

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

4
5 **FINAL MINUTES**
6 **Wednesday, December 17, 2025**
7

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

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

15 **Absent:** Alley, Bernet (resigned)
16

17 The meeting was called to order at 6:31
18

19 The meeting was recorded.
20

21 Adjustment to the agenda: Yes: Chair Ryan asks Brianne Lavallee for an update
22 from last night's (12/16/25) School Board meeting.
23

24 **Athletic Facilities Warrant Article**

25 Brianne Lavallee reports on the extensive discussion the School Board had
26 regarding a warrant for the athletic facilities which had been suggested recently by
27 the budget committee. This would include things like the track and tennis courts
28 which are not in the CIP but which could create an off-kilter budget if these items
29 needed to be included in the annual budget. The School Board discussed option for
30 dealing with this; 1. Do nothing and carry on as usual. 2. Change the existing
31 language in the CIP warrant article adding athletic facilities to that and update the
32 facilities policy. 3. Have a second warrant article to handle just the athletic facilities.
33 The consensus of the School Board was to move forward with a second warrant
34 article. The facilities director will be working on a list of things to be included in the
35 plan, the policy committee will be creating the policy and Kristie LaPlante will begin
36 working on draft language. There is no dollar amount set until the budget committee
37 and the public weigh in. Jonathan Vanderhoof suggested the warrant article should
38 be put off until next year giving the board time to fully flesh it out. Brianne Lavallee
39 pointed out the reason the school board was having the discussion was because the
40 Budget Committee requested it. She explains that planning ahead, which this
41 warrant article would do, is the most fiscally responsible route to take for the
42 taxpayers. Alyssa Lavoie points out that historically we haven't had a plan for these
43 athletic facility needs and wonders why not. Brianne Lavallee explains that it is the
44 school board who will write and present the warrant article and it is their
45 responsibility to have accurate information to present to the taxpayers, whether that
46 ends up being this year or next. Jonathan Vanderhoof points out that money is not

47 budgeted annually in the operating budget for maintenance of assets such as the
48 track and the tennis courts and that the warrant article will not solve that problem.
49 Brianne Lavallee agrees and suggest the budget committee ask the administration
50 to look at that and bring the budget committee a new number which includes athletic
51 facilities maintenance.

52
53 Chair Ryan said he attended the school board meeting last night online and called it
54 a horror show with $\frac{3}{4}$ of the meeting focused on athletics, not academics and he
55 believes this is why parents are choosing homeschooling and charter schools. He
56 feels the school should be fund raising to support athletics. Brianne Lavallee says
57 that the school board has meetings where they spend extensive amount of time
58 specifically discussing academics. She explained the different topics discussed last
59 night with athletics/co-curriculars being one of the agenda items. Brianne Lavallee
60 will mention Chair Ryan's concern to the school board. Jonathan Vanderhoof again
61 points out the disparity between including funding for athletic maintenance in the
62 budget with being able to present a budget the taxpayers will approve. Alyssa Lavoie
63 is disappointed that the budget committee receives no triggers, reports, or
64 documents that anticipate goals such as athletic facilities maintenance, that would
65 allow the budget committee to provide checks and balances of the budget and
66 perhaps make a new warrant article unnecessary.

67 68 **Capital Reserve Warrant Article**

69 The school board will request \$190,000, down from the anticipated \$236,000 as
70 there was a cost savings from past projects. The school board voted on and passed
71 this change. Alyssa Lavoie asks that an explanation be provided to the budget
72 committee for the anticipated cost and what caused the reduced number.

