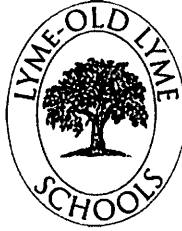


# LYME-OLD LYME SCHOOLS

*Regional School District #18*

*A Private School Experience*



*in a Public School Setting*

## **District Budget Hearing**

April 6, 2020

*This meeting was held virtually through Zoom.*

*Board Present:* Diane Linderman, Chairwoman; Martha Shoemaker, Vice Chair; Jean Wilczynski, Treasurer; Steven Wilson, Secretary; Rick Goulding, Stacey Leonardo; Jennifer Miller; Mary Powell St. Louis; Suzanne Thompson

*Administration Present:* Ian Neviaser, Superintendent of Schools; James Cavalieri, Principal of Lyme Consolidated School; Michelle Dean, Director of Curriculum; Melissa Dougherty, Director of Special Services; Kelly Enoch, Principal of Mile Creek School; Jeanne Manfredi, Assistant Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme High School; Holly McCalla, Business Manager; Ronald Turner, Director of Facilities & Technology; James Wygonik, Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme High School

*Others Present:* Mary Jo Nosal, Old Lyme Selectwoman; Olwen Logan, *Lymeline*; 2 Community Members from Lyme-Old Lyme

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Chair Diane Linderman. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Steven Wilson read the call of the meeting as follows:

*Notice is hereby given that the Regional School Board for Regional School District No. 18 for the Towns of Lyme and Old Lyme will hold a public hearing on the budget request for the fiscal year July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, April 6, 2020. All interested parties are invited to attend and present their comments or questions.*

Mr. Neviaser presented a summary of the 2020-2021 proposed budget. A copy of this presentation is attached to these minutes for informational purposes.

The meeting was opened up for questions and comments.

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Mona Colwell, Old Lyme resident, posed the following questions to the superintendent previous to the virtual meeting:

*1. Per Pupil Expenditure: page 3 of the Budget Book. It seems these costs are averaging a large increase each year. Just a few years ago, the PPE in the 2016-2017 Budget Book was \$19,033. During that time, Lyme-Old Lyme High School was rated 9/10 on sites used by most people looking to move to Connecticut. The PPE is now budgeted at \$22,671, and our high school's rating has dropped to 6/10. Does this concern you or any of the Board members?*

Mr. Neviaser explained the differences in per pupil expenditures year over year. Enrollment during the 2016-2017 school year was 1,302 students vs. 1,255 in the 2018-2019 school year when the most recent PPE was calculated. This signifies a drop of approximately 50 students which, when balanced with a larger budget, causes the PPE to go up.

Mr. Neviaser further explained how the district's rating has dropped due to inaccuracies in some reporting on GreatSchools.com. He directed Mrs. Colwell to a site on the State Department of Education website (EdSight) where accurate data and ranking for all districts can be located and where Lyme-Old Lyme High School is rated as one of the best high schools in Connecticut.

*2. Pupil Transportation Costs: page 4 of the Budget Book. Costs are up 28.69%. I understand that we benefited from a \$170K grant in last year's budget, but these costs are still high and up \$100,000 from \$971k two years ago. Have you explored ways to reduce these costs?*

Mr. Neviaser explained that the district recently negotiated a new transportation contract which resulted in an 8.1% increase year over year, on top of accounting for the \$170,000 in the transportation grant used against 2019-2020 expenditures. The district has the lowest price per bus in the area and likely the entire M&J fleet. As bus contracts do not have the same increases each year (they generally show a larger increase in the beginning of a contract) he noted that in year three of the new contract that starts July 1, 2020, the district is realizing a decrease in the cost per bus.

Mr. Neviaser further explained that the mandated cost to transport students to technical and Vo-Ag schools, in addition to magnet school costs, has also increased \$12,000 year over year. From two years ago, Vo-Ag and technical costs increased and fuel is also up considerably; however, the district recently locked in diesel pricing for next year that will save approximately \$13,000 to what is budgeted.

*3. Board of Education: page 16 of the Budget Book. What is the \$400K+ for the Board of Education?*

Mr. Neviaser explained that the Central Office services go into that line item. This includes banking fees; attorney fees; LAP insurance broker; ACES program; SEVIS programs (bringing in students); Frontline

platform applications; the referendum; staff recognitions; police services; district marketing; postage fees; copier and postage meter; and insurance.

Mr. Neviaser provided the costs associated with these services.

- \$19,500: CABA Membership and conference fees, district banking fees
- \$85,000: Attorney fees, LAP broker and ACES/SEVIS
- \$130,315: Purchases Services including all Frontline platforms (Recruitment, Time and Attendance, Absence Management), NESDEC, recognition banquet, referendum, Safe Schools training, volunteer background checks, police services, district marketing, etc.
- \$5,200: Postage
- \$1,900: Copier and postage meter leases
- \$10,000: Advertising and legal ads
- \$135,350: Property and liability insurance

*4. Grounds: page 18 of the Budget Book. Why has this number increased by \$150-200K since 2018-2019?*

Mr. Neviaser explained that \$240,000 has been budgeted for phase two of the tennis court replacement.

