Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative School
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
DRAFT MINUTES

WLC-Library
Monday, November 9, 2026

Committee Membership: Adam Lavallee (Chair), Phil Brooks (ViceChair), Bridget Mooney (Secretary), Kellie-Sue Boissonnault, Kate McClure, Bob Newton, Bob Silva,

Present: Brooks, Boissonnault, McClure, Mooney, Newton, Silva, Brianne Lavallee (online – SB liaison)
Absent: two vacant Wilton seats

Chair Lavallee called the meeting to order at 7:00

The meeting was recorded.

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA:
None

BUDGET COMMITTEE VACANCIES:
Craig Alley resigned from the WLC Budget Committee. There are now two Wilton vacancies.

BUDGET FY 27-28:
Adam Lavallee shared his thoughts and notes on the first draft of the budget which will be included in these minutes. He suggests the committee use this meeting to collect questions we have for the school board and administration which we can get answers to at our next joint meeting.
Draft 2 of the budget is due to the Budget Committee on November 20, 2026.
The next joint meeting of the Budget Committee, School Board and Administration is scheduled on January 5, 2027.
Chair Lavallee would like to invite the Administration to come to a meeting with the Budget Committee prior to the January 5th meeting, preferably on November 23, 2026. Adam Lavallee will contact the Administration to ask them to attend the Budget Committee's next meeting.

Kate McClure shared questions she had about the budget which will be included in these minutes. Brianne Lavallee was able to verify that coaches stipends were increased and that staffing has stabilized and teachers seem pleased with the collective-bargaining agreement.
Kate McClure also wonders about a timeline for teachers to announce their retirement which Brianna Lavallee explains is in April.
It is noted that SPED and health benefits, are the greatest increases to the budget. Adam Lavallee wonders if the Special Ed Capital Reserve Fund could be used for these known increases. Brianne Lavallee explains the Special Ed Capitol Reserve Fund is to be used after a budget has already passed and a special needs event arises that was not previously expected. There is currently over $250,000 in that fund.

It is decided that the best next course of action is to invite the Administration the to next Budget Committee meeting to answer the questions of the committee members. Adam Lavallee will contact the Administration about attending the November 23, 2026 budget committee meeting.

Kellie-Sue Boissonnault wonders if there will be a recount on Question 2. Adam Lavallee says there is already a recount scheduled for both Wilton and Lyndeborough. Adam Lavalle states that the committee should proceed with the budget that we think is responsible for our district and wait to see the outcome of the recount. If we come up with a number that we feel is correct for our school district, but it doesn't fit within that cap, we will explain to the public this is the budget we think is best for our district and it will need sixty percent to pass. If it doesn't pass we'd hope by that time (March) we'd have some clarity on what the unexplained numbers are within the bill.

Kellie-Sue Boissonnault feels we need to be as lean as possible when building the budget. Adam Lavallee says he thinks we always are. There is a discussion of unspent funds and where the unspent funds go and how they effect the tax rate. Kate McClure suggests that Kellie-Sue Boissonnault go through the budget and identify anything she considers "fat" and then suggesting these things be cut from the budget.
Adam Lavallee would like to know how many children there are in the community who are not students at the WLC schools, but who use the school resources for things like sports, core curriculum, specials, and other extra-curricula who are not counted students. The school does not receive funding from the state for these students. However, if a child has a special ed need, the school system is responsible for paying that cost. Additionally, some children are being paid by the state to go wherever they want with the EFA's. Bob Silva added that when he asked a similar question last year he learned that the largest burden on the system from these unregistered students was on the curriculum co-ordinator. Brianne Lavallee added that if a student attends less than 50% of their school day the district is not reimbursed by the state for that student, but the district is obligated under the law to allow them to attend classes to supplement their homeschool education. Adam Lavallee states that the public should know that there is a group of students using the school resources for whom the school system is not being compensated. Kellie-Sue Boissonnault wonders if homeschoolers receiving vouchers and also using the school resources can be charged a fee for attending classes. Brianne Lavallee says it is not possible to charge for public education. Brianne Lavallee added that WLC is required to provide special education services to students who attend charter schools, but they also would not be counted in WLC enrollment numbers and therefore WLC would not be reimbursed by the state for any of the SPED costs.
Bob Newton suggests we ask the Administration how much of our actual SPED expenses are going to support students who are not counted in our schools enrollment numbers.

Phil Brooks wonders how we will collect the questions that the Budget Committee members want to ask of the Administration. It is decided that Adam Lavallee will keep the list and others members should email their questions to him.

Phil Brooks would like the next budget to indicate which costs went up and which went down so we don't have to do that ourselves. Bob Newton adds that the Administration usually provides that as part of the package. Adam Lavallee will continue to summarize data from each budget which does include gainers and losers.