73 74 **Special Education Warrant Article**

75 The account currently has \$342,000. Last year \$15,475. was gained in interest on
76 the account. The school board likes to keep it at about \$350,000. There have been
77 years where it hasn't been used. This year a discussion on using it has been tabled
78 until potential needs are realized. After three months of school, it is evident that there
79 are additional students with significant needs. Therefore, there will be \$100,000.
80 added to the operating budget which will bring the increase to 3.78%. The specific
81 needs cannot be enumerated publicly to protect the privacy of the students and their
82 families. There was concern that the Special Ed fund was being improperly used as
83 it is meant for an emergency and not for funding already identified needs. Brianne
84 Lavallee explained that the needs are not yet identified, but that the potential need is
85 there. Some budget committee members felt the total amount anticipated should be
86 included in the operating budget. Brianne Lavallee reiterated that the needs are not
87 definitely known and the school board it is trying their best to deal with a complicated
88 situation in the best way possible, which they believe is using the Special Ed
89 account should the potential needs materialize. Jonathan Vanderhoof states that that
90 fund is for emergencies, for instance if someone moves into the district with special
91 needs, during the school year; it is not meant for known needs. He goes on to say
92 that the operating budget doesn't need a final number until two weeks before it is

presented in March and that the school board should gather all the information on the currently anticipated needs and include those numbers in the operating budget. Phil Brooks states that we must spend the money one way or another so why not put more money in then less so it's making interest and we have it when we need it.

Warrant Article for Support Staff

No final number on this yet

Capital Reserve Warrant Article

This warrant has no money associated with it but will be significant to both towns. It is RSA194-D. Brianne Lavallee gives a history of the Open Enrollment plan that has been around since 1997. All public schools in NH are considered open enrollment schools unless they pass a warrant article. After a series of court rulings, it was determined that if a student from an open enrollment school district wants to enroll in a different public school, the taxpayers of the school district the student is leaving are required to pay 80% of the cost to educate that child in the school the student is leaving. The student would no longer be considered an enrolled student in the original district, so while the taxpayers would be required to pay for that student to attend a different school, the student would not be considered in the original district's enrollment numbers and therefore the original district would not receive any revenue funds (state funding, grants) for that student. This could create a big hole in the operating budget, which could not be offset by reducing the staff or closing a building.

The school board did a straw poll to see if they would move forward with writing a warrant article to address the open enrollment issue. The wording has not been settled on yet. However Kersage school district, which is pursuing a similar warrant article, has posted their language: "To see if the school district will vote to designate Kersage High School as an open enrollment school to allow 30 students from outside the Kersage Regional School District to attend Kersage Regional High School as provided with RSA 194D 2 and 3 and limit the percentage of Kersage Regional School District students who may attend open enrollment schools located outside this regional school district to zero"

This language of the warrant does not mean students cannot leave the school district, but it would relieve taxpayers from having to pay for students going to a different school. Without a policy, passed as a warrant article, a school district would be required to pay for outgoing students. If an outgoing student is special needs the original school district is required to pay 100% of the special needs costs, however the original school district does remain active in the IEP process.

All our administrators have attended training on the issue and Brianne Lavallee will be attending training on it next week.

A suggestion was made to have a second warrant article requesting funding to cover the costs of students leaving the district should the first Warrant article fail to pass. Brianne Lavallee will take this suggestion to the school board.

Title 1:

138 The school board discussed the budget committee's suggestion regarding Title 1
139 and have decided to have the administration report out to the committees in July the
140 amount they expect to be receiving and what they plan to use it for. They will be
141 required to report out again in March to see what was used and to have the
142 opportunity to reapply to use the funds for something else. The funds cannot be
143 used for something already in the budget. A conversation followed discussing the
144 timing of the reports and the various possibilities for the use of funds and what can
145 and cannot be funded.

146
147 There was no discussion of the Emergency Contingency fund at the school board
148 meeting.

149
150 Chair Ryan reported that at 4:15 today (12/17/25) Jennifer Bernet sent him a message
151 stating that she was resigning from the WLC School Budget Committee. Jennifer Bernet
152 had been elected to serve until 2028. If anyone knows someone who would agree to fill
153 the position, please send them our way.

154
155 Chair Ryan explains that Superintendent Peter Weaver requested that the Budget
156 Committee set the final amount for the budget request. Chair Ryan feels that with the
157 information Brianne Lavallee has just presented we are not able to do that until the
158 January meeting.

