

1 WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE SCHOOL
2 BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
3 WLC-Library
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5 FINAL Minutes
6 Wednesday, October 08, 2025
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9 Committee Membership: Bill Ryan (Chair), Alyssa Lavoie (Vice Chair),
10 Bridget Mooney (Secretary), Craig Alley, Jennifer Bernet, Phil Brooks,
11 Harold Melcher III, Bob Silva, Jonathan Vanderhoof, Paul White (SB liaison)
12

13 Present: Alley, Bernet, Lavoie, Melcher, Mooney, Ryan, Silva, Vanderhoof, White
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15 Absent: Brooks
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17 The meeting was called to order at 6:37
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19 The meeting was recorded.
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21 Adjustment to the agenda:

22 Alyssa Lavoie noted that the October 1, 2025, meeting of the Budget Committee did
23 not have a quorum and therefore was not legitimate.
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25 Alyssa Lavoie made the motion to accept Bob Silva of Wilton to the Budget
26 Committee.

27 The motion was seconded by Jennifer Bernet. Six aye votes, no nays. The motion
28 passes.
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30 Alyssa requested that acceptance of previous minutes and the reports be moved to
31 the end of the meeting.
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33 **TECHNOLOGY:**

34 Nick Buroker presented his budget explaining that this budget is the one he feels
35 least confident in, and he has tried his best to keep it level. The main driver of his
36 budget increase is software. He's looking at free and grant funded services to
37 replace some current use items to cut back on the budget. Replacements remain
38 level. Alyssa Lavoie presented Nick with a list of eleven questions meant to clarify
39 aspects of his budget. Nick Buroker addressed each question.
40

41 ● **2410-650 (office software and license subscription) Items listed in notes for**
42 **equals \$17,790.75, but equal a total budget of \$25,779 (across three buildings).**
43 **Why an \$8,000 difference? Also, why up approx. 15% over FY26 budgeted and**
44 **FY25 actual?**

45 Nick did not update the notes with this year's numbers; the numbers are from last
46 year or possibly the year before. \$7,200 Vector; \$2,700 Alice Training, \$2,600

School Spring, \$440.00 Pick Up Control; \$8,176 Power School; \$2700 Parent Square; \$500.00 MBA Report Creator with 5% for wiggle room

● **Details of new printer/copier contract**

It is a three-year copier contract with Toshiba for toner and replacement maintenance of our printers and copiers and negotiated with SP Copiers Pro. This budget is the third year on a three-year contract to renew in 2028 or 2030. Kristie LaPlant is looking into this detail.

● **Details of phone/internet contract with FirstLight**

This contract is marked confidential from the vendor. Craig Alley questions the confidentiality of this contract. Peter Weaver will investigate this. It is a ten-year contract, negotiated by Nick Buroker's predecessor's predecessor. Kristie LaPlant explains that the district has tried to negotiate out of this contract, but it is a substantial penalty to do so.

● **2844-530 (phone & internet) - Why is SAU not charged with any portion and why a 10% increase?**

It's based on students and SAU doesn't have students. 10% Increase – Nick Buroker we came dangerously close to going over budget, so he wants to account for that possibility. Alyssa Lavoie asks how do we come dangerously close to going over budget; what are the variable costs? Nick Buroker is unclear on the variable costs and will get back to the committee.

● **What kind of items are categorized in 2844-610 (technology supplies)?**

Adaptors, wall jacks, cabling, batteries

● **Why is LCS Replacement Equipment listed under 2844-735 instead of 1100-735 like FRES and WLC?**

It's used at FRES and WLC to purchase Chromebooks. LCS doesn't have that.

● **2844-50 (Travel, conference fees, mileage) No expenses for the past few years. Are expenses actually expected for this?**

Yes. Previously staff wasn't expected to travel between buildings. One position was cut from full time to just school year, leaving just two staff during the summer with three buildings to maintain, so there will be expenses on that budget line.