Bob Newton suggests a small delegation of the Budget Committee members meet with the Administration and Superintendent prior to the Nov. 23rd meeting to relay the committee's questions to them in person in the hopes that more knowledge will be gained through conversation rather than having them simply answer a set of written questions. The small committee would then transmit the answers to the full committee on the 23rd. Chair Lavallee explains that he would prefer to get through the first round of questions with the Administration as a full Budget Committee and then after that we could get more targeted and efficient.

Bob Newton explains that there is a new state law (HB564) (RSA194-c) which says the first Warrant Article at the District Meeting is no longer the Operating Budget, but is now a new SAU Central Office Budget. Bob Newton suggests the second draft of the budget should be in two parts to get things organized as they will need to be presented at the Annual Meeting.

Bob Newton suggests a different approach to the budget process which is to eliminate the questioning of various line items, which he suggests assumes the committee accepts the premise of the budget as presented, and instead to ask for an explanation, and a justification where needed, of why the cost structure is the way it is. Bob Newton wants to know more about the management decisions that went into creating the budget. The numbers themselves, they're like the shadows on the walls of Plato's cave, they are not reality. The reality is the thing the management has decided to do that generate those numbers. Bob Newton goes on to the list the student to teacher ratios in the three WLC schools and suggests, based on a book he read called Smarter Budgets, Smarter Schools, that the WLC schools could have potential staffing savings without having negative effect on the quality of education; could big savings be made by having higher student to teacher ratios?

Adam Lavalle says these are good questions to be asking, but we have to be careful to not get into trying to manage how the school is operated which is not our purview.

Bob Newton says he's not trying to tell anyone what to do but he wants them (Administration) to justify what they want to do. Bob Newton then goes on to focus on the Special Ed program nationally, state wide and at WLC questioning is value in effectively helping students. He mentions Sherky's law, the premise of which is that an institution will preserve the problem it was created to solve. Bob Newton claims the Special Ed Industrial Complex has grown out of control. He wants to know why 25% of our kids are in SPED and how effective the program is at helping our kids, and if not effective why are we spending money on it.
Bob Newton suggests that we have kids in these schools that do poorly at reading because they were poorly taught how to read suggesting that they were taught with a method he doesn't agree with (whole word). Bob Newton wants to know when did the school institute the Science of Reading reading program, a program he does support.

Adam Lavallee says this is getting into the area of managing the schools which again is not our job. Adam Lavallee says that he is 100% positive that there are zero students in this school that have an IEP that have not been diagnosed with a learning disability. Not one is on an IEP from doing poorly on iReady. Adam goes on to explain that the Budget Committee's purpose is to ask questions of the administration and to remove things from the budget if we need to, but

our purpose is not to pontificate about methods we don't even know are or are not being used.

Bob Newton goes on to question whether the school is accurately diagnosing children's disabilities or has it set up system in such way because you have a SPED organization that you want to drive revenues to.

Kate McClure asks Bob Newton to stop using inflammatory language which makes it difficult for her to hear his thoughts.

Phil Brooks says he'd like to know about class size at WLC in relation of class sizes of similarly sized schools in the area as thats something we can discuss. Phil Brooks emphasizes that Bob Newton's other issues are not something this committee can deal with as they have to do with educational philosophies and techniques which is not the Budget Committee's purview.

Bob Newton claims that it is our job to ask the questions about the methods used to reach educational choices, but not to tell the schools to do something differently.

Bob Newton next asks a question he claims he's asked repeatedly without ever getting and answer which is: are we getting the full proper statutory reimbursement for our spent expenses from the state and the federal government. And to the extent that we are not getting the full amount, how much is the gap and what are we doing to collect.

Adam Lavallee says the state has never come close to meeting their obligation and that he will email that question to Kristie LaPlante because he knows she has the answer.

Bob Newton asks what would be the cost benefit of consolidating LSC and FRES? Brianne responds that there was a cursory look into that several years ago and they didn't get specific numbers. However the current thinking is not to consolidate, but to try to increase enrollment numbers by attracting students from other towns. The board does not feel consolidating is feasible because moving all the LSC students into FRES would potentially mean having to move some students into the High School. Adam Lavallee adds that he knows parents are not happy with the idea of fifth graders at the High School. Brianne Lavallee explains that investigating consolidation is at a standstill as the School Board does not think it's a good use of the Administration's time to look into the costs of consolidation since the focus now is on expansion.

BUDGET AI ANALYSIS:
Bob Newton reviewed the AI analysis that previous Chair, Alyssa Lavoie shared with the committee. He found it essentially said the same this as Kristie LaPlant's cover letter.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:
Phil Brooks – *Facilities*: They've settled a company, EMC, to who will act as a general contractor to put jobs out to bid. They are still in discussions about the oil tank, however this one will be inspected more frequently to insure it is not leaking.

