

**WOOSTER CITY
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

FIVE-YEAR FORECAST

FY2020 – FY2024

Bonnie West, Treasurer

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INTRODUCTION

Section 5705.391 of the Ohio Revised Code requires that public school districts file a Five Year Forecast with the Ohio Department of Education once in November and then again in the form of an update in May of each fiscal year. The fiscal year of the Wooster City School District is from July 1 through June 30.

This financial forecast reflects the cost of general operations typically recorded in the District's General Fund (001). It is within this General Fund that the majority of the District's tax dollars are received.

Other funds required to be included in this document include the Debt Service Fund (002) related to General Fund Debt. This is separate from the now retired Debt Service Fund that was maintained for repayment of the high school construction bonds which are not a function of this forecast.

The forecast includes three years of historical (FY2017 – FY2019) data, as well as a projection of the present fiscal year (FY2020) and four additional fiscal years (FY2021 – FY2024).

It is important to recognize that the District manages a multitude of Local, State, and Federal funds that are not included as part of this projection. These excluded funds, totaling \$6,818,085 for FY2020, are typically earmarked as grants or funds derived from sources separate from general operations and to be used for specific projects or initiatives. In the case of State and Federal grant funds, there are separate State reporting systems related to the management of those funds.

The forecast provides a good internal planning tool for the Board of Education and should be viewed as such. It is important for the reader to understand that this document, as presented, is based upon a set of circumstances and assumptions at a point in time certain. As time passes, new events and additional information will alter this outlook. When such changes are significant, an updated forecast will be prepared for review.

Users of the Five Year Forecast are encouraged to review the Notes to the Financial Forecast to aid in understanding the data. It is also recommended that users direct any questions about the attached information to the District Treasurer who can provide additional explanation.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL FORECAST

REVENUES

Line 1.010 - General Property (Real Estate) -

Line 1.010 accounts for the receipt of property tax revenue as determined by the Wayne County Auditor and collected by the Wayne County Treasurer on behalf of the School District. This tax revenue is derived from the local millage rate as approved by majority vote of the local community and then applied to the value of real estate as contained on the tax duplicate.

Typically, Wooster City Schools had returned to its community every four years with a request for additional operating millage. The last time the District returned to the ballot with a request for new operating dollars was in August 2010 and found success. The passage of that August 2010 6.5 mill continuing operating levy generates approximately \$4 million annually. The close of the current fiscal year (FY20) will mark a milestone of ten (10) years since passage of the last general operating levy.

Estimates in future years allow for a nominal amount of annual growth in revenue as may occur based on adjustments to inside millage and new construction.

Line 1.020 - Tangible Personal Property Tax –

Legislative action (HB66) called for the phase out of the Tangible Personal Property Tax beginning in FY2006. This funding source, which once provided as much as \$8 million in annual revenue to the District, saw the last collection of any significance occurring in FY2012 in the amount of \$154,255.

The Commercial Activity Tax (CAT) was the planned funding source for the Tangible Personal Property Reimbursement replacement payments to schools in an effort to replace the loss of tangible personal property tax revenue. This revenue stream is accounted for in line item 1.050 as discussed later in this document.

Line 1.035 - Unrestricted Grants-in-Aid –

Unrestricted Grants in Aid consists of basic per pupil state funding known as State Foundation. This funding is determined by applying the state's funding formula to the district's student enrollment and local community demographics.

During former Ohio Governor Kasich's term in office, he called for the creation of a new formula method for allocation of basic per pupil funding to school districts. During the

biennium years of FY2012 and FY2013 a temporary formula, referred to as the Bridge Formula, was in place while the Governor's office worked on construction of a new funding model.

The State approved (effective July 1, 2013) biennial budget for FY2014 and FY2015 included a new formula for distribution of state dollars to public school districts.

Under this formula, the school district falls under the cap, meaning that the formula provides more dollars in theory, than the state can afford to pay. For example, FY2015 basic state aid funding was estimated and capped at \$8,575,860 compared to the formula structured to provide revenue of \$13,097,512.