● **2844-430 (WLC Equipment repairs & Maint) - minimal spent in 2025, \$1800 spent in 2024 and note says the costs are expected to continue to decrease. If so, does FY27 need to be \$1,500? It's early in FY26, but what do we realistically see needing this year?**

This is budgeted for unforeseen consequences. Craig Alley inquires if there is history

on repairs. Nick Buroker replies not an aggregated list.

● **2844-650 (software & license subscriptions) What is contributing to the drastic increase in cost? FY27 budget is up 30% over FY26 budget and up 127% over FY25 actual and up 87% over FY24 actual.**

Multiple reasons: Google has changed its model and now we must pay licensing fees to keep the google classroom suite. The same is true of Microsoft, also our security camera software is out of date and that updates are being folded into the budget.

Craig Alley asks whether licensees are at an enterprise level. Nick Buroker replies that the big stuff is enterprise, smaller things are whatever is cheapest. Google is an enterprise license plus a per student cost. For google and Microsoft the licenses are for the district. Exact Vision is per unit; we have a server in every building.

Craig Alley asks if there is a practice of right sizing licenses and how frequently is that done. Nick Buroker replies yes and yearly, when he prepares his budget. Craig Alley asked in this last accounting were any licenses found to be unused? Nick Buroker replies yes, Learning AZ was a district license, but only one teacher was using it so it was change to an individual license.

● **1100-650 (software & license subscriptions) - why is LCS up 34% over FY26 budget and 58% over FY25 actual? And What is contributing to the drop in WLC by 45% over FY26 budgeted?**

LCS: There is a very large Kindergarten class this year, close to a 20% increase.

Also, the software price is increasing, and they were told to budget 5% more.

WLC: took a hard look at what was needed and tried to pare down as much as he possibly could.

Craig Alley asks who is responsible for negotiating these contracts? Nick Buroker answers that he and the curriculum coordinator are responsible for the classroom stuff, for the backroom stuff, it's all Nick. Craig Alley asks how many subscriptions and contracts Nick manages. Nick Buroker: a dozen or a dozen and a half. Craig Alley would like a summary of the agreements and an accounting for which ones are going up and why. Nick Buroker says that does not exist, but that he can create it. Alyssa Lavoie asks that that be put on the list of reports.

● **2844-810 (dues, fees, memberships) - 35% increase over FY26 budget and 72% increase over FY25 actual, how come?**

A small budget line only used for two things. One is MSISAC. Federal funding has been cut from MSISAC (Multi-State Internet and Security Alert Center) which is essential for cyber security measures for small districts. They've had to move to a membership model which for a small district cost \$550 per year. The other is COSIN (consortium of technology directors in the state) which gives us access to the Student Data Privacy Consortium. We have a digital privacy agreement with every vendor, and this is managed through SDPC.

Jonathan Vanderhoof asks what the reasons are for Nick Buroker feeling the least secure about this year's budget? Nick Buroker was looking at a 40% tariff increasing the cost of the devices he needed to purchase. By the time he was going to make the purchases the tariff was down to 10%. Currently there's a 25% tariff on Apple products.

It's a very fly-by-night situation which has led to a lot of unease on Nick Brucker's part.

Jonathan Vanderhoof asks if Nick Buroker can project a technology savings if LCS weren't there. Nick Buroker would like to get back to Jonathan Vanderhoof on that.

Kristie LaPlant reports that the copier contract expires on June 30, 2030

Peter Weaver asks Jonathan Vanderhoof to repeat his question about the LCS building and possible savings if it weren't part of the school system. Nick Buroker can't be specific, but there is a great deal of infrastructure that wouldn't need to be maintained and upgraded.

Alyssa Lavoie asks about expected big purchases or upgrades. Is there anything that should be anticipated in budget planning? Nick Buroker explains that we have the ERATE program that covers much of the technology needs and the system was completely upgraded in 2021. No big upgrades are anticipated until the early 2030's. Probably at that time the upgrades will be in the 20K range and with a 60% reimbursement from ERATE it would be in the 8K dollar range.

