summary of, you know, where our school district has come from and how it has grown and improved because of the parcel taxes, and because of the community funding and involvement that we have. And the current generation of school families-- they don't have that history anymore, and we're kind of in a new generation of school families. So unless there's people like Theanne and others who have been around in the community for a long time, we don't have that perspective on what has been at stake in the past, and that's important. So I would definitely encourage you guys to make sure you communicate on those things. You mentioned a list of FAQs. A couple of thoughts of things...questions I had. So, you mentioned, Erik, that the percentage of property taxes that we get as a district is less than comparable school districts. I'd want to know more about that as somebody who really wants to understand the finances of our district, like how does that happen and exactly what does that look like? You also mentioned, and I've seen it in a couple of the presentations, that we can't maintain current funding past 2018-19, and yet you're saying we've got to go out for March, which I agree with because we'll have to issue pink slips in March. There's a timing gap there that I'm sure if really understood the nitty gritty I would understand, but that's not making sense to me and may raise questions with other people in the community. Oh, and I would also say, I was having the same thought as Scott about sunseting. Is there an opportunity...yes, I think it should be a sunseting, I think that an unlimited and lifetime property tax turns people off, but can you make it 10 or 12 years instead of 6, again with the justification as to why. I think that's all. Thanks, guys.

HILLARY EASOM

Good morning. Like Karen, a reluctant public speaker, but I feel very passionately about this, and I think that our voices really need to be heard. I think that the fairly low turnout this morning is a little bit disheartening. I'm afraid that there are a lot of people who are not really educating themselves about what's going on, and we really need to work together to really let the community know what the repercussions are of our failed measures. I grew up Chicago. I have a Masters in Education and I used to teach in public school in Seattle and also in Indianapolis, and I can say without a doubt that our schools are exemplary as they currently stand. I'm happy to see that our administrators are here. I have two kids at Encinal in the Spanish Immersion program in fourth and fifth grade, and the work that our administrators and our teachers do for our children is what makes our community so strong. We really, really appreciate you. It's devastating to think that our teaching staff and compensation may be cut. The proposed changes to make up for budget deficit are devastating. What would be lost is exactly what makes our schools so strong, and better than those in neighboring communities. If we're unable to compensate our teachers and administrators with a just salary and benefits, I fear that we will fail to continue attracting top notch educators to our community. Drawing teachers to this district where the cost of living is already at a premium is, I'm sure, difficult enough without cutting back on the package that is offered. Compensation needs to be commensurate with experience and quality of work. As a former teacher, I understand the impact first-hand of increasing class sizes. Two to three extra children in the class, compounded by a reduction in aides, negatively impacts our children's educational experience exponentially, both at the kindergarten level but also in middle school across the board. Countless studies have demonstrated a correlation between aptitude to music, and music and achievement in mathematics. Cutting Music has residual effects in other areas of education. Art, creativity, innovative thinking, I could go on and on, and unfortunately I'm preaching to the choir because we're all here because we understand the severity of these potential cuts and we know something has to change. Sadly, those who need to hear our arguments are probably not here today. What can be done to open peoples' eyes and help them to understand the detrimental effects of not passing these measures? Everyone in the community is affected and we need to wake up. The quality of our schools is much of what makes this a desirable community to live in. This is much of the reason that our schools are still crowded. Families want to live here to take advantage of our award winning schools.

In fact, we moved away from Menlo Park for a couple of years and decided to come back, and make sacrifices to come back here, before our kids started school because we couldn't find anything comparable. The potential damage to our district has repercussions throughout the community. Aside from the obvious detriment to our youth, the value of property inevitably will be affected as the district loses some of its desirability potentially. A parcel tax is truly a minimal investment to maintain the quality of our community--truly the cost of a couple pairs of jeans or a few dinners out. Most of the concerns that I read during the last campaign were based on the perpetuity of the tax, not the tax itself; but I agree that sunseting would be a really wonderful option. A finite period of time, it seems, is more palatable to voters, particularly those who don't have children in the public schools. So while this presents some concerns for the long term future, we can cross that bridge when we come to it. I believe that providing an end date, at least for now, would make a huge difference in voting outcome. I also believe a new measure should be placed on the ballot in March--sooner rather than later. We need to retain our teachers, we need to move forward quickly for the sake of our kids and for the sake of our community. So let us know what we can do to help make this happen. Thank you.

CHILD:

The next three are: Hongran Stone, Thomas Weiser and Jeffrey Mead.