State funding levels increased in both FY2016 and FY 2017, however, the degree of those increases were offset by a similar degree of reduction in Tangible Personal Property Reimbursement in (Line 1.050) estimated at \$756,000 annually in the same years of the forecast.

The prior biennial budget for FY2018 and FY2019, provided increases that once again were offset, by a similar degree to the reduction in Tangible Personal Property Reimbursement in (Line 1.050) of \$395,000 annually.

Casino Revenue, first distributed by the State in FY2013, continues to generate about \$180,000 annually and is also accounted for in this line.

For FY2020, Unrestricted Grants-In-Aid is anticipated to remain at the same funding level for FY2020 as in FY2019. Future years of the forecast assume no increase at this time.

Line 1.040 - Restricted Grants-in-Aid –

Restricted Grants in Aid include elements of the State Foundation that are restricted for use according to guidelines established by the State.

Two categories of state funding are accounted for in this line of the forecast to include: Career Technical Funding for use in vocational content areas as defined by the State of Ohio, and Economic Disadvantaged Funding which requires the district demonstrate use within specific guidelines.

A new category called Student Wellness and Success Funds were awarded by the State to districts during this new biennium budget. Wooster City Schools is scheduled to receive \$697,598 for FY2020 and \$1,009,821 for FY2021. These dollars, while currently and temporarily, reflected in Line 1.040 will be moved to Fund 467 as prescribed by the State. At the same time, the District is reviewing expenditures in the General Fund to determine programs and services that meet the criteria for use of funds. Once completed, those qualifying expenditures will also be reassigned out of the General Fund to the new

Fund 467. Future versions of the five-year forecast will reflect movement of these dollars out of the General Fund.

Line 1.050 - Property Tax Allocation –

Property Tax Allocation accounts for two pieces of State reimbursement received by the School District. These are the (1) Homestead and Rollback Reimbursements projected at \$2,923,820 in FY2020 and the (2) Tangible Personal Property Fixed Rate Payments projected at \$2,654,500.

The Homestead and Rollback Reimbursement compensates the District for the local taxpayer reduction of 10% on real estate and a 2.5% taxpayer reduction for owner occupied residency.

The Tangible Personal Property (TPP) Fixed Rate Payment, currently funded by the Commercial Activity Tax (CAT), was designed to provide temporary revenue replacement in lieu of the now defunct Tangible Personal Property Tax (HB66).

This reimbursement, when first implemented, provided annual revenue to the District in the amount of nearly \$7 million, which equated to 17% of the District's General Operating budget. The District ranked 23rd highest out of 614 public school districts as a high dollar recipient of this annual payment.

In 2009, HB1 postponed the gradual phase out of TPP replacement revenue until FY2014 as total elimination was scheduled to occur by FY2019. This decision came on the heels of bipartisan support to provide a permanent funding solution as opposed to proceeding with the phase out. However, Governor Strickland chose to issue a veto to maintain the funding just for the biennium. Given this evidence of support within the legislature, the potential for continued effort to a permanent solution by 2014 to ward off, in some degree, this scheduled loss of funding was deemed highly plausible at that point.

In 2011, under elected Governor Kasich, legislation later reversed the sentiment of the prior administration and called for the TPP reimbursement phase out to occur at a faster pace as was evidenced in actual revenue reported for FY2012 and FY2013. A reprieve occurred heading into the biennial budget for FY2014 -15 as the \$5,355,000 funding was maintained at the same level as FY2013.

The FY2016-FY2017 state budget originally called for continued phase out of this line item at a rate of \$756,000 in each year of the forecast causing the revenue line to reach \$0 by 2022. Subsequently, SB208 was signed by Governor Kasich in November 2015, which while not changing FY2016 or 2017 estimates, prescribed a slower rate of reduction starting in FY2018 at an amount of \$395,000 per year. Under this assumption the revenue line will reach \$0 by FY2027.

