

D161 gives two abatements as tax levy increases by 1.5%

By **BILL JONES**
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After a number of twists and turns in the face of multiple options on how to approach its 2021 tax levy, the Flossmoor School District 161 board of education gave its final nod of approval to a 1.5% increase over last year's tax extension.

The school board voted unanimously Monday, Dec. 13, to approve a total levy of \$25.51 million.

The district applied for another two-year Property Tax Relief Grant, through which it is to receive \$1.71 million in

state funds in exchange for \$1.89 million in property tax abatements for two consecutive years. One of the complications of this year's levy is that the board received a similar PTRG in 2019, and the abatements related to it expire this year. That left the board with the option of making those abatements permanent or returning to pre-abatement figures, which would lead to the appearance of a greater increase over last year's tax bills.

The district elected to return to pre-abatement figures, but in addition to abating \$1.89 million related to the new PTRG, the district is also abating any refund recapture the county adds to

this year's tax rolls in accordance with State Senate Bill 508. It also estimated a 3% increase to existing Equalized Assessed Value and \$500,000 in new property for a total EAV of \$478.74 million in the district for 2021.

A Public Truth in Taxation Hearing was held during the meeting prior to the approval, but no members of the public spoke about the levy. Associate Superintendent Fran LaBella gave a third presentation in a series. This presentation went over total levy versus individual tax bills.

LaBella explained that individual tax bills are proportional to the total, so

they can rise or fall with changes in the overall levy. But the size of a particular slice of the proverbial property tax pie is related to both the value of the total and the size of other pieces. So when the total value is decided and a business receives a reduction in its taxes, essentially taking a smaller slice than expected, who is paying that bill shifts.

That means while the overall increase in the tax levy over last year's extension is 1.5%, individual taxpayers could see greater increases or even reductions, depending upon how the pie is ultimately split among all taxpayers, LaBella explained.

Homewood goes with ParkMobile for parking lot payment

By **NOAH JOHNSON**
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The Homewood village board approved a service agreement with ParkMobile for a commuter parking payment method.

The state legislature passed a law earlier this year that discontinues the Chicago South Suburban Mass Transit Dis-

trict, which had managed commuter lots at several south suburban train stops.

The legislation transferred to the village ownership of the following parking lots: the Harwood Avenue lot, a new lot north of the Amtrak ticket office and the Park Avenue south lot.

The village decided to stay with ParkMobile as the collector of parking fees.

ParkMobile is a parking payment ser-

vice already in use in the lots. It provides both on-demand and reservation services. Individuals seeking a parking space can pay for a space using a phone app or on the ParkMobile website. Customers who don't want to pay using the ParkMobile options can use a credit card at a pay station.

The village will continue the \$2.25 daily rate and and reduced the month-

ly commuter parking rate to \$35. The parking lots will provide free public parking on weeknights, weekends and during events. That means for the first time, the lots will be available to customers who shop and eat downtown. Parking will be enforced by the police department, which will work with ParkMobile on how to verify customers have paid.

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