HONGRAN STONE:

My name is Hongran Stone. I want to introduce myself here. I'm actually a long time resident in Menlo Park. One is in second grade in Oak Knoll, and the other one is in sixth grade at Oak Knoll. A little bit special background to me because we went back to China in 2012. If you look at my face you know I'm originally from China. We went back there at 2012 and came back August 25 this year. It's shocking, the richest district almost in California has no money to pay their teachers. I just can't believe it. So, and I asked my neighbor. She has a boy in sixth grade in Oak Knoll also. I said, 'Do you know we have shortage in budget and there's a parcel tax that you didn't pass?' and she said, 'I never heard of that'. So what it said is, what a poor communication we have, so we fail on ourselves. So I don't know the great details on what is going on in the last four years, but to me, my first reaction just as a Menlo Park citizen, how can we not have enough money? We are highly taxed area, and we have so many houses. What's the price people think is rise...20% a year? And the tax should rise at the same proportion, right? The reason why we have more enrollment for students is because there's a lot of new people (*inaudible*). So, it just doesn't add up in my mind. This is why I so want to be involved to understand more. I'm trying to read a lot of materials I can to understand, and definitely we need money. I think everybody in Menlo Park would (*inaudible*) and champion for that. But under one condition, it has to be physical transparency. How does money get spent? That's the first question I have in my mind. We pay so...all kind of tax, how can we don't have money? So, that's my first question. I think to a lot of resident who lives here, especially they don't have kids go to school, this must be their first question to ask themselves, why we don't have money. How this money gets spent, right? So physical transparency is definitely, absolutely key to make clear how we year by year increase the revenue, because the tax is increasing, right? The house...my neighbors...two neighbors retired and moved out. One neighbor paid \$38,000 to buy their house. The other one paid \$54,000 to buy their house. They're moving out, and replaced by \$3 million people. Their tax increased how many times? And those two people who retired don't even have kids, and the new people who come in pay a lot tax, has kids. So, how this...how the (*inaudible*) works, is really I don't understand it. Because I'm a scientist, I have to make left hand side equals right hand in order for me to make an action, so it's just my simple brain. So I want to see the detailed spending over a year, what's the tax revenue, and what is the spending, why there's a gap. Let's say we do we have gap. I'm pretty sure everybody already do their detail math and left doesn't equal right, so then how can we open the resource to get more revenue in. Of course a parcel tax is the easiest way to go, but I think

it's hard to get through. So how are we going to get there? Do we require 2/3 approval? And what's the school...see, this is a very narrow audience, right? We talk about the (*inaudible*) details of why we can't have the deficit, why we need the Art teacher, why we need...we all understand, everybody who sit here already understand that. But the the big community don't. They don't care. They care about their own wallet, the value to them. I think we go with a parcel tax, we need to address that. What's the language people can understand? We're going to lose a Menlo Park Art teacher. So? Right? People don't care, it doesn't catch their heart. Like, for example, what's the impact to their property value, right? Why this is now going to be a good area people want to stay. Those kind of language, majority of people understand, so we need to maybe form even two tiers of marketing campaign. One is to work the community people, one is to work the teacher. I can't believe my neighbor who has a kid in Oak Knoll didn't know we have a budget deficit in the school district. It's just last week why I hear all this meetings, I (*inaudible*) her. She said, Really? And the next question I want to understand more, I haven't hear much, is what this budget deficit has any impact to Las Lomitas, right? It's our neighbor. We have the same tax, and do they also have shortage? If they don't, how they deal with that? Why they don't, why we do, right? And also the other comparison is to Palo Alto. Does their neighbor pay more tax? How they balance their budget? So all these questions people ask, are these...when they say yes or no, they think about it, right? So why our area ask for more money, for more parcel tax? Is that because we spend too much money? (*Child: If you could wrap-up...*) Yeah, and the other thing I think we want to cut, just my personal experience about the ELL program. We have English Level...English Language Level, I don't think it's very well thought, that project. I give you a personal experience. My son, who is in fifth grade, and my husband, when he fill out the information, he mistakenly...he truthfully fill out he also speaks Mandarin. That's like a bomb in the application. Now he got put in the ELL program although he was tested at the beginning of the ELL program as Advanced--5 in every single area, but he has to stay there for a year until next May he get test out. To me, I wouldn't mind he's there, but I talked to the teacher and I said this is a waste of a resource. He didn't need help in English, so we need to re-evaluate (*Child: You need to wrap up.*) OK, thank you, sorry.

CHILD:

Thank you, sorry to cut you off but it's supposed to be three minutes. And I apologize, we've been a little loose on the three minutes, but please, I'll give you a little sign and if you would, I'd appreciate it. Thomas Weiser, then Jeffrey Mead, and Marijane Leonard. So go ahead, Thomas.

THOMAS WEISER:

Thank you so much to address you all. I have two children at Oak Knoll, in first grade and third grade. I want to reiterate my support of the librarians. My wife volunteered in the library at Oak Knoll several times a week with Ms. Bennion . It is an unbelievable program and I would be, it would be absolutely distressing to see that cut, so I want to reiterate that. I do think with every challenge comes opportunities. I certainly think there are probably opportunities with our own budget to make some...to streamline. I have deep concerns about the class size. When my son started in the first grade he was in a class of 18. My daughter's now in first grade and she's in a class of 24-25, that's the average, they've already cut class size, one whole class, out of first grade. I think that's deeply concerning and to see that continue and get worse would be a travesty. I would absolutely support a measure, a parcel tax in March. I think we have the ability to raise that kind of awareness. I do express concerns about the ability of us to understand where resistance will come from. This is a fairly friendly audience, and so I would want to know why people would be against it and how we can communicate the message of its importance. And I do think there is a vicious of decline, as schools start cutting programs people are going to start either moving out of the area or moving their children into private school. Plenty of people can afford private school but chose to go to public school because there's a value to the community.

