

**Caesar Rodney School District
Citizen Budget Oversight Committee Meeting
Meeting Minutes
12:30 p.m.
May 12, 2023**

I. Opening

The meeting commenced at 12:30 at Allen Frear Elementary School. The following members were present: Julie Lavender, Shari Gary, Sherry Kijowski, Dave Failing, Ade Kuforiji, and Cheryl Precourt. Heath Chasanov, Kimberly Willson, Kimberly Judy, Caesar Rodney School District (CRSD) Director of Finance, Nicole Polite, CRSD Supervisor of Finance and Renea Thompson, Administrative Secretary for CRSD Finance Department, were also present.

II. Discussion Items

- A. The budget summary by operating unit was discussed with the committee.
- B. The operating costs for David E. Robinson Elementary School and Magnolia Middle School was discussed with the committee. Members cited concerns over the wording of the Referendum question and the lack of knowledge that the approval of the Certificate of Necessity would not have generate additional costs to tax payers.
- C. Growth in units was discussed with the committee.
- D. The following items were also discussed:
 - i. A one penny increase generates approximately \$95,800 for the District.
 - ii. Committee memebtrs were asked if 2% and 5% budget cuts were sufficient. It was suggested that the school budgets are already small and additional cuts there were not warranted.
 - iii. Committee members were asked for suggestions on next steps with the Referendum and a potential strategy for a tax rate increase. First, it was suggested that signs used to announce the Referendum were too small and easily missed. It was also mentioned that other school districts sent numerous text messages and pre-recorded phone calls about their Referendums where CRSD did not. Committee members highlighted the important role the Friends of CR played in the passing of the 2015 Referendum. Additional factors to consider were the lack of teacher support for the Referendum and the timing as we're in the midst of an economic downturn after the global pandemic. Finally, some of the suggestions made moving forward were to stretch the amount over several years, better communication on true needs moving forward and more detail on what the increases are intended to provide (e.g. if any portion is

going towards salaries or if a portion would be utilized for safety and security).

III. Adjournment