The Annual Business Meeting of the Board of Cooperative Educational Services, Rensselaer-Columbia-Greene Counties, was held on Wednesday evening, April 5, 2017, at the Questar III Administrative Building located at 10 Empire State Boulevard in Castleton, New York.

Prior to the start of the Annual Meeting, Questar III Board President, John C. Hill gave a warm welcome to the guests in attendance and led them in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Next was the presentation of the G. Lucius Cary Award presented to Mr. James Keegan in recognition of his generosity in giving of himself by volunteering his time and educational and business talent in serving on the Questar III board for the past 26 years. Mr. Keegan humbly accepted the honor by saying what an honor it had been to serve both Questar and the Hudson City School District, where he also selflessly served on the board of education. He expressed his gratitude for the BOCES and the services it provides and thanked his family for their loving support.

President Hill and District Superintendent Gladys I. Cruz then recognized Questar III Chefs Peter Desmond and Andrew Ottati, and their Teaching Assistants, John McCarthy and Chris Snye, along with their culinary students for their outstanding work in preparing the spectacular food for the evening. The audience joined in showing their appreciation for such a job well done.

Questar III Board President John C. Hill called the annual meeting to order at 5:50 p.m. President Hill introduced the Questar III board members serving Rensselaer, Columbia and Greene county school districts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rensselaer County</th>
<th>Columbia County</th>
<th>Greene County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. John Hill</td>
<td>Mr. Edmund Brooks</td>
<td>Mr. Joseph Garland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Carol Orvis</td>
<td>Mr. James Keegan</td>
<td>Mrs. Marilyn Noonan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Paul Puccio</td>
<td>Mrs. Lynn Clum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Frank Zwack</td>
<td>Mrs. Nadine Gazzola</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hoosic Valley</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>East Greenbush</td>
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<td>Schodack</td>
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<td>Berlin</td>
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<td>Ichabod Crane</td>
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<td>Hudson</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Germantown</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Taconic Hills</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Coxsackie-Athens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Catskill</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
President Hill then introduced the board candidates who are running for four, regular term seats on the Questar III board from July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2020. Three candidates are incumbents: Mr. John C. Hill, Rensselaer County, nominated by the Hoosic Valley Central School District, Ms. Marilyn Noonan, of Greene County, nominated by the Catskill Central School District and Mr. Joseph Garland, also of Greene County, nominated by the Coxsackie-Athens Central School District. The fourth candidate is Mrs. Mary Dowd Daly, from Columbia County, nominated by the Hudson City School District. President Hill explained that Ms. Daly was unable to join us due to a previous commitment.

District Superintendent Gladys I. Cruz then stepped to the podium and also greeted those in attendance and explained that this meeting has been a BOCES tradition since 1979 and while this meeting is held every April to review our proposed budget, it is also an opportunity to showcase our culinary students’ talents, to focus on student programs, and to connect with our component districts. She thanked those present for joining us for this important and delightful event.

The following is Dr. Cruz’s presentation of the 2017-18 budget.

- Dr. Cruz explained to the audience that our proposed Administrative Budget has two components – the part that supports the general operations of the BOCES, which is increasing by less than 1 percent. The second component includes the other post-employment benefits (also known as OPEB) that will increase by approximately 6.5 percent.

**Administrative Budget Overview**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017-2018 Budget without OPEB</th>
<th>2016-2017 Budget without OPEB</th>
<th>Dollar increase without OPEB</th>
<th>Percent increase without OPEB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017-2018 Budget</td>
<td>$2,920,912</td>
<td>$2,895,122</td>
<td>$25,790</td>
<td>0.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPEB Budget</td>
<td>$3,181,463</td>
<td>$2,987,624</td>
<td>$193,839</td>
<td>$6,076,585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-2018 Total</td>
<td>$6,102,375</td>
<td>$5,882,746</td>
<td>$219,629</td>
<td>3.73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- When we add both components, our total 2017-18 budget will increase by approximately $219,000, or 3.73 percent. The 2017-18 budget is approximately $25,000 above a contingency budget.
Amount Above Contingency Budget  $25,790
Our total administrative budget is approximately $6.1 million. However, as always, we will net any type of miscellaneous revenue against the administrative budget. The actual charge to our components will be approximately $5.2 million. This is allocated to component districts on a Resident Weighted Average Daily Attendance (or RWADA) basis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2017-2018 Budget</th>
<th>$6,102,375</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Component Admin Fees</td>
<td>(476,499)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Revenues (Indirect Cost &amp; Interest)</td>
<td>(382,700)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Charge to Component School Districts</td>
<td>$5,243,176</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Admin, Rent/Capital School District Impact will vary based on RWADA