SAU:

Peter Weaver provided the Budget Committee with a breakdown of the administrative budget items. Alyssa Lavoie presented a list of seven questions meant to clarify aspects of their budget. Peter Weaver addressed each question.

● What kind of things fall under 2819-890 (School board misc)?

Things like retirement gifts and lights on the LCS light pole. Things unanticipated.

● 2321-290 (Superintendent PD) - What kind of PD is planned? FY24 was \$229 and FY25 was \$581

Peter Weaver wants to accumulate as much professional development as he can. He doesn't anticipate spending everything budgeted, but he does plan to pursue more professional development.

Jonathan Vanderhoof asks what's the difference between SAU travel expenses and the professional development in terms of categorization? Kristie LaPlant explains that it's an accounting requirement for the two accounts to be separate in the budget. One is specific to professional development courses while the other covers things like mileage and hotel fees for a conference.

● 2321-534 (Superintendent office postage) - What is the difference between

business and superintendent? FY24 \$8, FY25 \$15 - what would be sent to need a budget of \$450?

This has been changed to \$100.00. Kristine Fowler, the Superintendent's assistant felt that was the right number. Peter Weaver said most of the postage was paid out of the business office. Kristie LaPlant concurred but added that postage is sometimes taken from the Superintendent's budget or the Special Needs budget as well as LCS as it all comes from that one meter in the building.

● **2321-810 (superintendent dues, fees, memberships) - What dues, fees or memberships are anticipated for \$1775? FY24 - \$75 and FY25 - \$0**

Peter Weaver explains that there are two groups that almost all Superintendents belong to. The cost for the year for one of them is \$75.00 (Southwest Regional group) and the other is \$1775 (Superintendents Association). Previously Peter Weaver didn't budget that money for personal reasons, but this year he is interested in attending the meetings if he is able. If he doesn't anticipate being able to make the meetings, he won't use the money to join the group.

● **2321-890 (superintendent misc) - What kind of items have been categorized under misc the past few years?**

Peter Weaver explains that quite a lot of the money goes to background checks which are required for all volunteers and staff members. Starfish award is included here. Employs students to help carry things then buys them pizza. Cards and flowers. First grade T-shirts.

● **2319-550 (school board printing services) - Parents bill of rights: does this need to be printed? Can it be electronic?**

The Annual report is expensive to print; this is the only thing this budget line is used for.

Alyssa Lavoie asks about the Parent Bill of Rights. Peter Weaver thinks it can be folded into the Annual Report, but he needs to check on this.

● **2319-810 - NHSBA fee - is this expected to continue to increase year over year? It seems to have been \$3195 consistently. Why are we budgeting more?**

Peter Weaver: Prices for everything are going up. Alyssa Lavoie: what benefit are we getting from this subscription? Peter Weaver: the policy subscription is priceless, as well as legal advice.

Jonathan Vanderhoof asked about the costs and method for advertising required public notices. Peter Weaver says we post in post offices and in newspapers and we post kindergarten information. Kristie LaPlante adds we're required to publish notice of Budget Meeting and Annual Meetings must be published in an actual newspaper.

Bob Silva asked what percentage of time is spent on services for homeschool and private school students. Peter Weaver explains that homeschooled students have

access to WLC courses and co-curriculars, so any cost or time would be on the principals, not the SAU. Peter's input is on TITLE Grants two of which are shared with High Mowing. This can take a significant amount of time as High Mowing often doesn't understand the flow of government funds and often requires Peter Weaver to rewrite their requests for funding. Bob Silva believes the town has a significant number of students not attending the public school and he'd like to see data around why that is.

BUSINESS

Kristie LaPlante noted that the business budget is decreasing on almost every line. Jonathan Vanderhoof asks about mailing costs (meter vs actual) and about the differences between the travel conference fees and the professional development fees and why they categorized differently. Kristie LaPlant: If employees go to a workshop its considered a benefit so it goes into one budget line category, however a conference for example is that is beyond normal employee benefits and therefor appears in a separate budget line. Craig Alley asks about the FRES Bond is going up substantially. Kristie LaPlant: per the bond agreement, every year the principle is increasing, and the interest is decreasing and is all tied back to the original bond documents. ts our only bond.