And so I would urge, as part of your promotion of a parcel tax, that this is actually a huge value to the community and it's, as we know, it's a fairly wealthy community, but that's...it gives a huge value not just to our community, but even to neighboring communities that we participate in. So I want to thank you very much for that opportunity.

JEFFREY MEAD:

Uh, good morning, my name is Jeff Mead, I teach eighth grade English here at the Hillview Middle School and I just had a couple thoughts. One of them is for the the Communication Committee. I keep hearing talk about the pension system and the increased contributions that the district has to make to the pension system. When I talk to people about teacher pensions and what happens when we retire, I'm surprised that how many people don't know that we don't collect Social Security, and also there's an impression out there that we don't contribute to that pension. So if your committee is going to talk about pensions, I would be happy to tell you what it looks like from our side making contributions also. In addition, I just want to talk from kind of an emotional standpoint here for a bit. I'm one of a huge group--I think about 11 in the district-- Burmeister hired a couple years ago, and we kind refer to ourselves as the "Newbies", we're kind of a community and we like to do things together to kind of strengthen the Hillview spirit. And the idea of pink slips definitely has been around, kind of feels grim for our group of people. One thing that I want to assure you, and this is also for the community, that if you go out for a parcel tax, I will personally encourage and help whoever does that, encourage teachers to participate in that process in whatever that may be. I don't think that you guys should have to be the only ones to go out there and do it. I think this is going to benefit us and save our jobs, that we should be out there too, so I will definitely help that. I also appreciate, Mr. Child, earlier you put something up about the tone of the conversation. When you go the *The Almanac* and we read the daily posts, it really feels all of a sudden that the teachers have become the culprits here in this. I think that has actually, especially after the *Daily Post* article, surprised a lot of the staff that like all of a sudden we're culprits. I don't know how to remedy that, I don't know why that is. We love our jobs, we work really, really hard for the kids here, we show up a lot. But I just appreciate your attention to keeping it positive. Thank you very much.

MARIJANE LEONARD:

Hi, I'm Marijane Leonard. I have two students at Encinal. I'm also the President of the Encinal Site Council. I want to encourage you to go for a parcel tax in March and at the \$515 level, and I want you to include a sunset. And I want to talk to the audience as well as Board about communication. I want us to keep communicating, and I want all of us to put all of our energy about worrying about these cuts into supporting a parcel tax. So, we need to take all of this energy to explain to our neighbors and community at large why we need to pass this parcel tax, and we need to arm ourselves with the information to answer their questions, communicate clearly, use plain language, give context, keep it simple, and I believe we can get this done.

CHILD:

OK, the next three are Lora Christen, Anna McDevitt, and Jennifer Bestor.

LORA CHRISTEN:

Hi, I'm Lora Christen. I grew up in Menlo Park and I have three children, two in high school and one here at Hillview. I was involved in Measure C and tried to do what I could at that time to help pass that, and believed very strongly in it. I'm really hearing the support of the community for keeping our teachers, our class sizes, and all of our specialists, and how important it is to our community. I noticed that our largest proposed cuts are in the area of teacher reductions when you look at the proposed cuts. I'm

wondering what areas of reductions have been considered, and what other scenarios, and how we came to those decisions. And I think it would be helpful in talking to people about the new parcel tax if that's decided, so that we can kind of help to give information and be transparent about that. I think it's also important to communicate how we're going to work towards being fiscally responsible once we do have this new parcel tax. And I've been hearing from everyone how important it is that we're more transparent about our budget and how things work, and I think that would be really helpful. I do support having a parcel tax and having it be in March. I agree that we need to be really thoughtful about the amount requested and communicate why we came to that number. I'm not sure exactly what that number is. It sounds like going for the full amount makes the most sense. But just really coming to the table with why we came to that, and also having that (*inaudible*). Thank you.

ANNA MCDEVITT:

Hi, I'm Anna McDevitt and I'm a parent of a first grader at Oak Knoll who's having a fantastic experience. And I also have three year old and a one year old, so I'm looking forward to them going to Oak Knoll as well. I'll keep this quick because I have to get there for pick-up. I absolutely agree that we need to do another parcel tax. We need to keep this momentum going and do it in March, but I'm very, very concerned about the \$515 number. I was here for the September 27 meeting and I heard a lot of criticism, almost hostility, that really surprised me from members of the community, but we have to be aware that there are members of the community who are voting who don't have kids in the schools, and they don't treasure them as much as we do. So, we need a parcel tax--that number might be bigger than the \$200 renewal, but I don't think it's the \$500, and I think we have to come up with other creative ways to raise the revenue. I think as we do all the marketing that we're talking about doing, which is obviously key, we need to market to our parents. So maybe we're going to tell our community: Listen, we need your \$300, and parents, you're the benefitting, you need to do \$2,500 instead of \$1,500 to the Foundation. And then maybe there are other creative ways that we can raise revenue, I don't know. But the bus thing...there are school districts that charge for buses. It's obviously not going to dent the deficit, but what other ideas do we have to raise money, because in my opinion we cannot afford to have the next parcel tax fail, and if the \$515 isn't going to get us there, then it had to be lower.