**Administrative Other Budget Revenue**

These are the sources of our miscellaneous revenue, which is applied to our administrative budget. We charge both statewide services and non-components an administrative fee. We charge an indirect rate and internal service charge to any state or federal grant we manage for the BOCES. We also charge a four percent administrative fee to non-component districts using our special education services, as well as charging an indirect rate and internal service charge to any state or federal grant or contract we manage for the BOCES. Ultimately, this revenue generates a credit to the administrative budget of nearly $1 million. This helps Questar III contain administrative costs for our component school districts.

- Statewide Services Administrative Fee
- Non-Component Administrative Fee
- 4% Admin Fee on Special Education Services for Non-Components
- Federal Indirect and Internal Service Charges
- Interest Income

**Total Administrative Credit: ($859,199)**

**Administrative Charge to Districts**

The net charge to our component districts is an increase of $206,000, or 4.1 percent next year. Approximately $193,000 is due to legacy costs, or other post-employment benefits. This amount does not reflect that we will be in the third year of the other post-employment benefits (OPEB) credit liquidation, so there will be an additional reduction to your administrative charge based on the approved distribution plan and agreement.

- 2017-2018 Budget, Net of Revenue $5,243,176
- 2016-2017 Budget, Net of Revenue $5,037,015
- Dollar Increase $206,161
- Percent Increase 4.1%
- OPEB Credit for 2017-18 will be credited against the Administration budget based on each district’s “Fund Surplus
Next it was illustrated what we do for our component districts as part of the administrative budget. This includes superintendent searches – this year, we supported three different searches. It includes the Superintendent Success Network. The SSN provides one-on-one experienced mentors for new superintendents and ongoing workshops on topics requested by superintendents. The administrative budget also supports our annual summer institute for superintendents, board of education facilitation, workshops and trainings; regional certification; business and operational supports; communications; grant research; and regional and district strategic planning support. It also supports emergency management and provides response teams to help districts deal with a variety of crises, such as accidents, illnesses, deaths or other critical issues impacting your operations. Additionally, this budget supports a variety of advocacy efforts coordinated by the BOCES – something Averill Park CSD Superintendent Jim Hoffman will discuss later in our presentation. This is the only budget that our component Boards of Education vote on.

- Superintendent Searches
- Superintendent Success Network (SSN)
- Summer Superintendent Institute
- Board of Education Facilitation, Workshops & Trainings
- Regional Certification
- Business and Operational Support
- Communications (Crisis, Budget and Other)
- Regional and District Strategic Planning Support
- Emergency Management & Response Teams
- Grant Research
- Advocacy

Factors Affecting the Administrative Budget
These are some of the factors impacting the 2017-18 Administrative Budget. This includes increases related to other post-employment benefits (OPEB) and professional development for board members, superintendents and staff. It also includes internal transfer increases due to charges for NERIC IT services and the redesign of the Questar III website for next school year. There are also decreases in staff full-time equivalents, fringe benefits, supplies and equipment, and operations and maintenance.

