

Unionville-Chadds Ford School District
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Tax Study Commission Minutes
Public Hearing
October 26, 2006

The scheduled public hearing of the Unionville-Chadds Ford School District Tax Study Commission was held on October 26, 2006 in the Large Group Instruction Room of Unionville High School. The following members were present: Mark Berry, Zack Bowen, Robert Kane, James Romine, Barbara Siegel, Ed Wandersee, William Wilson and Bruce Yelton. In addition, Sharon Parker, District Superintendent, Robert Cochran, Director of Business and Operations, and Sharon Baillie, recording secretary were in attendance. Seven members of the community were present.

Commission member Charles Rudershausen was unable to attend.

Chairperson Bruce Yelton called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. He requested that the group stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. Members of the Commission introduced themselves to those present.

Mr. Bowen motioned to approve the minutes from the October 19, 2006 meeting. Mr. Berry seconded. Minutes were approved 8-0.

Mr. Cochran gave an overview of Act 1 using a slide presentation (copies of the presentation were given to all Commission members). Mr. Bowen concluded the presentation by explaining the responsibilities of the Commission.

Mr. Yelton opened the floor to public comment.

Nancy Moore, resident of Newlin Township, asked is there has been anything within the guidelines from the State regarding including this on the State tax return.

Mr. Cochran responded that the State has not indicated they will
Tax Study Commission Minutes

MEMBERS
PRESENT

CALL TO ORDER
PLEDGE OF
ALLEGIANCE
INTRODUCTION OF
MEMBERS
APPROVAL OF
MINUTES

SLIDE
PRESENTATION

PUBLIC COMMENT

add this to their return. The Legislature did not consider collection. The 500 School Districts in Pennsylvania have the option to choose Earned Income Tax (EIT) or Personal Income Tax (PIT) and the State collects only a PIT. They do not want the additional confusion of, theoretically, 500 separate rates.

Mrs. Moore - Will local collection give you a better situation as far as having the revenue when needed?

Mr. Cochran - Yes, it will make sure the State doesn't hold onto it. We will set up our own local tax collection office or contract with Berkheimer or Central Tax Bureau or PA Municipal Services.

Mr. Bowen proposed turning the meeting in to a less formal Question & Answer session.

Mr. Berry added that one of the problems in the first year is that the majority of property taxes are currently collected between August and October. Switching to an Income Tax will result in a lag in the first year, for sure. Revenue will not come in the fall of 2007, more likely in the spring of 2008.

Mr. Bowen stated that there are a lot of unknowns in the tax shifting process, such as credits for working outside the State. Some residents, such as renters, will be affected disproportionately.

Mr. Berry stated that the ideal would be to own a farmstead and work in Philadelphia. The worst scenario is to be a renter and work in Delaware.

James Hartsky, Birmingham Township - What is the purpose of double deduction for Farmsteads?

Mr. Cochran - It is the recognition of the farming community and the State's commitment to agriculture.

Mr. Yelton - We only have 23 qualified farmsteads in this District.

Mrs. Moore - Farmers actually subsidize the community. If the

development, we would need more schools.

Mr. Cochran - that is the intent of "Clean and Green". Other factors are that Unionville-Chadds Ford has a 10% commercial/90% residential make-up. We are the 4th lowest in taxes in the 12 School Districts in Chester County, which speaks of the good fiscal responsibility in Unionville-Chadds Ford.

Karen Halstead, East Marlborough Township - This is a lot of time and talk for the same amount of tax dollars. This is something that is not a cut in taxes. Most of those in our community who are not here tonight believe that there will be a cut in their taxes.

Mr. Berry clarified that there will be winners and losers - 70% of taxpayers should get a net reduction. 30% will likely see an increase.

Sue Forssmark, Pocopson Township - Does the prior Homestead certification apply or do we have to reapply?

Mr. Cochran - if you did apply two years ago, you do not need to reapply.

Mr. Berry stated that this needs to be communicated to the public.

Mr. Cochran stated that the County is considering sending postcards to the taxpayers and that there will not be any difference to the School District whether everyone applies or not.

Mrs. Parker commented that we need to find a way as a community to manage this beast. This same conversation is taking place in the other 500 School Districts across the State.

Mrs. Halstead stated that the good thing is that the Commission has been joining the School Board in learning about this - this is complicated. At least we have 8 or 9 more people who can explain this to the community. She thanked the members of the Commission for taking the time to do this.

Mr. Yelton reminded everyone that the minutes will be posted on

With no further questions or comments, Mr. Yelton thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James Romine
Secretary

ADJOURNMENT