

Oxbow Unified Union School District Boards role and responsibilities.

It is important to understand what the job of the school board is. As a school board our roles and responsibilities are:

- Engage the Community & Establish a Vision
- Adopts policies and protocols governing effective and ethical operations
- Develop a Budget & Assure Financial Oversight
- Employs and evaluates the superintendent along with the other Boards in the supervisory union (Thetford, Waits River, and Blue Mountain) . Holds the superintendent accountable for developing a strategy and education work plan to achieve District or SU goals. Reviews the superintendent on an annual basis in coordination with other Boards in the supervisory union.
- Handles quasi-judicial hearings in a consistent and orderly fashion and arrives at clear, fair conclusions.
- Understands they are community trustees to assure quality education and that taxpayers get a great return on investment, not the operators of the school.

As a newly formed board we are working hard to adapt to these roles and responsibilities within the new organization of Oxbow Unified Union School District. While some of us have been board members for years, some are new to this role. We are all focused on bringing the four schools (Bradford Elementary, Newbury Elementary, Oxbow High School and River Bend Career and Technical Center) together under one umbrella. This would be a challenge in normal times, but doing this during a global pandemic has created many more obstacles and challenges. Despite these obstacles and challenges, we are continuing to find opportunities to work together and ways to improve education for our students.

On 10/5/20 the OUUSD board met and approved a new budget in the amount of \$16,780,183; with per pupil spending of \$17,741, which is a 5.51% increase in per pupil spending.

Bradford increase- 4.58% the tax rate is \$1.6477

Newbury increase – 1.94% the tax rate is \$1.5873

So if you use \$100,000.00 property value:

The numbers for Bradford:

Last year: \$1,576.00

Upcoming vote: \$1,648.00

The numbers for Newbury:

Last year: \$1,557

Upcoming vote: \$1,587.00

We understand that people are concerned about the increases in some areas of the budget. However, we want to let our communities know that there are some areas that we can't change.

These are:

- The cost of health insurance. Health Insurance benefits were negotiated at the state level this year and are not in our control. The cost of health insurance went up 12.9% this year.
- The cost of maintaining the facilities. Some projects can be put on hold and managed but the buildings must be maintained.
- The lease on the Copeland building can not be changed. The OESU board authorized a 5 year lease in January 2020. We have no authority to change or cancel this lease.
- We can not change the Act 46 merger. There is a process that is in place for communities that want to dissolve a merged district. It does not involve the OUUSD board or our budget. This board is committed to unifying our school district and communities.
- Through the year 2021 we can not close a school without a vote of the town that would be affected. With the help of committee members we have drafted an amendment that would require town vote to be part of any school building closure going forward. This is on the ballot to be voted on by each town on Nov. 24th.
- We have limited control over the OESU budget. The OESU budget is voted on in January by the OESU board. We do not have authority to change that budget without the approval of all the OESU board representatives from all the schools in our Supervisory union. The OESU total budget amount is divided out over all the schools in the Supervisory Union. That means Waits River Valley, Blue Mountain, Thetford, and Oxbow Unified Union School District all pay a portion of the budget total. As a district, OUUSD pays about 47% of the OESU budget. This is based on the student enrollment.

We look forward to joining our community members to create a unified vision for our district that is clear in its focus and drives us towards an educational system that benefits all of our children, our schools, and our communities. We understand that these are challenging times and that we are "sailing in uncharted waters." We are committed to this unified district and ask for your support as we continue to make our school district exceptional.

Please reach out to us with any questions you may have.

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