☐ Increases
  - OPEB Increase
  - Professional Development (BOE, Superintendents & Staff)
  - Internal Transfers

☐ Decreases
  - Reduction of staff FTEs
  - Fringe Benefits
  - Supplies & Equipment
  - Operations & Maintenance
OPEB Liquidation Plan
Dr. Cruz reiterated information pertaining to OPEB that has been distributed and that is posted to our website - explaining that prior to the 2013-14 school year, Questar III had a longstanding practice of setting aside funds to pay for the future expenses associated with the other post-employment benefits of our retirees. This practice, which was reported annually to districts, was a fiscally conservative approach to paying forward these costs. After this practice was questioned by several districts, Questar III convened a task force of superintendents and business officials. The Questar III Board accepted the final OPEB Report of the Task Force, dated February 2014, at its regular meeting on April 15, 2014. This report was also shared with districts in a letter dated July 25, 2014. You can find these materials on our website. In this report, the Task Force recommended that the BOCES conduct an independent full forensic audit of the accrual to determine the source of the funds and to determine allocations to component districts and others as specifically as possible. The Task Force recommended that the independent audit should include three scenarios for returning the funds to all contributors over a five, seven or ten-year period. Ultimately, a majority of school districts recommended a five-year distribution plan. Prior to the disbursement of funds or credits, Questar III required releases from future liability concerning the OPEB matter from any Board receiving a credit. To date, Questar III has received releases from all districts in our BOCES area. We also received 513 out of 672 statewide school district and BOCES releases. The 2015-16 school year is the first year of the five-year OPEB accrual credit distribution plan. She explained that we have two years of OPEB credit remaining after the 2017-18 school year.

☐ **2015-2016**: Year 1 of OPEB Accrual Credit based on approved five-year distribution plan

☐ **2016-2017**: Year 2 of OPEB Accrual Credit based on approved five-year distribution plan adjusted for carryovers

☐ **2017-2018**: Year 3 of OPEB Accrual Credit based on approved five-year liquidation plan adjusted for carryovers

www.questar.org/opeb

Dr. Cruz then asked if anyone had any questions. Being none, Dr. Cruz continued with her report.
Rent and Capital Budget Overview

Dr. Cruz explained that Component school districts do not vote on this portion of the budget. The rent and capital budget is allocated on the same basis as the administrative budget. This is based on RWADA. This budget is increasing by $3,005.00, or less than a quarter-percent next year and supports a number of instructional and non-instructional spaces in our tri-county region. This includes spaced owned and leased by the BOCES. She explained that we continue to renew leases with districts for special education space. In fact, we are currently seeking more space for our Special Education programs. One of the recent changes to this budget includes an additional classroom for our New Visions: Medical program and the renewal of our New Visions: Scientific Research & World Health classroom at the University at Albany's Health Services campus.

- 2017 – 2018 Budget $1,683,365
- 2016 – 2017 Budget $1,680,360
- Dollar Increase $3,005
- Percent Increase .18%

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>15-16</th>
<th>16-17</th>
<th>17-18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rents to School</td>
<td>$514,250</td>
<td>$526,250</td>
<td>$526,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent to Other</td>
<td>$633,361</td>
<td>$654,110</td>
<td>$657,115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer to Capital</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Upgrades to Facilities

Since 2010, Questar III has spent $3.8 million on modernizing and updating our facilities, primarily the Columbia-Greene Educational Center, Sackett Educational Center and our 1070 location. We also have another $900,000 in summer work planned at Columbia-Greene and Sackett. These facilities will be in good shape and continue to serve our students and staff for years to come.

One of our longstanding challenges has been our Rensselaer Educational Center in Troy. This is something we have discussed at our annual meeting for a number of years as well as during visits with our component school boards and ongoing discussions with our superintendents.

Looking at the REC, we needed to decide on whether to spend the necessary money to rehab the facility or whether there were other options.

