



Eastport-South Manor district Assistant Superintendent for Business and Operations Tim Laube, left, and acting Superintendent Joseph Steimel at a public hearing at Eastport-South Manor Junior-Senior High School.

NEWSDAY / THOMAS A. FERRARA

District pressing ahead with vote

Residents offer comments on budget do-over

BY CARL MACGOWAN
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Eastport-South Manor school district officials told residents who turned out for a public hearing Tuesday they are going forward with next week's revote on a \$96.6 million budget, but maintained that last month's budget vote was valid.

Tuesday's vote will be held in case school district lawyers cannot convince state Education Department officials that the May 21 vote should have counted, acting Superintendent Joseph Steimel told about a dozen residents during the budget hearing at the district's junior-senior high school.

State officials told the district last week the budget vote was invalid because a second proposition on the ballot would have caused the budget to exceed the state tax cap.

"We strongly disagree with

the state," Steimel said, adding lawyers for the district will continue to make their case to Albany officials.

Eastport resident Mike Doyle questioned why district officials followed the advice of district lawyers to count the budget as having passed.

"Did your attorney give you bad advice?" said Doyle, a retired Eastport-South Manor teacher. "Did they check with the state?"

Steimel responded: "We wouldn't consider it bad advice at all . . . Even the [state] officials . . . are checking to see where it stands."

District officials had announced after polls closed last month that the budget had passed, with 1,211 "yes" votes and 1,002 "no" votes. The second proposition, allowing the district to hire armed security guards, failed resoundingly that night.

The security proposition will not be on next week's ballot.

The revote would be on the same budget put up before — a \$96,551,702 million spending plan carrying a 2.75 percent tax increase. The plan is within the

district's state-imposed cap limit and will require a simple majority to pass.

The Eastport-South Manor school board scheduled the revote last week. The proposed budget would raise school taxes about \$300 for the average district resident.

Manorville resident Joan Breimann said any tax increase would be too much for her.

"I don't know if I can retire here in Manorville," she said. "It's getting out of hand."

State officials ruled that the budget vote last month had failed because it garnered support from 54.7 percent of the voters — less than the 60 percent required by the state tax cap law.

In a June 5 letter to Steimel, Assistant Commissioner of Education Christina E. Coughlin said the higher level of support was required because the tax increase would have exceeded the cap if both propositions had passed.

If next week's vote fails, the district will be forced to adopt a \$95 million contingency budget — a bare-bones spending plan that freezes taxes.

PANEL OFFERS PARKING PLANS FOR RIVERHEAD

BY JEAN-PAUL SALAMANCA
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A preliminary streamlined parking plan for Riverhead could pave the way for a series of improvement strategies, especially for downtown, officials said.

Members of the town's Parking District Committee presented preliminary recommendations to the town board at its June 6 work session. The plan — which took parking information from previous studies such as the 2016 Brownfield Opportunity Area study — has recommended four major steps to improve town parking:

- Prioritizing spaces for customers and visitors in centrally located facilities such as town-owned parking lots
- Updating enforcement efforts to better monitor and manage parking demand
- Establishing regulations for incoming residential development such as buildings with studio and/or 1-bedroom units, or multifamily residential buildings to prepare for increased residential parking demand
- Enhancing alternative transportation amenities including pedestrian/bicycle facilities — such as along McDermott Avenue — and parking connections to reduce parking demand

Dawn Thomas, community project supervisor for Riverhead's Community Development Agency, said Friday that the plan's major objective is determining how to best use

the available parking in Riverhead, while using multiple strategies to address parking issues. The plan would also give town officials an idea of where to create new parking to address growth downtown.

The plan suggests several steps the town could take to improve parking, such as extending the hours when on- and off-street parking rules are enforced at several downtown parking lots and establishing a more unified signage and wayfinding program within the town's parking district.

"If we can drive people staying for the day, like employees or business owners, to farther away parking, it opens up the nearer parking for turnover," Thomas said. "The objective of changing the parking duration was to make the spots closer to the businesses the shortest time, and then make the spots farther away the longer time limits."

Implementing a payment in lieu of a parking plan for any residential development downtown, such as studio apartments, was another recommendation from the committee.

The board gave the committee the go-ahead to work on evaluating the environmental impact of the plan as required under the State Environmental Quality Review Act. Should that be approved, a finalized parking plan could be adopted, a process Thomas said could take six months to a year.



The town's Parking District Committee has recommended four major steps to improve town parking in Riverhead.

JAMES CARBONE