*5. Non-Certified: page 23 of the Budget Book. Preschool: why is this up by \$82K? Tutorial: why is this up by \$63K? Athletics: why is this down by \$15K?*

Mr. Neviaser explained that the newly hired Board Certified Behavior Analyst salary of \$64,360 is housed in the Pre-K Instructional Assistant line item. Previously, this position was held by a certified teacher and housed in that line item. The remaining increase is due to contractual obligations.

Mr. Neviaser explained that tutor expenditures are up due to the increased need of tutorial support at the high school (reduced an instructional assistant position) and Mile Creek School. The work at Mile Creek was previously outsourced to the Institute of Professional Practice. By moving it in-house, the support is greater and the cost is a savings of approximately \$40,000.

Mr. Neviaser explained that athletics is down \$15,000 because Samantha Ward was hired as a full-time nurse at Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School, in addition to being the athletic trainer, which resulted in savings to the athletic trainer position.

*6. Debt Service: page 28 & 29 of the Budget Book. We have \$719K dropping off. The Minimum Budget Requirement is \$700K less than our current proposed budget. Is it really necessary to make so many adjustments and increases to the budget that we do not gain any tax benefit of this debt decrease?*

Mr. Neviaser explained that debt service has no impact on the Minimum Budget Requirement, only the operating portion of the budget does. Both towns are seeing a great benefit of the drop in debt service as

the amount allocated to each town, per their respective enrollments, would be much greater without this reduction.

Mrs. Thompson asked for a more detailed explanation of the Board Certified Behavior Analyst position, and Mr. Neviasser explained the role of this position in the Special Service Department. *The Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) serves as the behavioral consultant for all ABA services and provides program oversight for students identified with autism or other significant behavioral challenges. The BCBA conducts related functional behavioral analysis, generates related behavioral plans, and ensures the effective implementation of all treatment and programming for students on their caseload.*

Mrs. Colwell asked for more information on the program that brings students in from other countries to be educated in Lyme-Old Lyme. Mr. Neviasser explained in more detail the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) program. He further noted that this program ends up being self-funded by simply having one student here via tuition payments. Mr. Neviasser provided a financial example from Region #13 who also participates in this program.

There were no further questions or comments from the public.

Mrs. Linderman commended all for their efforts on the 2020-2021 budget.

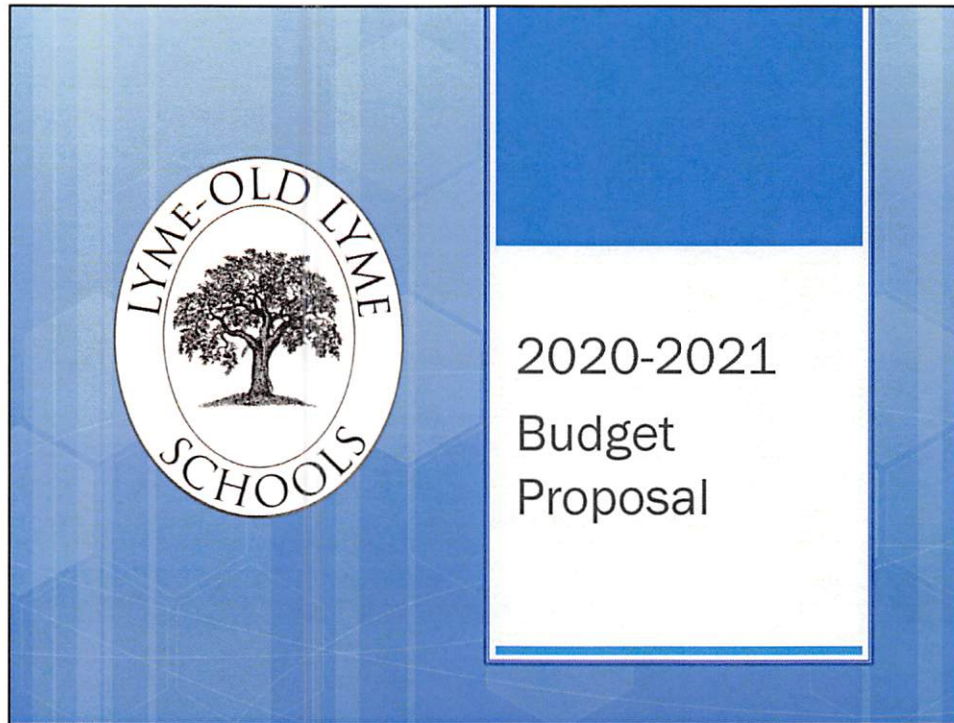
MOTION: Mrs. Wilczynski made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Wilson, that pursuant to Governor Lamont's Executive Order No. 7I, the vote on the budget for fiscal year July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021 will be held at the Regional School District #18 Board of Education meeting on May 6, 2020.