159
160 Alyssa Lavoie asked Brianne Lavallee to explain the co-curriculum presentation from
161 last night's (12/16/25) school board meeting. Brianne Lavallee didn't have notes on this
162 and spoke from memory stating that many clubs and teams have low costs due to
163 volunteers who act as coaches and club leaders without stipends. The sports
164 teams/clubs and their costs are listed online. Alyssa Lavoie wants to know the
165 guidelines for sports transportation and whether the guidelines are different for middle
166 and high school teams.

167
168 There was another conversation around the issue of the administration presenting a
169 budget that took into consideration the needs that they and the staff feel are vital to the
170 running the school while not including the wants as requested by the budget committee
171 for supporting a fully functioning school. Brianne Lavallee opined that the wants of one
172 person don't necessarily align with the wants of another and that the wants may have
173 initially been identified, but the administration have perhaps decided to pursue different
174 avenues for funding the wants to present a zero or close to zero increased budget.
175 Jonathan Vanderhoof reiterates that he wants a budget that transparently states all the
176 costs of running the schools and says he's not talking about needs and wants. As an
177 example, he points out that the food service consistently goes over budget. Chair Ryan
178 reminds us that Peter (Weaver), Tom (Ronning) and Stacy () reported having had a
179 discussion and agreed that the budget is adequate for maintaining the facilities and for
180 providing all the students a good academic education.

181
182 Chair Ryan states that after the last meeting (12/03/25) he asked Alyssa (Lavoie) to put
183 a presentation together for the budget committee for the district meeting. Alyssa Lavoie

184 agreed and requested that she be able to speak one-on-one Kristie LaPlante to have up
185 to date figures. Kristie LaPlante has agreed to work with Alyssa Lavoie.

186
187 Alyssa Lavoie would like feedback from the committee if there were things they'd like to
188 see in the presentation or ideas on how to present information differently than has been
189 done in the past. Brianne Lavalley says the school board would like a slide that highlights
190 the legislative changes that are non-financial that have a financial impact on our district.
191 Tax-payers often ask why we even need administrators. They don't understand the
192 overhead costs in time and labor due to state and federal changes which we're legally
193 required to meet. For instance, curriculum standards which must be read, understood,
194 and implemented, or when to divisive concepts bill passed and many teachers left the
195 state or took early retirement which increased the number of instructional positions on
196 the critical needs list. The state budget impacts the dollar amount we're getting from the
197 state per student. The year they made changes to the state's formula for retirement
198 funds impacted our school budget by over \$200,000.

199
200 Chair Ryan says that if between meetings anyone would like to contact Alyssa Lavoie
201 with things they'd like to see in the presentation, they are free to contact her.

202
203 Bob Silva would like to see a town-by-town comparison that not only includes student
204 also includes benchmarks for transportation and special needs and that level of thing
205 compared to multiple school districts of a similar size to WLC.

206
207 Brianne Lavalley has an update on transportation; we are partnering with Milford next
208 year for the RFP. There are three quotes for regular transportation and five for special
209 needs transportation. The board will review these proposals at the January 6th meeting
210 with the goal of awarding contracts shortly thereafter. The amount will be adjusted in the
211 budget once the numbers are finalized.

212
213 Bob Silva would like a slide to show evidence of ongoing attempts at cost reductions
214 such as the transportation costs currently being worked on. He feels we should
215 anticipate questions that we get year after year or are currently being asked in public, or
216 on Facebook, and try to have answers that directly address these concerns. He
217 guarantees that the closing of the LCS School will come up. There is currently not a
218 clear answer for this issue, but Peter Weaver is working on it.

219
220 Alyssa Lavoie would like to work with Kristie LaPlante to do what other towns do, which
221 is put together a budget book which gives a narrative for each of the departments
222 including why their budget is where it is. Some of these booklets include FAQ and to
223 what the budget process is, some to the legalities of the budget, or more specifically to
224 our co-op and our spending. She would like this booklet to be published ahead of time
225 and would really like there to be a video with commentary on the visuals. This would
226 allow people with questions to email them ahead of time which could make our annual
227 meeting cleaner and more focused, efficient and effective. Phil Brooks asks that the
228 presentation be sent out to the board ahead of time so we can comment on it.