Line 1.060 - All Other Revenue –

This revenue category currently estimated at \$2,175,000 includes various miscellaneous revenue accounts such as investment income, student fees, tuition from other districts, pay-to-participate receipts, rental income of school facilities, open enrollment income, and Medicaid reimbursement.

Projections for future years assume all areas remaining steady with the exception of investment income which anticipates a declining trend due to decreasing cash reserves through FY2024.

Line 2.050 - Advances-In –

The FY2020 amount of \$1,430,750 constitutes the repayment to the General Fund of temporary loans made to other funds at the end of FY2019 (see Line 5.020).

Temporary loans to other internal funds are sometimes necessary to meet the Ohio Revised Code requirement that all funds end the fiscal year with a positive cash balance.

The initial loans out to other funds are recorded in Line 5.020 as Advances Out with repayment recorded the following year in Line 2.050 as Advances In.

While it is difficult to predict the future needs of temporary loans to other funds, an estimate of \$1,500,000 has been included for FY2021 – FY2024

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Line 2.060 - All Other Financing Sources –

Proceeds from the sale of obsolete equipment as well as the periodic write off of stale checks generally account for the small activity in this line.

EXPENDITURES

With losses of State revenue in FY2012 and FY2013, the Board of Education implemented budget reductions totaling approximately \$1 million for FY2012 and another round of additional reductions for FY2013 also totaling \$1 million.

The specific cuts contained in the first phase of this reduction strategy were approved by the Board of Education for FY2012 and included the elimination of 16 staff positions with all but (3) three accomplished through attrition.

In preparation for the FY2013 school year, the District engaged in a Facility Reconfiguration Process that ultimately closed two elementary buildings identified as Lincoln Way and Wayne. The remaining four elementary buildings now house grades Pre-K thru 4, Edgewood Middle School houses grades 5 – 7, and Wooster High School houses grades 8 – 12.

As the Facility Reconfiguration Process came to a close, the District identified idle property to include Lincoln Way, Wayne, Maurer Field, and property formerly known as the Armory which later sold at public auction.

Line 3.010 - Personnel Services –

The Board of Education is party to union labor contracts for the certified (teachers) unit and the classified (support staff) unit.

Historically, labor agreements have provided base salary increases to staff as follows:

FY2010 = 1%, FY2011 = 2%, FY2012 = 2%, FY2013 = 0%,

FY2014 = 1%, FY2015=1% and FY2016=1%.

FY2017 = 3%, FY2018 = 2.5%, and FY2019 of 1.5%.

Recently negotiated labor agreements provide annual base salary increases of:

FY2020 = 2.75%, FY2021 = 2.25%, and FY2022 of 2.00%.

These increases occur in addition to automatic step increases built into various sections of the schedules.

While this forecast does recognize the likelihood that salary increases may occur in the future years of FY2023 and FY2024, those increases are projected at a minimal amount as they are yet to be determined through the negotiation process.

Pension reform, particularly that of the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS), prompted larger numbers of retirements at the end of FY2013 through FY2015.

With the opening of the 2019-2020 school year, Wooster City Schools ceased providing educational services to The Village Network (Boys Village). Given that the school district experiences an annual need to hire new staff each year as the result of attrition, the district chose not to implement a reduction in force but to reemploy those 18 staff members back into the District.

Staffing levels throughout the balance of the forecast are assumed to remain constant.

Line 3.020 – Employees Benefits –

This line includes expenditures related to employee benefits including retirement, health insurance, workers compensation, and unemployment.

Wooster City School employees participate in the Ohio State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) for teachers and administrators and in the Ohio School Employees Retirement System (SERS) for support staff. Employee participation in these retirement systems is a requirement of State law. The school district is required to contribute 14% of annual employee salary to the applicable retirement system. Each employee is then required to make a related contribution through payroll deduction. The employee contribution is currently 14% for STRS and 10% for SERS.

Current labor agreements provide for various levels of employer pick up of the employee share. This benefit was established during prior contracts in lieu of increases to the base salary schedule.

For the balance of the forecast, increases in retirement benefit obligation are directly tied to estimated salary increases.

