

1 **WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE SCHOOL**
2 **BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING**
3 **WLC-Library**

4
5 **FINAL MINUTES**
6 **Wednesday, December 3, 2025**
7

8
9 **Committee Membership:** Bill Ryan (Chair), Alyssa Lavoie (Vice Chair),
10 Lavallee (SB rep), Bridget Mooney (Secretary), Craig Alley, Jennifer Bernet, Phil
11 Brooks, Harold Melcher III, Bob Silva, Jonathan Vanderhoof
12

13 **Present:** Brooks, Lavallee, Lavoie, Melcher, Mooney, Ryan, Silva, Vanderhoof
14

15 **Absent:** Alley, Bernet
16

17 **Other Attendees:** Peter Weaver, Kristie LaPlante, Katie Gosling, Nick Buroker
18

19 The meeting was called to order at 6:32
20

21 The meeting was recorded.
22

23 Adjustment to the agenda: none
24

25 Kristie LaPlante began by answering questions that had been transmitted to her
26 since that last meeting via email from Chair Ryan from various Budget Committee
27 members. LaPlante wanted to address the question “what would happen if the grant
28 money was eliminated from the budget?” Jonathan Vanderhoof stated that the
29 question was “what would happen if the grant expense were removed from the
30 budget?”, not that funding be removed from the budget. He explains that budget line
31 413 is listed as an expense., with funding at the bottom. LaPlante goes on the
32 explain what it would look like if grant spending was removed, reiterating the points
33 she had sent to the committee prior to the meeting, included below:
34

35 “If a motion passed that removed the expense line for federal funds, the District
36 would not be able to spend any grant money received by the District and would
37 preclude the School Board and School District from receiving Title or IDEA
38 Grants for that fiscal year. This would also eliminate funding for the proportionate
39 share owed to High Mowing/Pine Hill. Because three of our Federal Grants are
40 multi-year grants, we would lose out on any unspent funds remaining after the
41 first year of these grants as well as lose out on the next two-year cycle of grant
42 funding. In essence, this would have a three-year impact on grant funds.
43

44 Because the District is legally required to provide Special Education services to
45 students with IEPs, any Special Education expenses paid with IDEA funds must
46 then be spent from other areas of the operating budget.

The local budget cannot sustain non-legally required services and programs. Removing the expense line for Federal Grants would also eliminate the following programs:

- ☐ Title I tutoring program that provides targeted intervention throughout the school year for K-12 students who need math and reading support
 - ☐ Summer tutoring for students in grades 1-6 who need additional help to build skills and competencies during the summer break
 - ☐ New Teacher mentoring program
 - ☐ Classroom behavior management training
 - ☐ Book studies for professional development for our instructional and administration staff
 - ☐ Curriculum specific training opportunities that support our teachers in effectively implementing new standards and/or content
 - ☐ After school math tutoring at the Middle and High School
- By not approving the grant funds, the district will be increasing the tax rate because Federal Grants provide the district revenue to offset property taxes.”

Alyssa Lavoie is curious about how the grant funding is presented (clear intent) either verbally or on paper to the community at the Annual Meeting based on an RSA she read and wonders if Kristi LaPlante feels the current budget format addresses the information, she gleaned from the RSA, stating that the intent of the appropriations need to be clear. LaPlante feels the budget document conveys the information adequately as it meets the intent by discussing the scope of the grants and explaining the parameters and the usage of the grants. They can't know how the funding will be allocated as they don't know what the allocation will be or if use of fund requirements will change and they won't know until they submit the consolidated applications in June.

Alyssa Lavoie would like to see a more streamlined presentation of the budget data. Kristi LaPlante says she will create one combined document so that each tab will show first, second, third and fourth drafts and will incorporate revenues and staff costs.

BUDGET PRESENTATIONS:

REVENUES:

Based on NH adequacy rates, this fiscal year we're looking at an adequacy amount of \$4,351.00 per student with an increase of one student. This is an increase of \$85.36 per student from last year. The courts have ruled that the adequacy rates are insufficient for an adequate education, however the budget is based on the current rate as it is unknown when that funding will be included in the state budget. We're looking at a net increase of \$61,607 in our state aid and \$14,000 between local revenue and food services revenue. We are looking at a projected decrease in our tuitions and an increase in earnings on investments. \$30,000 revenue is forecasted for the increase of students that hit the catastrophic aid threshold for special education. Flat funding is projected for vocational ed, Medicaid fees and food services sales locally. There is a net decrease in our food reimbursements. Grants have already been discussed.

Regarding the question asked previously, Kristie LaPlante explains the allocation of grant money which needs to be divided between WLC and Pine Hill.

The IDEA grant for Special Education: WLC receives about 90% with Pine Hill receiving about 10%. This is based on students with IEPs.

Titles 2 and 4: in FY 20-21 WLC received 68% of those funds. There's been a gradual decrease since then in WLC's allotment of the funds based on the number of students. WLC has been losing students and High Mowing significantly increasing students, so this year WLC will receive 60% and High Mowing 40% of the grant allocations, which is like the last two years.