JENNIFER BESTOR:

Hello, I'm Jennifer Bestor, I do not have a child in the district. I do have past gratitude for educating my son a few years ago and a deep interest in the economic and the political health, frankly, of this community. You may recall, a few days ago I suggested a \$340 parcel tax. That's the number that I came up because it's less than the Sewer charge. I'm well aware that that would in fact mean that the children of the district would be swallowing the cost of increased pensions, and additionally they would be having to deal with larger class sizes and fewer options, fewer ways of learning. It's probably no surprise that my number disagreed with Peter Carpenter's, for those of you who follow *The Almanac*. The most significant reason I could give for a larger number would be that we cared for the less advantaged children in our district. I don't know how many of you are aware that there are, in fact, more children who reside within the district who qualify for a free lunch and are classified as English learners than there are children coming over through the Tinsley program; there are more children within the district. When we look at our district, particularly from parcel tax, or actually more from a property tax standpoint, what we quickly learn is the large number of multifamily units there are in this district compared to many of the others that we're being compared with, and so we actually do have many children who are living in apartments. For example, when I looked at the Redevelopment Agency three or four years for the *Almanac*, what I discovered was that there were 95 children living in the large apartment complexes along Coleman alone. Those are within the Redevelopment Agency, so we were not getting any property tax for those children. So we actually have a large number of children who are

living in multifamily units. We have a large number of disadvantaged children. And those are the children who will suffer if our services go down. My child would not have suffered particularly, because I could afford to buy him music lessons, to buy him art lessons, to buy him whatever he needed to make sure he was exercised at the end of the day. It is the children who have the least in this district who will suffer from any of the cuts that you are listing. Secondly, I loved the phrase that Hillary used, "We are an exemplary district." Exemplary comes from the word example. When I hear "platinum" or "gold plated", I shudder, because that is not what we are. I have seen gold plated, I have seen platinum. If anybody wants to discuss that with me, I'm happy to. But "exemplary", why do I like that word? Because when I look at all of the state--not at this district, or Woodside, or Las Lomitas, but when I look at the state, I am often told 'Oh well, Menlo Park, oh well, Palo Alto', and I realize that the state for 95% of the children in the state in state funded districts, the consideration is not what is needed to educate those children, it is what is available. So the state takes what money it can and it divides it by the number of children it has, and that's what's available to 95% of the children. What we do is create an example of what is needed, so the state knows what amount of money it could spend on its children in general to get a quality education--not a gold plated education or a platinum one, but a quality education. So we provide a very valuable service, and if any of you disagree with my \$340, and I'm thinking more about Theanne's and Mr. Carpenter's \$515, that would be a significant reason that actually I would buy. Property tax structure, I think most of you that I could discuss this until the cows come home, but if anybody wishes to understand our property tax structure, please contact me directly. We pay less as a percentage of our property tax because of a bizarre set of circumstances that happened after Prop 13 in 1978--a bizarre set of circumstances. So we pay less. We also get much less pick up from commercial property, and as I mentioned, we happen to have many more multifamily units which pay less per unit than a single family dwelling does. OK, so now, in terms of a date, please pick the right election. Please forecast what is going to happen in terms of are we going to have all sorts of nutty things that are going on, or are we going to have a nice, calm election. But pick the right election, if you can't predict then guess. And secondly, we are a strange nut. People think of us in terms of Menlo Park, but in fact Menlo Park has a lot of growth to the east, whatever direction that actually is...freeway east in terms of Facebook. We have a lot of growth in freeway west in terms of the Sand Hill corridor. But neither of those happen to be in the Menlo Park City School District, so think a little bit about the Dairy and other projects that hopefully will come along El Camino, both in terms of property tax growth from their commercial side, but also from the residential side, because as we know it's a mixed bag. So in terms of the timing, that would be my advice. Finally, you mentioned that you were coming out...do explain that pensions, when it comes to our teachers and CalSTRS, are not the same as they are for city or other districts. It's a very strange and wondrous thing mandated by the state, which is a result of the state making changes 16 years ago and not dealing with the changes that it made, and then suddenly putting them on the back of the district six weeks before last year's budget. And that's crucial, because when people say why did we go out all of a sudden for a property tax, etc., etc., it has an awful lot to do with that. Secondly, in terms of reserves, please be very clear that if we treated reserves the way that people think of reserves in Fund 17 where you sock it away and then you spend it; but our general reserves are not reserves, they are our cash flow for the next year. And finally, in terms of property tax, I find it very useful to look at the numbers that Ahmad generated a couple of years ago, where for every single family turnover in the district, we were getting somewhere around .4 children. That was an average, and the wonderful thing about an average is you can then begin to use it fundamentally. Looking at a point for average turnover, looking at a \$14,000 per student spend, you can figure out how much that uplift has to be, and my calculation was \$2.8 million. So seriously, in order to fund the kind of enrollment growth we were seeing then, we literally needed each house to generate \$2.8 million more than whatever had been there before. Las Lomitas, by the way, has benefitted an awful lot from turnover, where we haven't. I would like to end also thanking actually all the members of the Board, but particularly the two retiring

members of the Board. You have been dealing with this without all of us watching you and cheering you on for years and years. It is extraordinary and I thank you both very, very deeply.