VOTE: The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m. upon motion by Dr. Goulding and a second by Mrs. Wilczynski.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Wilson, Secretary



## **Goals to be Served by the Budget**

To support the objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan by:

- Preserving and building upon the high standards of education in LOL while remaining fiscally responsible to our communities.
- Supporting the ongoing renewal of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and staff development activities in response to the expectations of state and national standards.
- Continuing to plan and provide technology infrastructure and applications that are consistent with highly effective and efficient programming and operational standards.
- Maintaining high facility standards for all district buildings and grounds.
- Maintaining a dynamic and responsive approach to programming needs and mandates in special education.
- Maintaining both compliance and reasonability in response to state and federal mandates.

## What is a budget?

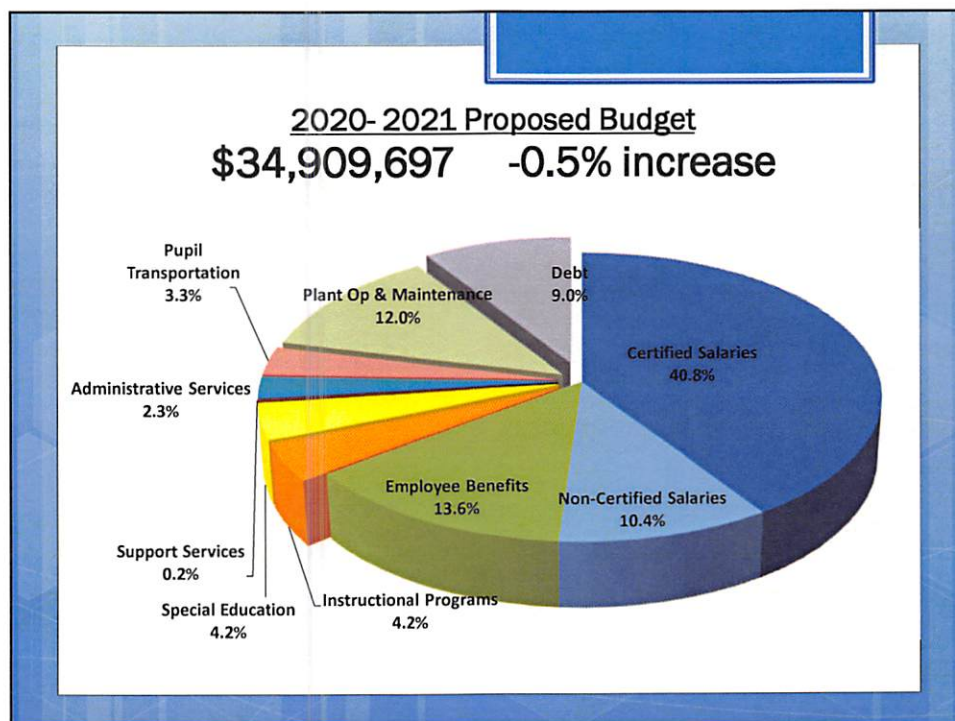
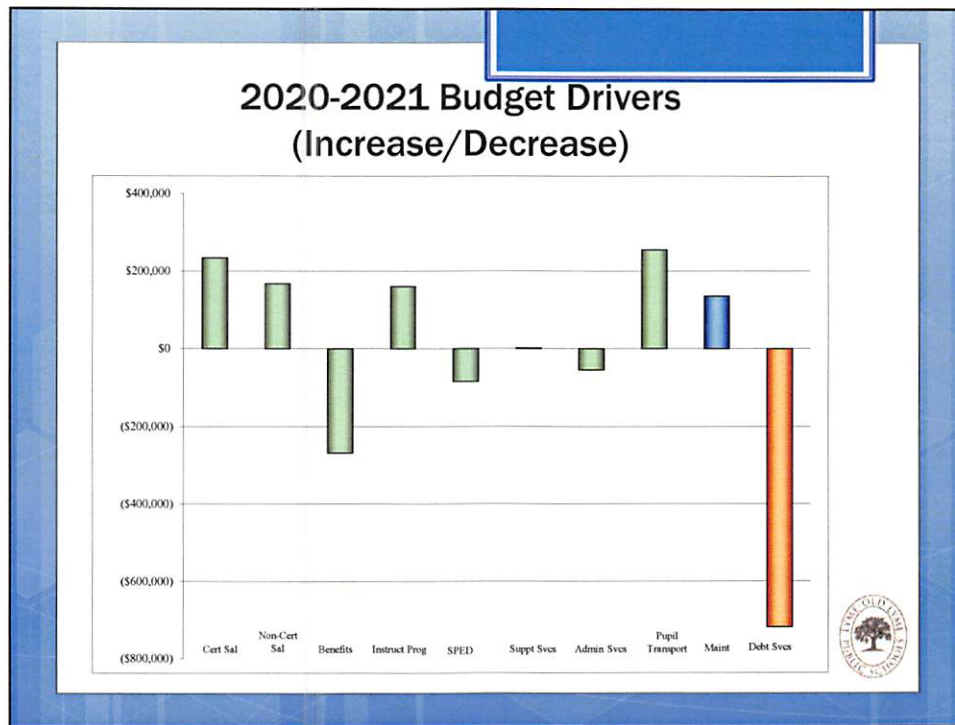
- Sec. 10-222. Appropriations and budget.** Each local board of education shall prepare **an itemized estimate** of the cost of maintenance of public schools for the ensuing year and shall submit such **estimate** to the board of finance in each town or city having a board of finance, to the board of selectmen in each town having no board of finance or otherwise to the authority making appropriations for the school district, not later than two months preceding the annual meeting at which appropriations are to be made.
- A BUDGET IS NOT ONLY A PLAN, IT IS A STATEMENT OF VALUES AND PRIORITIES**