Building Modernization Initiative Estimated Impact to 2018-19 Budget

Dr. Cruz showed preliminary estimates for our building modernization initiative based on today’s numbers. This project will NOT impact the 2017-18 budget. The first year of this 20-year lease is anticipated to impact the 2018-19 budget. The first-year lease payment is expected to be $880,000. However, after the reallocation of the $500,000 capital contribution, the increase in the rent and capital budget is projected to be $380,000. The bottom chart reflects the estimated total net cost increase to districts of approximately $168,000, after BOCES rent aid is applied. It is important to note that net cost increase to districts is estimated using current BOCES Rent Aid and RWADA ratios. These ratios are updated by SED on an annual basis.
**RENT AND CAPITAL BUDGET**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017-18 Budget</th>
<th>$880K Lease Projected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017-18 Budget*</td>
<td>$1,670,012</td>
<td>$1,670,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REC - New Building Lease Estimate</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>880,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease in Contribution to Capital Budget</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(500,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Budget</td>
<td>$1,670,012</td>
<td>$2,050,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget Increase (Projected over 2017-18 Budget)</td>
<td></td>
<td>$ 380,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NET COST TO DISTRICTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017-18 Budget</th>
<th>$880K Lease</th>
<th>Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Rent &amp; Capital*</td>
<td>$ 1,670,012</td>
<td>$ 2,050,012</td>
<td>$ 380,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less BOCES Rent Aid^</td>
<td>(932,841)</td>
<td>(1,145,104)</td>
<td>(212,263)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Net District Cost</td>
<td>$ 737,171</td>
<td>$ 904,908</td>
<td>$ 167,737</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Net of revenue of $13,353 from federal and state grants/contracts.

^Based on BOCES rent aid ratios as of November 2016.

Legislation that allows for the BOCES to enter into a 20-year lease is providing us with the opportunity to move forward with our Building Modernization Initiative. After positive feedback was received from the presentation of a range of budget scenarios for the lease of a new Center to superintendents, business officials and the Questar III Board of Education, a request for proposals (RFP) was issued. There was an extensive RFP review process that included a committee of Questar III board members, staff and component district superintendents, resulting in the selection of a developer.

The new, state-of-the-art career and technical education center is currently in the planning and design phase. It will be located on Route 150 in Schodack, just off Exit 11-E on I-90. This 60,000 square foot facility, scheduled to open in September 2018, will replace our Rensselaer Educational Center. The design process is allowing us to research and reflect on how to best design our instructional and shop spaces. Design committee members are doing research on what is happening in the various fields represented by our programs. For example, in culinary, we are looking at state-of-the-art kitchens, talking to culinary instructors and taking photos of their instructional spaces.

Looking ahead, we are also making sure that the building’s infrastructure can support excellence and innovation. Ultimately, we are trying to be thoughtful about our space and programs. This includes building in flexibility for program expansion and options for collaborative and multi-use space.
In addition to providing a hands-on, state-of-the-art education to high school students, we also plan to use the space to benefit the larger community. This is not just a building for Rensselaer County; this is a building for our entire BOCES region.
Dr. Cruz explained that when you combine the administrative budget with the rent and capital budget, the combined charge to components is $6.9 million. This is approximately $209,000 or 3 percent higher than the 2016-17 budget. These charges will be allocated to components based on RWADA. This excludes any credit for the other post-employment benefits (OPEB) accrual I previously discussed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017-2018 Budget, Net of Revenue</th>
<th>$6,913,188</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2016-2017 Budget, Net of Revenue</td>
<td>$6,704,022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dollar Increase</td>
<td></td>
<td>$209,166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Increase</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next, Dr. Cruz explained that the overall trends for the administrative, rent and capital budgets over a five-year period. The chart below shows the rent and capital budget has remained fairly consistent during that time. However, you will see an increase in the administrative budget starting in the 2014-15 school year. This is due to allocating 100 percent of the OPEB costs to the administrative budget, based on the Task Force recommendations. It is worth noting that Questar III has the lowest budget increase in our Joint Management Team (JMT) region of BOCES.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Admin Budget</th>
<th>Percent of Total Budget</th>
<th>Rent &amp; Capital Budget</th>
<th>Percent of Total Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014 Budget</td>
<td>$ 4,238,898</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>$ 1,646,750</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015 Budget</td>
<td>$ 5,570,122</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>$ 1,618,650</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016 Budget</td>
<td>$ 5,835,872</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>$ 1,647,611</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017 Budget</td>
<td>$ 5,882,746</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>$ 1,680,360</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-2018 Proposed Budget</td>
<td>$ 6,102,375</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>$ 1,683,365</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Impact to Rates