CHILD:

Ok, we're down to our last group of three: Sara Leslie followed by Jackie Ward and then Sherwin Chen.

SARA LESLIE:

Hi. So my name is Sara Leslie. I was the Editorial Director for the Measure W campaign...two years ago? I'm a member of the Site Council at Oak Knoll. And just kind of talking to a lot of people, I think that one thing that is a perception issue around that I do think we need to address is this idea that people feel that these are more than public schools, that our community has grown schools into a private-type school, and while I don't agree with that idea, I think it's important for the community to hear why that's not the case. And I think one thing that's very, very important in the communication going forward is to talk about how many volunteer hours are given to these schools. Because I think if you look at the programs that are coming out of Oak Knoll, Hillview...I don't know Encinal and Laurel, but so many of these things are only possible because we have an amazing set of volunteers. I mean, you heard the person talk about the library. The library has a head librarian, but anything that happens there couldn't happen without volunteer hours. And I think that is credit to the amazing staff, and also for the fact that people feel that this is a community institution and they want to help out. And the thing that's really interesting is that it's not just volunteers who have children in the schools, it's people from the community. There's a woman named Julie Broady who comes and does mindfulness at Oak Knoll every single year. There's a woman who does the "Let George Do It" play. This woman has...I think her grandchildren are no longer in the district. So, I think that it's important that we see the school as a community institution. I think that as a district we need to do a better job of engaging the community. I mean, we should have community days where everyone's invited in. And it's not enough to say 'Come stop by', we need to invite them in. The other thing is, I want to echo what the woman who just talked about how there are poor students in our district. For people who don't know, there's a group of parents...I dropped off breakfast this morning for kids here at Hillview. Everyone doesn't come here having to eat breakfast. At a private school, that's not the case. In fact, they have a...I know at schools around here there's a meal program, you can sign up for a snack. That isn't the case here, so it's important that we provide services that support all our students.

CHILD:

Thank you. Jackie Ward. Jackie Ward? She might have left, I apologize. And then Sherwin.

SHERWIN CHEN:

Hi, everyone. My name's Sherwin Chen. I did not know that I'd be signing up to run the anchor leg of community comments here, but at least most of the people left so that works for me. I have a daughter in third grade at Oak Knoll and a son in sixth grade at Hillview. And a lot of what's been said around the room today has really resonated with me, but I'm going to try to limit my comments to some thoughts that haven't been voiced yet. So on each of the points: In terms of the date, I think we go out for March, for all the reasons that have been said, particularly around pink slips and layoffs, but also because I just think that having the uncertainty of this binary outcome, no parcel tax vs. "X" parcel tax for nine months or ten months is just a very corrosive environment that it creates. I can't imagine working at a job and trying to be enthusiastic knowing that nine months from now, 12 months from now, people need to decide whether or not I have another job. So I really do encourage you to go out early. In terms of amount, I come at the point of view that our teachers are underpaid; that the district has done an amazing job, looking at the benchmarks, generating the results that we generate on the budget that we

have. I also come at it with the point of view that for most homeowners and certainly for myself, the difference between a \$200 parcel tax, a \$500 parcel tax, isn't that meaningful over the course of a year. And that if you articulated a vision for how we could make our schools even better at \$600, that would be great. Having said that, I also find it very hard to advocate for a \$515 parcel tax. And the reason I say that is just risk aversion. And I think that when you deal with campaigns like this, it's not that I don't have faith in the community and belief that everyone in this community wants to have great schools, and wants to do what's best for our kids, but I do think that you do have the danger of misinformation and the danger of uninformed voters. And I think one way to...if everyone were informed and we understood what budget we had per pupil and the results that we get relative to the other schools, I think a lot of people would very readily write a larger parcel tax check. But I think not everyone is going to have the opportunity--as great as our efforts may be in the campaign--not everyone's going have that opportunity to learn all the facts, and I think that one way to symbolically make the community understand the tough decisions that are made day-in and day-out by the Board and by the staff, is to show them that we are meeting them part-way. To show that there are cuts being made, even though we probably make these decisions year-in and year-out, to have on either the description or wherever, an explanation that these are things where we found an opportunity to reduce costs, and therefore we're asking for an amount of X, Y or Z. If I can have just a little bit more time, I'll finish my thoughts. So, having said that, I do think that we've got to go out for a number that's greater than the \$207. With benefits costs going up, with the enrollment costs going up, there's just no way to preserve class size or our electives, or a meaningful portion of those at the current renewal rate, so it's got to be meaningfully higher. Beyond that, I sort of leave it to the experts to decide where we can cut without hurting our children's education. And then lastly, around structure, I do think there are a lot of good political reasons that we put out for why we should have a renewal...or not a renewal, but a sunset clause in. I do want to add a very practical consideration for why I think we should make this a six or an eight year term, which is, we are running...we are asking you guys to have an exemplary district on a relatively tight budget. We're not like Palo Alto, you know, we don't have budgets of \$20,000 per student. Given that reality and given the fact that anyone who says they can predict what the real estate prices are going to be five or six years from now, and what our enrollment's going to be five or six years from now, they're either lying or they're delusional. So, given the tightness of what we're working in, I think it's actually a good mechanism to have in place where six years from now we have a renewed view of where taxes are going to be, what our enrollment is, and we can come back out to the community to say this is what we need for the next five years. I think even creating the expectation that we can today predict how much we need in perpetuity is really misleading. All right? Thank you.