Bob Silva: *Technology*: the next meeting is in December.

Kellie-Sue Boissonnault and Kate McClure: *Strategic Planning*: two things they are working on with the roadmap is retaining students and attracting new students if Open Enrollment moves forward. The closeness of the community is a strength of the school and they are looking to encourage more closeness by having older kids go in to read to younger kids and also creating a buddy system for ninth graders. Additionally they are looking into getting some more educational opportunities such as students taking college classes. This needs to have teacher buy-in.

REVIEW MINUTES:

Bob Newton makes the motion to approve the 10/19/26 Budget Committee minutes. Kellie-Sue seconds the motion. Five ayes, two abstentions. The motion passes.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Brianne Lavallee – *Lyndeborough* -

Wants to clarify that IEP determination of eligibility is regulated both at the state and federal level. There are very specific tests that are used to determine if a child is eligible for it. These tests have to be administered by a certified professional. iReady testing is not used to determine eligibility. Brianne Lavallee agrees that discussions need to be had regarding the uprising numbers of students misbehaving and she reports that the national education association did a poll with 81% of educators reporting misbehavior as teacher's number one concern. 56% increase in minor classroom disruptions, 49% increase in hallway lunchroom rowdiness, 42% increase in unauthorized electronics, 36% increase in fights or threats, 36% increase in verbal abuse of staff, 33% increase in student physical attacks. That's information that was reported from the National Department of Education.

Electronics and the internet use at home are felt to be culprits in causing or influencing this misbehavior. To address this they have had most teachers trained in responsive classroom. Additionally they've had Pauly Bath a nationally recognized behavioral specialist who focuses on meaningful consequences and punishments visit the school to work with teachers twice. Brianne Lavallee believes that reducing staff before determining the causes of the misbehaviors is not a good plan.

Jonathan Vanderhoof – *Lyndeborough* -

He was in favor of small schools and its why his family moved to Lyndeborough. That was fifteen years ago and he's not sure small classes are a thing to hold to now.

He doesn't feel that we need to compare our district with other districts. We don't need to do what others are doing. The behavior issue is a concern, but it is because they are sitting in a classroom and have been receiving a lesson that they do not understand and they've been moved through the system and now they are acting out because of frustration and self-confidence. Increasing enrollments has been discussed for years and has rarely been successful. The high point was during the last administration in 2001 with 590 kids and its been down ever since in both enrollment and test scores. The tax question isn't about taxes being too high, its about the product. So asking administrations to stand behind what they are asking for and to expect results is something that needs to happen on the school board and the budget committee.

BUDGET COMMITTEE COMMENTS:

Phil Brooks – thinks we had a good meeting. We spent a long time talking about the budget and thats what we're here for.

Bob Silva – no comments

Kellie-Sue Boissonnault – thanks Jonathan Vanderhoof for his comments on needing to show more productivity for our taxes paid. She feels she's been pushed back on when mentioning taxes and her point is that we do need to give things to our children but not if its going to cost tax payers more and not get the product done.

Adam Lavallee- Its good to be back and to have a pretty smooth first meeting. He does want to point out that our SAT scores are actually way above state average and thats a test kids actually care about and matters. He believes that the standardized tests that the kids have to do so many of its whats causing them to do poorly. They spend all their time taking tests and no time learning. Its a system that is set up to produce bad results and is a total waste of time.

Bridget Mooney – No comments

Kate McClure- No comments

Bob Newton – read a book over the summer recommended by Phil Brooks and written by Nathan Levenson. Levenson's credentials are that he was the Superintendent in Harvard, MA for ten years. The school had twelve hundred and fifty kids. He out performed every school district in the state in every subject with a per pupil expense in the 25 percentile of the state. Bob Newton's point is that if we do the right things and we do them well we can do a better job for the kids and save money at the same time. This is his goal. He's not trying to cut the budget at the expense of the kids.

Bob Newton makes a motion to adjourn. Kate McClure seconds the motion.
All ayes. The meeting adjourns at 9:09 pm

The next meeting of the Budget Committee is November 23, 2026 at 7:00

Some Questions for Administration:

- Why after eight years you've reallocated the health care reserve.
- Increase in wages, where is that coming from
- negotiation contracts with teachers and the new ABA Uniondecrease in $10,000 in the capital reserve funding (facilities needed less than the original ask)
- transportations for the CTE
- what classes were CTE students taking before going to CTE classes
- why have the licensing and subscriptions gone down so significantly
- SPED dollars going to students not enrolled in WLC
- are we getting the full proper statutory reimbursement for our spent expenses from the state and the federal government. And to the extent that we are not getting the full amount, how much is the gap and what are we doing to collect.
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