FOOD SERVICE:

Megan Nantel presented her budget stating that there isn't a big increase, but there is an increase of .21%, mostly due to food costs, which happens every year. She has budgeted more than last year but anticipates going over budget as the participation in the food program has gone up over the last two years, as have food prices. She's looking into purchasing reusable trays which should help lower costs. She spoke to the contracts she has with service providers and useful tracking system. Alyssa Lavoie asked about the reusable trays, about the cost of snacks and Frozen Fridays. Additionally, Lavoie asked about whether other districts are doing any inventive culinary programming around revenue generating opportunities. Jonathan Vanderhoof asked that the food services budget reflect a more transparent number for the actual costs; previous years have been over budget. Alyssa Lavoie asked about inconsistencies in staff salaries vs taxes paid. (Kristie LaPlante will investigate this). Craig Alley asks about a sustainability credit for the reuseable trays. He also asked about tracking cost per servings and wonders if this has varied over time and does it contribute to a realistic forecast for the budget.

Alyssa Lavoie asked that Department heads to update notes in the budget and to make the updates known to the Budget Committee prior to meetings. She requests a more efficient process. She asks that Budget Committee members write to the Chair and Vice Chair if they will be missing a meeting; the October 1 meeting did not have a quorum, and members had not informed the chairs that they would be absent. She requested that Chair Ryan get pertinent information to the rest of the committee in a timely manner.

Jonathan Vanderhoff made the motion to approve the Minutes from 09/23/25. Craig Alley seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Alyssa Lavoie wants to discuss the salary and benefits report request. After digging into it for ten hours, she feels it is critical to change our process as a district. She proceeds to give a brief history of past school budget failings and shortfalls and suggests that others read the history by looking at the school board and budget committee minutes from September and October 2019. Jonathan Vanderhoof states that he remembers her findings differently. Alyssa counters his memory with the minutes from the 2019 meeting. She continues explaining the history of WLC school budget deficits in recent years and explains her concern that we could experience a turnover in administration at any time and that we'd need to hope the new administrator got the numbers right. She wants to know how we prevent this from happening again. She wants all the details in the budget ahead of time so we're not hearing "we'll get you that information".

Peter Weaver says he and Kristie LaPlant are preparing a document for the committee. He states that he's in agreement with the request for public salary data in the budget but probably not the benefits package which he thinks may be a violation of privacy. The administration are in discussions with the district attorney to get a legal position on the benefits packages being public. He doesn't want to be lumped into the pre-Weaver administrations where serious budget deficits were not caught in real time leading to distrust in the budget. He's aware of several other districts in deep budget deficits and he doesn't want ours to be one of them. Alyssa Lavoie states that we are in a good position and wonders how we take advantage of staying there. She asks Kristie when we can have a discussion around establishing a 2.5% emergency fund so it can be understood by the budget committee and suggested to the School Board for a possible warrant article as well as exploring a CRF Expendable Trust Fund which may be interchangeable. There is a 150K cushion in the budget; how do we want to decide on that. Alyssa Lavoie suggests that Kristie LaPlant look at July 2020 and May 2121 to see what was previously included in the budgets. Jonathan Vanderhoof thinks that having benefits information would be very useful for purposes of teacher negotiations to bring more clarity to the process when the public needs to vote on the CBA. Also useful to understanding the budget freezes that we get at the end of the year not because the money isn't there, but because we're not sure, and by the time we are sure, we're past the time of spending that money. Peter Weaver says the issue isn't with sharing the health benefits as an aggregate, but in listing it out individually. They have those numbers and prefer sharing it that way so as not to create trouble for themselves with the union or to violate to anyone's privacy. They should have a legal opinion within a week, and he can share that. With the other requested information, he agrees it should be shared. He agrees that the more information ("stuff") that is shared the better it will be when a new Superintendent or Business Manager takes over. Jonathan Vanderhoof emphasizes that it's the money the budget committee is concerned with not the individuals, but that not tying the benefit to an individual leaves people in a one-person department more exposed than employees in a multi