CHILD:

Well, that concludes all of our comments. Again, thank you very much for all the comments. Thank you for your attention and respect for one another on this subject, I really appreciate that. I believe it's exemplary the way we're acting compared to three other times when we've had political things recently around the country. So, let me turn back over...first of all, go to the Board, any questions or comments you would like and then I'll turn things back over to Maurice and Erik.

MARIA HILTON:

So, following up on my suggestion the beginning of the meeting, I think pretty explicit about what their questions were and I was kind of tracking and noticing (*Burmeister: We took good notes*) that you were taking notes. So I think Joan's particularly distressed that I didn't let her interrupt one of the speakers to let the speaker know that we actually do charge our parents for buses. So, just make sure somewhere somebody's carrying a sign because Joan's unnerved by that. (*Burmeister: We do charge for buses, yes*). And so the one thing that I would...I don't know, I have one clarifying point, which is, and I say this with

Aimee in the room, who I adore, but I do want to clarify something, which is that when the proposed reduction looked for supplanting an credentialed teaching professional with an aide, that the community needs to understand that what we're actually asking to have happen, which I think is the buried secret here, which is more unnerving to me, is that we are looking to include an aide that would then support the classroom teacher to provide that instruction. So it's not like our kids would go into the Hillview library and just have an aide, it's now the teacher's responsibility to go to Music, to go to Art, to go to the library. And the aide, to a certain extent we could even put up a further reduction, which is no aides whatsoever. And so, I think that that's something that's very important for people to understand, which is that in order to maintain program, it is yet on top of what our teachers are currently doing. And one of the things that has happened in our district is that we have provided those professionals to give our teachers...and if Aimee could easily come back up here and explain to us what she would do with her time when her class would go to the library. Oftentimes, she might stay for a period, which is a double whammy, or she could do collaboration with her colleagues, there's opportunity for us to do more professional development because it's in essence a release time. So there's a lot there, and I do feel like it's not clear in the way in which I've heard comments that people don't recognize that yes, we're putting in an aide, but that means it's not a one-to-one slot, that we're actually getting an aide and a teacher from other (*unaudible*).

The other thing I wanted to...in the spirit of the community's interest of how we communicate. I enjoy FAQs, they are very wordy and helpful in giving depth, but I've heard so many people say: This is really complicated information and we need to know all the details, but give it to me in one swallow. So, to pile on, is there an opportunity to incorporate info graphics? I think one of the ones that's very interesting is to think about info graphics as it relates to housing turnover, right? You've got a house, and then you've got the kids, and then you've got somewhere...but just in some respects we clearly have to think of a lot different ways in which people process information, so if there is anything out there that might be additive, great. I don't want to add another three hours to your meeting, that's not effective. But potentially some of these more complicated things as it relates to the big parcel tax revenue, or the property tax revenue. That one people still are having so much trouble with, that we might have to come at it from a lot of different ways.

BURMEISTER:

Thank you, Maria. We are going to do our best to get something out by the end of the week, and I will say to you that it's going to be a living FAQ and we'll continue to add to it, and continue to create clarity and meaning as we go, and I would imagine that should you decide to go out for a parcel tax that the FAQ from Friday to when we would go out for a parcel tax will be significantly different, and there will be lots of value added over time. We'll get you the best we can by Friday and after that we'll continue to add info graphics, information, clarity as we go.

CHILD:

Hey Erik, I might even...to the extent, and I don't know where you are in processing the...you said you've got 150 online (*Burmeister: 170*), 170 and we've probably had 30 comments today, and probably 50 or so, you know we've got 250 comments, something like that. To the extent that you're seeing any sort of repetition of misunderstanding or whatever, you might even take five minutes tomorrow night. I mean if there's two or three questions that are just...you know, I wouldn't wait until the FAQs. I would encourage you to take some time and say, here's a couple of questions that I have seen 5+ times or whatever. If you can, I don't know where you are in processing, it might be helpful rather than just saying to people...because sometimes a question repeated a number of times all of a sudden becomes

fact, or you know, I mean, it's kind of the way society works, and so I think it would be helpful if you took some time, if you're prepared, feel free to, we'll give you that. (*Burmeister: OK*)

CHILD:

Did you have something? You were leaning forward into the talking position. People are getting worried.... (*THYGESEN: You know what, I do have comments to make.*) OK, then you're up, that's why I was turning to you.