With respect to employee health insurance, Wooster City Schools had previously managed a self-insurance fund for medical, prescription, and dental benefits. Effective January 1, 2013, the District transitioned its employee health benefit plan to the Stark County Schools Council of Governments. The Stark County COG is a consortium of public school districts and other local governments with over 14,000 enrolled lives. The Stark County COG has a proven track record of providing quality employee benefits while containing annual premium increases.

Determination of premium holidays are made on an annual basis by the Stark County COG based upon their review each year of claims experience and fund balance reserves.

Annually since FY2015, the district has enjoyed a minimum of at least 2 premium holidays per year with annual premium increases ranging from 2.5% - 5.4%.

Estimates for FY2021 – FY2023 follow the Stark County COG recommendation of an annual 10% premium increase and no premium holiday.

With respect to Bureau of Workers Compensation (BWC) premium, the school district experienced extremely low annual premiums during the period of FY2014 - FY2016 which did not exceed \$10,000 in any one year due to the large premium refunds that were issued by the State. FY2017 was a more normal year with a premium of nearly \$150,000. However, FY2018 and FY2019 were back down to virtually zero once again, as large premium refunds were issued in each year. FY2020 assumes a full premium rate of approximately \$187,000 which continues through the life of the forecast.

Line 3.030 - Purchased Services –

FY2020-FY2024 includes projections of varying increases among a multitude of purchased services accounts in the General Fund. This line accounts for items such as utilities, legal fees, tuition paid to other districts, excess costs for students, open enrollment tuition, nursing services, mileage and travel reimbursement, property insurance, and data site acquisition services.

Line 3.040 - Supplies and Materials –

Budget for FY2020 - FY2024 provides for typical allocations of supplies and materials to each school building and department within the District. In FY2010, a continuing annual cycle of curriculum and textbook replacement was incorporated into this line with an ongoing allocation of \$500,000 each year.

Line 3.050 - Capital Outlay - New and Replacement –

Capital outlay generally includes budget for purchase of either additional new or replacement equipment as needed throughout the district.

Purchases typically include new /replacement technology ranging in cost from \$250,000 - \$350,000 annually, school bus replacement, and periodic replacement of district vehicles for maintenance and student transportation. Allowances for other equipment needs are also budgeted here.

Permanent Improvement levy proceeds are not a function of this forecast.

Line 4.050 - Principal - HB 264 Loans –

A HB264 project was approved in 2009 which provided for renovations to improve energy efficiency at targeted buildings throughout the District. Projected energy savings were anticipated to cover the cost of the project.

This line represents the principal payments required during the (10) year life of the note. The note was paid in full on December 1, 2018.

Line 4.060 - Interest and Fiscal Charges –

This line accounts for the interest payments on the HB 264 loan with the final loan payment made on December 1, 2018.

Line 4.300 - Other Objects –

Expenses accounted for in this line primarily consist of County Auditor and Treasurer Fees charged for the service of assessing, collecting, and remitting property taxes to the school district. This line also includes payment of miscellaneous dues and fees.

Line 5.010 - Operational Transfers-Out –

For FY2015, an operating transfer of \$2.5 million to the Permanent Improvement Fund was made for the completion of various capital repair and improvement projects throughout the district. An additional \$5 million of capital improvements was identified in both FY2016 and again in FY2017 necessitating transfer of funds to the Permanent Improvement Fund.

With Athletic Field Turf installed in 2014, a planned transfer of \$20,000 annually to the Turf Replacement Fund is forecasted to reserve the dollars necessary for its eventual replacement.

This line also provides a \$100,000 contingency fund to cover unanticipated expenses not budgeted elsewhere in the General Fund. Should dollars from the contingency fund be necessary, budget is moved from this line to the appropriate cost center where the expenditure will ultimately be recorded.

Line 5.020 - Advances-Out –

An annual projection of \$1,500,000 for temporary loans to other funds is anticipated at the end of each fiscal year. Such temporary loans are necessary, particularly to State and Federal grant funds which often operate on a reimbursement basis, in order to close all funds at year-end with a positive cash balance.