Dr. Cruz informed the audience that Questar III continues to work hard to contain costs and to minimize rate increases for our programs and services. Looking ahead, 86 percent of our programs and service rates are at or below a 2 percent increase for next year. Additionally, nearly 63.5 percent of programs and services will remain at the same rate (or will decrease next year). This is accomplished through a number of ways – increased participation, technological advancements, process improvements, regional benchmarking of costs or vacancy control. This means as positions are vacated, we look closely at whether that position needs to be filled. We also have programs and services where rates are increasing due to rising costs. Generally, increases are due to contractual salary increases and increases in health insurance, for example, shifts from single to two-person or family health insurance. Like you, these are areas where we have little control, but we do work hard through our budget development process to carefully review our costs and to contain rate increases whenever possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>% of Programs with a Rate Increase ≤ 0%</th>
<th>% of Programs with a Rate Increase ≤ 2%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>88.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>55.78%</td>
<td>69.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>53.59%</td>
<td>87.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>79.80%</td>
<td>91.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>63.49%</td>
<td>86.31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dr. Cruz then explained that earlier this school year, Questar III adopted The Leading Edge, our new framework for goal-setting, innovation and growth in our rapidly changing and increasingly complex field of public education. This framework focuses our staff and organization on why we exist as a BOCES. This is to “change lives, realize dreams and do together what can’t be done alone.” Ultimately, we are seeking to build a culture of innovation and excellence that continuously asks and answers the following question -- what am I doing today to ensure that our programs and services offer value to our districts? This work is reflective of our efforts to build a stronger cooperative. Over the past year, we have visited our school boards to discuss your needs and how the BOCES can help. We also looked at educational trends, state changes and other items impacting your work as school board leaders. This is important to us, particularly given the number of changes in our region in recent years. Moving forward, we look to continue this dialogue with you and your colleagues.
Program Updates
Dr. Cruz then reported that the program and services budgets are dependent upon purchases from school districts. Districts have the choice to sign-up on a year-to-year basis. She then turned the podium over to the chairs of superintendent subcommittees, explaining that these subcommittees meet monthly to help us respond to emerging needs and assist us in reviewing and evaluating our various programs and services. This may mean expanding hands-on programs for students as part of our instructional programs, or responding to new and emerging needs such as our Health & Safety Department providing support for lead water testing. This feedback is very important to us as a cooperative.
Jim Hoffman (Averill Park), Sally Shields (Rensselaer), Cheryl Nuciforo (Chatham) and Randy Squier (Coxsackie-Athens) serve as chairs of our subcommittees. The chairs then reported some insights into some of their conversations over the past year and collaborative decisions that have been made that will impact the Questar III programs and services.

❖ Advocacy and Business and School Partnerships
Dr. James Hoffman, Averill Park CSD Superintendent

Dr. Hoffman stated that over the past year this subcommittee has supported a number of initiatives benefitting local school districts. A number of our districts have asked the BOCES to focus more on readiness – or whether our high school graduates have the knowledge and skills to succeed in college without the need for remediation, or whether they are qualified for jobs after high school. In response, Questar III convened a college and career readiness roundtable in mid-January to provide business, higher education and school leaders with the opportunity to both share and listen to different perspectives – and to provide the BOCES with feedback to create a white paper on readiness.
We opened our meeting with a panel discussion featuring Chatham Superintendent Cheryl Nuciforo; Jhone Ebert, Senior Deputy Commissioner for Education Policy for the State Education Department (SED); Jim Baldwin, President of Excelsior College; and F. Michael Tucker, President of Tucker Strategies, Inc. Following the panel, we broke into small table discussions. More than 40 individuals provided feedback, which was later shared with SED, school personnel from our 23 districts and BOCES, and all participants. Dr. Hoffman encouraged the audience to read Gladys’ message from February in which she summarized their discussion.
Dr. Hoffman went on to say that as a follow-up, Questar III met with the Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce to discuss the readiness initiative. The Chamber will be asking their members to respond to a survey to identify their needs so we can pool this data into planning for new programs and initiatives. Questar III is also looking to engage the Columbia and Greene County Chambers so we can align our efforts across the region.