THYGESEN:

But I was trying not to be the first one to (*inaudible*), so thank you, Maria, for that. So, again, Karen and I had a nice conversation after the last Board meeting about the fact that, you know, as Erik said in his Op Ed recently, that we're victims of our own success, and to some extent that's true, and that the vast majority of people who are current district leaders and future district leaders now haven't been around long enough to have a real tangible granular sense of what's at stake, and where we've come and how we got here. And, you know, as a person who was working fulltime at Booz Allen & Hamilton, and had four kids, and had little time to volunteer in the class and things like that, you know, tried to do what I could, came to a meeting in 1999, raised my hand, somebody chased me out into the parking lot and said: 'Well, you know we're looking at going out for a parcel tax, can you help?'. And one thing led to another and I found myself co-chairing that, and we had an election in April of 2000, and that is the parcel tax that was not to save our schools and to prevent tax, it was a parcel tax about helping good schools get better. And that parcel tax over night increased our funding by 20%, and over the next several years we set about implementing programs that would help close the gap between the programs that we were offering versus the programs that were being offered in Palo Alto, Las Lomas, etc. And we would have needed to go out for a \$500 parcel tax at that time to actually close the funding gap, but we felt we couldn't, and so we went out for \$300, But that \$300 increased our funding overnight by 20%. Interesting now to see the extent to which the parcel tax is not just that, but the other parcel taxes are such a smaller percent of our overall budgets, that is kind of interesting. But as a result, as we went about as a district working to improve our program, we had to do with less right from the start because we didn't go out for the full bogey to close the funding gap. And so, this district has been under a significant amount of pressure. I think one or two speakers raised that point as well. Sherwin, I think you raised the point that we've been under get-go to try to deliver comparable programs including comparable quality of teachers which means that we need to try to keep up and pay what we need to pay competitively to attract and retain the best teachers. And we've been doing that with less all along. And as a result, there are a not...you know, I keep hearing just keep the cuts away from the classroom and so on and so forth. And sort of the...you know, the thought behind that is there are some stores of really, you know, things can be cut that are going to be painless, and that are going to be able to cut but aren't going to end up translating into reduced quality of programs. And I'm sorry to be the bearer of bad news but, you know, there is no Tooth Fairy, there is no Santa Claus (don't let your children watch this), and there's only us. There's us in this community and as somebody said, oh I think it was Scott Saywell who said that our means are whatever we decide our means are for our schools. So, you know, the budget is whatever we as a community decide we want.

And I want to...you know, in one of these meetings then that I ended up attending back in 1999, we had a new Superintendent at the time that the Board then had hired, I wasn't on the Board and never thought I would ever be on a School Board. And her name was Dr. Meredith Jones, she had been hired from Westin, Massachusetts, and the Board at that time had sort of taken the risk of hiring somebody not in California. Because there's so much minutia and specificity about the way you have to run schools in California, that it's actually a little risky to bring in someone from out of state because they have so

much to learn. But the Board at that time just felt that was the right move to make when they were looking for a new Superintendent because they were trying to raise peoples' sites up. And I remember being at a meeting where there was discussion about different ideas for what needed to be done to improve our schools, and you know we all sat back at that point and we sort of said: Oh, we have pretty nice schools here, and you know, we're in Menlo Park, and so on and so forth. And Dr. Jones, she was a very plain spoken woman, and she said, she told everybody: What you are doing is pathetic. What you are doing here is pathetic. And she said it was pathetic relative to well run schools that she had been a part of in other parts of the country that are more reasonably funded than we are. And she went on to sort of list out all the different ways, and the ways that this ends up flowing through to classrooms. And you know, I think that was the big wakeup call for our community, and we stood back and looked and it and we said: Wait a minute, we want to have better schools. And so we made the investment. We didn't make the full investment, you know, we tightened our belts and we've been doing more with less, but we did it. And, you know, it wasn't...and fairly soon after we put those resources in place, the results started to follow. And what we now see is that we have schools that are performing at least at comparable levels across the board, and whatever measures you want to look at--whether it's test scores or whether it's other things--to these other districts who we try to catch up to.

But, you know, I want to go back to some of the comments that have been out there about gee, if parents want to have a private school education then they should pay for it themselves, and we don't want to pay for gold plated education and so on and so forth. And you know, as much as we have improved our schools, they are far from gold plated. I think that comment that Jennifer made about them being exemplary for California is a nice comment, but they are far from gold plated. There's nothing about what we're doing that's gold plated. And so, anything that we do to start dismantling this is going to hurt. I mean from Ahmad's dealing with trying to do his job with one less accounting clerk, mistakes are going to be made, it could end up costing us more money. You know, I'm not sure that that's a cut that's actually going to save us money as a result. We're talking about going against our guiding principles and dismantling Elementary Foreign Language and yet retaining Immersion, which is simply not appropriate from an equity perspective, but it also is a cut that isn't really feasible. If we're going to do that, then we also need to dismantle Immersion because we can't expand Immersion enough to meet the demand, and we can't be running a program that is only available to people who manage to win the lottery. You know, we're public schools and all of our programs have to be available to all children, not just those who happen to win the lottery, so that doesn't work either.

