

**Finance Committee Meeting Notes
Crescent Lake School
November 18, 2025 6:00pm**

PRESENT

GWRSB Finance Committee: Dr. James Manning – Team Leader, Kirsten Burke, Brodie Deshaies, Kayla Hewitt

Administration: Superintendent Caroline Arakelian, Business Administrator Kathy O’Blenes, Kerry Hunt, Paul Famulari, Kathy Tetreault

Other: Tom Bickford, Mary Schillereff, Dr. Beth Sheckler, community members

SUBJECT MATTER

Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2027 – General Fund

BUDGET OVERVIEW / DISCUSSION

- Superintendent Arakelian described the budget development process that included SAU summer preparation and meetings with administrators during the month of October. She reviewed the schedule of presentations and explained that the committee would vote on moving the budget forward at the conclusion of the final meeting. The School Board will consider the budget in December for preliminary adoption and in January for final adoption, followed by the Deliberative Session on January 31st.
- Superintendent Arakelian summarized the personnel changes that are included in the proposed 2026-2027 budget for KRMS, KRHS, NDS, OCS, TCS, EES, Special Education, and District needs. Notably, she proposed that the Homeless Liaison, currently supported by grant funds, be added to the District’s budget, as well as an additional Maintenance Technician, and a new Finance Manager at the SAU office. She proposed that the Lakeside Academy Program be returned to the District as Kingswood Academy, with its location on the Kingswood campus and the addition of a dedicated Special Education teacher and paraprofessional, saving the District a significant amount in contracted services. She proposed the reduction of an Administrative Assistant position at the SAU, a math teacher at the high school, and a classroom teacher at New Durham School. She also proposed a 100% DPT shared by TCS and EES and a new District-wide DPT for Preschool. She proposed the addition of a Student Wellness Coordinator as a separate Warrant Article item to oversee the school nurse program, the student meals program, and to supervise the counselors across the District.
- Superintendent Arakelian highlighted the budget drivers of increased utility expenses, increased health insurance premiums (9.4%), and necessary maintenance projects for the District. The Superintendent and Business Administrator answered questions from the committee.
- Principal Hunt presented the proposed budget for Kingswood Regional Middle School with an increase of 3.5%. Ms. Hunt projected stable enrollment of 330 students for the next school year. She shared that the middle school is fully staffed with professional teachers, but they continue to try to fill 6 open part-time support staff positions. She explained the career readiness work that has been done to connect middle school students with LRTC programs and how they have strived to incorporate student voices into the daily activities of

the middle school to improve the culture and community. The budget represents generally level funded operational costs with the main increase going toward the return of her request to construct a permanent and dedicated counseling center through the repairs and maintenance line to accommodate the growing student needs in the building and the request to increase the Special Education secretary from part-time (29) to full time (32.5) hours with two additional weeks of work to support the DPT with the heavy caseload. Ms. Hunt answered questions from the committee.

- Principal Famulari presented the proposed budget for Kingswood Regional High School with an overall decrease of .14%. Mr. Famulari reported current enrollment of 741 students with a full staff of professional teachers, though a number of Special Education paraprofessional positions remain open. He shared that the high school team is working collaboratively with SAU leadership toward Competency Based Education with a focus on assessments, rubrics, and a new grade scale. He shared the introduction of Kingswood Academy, which involves the addition of one full-time certified educator and one paraprofessional support staff member. He commended his team for this fiscally responsible budget while utilities, maintenance, fuel, and contracted services costs continue to challenge it. He reported on the elimination of one teaching position in the Math Department. Mr. Famulari answered questions from the committee.
- Principal Tetreault presented the proposed budget for the Lakes Region Technology Center with an increase of 6.14%. Ms. Tetreault shared that LRTC serves GWRSD, Farmington, Moultonborough Academy, and Prospect Mountain High School and offers 15 programs to 265 students in grades 10-12. The Marine Technology Program is in its first year of operation, an Allied Health Position is in development, as well as an AP Personal Finance class. LRTC is currently fully staffed. She explained that the budget increases continue to be maintenance, utilities, and contracted services. She explained that the Perkins V Grant is set to expire at the end of 2027 so relevant positions will need to be moved into the local budget the following fiscal year. Ms. Tetreault answered questions from the committee.
- Business Administrator Kathy O'Blenes presented the proposed budget for the Facilities Department, which includes a request for an additional full-time maintenance technician for the District. She explained that, according to industry standards, the total square footage of the District's facilities (roughly 650,000 square feet) requires a total of 13 maintenance technicians. The District currently has 3 full-time maintenance technicians, 1 full-time working Director, and 1 full-time Administrative Assistant who processed 2,254 recorded maintenance requests during the 2024-2025 school year. She commended the maintenance team for their commitment to maintaining facilities despite the March 2025 budget freeze, their collaborative response to the Carpenter School ceiling collapse, and their efforts to maintain the athletic grounds within the constraints of last year's budget freeze and this year's default budget. Ms. O'Blenes requested 1 additional full-time maintenance technician. Ms. O'Blenes answered questions from the committee.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:31pm.

Recorded by,



Kathy Lagace

School Board Secretary

Approved by School Board: **12/8/2025**