

Sachem Legislative Committee Minutes

October 18, 2007

Highlights of Sachem Legislative Meeting at Samoset Middle School Library:

Meeting began at 7:15 P.M. ended at 8:30 P.M. Bruce Singer, Assistant Superintendent of Business was our Guest Speaker. He gave our committee an up to the minute picture of the Financial Status of the Sachem School District:

- a. We are fiscally sound
 - b. Our indebtedness is being paid at a low interest cost to the District Taxpayers.
 - c. Despite increases, due to Stock Market fluctuations, of Sachem Employee Retirement costs and Health Insurance costs, our District was able to offer a 2007-8 Sachem School Budget at Zero per cent increase from last year's School Budget.
 - d. We are going to be able to make significant infrastructure improvements in our existing school buildings and grounds (play fields, etc.) with State Aid and a Bond Issue.
 - e. A Referendum Vote will be held in Early March to acquire Sachem Voters approval for the Plan.
- Questions were answered by Bruce relating to other Educational Issues like establishing a Pre-K program that could be funded by State Aid. The Legislative Committee also suggested that an Ad Hoc committee be established by the School Board to enlighten Sachem Voters about the Referendum and the importance of approving it. Bruce Singer emphasized that the local costs of this endeavor would be minimal. If it were not passed, it would mean that local taxes, in the future, would rise in order to maintain and update the current infrastructure needs. Each building and its surroundings have been examined by accredited appraisers appointed by the board. It is not a "wish list" but a "must do" list in the near future. Our buildings are aging and the wear and tear is starting to show.
- Our committee appreciated his taking the time to apprise our Committee of how Sachem is currently faring and the ramifications of the Bond Issue that will be on the Ballot in March 2008.
- Sal Nicosia shared the results of the October 3rd, 2007 School Board Coalition that met at the Middle Country School District, Newfield High School in Selden chaired by the President of the Middle Country School Board of Education. 14 School Districts including Sachem School District were in attendance. Senator John Flanagan, 2nd Senatorial District was the guest speaker. He presented a financial status report on State Aid to schools on Long Island. His report was forthright. He clearly stated that the situation for State Aid to School District in the coming School year does not look to promising. It is projected that the State Budget will need to fill a significant budget gap that may call for increase in State Income Tax and tightening the belt for State Aid to the School Districts throughout the State. Star Program, Enhanced Star Program,

Rebate checks next year, State mandated costs passed on to the local districts were discussed with no significant comments made by Mr. Flanagan. He strongly urged those in attendance to continue to put pressure on the Governor and State Senators and Assembly persons in the coming months and urging School Boards to urge local residents to also send letters, phone calls, e-mails, letters to the editor to let them know how dire the educational scene is and continues to be for Long Island School Districts. He wants to help us in our plight but needs the support from his constituents on an ongoing basis.

- Dianne Hettrich suggested that we invite Mr. Flanagan to our November 15th, 2007 meeting to discuss Educational Costs and what he would suggest we do to assist him in getting more State Aid to help defray the costs of educating our children. We currently pay 57% of the Tax Bill to educate our children in Sachem. The State gives us 43% to help in that area. We send NYS more tax revenue than we get back from Albany.

- In January, we will invite Patricia Eddington, State Assembly Person from our District to give us her perceptions of our current financial status relating to State Aid from Albany. She is a member of the Education Committee in the State Assembly. Dianne Hettrich will initiate the invitation to her for the January 2008, Sachem Legislative Meeting.

- The December meeting will be used to react to Senator Flanagan's visit and to prepare how we can make Pat Eddington's visit more productive for our School District.

- 10 members of the committee were present for the October meeting. 7 members were not present due to other commitments.

Respectfully submitted,

Sal Nicosia, Chairperson.