Meeting with Legislators
Dr. Hoffman explained that Questar III also coordinates advocacy efforts that advance the mission of our schools. In late January, we invited our local legislators and their staff to attend our monthly superintendents meeting. The meeting was designed to provide legislators with the context and data needed to effectively inform state policy and better support student achievement and educate them in factors
affecting our local school districts. Some of the topics included providing adequate and equitable state aide and determining simple, stable modifications to the states’ property tax cap.
We sent letters to each of our legislators as follow-up thanking them for having productive conversations with us. School districts also met individually or as groups with our legislators to further discuss various items that impact local school district budgets and to brainstorm ways to sustain needed programs and services in our communities.
Dr. Hoffman thanked his fellow committee members and Questar III staff for their help and valuable assistance.

❖ Academic Programs

*Sally Shields, Rensselaer City SD Superintendent*

Ms. Shields reported that as a cooperative, we continue to expand educational opportunities for students while looking for efficiencies in other district functions. Questar III’s career and technical education (or CTE) programs provide hands-on training in a student’s chosen trade or field. These half-day programs integrate classroom learning with professional training in a wide range of fields, many of which offer certifications or industry credentials. Students can also earn a number of college credits that give them a jumpstart on higher education. This ranges from six credits in most of our CTE programs to upwards of 15 credits in our New Visions programs for high school seniors. Our programs help young men and women – particularly those not represented in certain fields – learn life-changing skills – and do what they love.

**CTE Programs**
- Overall budget for the 2017-18 year is staying the same
- Completing a program review
- Recommendations will lead us to develop new programs and enhance existing programs
- New Visions Medical (2016-17)
- Possible replication for our southern districts
- Welding expansion to Rensselaer County

She added that our school districts continue to work closely with Questar III to ensure that their academic programs are aligned to district needs, student interest and industry demands.

Looking ahead to next year, Questar III has worked to carefully evaluate needs, resources and staffing – to avoid increases in the CTE budget. The BOCES is nearing the end of a program review of CTE and Career Studies that will include recommendations for improving their programs and processes. It is crucial that we keep our programs on the cutting edge of training and offer students the opportunity to earn college credits and industry credentials.

We are exploring a number of new program areas including computer coding, agriculture science, emergency medicine and nanotechnology. With the input and support of superintendents, Questar III launched the New Visions Medical program at Samaritan Hospital in Troy last fall. Based on the success of this program, we are
exploring possible replication for our southern districts in Columbia and Greene counties – to provide equity in programming. Likewise, we are also exploring the expansion of our welding program from Hudson to the new center in Schodack.

**Special Education**

- Completing a program review
- Focused on educating students in the least restrictive environment
- Increased use of technology and work-based learning
- New facility will include a special education wing

Ms. Shields went on to explain that similar to CTE, the special education department is also undergoing a comprehensive program review. We look forward to reviewing these recommendations and making improvements to better support our students, school districts and BOCES staff. Our Committee continues to work with Questar III to educate special education students in the least restrictive environment. Since 2014-15, we have been able to reduce the number of the most restrictive classes (4:1:2) from 21 to 5. Next year, we are projecting a total of four classes. This has helped to generate savings for our districts. It also ensures that we are educating students in an environment as appropriate to meet their needs.

We also continue to look for better ways of educating students with disabilities. Questar III has increased the use of instructional technology and work-based learning, particularly to serve the increased number of students working towards the Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) credential. For example, students at Rensselaer Academy use the Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES) lab to help learn and develop job and life skills.

The new center being developed in Schodack will also include a wing for high school special education students. These are students with behavioral and cognitive needs (currently based at the REC in Troy).

Ms. Shields thanked the superintendents who join her in this subcommittee for their commitment in ensuring that students in our region have additional educational opportunities offered to them through the BOCES.