### Overall Budget Summary

	18-19 Actuals	19-20 Budget	20-21 Budget	\$ Increase or (Decrease)	% Inc or (Dec) by Line Item
Certified Salaries	14,137,643	13,993,148	14,227,237	234,089	1.67%
Non-certified Salaries	3,172,372	3,451,970	3,619,265	167,295	4.85%
Employee Benefits	4,372,755	5,005,802	4,737,682	(268,120)	(5.36)%
Instructional Programs	1,196,571	1,318,262	1,478,212	159,950	12.13%
Special Education	1,547,913	1,538,305	1,452,941	(85,364)	(5.55)%
Support Services	63,604	76,496	78,148	1,652	2.16%
Administrative Services	771,469	873,741	818,208	(55,533)	(6.36)%
Pupil Transportation	971,149	889,276	1,144,367	255,091	28.69%
Plant Op & Maintenance	3,915,628	4,065,858	4,200,916	135,058	3.32%
<b>OPERATING BUDGET</b>	<b>30,149,104</b>	<b>31,212,858</b>	<b>31,756,976</b>	<b>544,118</b>	<b>1.74%</b>
Debt Service	3,959,063	3,871,900	3,152,721	(719,179)	(18.57)%
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>\$34,108,167</b>	<b>\$35,084,758</b>	<b>\$34,909,697</b>	<b>(\$175,061)</b>	<b>-0.50%</b>





A review of budgets back to 1998 shows that this is the lowest budget increase on record. The next lowest was in 2017-2018 at 0.49%.



### The operations/program budget reflects:

- Continued adherence to class size guidelines
- Addition of staff to account for enrollment shifts
- Continuation of existing academic and extracurricular activities
- Adjustments for anticipated changes in the special education population
- Adequate funding for maintenance and repair of buildings and grounds
- Scheduled replacement of technology and equipment
- Program improvements that are consistent with high academic and operational standards





## Program Improvements:

- Musical Instrument Replacement Cycle
- SEL Programming
- Updated NGSS materials K-5
- Smartboard Replacement/HS 1:1

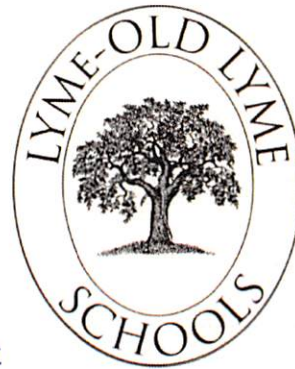
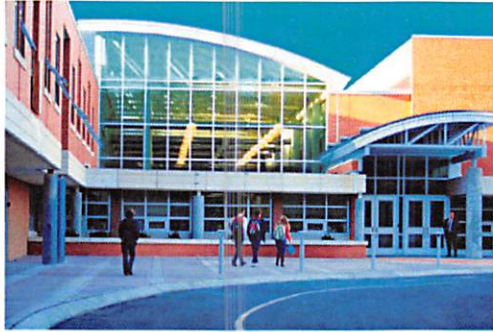


## Facilities Proposed Projects

Capital Projects (Operating Budget)	2020 – 2021 Operating Funds
Replace Three HS Tennis Courts	\$240,000
Lyme School Gymnasium Renovation	\$435,000
<b>2020/2021 Project Totals</b>	<b>\$675,000</b>

Special Project (Non Operating Budget)	Funding Source
Solar Electric System Installation – Center School	Purchase Power Agreement





## What's next?

- Opportunity for public comment
- Board vote on the proposed budget at their May meeting