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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

At a special meeting Monday morning, the Horseheads Board of Education approved the 2017-18 tax warrant, setting the average tax rate at \$17.54/1000 of assessed value, a 1.35% decrease from last year. This means that the overall tax rate on a \$100,000 home will decrease by \$24/year. This is the second consecutive year that the tax rate has decreased.

The decrease is due to property growth in the district, which includes seven municipalities. The tax rate is calculated using property assessments, as determined by assessors, and equalization rates, which are set by the state. Property owners in municipalities with 100% equalization rates will see the full 1.35% tax rate decrease. Those municipalities that are not at 100% equalization will see varying changes in their tax rates. Actual tax amounts are based on current assessments, which means that if a house is assessed at a higher rate than last year, the actual taxes may be higher.

“Our Board of Education has worked hard to be good stewards of our taxpayers’ dollars while continuing to offer our children and community a quality educational program,” said Superintendent of Schools Thomas Douglas. “With a much-needed major capital improvement project looming, it’s very important that our community is aware of our district’s tax rate, which has decreased over the last few years. This shows that our community is strong, and our district is a desirable place to live.”

Later this month, the Board of Education will vote on presenting a capital referendum to voters. The referendum would ask voters to consider a capital project that would include upgrading educational facilities and operational systems across the district during the next few years, with the potential of a second and third capital project to update the entire school district for the future. This is the Horseheads 2030 initiative that the district began last year, an initiative to improve and enhance both the educational program and infrastructure in the district.

“It is imperative that our facilities are upgraded to match our educational program so that we can compete academically, artistically, and athletically across the entire region and state,” said Douglas. “It’s time for our district to utilize the funding mechanism provided by the state to upgrade facilities, a funding system our taxpayers have been paying into for years to support other school districts and municipalities. It is time for Horseheads to get the state’s help in financial aid to upgrade our schools.”

Should the referendum go forward, the state would reimburse the district up to 80% of the cost of the capital project.

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