LYME-OLD LYME SCHOOLS

Regional School District #18

A Private School Experience ***in a Public School Setting***

Special Board of Education Meeting
January 29, 2025

Board Present: Jason Kemp, Chair; Christopher Staab, Treasurer; Martha Shoemaker, Secretary; Scott Brown; Laura Dean-Frazier; Susan Fogliano; Anna James; Gavin Lodge; Alexander Lowry

Administration Present: Ian Neviaser, Superintendent of Schools; Mark Ambruso, Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School; Michelle Dean, Director of Curriculum; Melissa Dougherty, Director of Special Services; Kelly Enoch, Principal of Mile Creek School; Allison Hine, Principal of Lyme Consolidated School; Sean Kennedy, Assistant Principal of Mile Creek School; Holly McCalla, Business Manager; Jeanne Manfredi, Assistant Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme High School; Ron Turner, Director of Facilities & Technology; Noah Ventola, Assistant Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School; James Wygonik, Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme High School

Others Present: one community member from Lyme-Old Lyme

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jason Kemp at 6:30 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. The purpose of the meeting was to hold a budget workshop for further discussion of the 2025-2026 budget.

Mr. Neviaser reviewed the budget timeline noting that the budget will be presented to the community on February 5, 2025. He also reviewed the budget reflecting a 7.99% increase that was presented at the meeting on January 22.

Mr. Neviaser reviewed the following reductions to the initial budget proposal based on feedback from the Board:
Postpone LOLMS Chromebook replacement cycle - $35,425
Elementary Interns - $34,000
Employee Benefits due to improved claims experience - $112,189
LOLHS Supplies - $2,870

Total decrease of ($184,484)
These reductions would reduce the initially proposed budget to $39,687,779, an increase of $2,766,898, for a total increase of 7.49%.

Mr. Neviaser reviewed a historical perspective of the budget increases since the 2020-2021 school year to the present, which reflected an average annual increase over five years of $995,230 or 2.75% per year. This information is detailed in the attached document.

Mr. Neviaser also discussed some important points for the Board to consider:
Uncertainties: kindergarten enrollment (planning for slightly lower than enrollment projections: 4 classes / 29 less students) and bussing (parent request of shorter bus rides) which can only be rectified by adding more buses to the routes.
Fluid: employee benefits and special education costs.
Impact to Towns: bare bones budget causes very little return to the towns. A return is favored by the Boards of Finance.

The Board discussed this new proposal and provided the following direction to the administration so that they could prepare the budget to be put forth to the community at the Public Forum scheduled for February 5. The discussion centered on the variability of health costs; the cost of adding more buses and the effect should it not increase ridership; removal of some of the planned facilities projects and funding from the undesignated fund; and tuition/revenue and how this is returned to the towns. Because of guidance from the Boards of Finance, there was consensus that they not move the facilities projects, or a portion of them, out of the budget to the undesignated fund. It was also noted that the Boards of Finance were anticipating a 10.5% school budget increase, which now was at 7.49%.

The Board also reviewed the historical impact of school renovations (increased debt service) which reflected the following

Year	Total Budget Increase
2000-2001	10.91%
2002-2003	9.49%
2003-2004	8.20%
2011-2012	4.92%
2025-2026	10.53 (predicted)

There was Board consensus that they move forward with the 7.49% budget to present to the community at the Budget Forum on February 5.

The special meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m. upon a motion by Mr. Lodge and a second by Mrs. James.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Shoemaker, Secretary

2025-2026 Budget Proposal

LYME-OLD LYME SCHOOLS

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Budget Development Timeline

Event	Date
~~Budget Driver Meeting~~	~~*November 6*~~
~~Administration prepares budget proposals~~	~~*October-January*~~
~~School Based Budget Presentations~~	~~*January 15*~~
~~Central Services Budget Presentations~~	~~*January 22*~~
Board Discussion/Deliberation/Direction	*January 29 (tonight)*
Public Budget Forum With Possible Budget Adoption	*February 5 (Feb. BOE meeting)*
District Budget Hearing	*April 7*
District Budget Meeting	*May 5*
Budget Referendum	*May 6*

Overall Budget Summary

	23-24 Actuals	24-25 Budget	25-26 Budget	$ Increase or (Decrease)	% Inc or (Dec) by Line Item
Certified Salaries	16,227,328	16,349,160	16,663,990	314,830	1.93%
Non-certified Salaries	3,869,083	4,188,967	4,263,615	74,648	1.78%
Employee Benefits	3,972,368	4,274,244	4,835,718	561,474	13.14%
Instructional Programs	1,507,946	1,586,694	1,688,617	101,923	6.42%
Special Education	806,398	1,238,752	1,965,473	726,721	58.67%
Support Services	66,929	78,298	78,360	62	0.08%
Administrative Services	1,018,558	1,026,921	979,148	(47,773)	(4.65)%
Pupil Transportation	661,768	883,269	1,047,503	164,234	18.59%
Plant Op & Maintenance	4,110,690	4,883,574	4,136,551	(747,023)	(15.30)%
OPERATING BUDGET	32,241,068	34,509,879	35,658,975	1,149,096	3.33%
Debt Service	3,229,313	2,411,002	4,213,288	1,802,286	74.75%
TOTAL BUDGET	$35,470,381	$36,920,881	39,872,263	$2,951,382	7.99%

Additional Budget Reductions

- Postpone LOLMS Chromebook replacement cycle ($35,425)
- Elementary Interns ($34,000)
- Employee Benefits due to improved claims experience ($112,189)
- LOLHS Supplies ($2,870)

- Total decrease ($184,484)

Overall Budget Summary

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Non-certified Salaries	3,869,083	4,188,967	4,263,615	74,648	1.78%
Employee Benefits	3,972,368	4,274,244	*4,723,529*	*449,285*	*10.51%*
Instructional Programs	1,507,946	1,586,694	*1,616,322*	*29,628*	*1.87%*
Special Education	806,398	1,238,752	1,965,473	726,721	58.67%
Support Services	66,929	78,298	78,360	62	0.08%
Administrative Services	1,018,558	1,026,921	979,148	(47,773)	(4.65)%
Pupil Transportation	661,768	883,269	1,047,503	164,234	18.59%
Plant Op & Maintenance	4,110,690	4,883,574	4,136,551	(747,023)	(15.30)%
OPERATING BUDGET	32,241,068	34,509,879	35,474,491	964,612	2.80%
Debt Service	3,229,313	2,411,002	4,213,288	1,802,286	74.75%
TOTAL BUDGET	$35,470,381	$36,920,881	$39,687,779	$2,766,898	7.49%

Historical Perspective

2020-2021	$34,711,631	
2021-2022	$34,874,548	+0.47
2022-2023	$34,830,464	-0.13
2023-2024	$35,844,345	2.91
2024-2025	$36,920,881	3.00
2025-2026	$39,687,779	7.49

2020-2021	$34,711,631
2025-2026	$39,687,779
	+$4,976,148

That is an average annual increase over five years of $995,230 or 2.75% per year

Considerations

- Uncertainties
  - Kindergarten enrollment
  - Bussing
- Fluid
  - Employee Benefits
  - Special Education
- Impact to Towns

What's Next…

- Questions/discussion/direction on preparing the budget to be put forth to the public on February 5.