The other point I want to make though, is that we have good teachers and we worked really hard to get them. But we had good teachers back before we did all this improvement as well. The issue is, is that if good teachers who are given a job that spreads them too thinly, and who are not properly and developed, become bad teachers. And likewise, people who are in a bad environment where teachers are spread too thinly and not properly supported, people who are thought to be bad teachers once they get into an appropriate environment become good teachers. I told Kristen Gracia the other day a story, and I want to be careful about not revealing too many details here in a public setting because this is a teacher who's still with us and is one of our most beloved teachers in this district who's doing a wonderful job by all accounts, and before we did the 2000 parcel tax and we had very thin programs in this person's area, there were a lot of people that had the knives out for this teacher because they said...what's that gender neutral..."they" are terrible. They are terrible, they are terrible. Well, they were terrible because they were trying to do a job that wasn't doable. They were terrible because they weren't properly supported. So if we talk about doing something to cut back on Music and go back to...you know, I think we heard comments the other night about this, that going back to programs...we're asking Music teachers to do something where they don't even see the students often

enough to do anything, we might as well not even have a Music program because our teachers who now we think are good will very quickly become terrible.

And so, you know, all these cuts are going to hurt. There aren't any really easy freebie ones here. I think Maria did a good job of laying out what the strategy, you know, the staff would be, if a library cut has to be involved. But as she also very well pointed out, that's going to take away from...because now the classroom teachers are going to have to deliver that program. And if they're trying to deliver that program and do all the things that they need to do on top of that, something's got to give somewhere. So, I just want to make sure that we're being honest with our community here about the fact that there are not freebie cuts to be made that are not going to have a negative effect on the quality of the program that we're delivering here, and you know, I for one do not want to be a part of dismantling something that this community has worked very hard to build over all these years. But I'll be standing back, taking input and looking to see what can be done here. But I just want to make sure that we're really being honest. And this is not about creating scare stories, this is about being honest. This is about being honest. We cannot deliver the quality of education that people are getting right now with...you know, and implement a lot of these cuts. We simply can't do it, and if that's where we are it will be a darn shame, but I'm not going to sit here and lie and say that there are things...oh yeah, we can find these cuts, keep it way from the classroom, and so on and so forth, because we can't. We simply can't. So that's all I have to say.

CHILD:

Thank you. Anyone else with any uplifting words for the community? OK, Erik, Maurice, I'll turn it back over to you. Again, great session. Thank you very much. I think these are...I really feel like we're...hopefully we're getting information. There were great comments today. It's very hard for people to walk up and...you know, we're not getting somebody who's saying: Well, here's how I'd make \$5 million in cuts. I don't think we expected that, but we are hearing peoples sensitivity on various things, and also I think we heard a lot of information about enhancing the revenue, which is...or funding, excuse me, is the word, enhancing our funding.

BURMEISTER:

Just in closing from the Committee's point of view. One of the things I'm struck by when I hear comments oftentimes is that some members of the community will comment that they would like to hear something that we've already addressed or that's been a big part of the meeting, and I think one of the most common ones is the transparency about the finances, so I can't say enough thank you's to Ahmad and his team for putting together the partnership with OpenGov, and I really thank the Board for encouraging us as a district to do so. As the Chair of this committee, I would say we can't over emphasize and over communicate enough the ability for the community to go on to OpenGov and get a lot of their questions answered. However, I do know that even when it's given to them, sometimes it's not easy to read, as public finance is not necessarily something that a lot of folks understand. It took me many years to even have the degree of understanding that I do have of it, and I would hope that our team can sort of sift some of that information enough to answer some of these questions, and we're going to try to do that, but I think whenever we can promote OpenGov, which is on the front page of our website, that we should try to do so. Lastly, just for the record, invite any member of the community to participate in tomorrow night's community input session that we provide in Special Session, and in addition to that, I would like to implore everybody to go on to the online input opportunity...the Google form that we have available to the community. We have over 170 pieces of input already and we're really excited to present those to you, but that will close on October 31, just so it gives us enough time

to get it ready for you for the Board packet on November 9. And then of course we're all very anxious to hear from you on November 9 in terms of direction that you would like us to begin leaning. Thank you.

GHYSELS:

Thank you to the Advisory Committee too, you're doing some really fantastic work. I want to thank everyone for their public comment. I wish all the people who are not here could also hear my gratitude. We have a lot of work to do, we're in the middle of the process. Really great comments today and I appreciate the direction of the Board. I and my cabinet have a lot of things to consider and to come back to you, of course, ultimately on November 9 with detailed recommendations in terms of timelines and priority. I think what is very hopeful here is we're hearing so much emotion and good thought about reasons to support our schools, and the most important thing about our vision, and that's every child. So thank you, members of the Board, the audience, staff.

CHILD:

So, I may just for our agenda, just to reiterate...so, future Board meetings on Item 4, we have a meeting tomorrow night, right here at 6:00 PM, which will be our third session. And then our regular meeting is Wednesday, November 9 at 6:00 PM when we will know who our new President is, maybe, and who our new Board members are (*Unidentified: I thought you meant Board President*) No, I meant the President of the United States. And that meeting is Wednesday night at 6:00 PM, and that one's back...oh, that one's also here, yes, excuse me, so the next two meetings are here. So with that I will adjourn the meeting, and thank everyone for attending.