

D-99 looks to have balanced 2015-16 budget

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DOWNERS GROVE – The Community High School District 99 School Board plans to have a balanced budget, according to a tentative budget presentation made Aug. 17.

District Controller Mark Staehlin said the 2015-16 budget would be balanced, unlike the previous year.

Last year, the district had a loss of about \$1 million. Staehlin said that was because of health benefit expenses and fund transfers in the operational funds.

“[The net loss] was a little greater than we expected,” he said.

In the tentative budget, the district has \$85.9 million in revenues and \$82.9 million in expenses. The district is projected to end the school year with \$2.8 million in reserves.

Property taxes make up the largest revenue for the tentative budget at \$72.1 million. Registration fees are up 36.7 percent and state aid is up 11.1 percent. Registration fees went up by \$300,000 because of fees associated with the new Chromebooks. The de-

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potential repairs. He said the screens cost \$150 to repair – half the cost of the lease.

“The Chromebooks we have are great devices, but they’re touch screens and very difficult to repair,” Staehlin said.

Staehlin said food service revenue is likely to decline because of state changes in income verification for free and reduced lunches.

“We’ll be watching that closely, because it impacts a lot,” he said.

Lunch prices also increased 15 cents this year because of a state mandate.

The largest expense in the budget is salaries, which are \$55.1 million, according to board documents. That’s an increase of 2.3 percent from the previous year, which is in line with the teaching contract. Benefits for the dis-

trict are being increased, Staehlin said. Compared with the previous year, Staehlin said. According to board documents, this is because of a larger than normal number of higher needs students either graduating or being brought back into the schools from outside placements.

Staehlin said some life safety issues can be resolved using bonds, which will result in fewer expenses.

“It comes at a time when we do need some relief in our operating funds,” he said.

Exact projects will be selected in September and will need to be finished in the next five years, including new boilers at Downers Grove North.

Staehlin said next year’s budget will require the board to “take a pretty hard look at our expenses” and reduce the amount of money it spends in the future.

The budget needs to be approved by the end of September, according to state law. The board is scheduled to vote on the budget at its Sept. 21 meeting.

The tentative budget will be on display at the District 99 administrative office, Downers Grove North and