Subsequent repayment of Advances-Out is recorded the following year in Line 2.050 as an Advance-In.

Line 6.010 – Excess of Revenues over (under) Expenditures –

This category compares total revenues to total expenditures and measures the extent to which current operating expenditures are supported by current revenues.

A negative number in this line represents the extent to which current expenditures are not supported by current revenues, resulting in a degree of reliance on cash reserves to fund current operations.

In response to the negative situation anticipated and starting in FY2020, the District has filed with the Board of Elections a 6.5 mill levy request to be placed on the March 2020 ballot. Approval of this levy request would generate an additional \$4.2 million dollars annually with collection beginning in January 2021.

Line 8.010 - Encumbrances –

This category represents commitments against current year budget for authorized but unpaid purchase of goods and services. These commitments are in the form of approved purchase orders that will be paid in the next fiscal year after the District takes delivery of the order or is in receipt of the service.

Line 9.010 - Textbook and Instructional Materials Set Aside –

HB 412 was passed in the summer of 1998 and was a State mandated set-aside which required a 3% expenditure level in each year. If the District was unable to spend the required amount, the balance was put aside as a reserve in a separate fund restricted to this category of future expenditure. Subsequent state law discontinued this set aside requirement in FY2012.

Line 9.020 - Capital Improvements Set Aside –

HB 412 was passed in the summer of 1998 and was a State mandated set-aside which requires a 3% expenditure level in each year.

Qualifying expenditures include General Fund expenditures used to enhance or improve, but not maintain assets, and Permanent Improvement funds generated to again enhance or improve assets.

With the passage of the 1 mill Permanent Improvement levy in 1999 and the current qualifying accounts in the General Fund, no additional reserves have been necessary to meet the 3% requirement.

Line 9.030 - Budget Reserve Set Aside –

With the passage of S.B. 345 during FY 2001, the District has elected to no longer maintain the budget reserve previously required under HB 412.

Line 9.050 - Debt Service –

This reserve was established to fund the HB 264 energy efficiency program. An annual transfer was made each year from the General Fund to satisfy the debt service requirements for this project. Historically, this line contained the fund balance remaining in that debt service account once the year's loan payment was made. The most recent project note was paid in full on December 1, 2018.

Line 15.010 - Unreserved Fund Balance –

The Unreserved Fund Balance of the District represents the cash balance that is free from encumbrances, reservations, or restrictions.

A school district is not permitted to begin a school year anticipating it will end the year with a negative cash balance. Should such a situation be expected, the District must take steps in advance to remedy the situation by increasing revenue or reducing expenditures.

With budgeted operating expenditures of \$51,500,000 for FY2020 averaging \$4.3 million per month, the projected unreserved cash balance at June 30, 2020 translates into an estimated eight (8) months of operating cash on hand.

CONCLUSION

As the District has now arrived in FY2020, overall revenue appears relatively stagnant with some decline by the end of the forecast.

State funding estimates for FY2022- FY2024 carry a degree of uncertainty as legislative action will be needed to determine state budget for future years. At the same time, the District continues to be challenged with the seemingly certain prospect that Tangible Personal Property reimbursement will continue to be phased out and entirely eliminated by FY2027.

The assumptions within this document are many and will continue to be monitored and updated as estimates become reality. Should revenue or expenditure patterns experience change to a degree significantly different than the assumptions within this forecast, a revision to the forecast will be made to determine the resulting financial impact.

The structure of school funding (HB920) does make it necessary for school districts to periodically return to the community to seek additional property tax funding. With the last operating levy approved in August 2010, the district's financial stewardship has stretched the district's time to 10 (ten) years between levy requests, well beyond what had been a routine return to the voters every 4 years.

The Board of Education has submitted to the Board of Elections a levy request of 6.5 mills to be placed on the March 2020 ballot. Passage of this levy would generate an additional \$4.2 million in annual revenue to the district, with a half year collection beginning in FY2021 and the first full year of collection FY2022.