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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – August 20, 2019
APW Board of Education Confirms No Increase to Tax Levy

Taxpayers in the Altmar-Parish-Williamstown Central School District will see no increase in the tax levy this year after the board of education received updated financial information in August that revealed a budget surplus from the 2018-19 school year.

The board of education initially acted in good faith on inaccurate information provided before the departure of its former business official. While initially informed that there would be little to no surplus in our 2018-19 budget, the district's partnership with Fiscal Advisors, external auditors, and the work of new APW business official Lorraine Burrows proved otherwise. This information was discovered in time for the board to act in the best interest of the community and avoid any increase to the tax levy this coming school year.

"A budget surplus occurs when a budget is constructed that underestimates revenue and overestimates expenditures," explained APW Superintendent Eric Knuth. "Conservative end-of-year spending also contributed to a larger than expected surplus. We promised the community we would immediately take corrective action, and I am pleased we have done so in time to avoid an impact to the tax levy."

On Aug. 8, the APW Board of Education adopted the tax warrant using assessment information provided by the Oswego County Office of Real Property Tax Service and equalization rates as provided by New York State Department of Tax and Finance. The STAR information was updated by New York State on Aug. 19 to approve enhanced STAR applications.

The board will look to approve the revised tax warrant using the updated information at the August 27th meeting. The action by the board would confirm the tax rolls, authorize the tax levy and command the tax collector to collect the taxes in each of the nine townships.

"We will continuously work to improve financial transparency at APW," Knuth said. "Our finance committee dates are posted on the district website, the district calendar, and under the board of education tab, and we would like to encourage participation at these meetings."

Over the past several weeks, APW developed a new partnership with Forecast 5 Analytics, which will help increase transparency and communicate budgetary information to the public.

Members of the board noted they were pleased to be able to present an unchanged tax levy to taxpayers. The board noted it has and will always act in good faith based on the information provided by the business office.

If there are have further questions, please see the board minutes online and the district encouraged all to reach out to school business official Lorraine Burrows with any specific questions. Burrows can be reached at 315-625-5254.

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