The budget committee's next scheduled meeting is a joint meeting with the school board on January 20th. Jonathan Vanderhoof would like a meeting of just the budget committee prior to the January 20th meeting. He would also like to see all of the versions of the budget during the budget process included in Alyssa Lavoie's proposed booklet. It is decided that the budget committee will meet separately in the conference room directly following the January 20th meeting vote on the warrant articles.

It is determined that a meeting of just the budget committee should meet to see the presentation ahead of the January 20 meeting. The meeting is scheduled for Wednesday January 14th at 6:00 in the WLC library.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Bob Newton of Lyndeborough: He began by summing up what he heard discussed regarding Open Enrollment and his belief that the proposed warrant article is necessary to pass to prevent large sums of funding from leaving our district. He goes on to remind the committee that on October 13th he presented the board with a list of his recommendations of things to include in the annual meeting presentations. He reiterates that he would like to see a radically different presentation from previous year's presentations and bemoans the fact that no one on the committee has directly addressed his suggestions. He states that should the presentation at the annual meeting be like past presentations he's prepared to vote against the budget as he'll take that presentation as an insult to the taxpayers. He feels the approach the budget committee takes in dealing with the budget is a lot of words and no substance. He would like a cost benefit analysis of closing LCS. He wonders why the teacher to student ratio is so low and claims the educational results are mediocre. He goes on to demean the teaching and curriculum at the WLC schools. He feels discussing "big picture" items on the school board and the budget committee would save tens and hundreds of thousands of dollars rather than going line by line over a spreadsheet. He goes on to enumerate other situations he takes issue with, the administrations (the budget committee's request for an all-encompassing budget, the floor vote from last year's annual meeting reinstating a teaching position). He asks if the public hearing is on February 5th. It is confirmed. The hearing, but not the budget needs to be posted two weeks before the public hearing, so January 22. He goes on to talk about the sports warrant article and asks if the facilities director has a plan for maintenance of the facilities and equipment. He's working on it.

There was no other in person or online public comments.

Alyssa Lavoie makes a motion to approve the 12/03/25 minutes. Hal Melcher seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimously.

Jonathan Vanderhoof asks that facilities updates be shared with the committee as soon as possible.

Alyssa Lavoie says Kristie LaPlante won't be able to work with her until the second week in January so all the budget information may not be available until then. She goes on the talk about her idea for a budget book which is meant to simplify the information while also creating a narrative of what goes in the process and describing what the school board and administration are working towards and including successes and challenges of the past year.

Brianne Lavallee adds that it is significant that New Hampshire comes in 50th in the US for state funding of education which has a powerful impact on local taxes. Alyssa Lavoie suggests a slide on how to contact your state reps including a template of an email you can send. Brianne Lavallee adds that business taxes have been reduced five times in the last ten years making it clear the state priorities are different from our priorities. She goes on to enumerate the financial hardships that supporters of the schools suffer and how that reality impacts the creation of the budget. Jonathan Vanderhoof states that he wasn't asking for wants and needs in the budget, but the best budget for fully running the schools. He then asks about the ongoing cost analysis for closing LCS and the possibility that someone could make a motion from the floor to close LCS, and that motion could pass. Brianne says the strategic committee hasn't reported their findings to the school board yet, but it will be brought up in the January 6th meeting. She states that there are more issues around closing the school than just numbers. Chair Ryan says he's spoken to Peter Weaver about the LCS issue, and Peter Weaver has been working on it for quite a while; and there are a lot of legalities that must be worked out with, for instance, the bond that required the building be used as a school for a certain number of years. Jonathan Vanderhoof makes the point that no one knows what the savings from closing LCS would be, maybe \$75.00 maybe \$750,000, nobody knows. We need the information to be able to let the taxpayers know. Alyssa Lavoie suggests if we don't have the numbers by the March meeting the budget committee can request that data and the school board or the administration will need to provide it. It is suggested that a document on the website with the analysis would be helpful.

Hal Melcher motions to end the meeting. Alyssa Lavoie seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15

The next meeting of the Budget Committee is January 14th, 2026

The next joint meeting of the Budget Committee and the School Board is January 20th, 2026