person department. Alyssa Lavoie appreciates the administration caring for their employees and seeking legal advice but notes that other districts include this data in their budgets, so she would be surprised if the legal advice were to conceal this data. Peter Weaver says we're looking at a big increase in health costs, at least a 15% increase. Alyssa Lavoie asks who our health care provider is and whether we got hit with a bill. The provider is School Care and the bill is 231K. Alyssa Lavoie thinks that if we have a document listing all our contracts will be invaluable should our administration suddenly leave. We would be starting four years back without this information, after getting us out of a hole how to we proceed forward to ensure a good future. Peter Weaver agrees that this information is vital and says he and Kristie LaPlante are working on getting us all that data. Jonathan Vanderhoof asks about the previous budget meeting (10/01/25). Alyssa Lavoie summarizes, explaining the school board should look at expanding the current CRF or creating a new one. She says the CIP, which is great, but that many years it's been underfunded to cut the budget or has been improperly used. She suggests if we break out the buckets it allows for more checks and balances and there should be an audit of the current CIP to see what spending doesn't qualify. Jonathan Vanderhoof wants to see that items aren't being paid for by the CIP when they should be in the budget. Kristie LaPlant explains that when she arrived the CIP was vague and had no historical data. So, they blew up the CIP and categorized it to better understand the scope and laid it out for the next few years. Since starting with the district Kristie LaPlante cannot see any spending for building and roadways that was not on the CIP. The CIP is not set in stone, but is a guiding principle used by the school board and facilities committee and funds cannot be used without the school board's approval.

The CIP discussion is planned with the Facilities Committee on November 12, 2025. The current Capital Improvement Plan is available on the district's website. All the projects in there are valid. December 3, 2025, is scheduled for warrant article consideration. Kristie LaPlante suggests carrying the salaries and benefits reserve fund conversation to December 3rd. Jonathan Vanderhoof asks that we discuss the salary and benefits reserve fund at the next Budget Committee meeting. He acknowledges that it is up to the school board to implement the fund, but that the Budget Committee can recommend it. Alyssa Lavoie wants to ensure that the CIP, which is now properly managed, doesn't revert to bad practices. Bill Ryan acknowledges that the current administration is handling things properly, unlike previous administrations. Peter Weaver says the three-year spending cap is beneficial in keeping spending in line and not allowing rash decision.

Kristie LaPlante asks the board to move the discussion of the wages and benefits capital reserve from November 22nd to November 12th. There is no objection.

Alyssa Lavoie asks that the budget committee be included in the information from school board meetings regarding budget issues. The budget Committee is already included on school board packets.

363 Bob Silva asks Jonathan Vanderhoof about his questioning of the LSC building.
364 Jonathan Vanderhoof says that many people ask him about why we continue to
365 have the LSC building because people are looking at ways to be efficient and save
366 money and the LSC building keeps coming up. The facilities committee and the
367 strategic planning committee are both looking into the LSC building and the viability
368 of keeping it. Peter Weaver notes that it is in the strategic plan to be looked at
369 operationally, logistically, legally. They need to determine space issues; the district is
370 stable, and the schools aren't growing. Bob Silva suggests programming options
371 such as having HS students working with kindergarten students in and early
372 education program. Jonathan Vanderhoof says if we could get a number on it, that
373 could push the conversation forward. Bill Silva agrees.

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375 Chair Ryan calls for Public Comment. There is no one present in the room. There
376 was one person online: Jennifer Gagnon. Her comment was "Alyssa, you're doing a
377 great job".

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379 Bridget Mooney makes a motion to adjourn. Hal Melcher seconds the motion. All
380 Ayes, No Nays. The motion passes.

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382 The meeting adjourns at 8:50 pm
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