**Professional Development and Leadership**

*Dr. Cheryl Nuciforo, Chatham CSD Superintendent*

Dr. Nuciforo reported that the Professional Development and Leadership Committee looks at regional approaches to dealing with standards, curriculum, professional development and evaluation. Most notably, our Committee is looking at how to best prepare our region for the considerable changes happening at the state level. This includes revised standards in ELA and math, a new social studies framework and next generation science standards.

We also proactively provide feedback and guidance to the State Education Department before changes are implemented. This includes hosting the Commissioner and her staff for conversations. In January, we also provided support to the college and career readiness panel. This included the drafting of a regional paper to help the Board of Regents and SED better understand what is happening in the field.
We also lead efforts to survey our board members on their professional development needs. This lead to changes to our Saturday Morning Board Workshop Series. Most recently, we hosted a session by Mike Ford on board-superintendent responsibilities.

Our committee guides efforts by the SSN to deliver relevant and real-world professional development to both new and experienced superintendents. This year we hosted a professional development program for aspiring superintendents that included sessions on board relationships, budget development and communications. Through the support of our superintendents we have expanded our Science Fellows program to include the other STEM areas. Since 2014, this program has provided an opportunity for secondary teachers to work side-by-side with researchers to conduct authentic research in an area related to the courses they teach. The hands-on experience includes paid summer lab work at local research facilities, professional development time to create lessons and a second-year mentor program.

Finally, our group has supported efforts by Questar III to change its delivery model to provide support where teachers need it the most – in the classroom. Questar III is currently beta testing a new Virtual Master Coaching Service that continues its innovative approach to embedded professional development. This service connects teachers and coaches in an authentic classroom environment using video and wireless earpiece technology. It will provide teachers with real-time coaching that instantly improves classroom performance and student engagement.

Dr. Nuciforo concluded by adding that teachers will have the opportunity to reflect by watching video and reading comments from previously recorded sessions, and engage in online discussions in a professional learning community.

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**District Services**

*Randall Squier, Coxsackie-Athens CSD Superintendent*

Mr. Squier explained to the audience that district operations are growing increasingly complex due to student needs, regulations and other mandates. Questar III, in its role, continuously reassesses its district services to make sure that they are meeting our needs. In some cases, this means creating new services to meet new needs or revising and improving existing services. We do a lot of brainstorming in our committee – asking how can we reduce our districts’ administrative burden or increase their capacity.

Carbon monoxide alarms and lead water testing are just two recent examples of challenges, or unfunded state mandates, that Questar III helped us resolve. In this case, our Health & Safety staff worked diligently to ensure our districts and the BOCES comply with new lead testing laws. Eight workers spent hundreds of hours, in the early mornings before school, doing nearly 3,500 samples across our region. Health & Safety is also adding fire sprinkler inspections, and battery and power supply testing to its list of offerings, based on district needs.

Most recently, our IT and Model Schools programs have teamed up to offer a new cyber security training service. As you know, we live in an increasingly networked world and we need to protect our systems and data. This service is designed to bolster districts’ cyber security efforts.

Finally, you have heard the phrase – a picture is worth a thousand words. We like to believe that video is worth much more so we have expanded our videography
services to provide our districts and BOCES with innovative ways of sharing information.

Mr. Squier concluded his program updates with a look at how our Communications Service is using video technology to help tell our stories, from how we educate students to how we inform the public about our budgets and bond proposals. This was done in the form of a short video.

Acceptance of Minutes

Questar III Board President, Mr. John C. Hill announced that each person in the audience had received a copy of the 2016-17 Annual Meeting Minutes. He then asked for a motion to approve those minutes.

The motion was moved by Mr. Joseph Garland, Questar III Board Member, to approve the minutes of the 2016-17 Annual Meeting. This motion was seconded by Mrs. Marilyn Noonan, Questar III Vice President, and unanimously carried.

Budget Vote and Board Election

Questar III Board President John C. Hill reminded the superintendents and board members that the 2017-18 Budget Vote and Election is Tuesday, April 25th, 2017.

A motion to adjourn was then moved by Mr. James Keegan, Questar III Board Member, seconded by Mr. Ed Brooks, Questar III Board Member, and unanimously carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Emanatian, Board Clerk