Alyssa Lavoie asks for an explanation of grants monies allocated, vs. grant monies used. Kristie LaPlante explains that sometimes grant money allocated isn't fully spent, for instance if a budgeted for teaching position can't be filled, and those unspent funds cannot be repurposed for other needs as they are based on strict usage guidelines. Peter Weaver and Kristie LaPlante gave further examples of times funds don't end up aligning with current needs. Peter Weaver states that we've never overspent the grant funds. Alyssa Lavoie is concerned that we may be "leaving money on the table" with unspent grant funds and wonders if this has been investigated. Perhaps there are opportunities for the students at no cost to the taxpayer. Kristie LaPlante points out that the money was budgeted and approved, so every intent was there to use the grant money, but ultimately, we didn't have the staff available for the budgeted funds. Alyssa Lavoie asks if we know the funds won't be fully used for the anticipated usage, is it allowable to pivot to a different use for the funds. Peter Weaver says yes, Title 1 gives us that flexibility, but we need to know that we have money left. Alyssa Lavoie asks Brianne Lavalley to bring this issue to the school board to ask them to keep an eye on the grant spending and advise the SAU on how unspent funds could be used.

Brianne Lavallee explains the process for requesting grant funding and the strict requirements for its use emphasizing that each grant has different requirements. She says the process involves identifying the needs of the students then submitting the application while clearly aligning the proposed usage to the acceptable usage for each grant. Kristi LaPlante says it could be possible to re-submit an application from any known unspent funds; however, the funds would be required to support a new program and services, not something already in the operating budget. Chair Ryan asks if the grants are audited. Kristie Laplante says they are heavily audited. She explains that when applying for the grant very specific usage must be made clear, then approved. The audit makes sure the grant was used as it was stated in the application. If it is discovered the money wasn't used as stated and approved, they could be required to refund the money and be penalized in future grant requests. We get both state and federal grants, and each has different requirements which need to be strictly adhered to.

SALARIES and BENEFITS

Kristie LaPlante: in this year's budget is year three of the teacher's CBA which will expire on June 30, 2027, the support staff contract which expires June 30, 2026. The staff are funded at their current rate through FY27. The administrators are receiving a 2.5% cost of living increase to free up money for non-affiliated staff. She goes on to explain how she builds the budget, with projected amounts based of previous years numbers and forecasting increases. She generally presents those numbers in September and doesn't update it with actual numbers 'til the end of the process, when she goes line by line making sure everything is accurate and adjusting as needed. The current budget reflects staffing at or about Nov. 15. They've received no retirement notices, so there will be a savings there as there are currently budgeted four retirement packages and will retain one, in case of emergency. Healthcare came in at 34.6% increase instead of the projected 15% and dental is 6%, instead of the projected 8%, and these increases are reflected in the budget, as well as updates to unemployment and workers compensation. Kristie LaPlante wonders if this health care increase is sustainable and mentions several healthcare providers with Health Care, who we use, and Health Trust being the two primary players. She asked HealthCare why our increase was so large and learned that our claims experience increased over 40%. Over \$637,000. Our rates are increasing to cover our employees; they aren't increasing to cover another district's significant costs. The employer pays 85% of health care costs with the employees paying 15%. We are with HealthCare provide a significant savings. With HealthCare we are part of a larger buying group as we are together with other school districts, thus reducing the rates for all in this plan.

TRANSPORTATION:

We partnered with Milford to get a proposal for regular and special ed transportation. Unlike previous years when we were on our own with only five routes and only got one vendor, this year there were three vendors for regular routes and extracurricular routes and three for special ed which we hope results in more competitive rates. Bids are due December 15th so it will be reported to the board at the January 6th meeting.

WARRANT ARTICLE CONSIDERATIONS:

The administration has provided all the information that is needed to figure out what current funds can be used for and what options there are for other funds. Brianne Lavallee reports that the School Board did not have their meeting so did not discuss warrant articles yet, but they will at the next meeting. They will discuss what warrant articles they will support and will then notify the budget committee.

Kristie LaPlante stated that the operating budget right now, plus federal grants, and anticipated capital reserve we're looking at \$492,647 above FY26, which is a 3.03% increase. There is a chance that we might need to increase our out of district or our special education costs.

Brianne Lavallee explained that the School Board are consulting with council to see how they can present information publicly so that they are as transparent as possible with the taxpayers and with the budget committee while still maintaining all students and families rights under FURPA.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mary Golding (online) expressed her appreciation for the questions asked of the Administration by board members, she praised Kristie LaPlante for her excellent work, calling her a rock star in her field and stating we're lucky to have her, and she thanked the whole administration and budget committee.

Jonathan Vanderhoof makes a motion to approve the 11/12/25 minutes with one amendment. Alyssa Lavoie seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimously.

Alyssa Lavoie makes a motion to approve the 11/18/25 minutes. Phil Brooks seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimously.

Alyssa Lavoie asked if the December 17th meeting was just for the Budget Committee or will Kristie LaPlante and /or Peter Weaver be there. It is determined that the administrators do not need to be there.

Alyssa Lavoie motions to end the meeting. Bridget Mooney seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimously.

221 The meeting adjourned at 7:45

222

223 The next meeting of the Budget Committee is December 17th at 6:30

224

225

226

227

228

229

230

231

232

233

234

235

236

237

238

239

240

241

242

243

244

245

246

247

248

249

250