

**WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE
SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, November 29, 2022
Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative M/H School
6:30 p.m.**

The videoconferencing link was published several places including on the meeting agenda.

Present: *Jim Kofalt, Brianne Lavalley, Alex LoVerme, Jonathan Vanderhoof, Dennis Golding, Matt Mannarino, Tiffany Cloutier-Cabral, Charlie Post and Darlene Anzalone*

Superintendent Peter Weaver, Business Administrator Kristie LaPlante, Principals Sarah Edmunds, and Kathleen Chenette, Associate Principal Bridgette Fuller, Assistant Principal Katie Gosselin, Director of Student Support Services Ned Pratt, Technology Director Nicholas Buroker, Curriculum Coordinator Samantha Dignan, and Clerk Kristina Fowler

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Kofalt called the meeting to order at 6:32pm.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

A MOTION was made by Ms. Lavalley and SECONDED by Mr. LoVerme to add a public comment right after the adjustments. Voting: all aye; motion carried.

• PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Kofalt thanked everyone for attending whichever your position may be on the issues at hand. He informed the group on how public comments works, noting we will hear from those in the room and then online. Because there are many attending and online presumably wanting to comment, he limited the time to 5 minutes for each speaker. Generally, public comment is not a question and answer session, if you ask questions from the Board you may or may not get an answer. If you do get a response, be aware they are not necessarily speaking on behalf of the Board as a whole. Public comment is not a debate period. If someone is at the mic and you feel you have to say something, he asks you hold that until you to the mic if you have not been up already, we want to avoid people being interrupted. We will later be discussing a number of items including the library book reconsideration, when the Board has that discussion and ultimately deliberation that is not a period for public comment. There will be public comment now, prior to the reconsideration of library material and one near the end of the meeting. We also have a couple of public comments sent in, in writing and we will read those as well. He asks the Board if they have any questions about what he has just said. None heard. He wants to appeal for people to try to be reasoned and civil throughout this process, he hopes we can disagree without being disagreeable and hopes to focus on the issue at hand, which is this book in our library, not what is happening elsewhere. Please refrain from making any personal attacks. If you make a statement that someone is supporting the book because they are enabling predatory behavior, I think that is across the line. Please don't do it, do not attribute motives to people. If you say that someone is opposing the book therefore they must hate and entire group of people, you are also attributing motives. He asks, please stick to what is in front of us and avoid attributing motives to people and engaging those kinds of personal attacks. He recommends using I statements as opposed to you statements. He encourages people to be careful using the word censorship or book banning. In the school district, we have the responsibility to use our discretion to determine what materials should and should not be in our library. If we are censoring that means, we are prohibiting access anywhere and everywhere. He thinks we can all agree there are some kinds of materials that none of us would want in a MS/HS library.

The public comment section of the agenda was read.

Ms. Anzalone asked to kick off this topic since she was the parent that brought this before the Board and public that she have a chance to give her statement, to give her concerns about the book, and how this issue came about. There has been some misinformation about what actually happened. She wants the opportunity to address that first as a parent. Chairman Kofalt responded that he thinks that is fair, subject to the same limitations he reviewed prior.

Ms. Anzalone thanked the Board and public with their willingness to hear her concerns about the book. There seems to be some misinformation about what actually happened during the process. She reviewed how it all unfolded with specific details. It has to do with our library nothing to do with what is in the public libraries from either town. During one of the nonpublic sessions in the WLC library, she looked over at a shelf highlighting new books for students to check out. She saw the book prominently displayed for any student to access. The title of the book, "Body Talk, 37 voices explore a radical anatomy" instantly drew her in to take a closer look at the book. Subsequently to submit a form around reconsideration for instructional library materials. See full comments attached.

Chairman Kofalt informed Ms. Anzalone the timer was not started, he believes she is approaching her 5 minutes and asks her to wrap it up. Ms. Anzalone continued with two more quotes, "Body positivity spaces continually center on white women and lighter women of skin color and one author said, "This is when I first learned about eating disorders which seemed to me like a symbol of privileged white girl angst" and it talks about it is for skinny white girls. For me, school is a place where we as parents send our children to learn things like English, math, science and history. We trust our children to other adults for 7-8 hours a day, 5 days a week, for 9 months a year and when it comes to shaping our children and sharing values and morals and beliefs around issues like sex that is the job of the parent or guardian raising the children of our district. Remember again, we are talking about kids that are between the ages of 11 and 18. I think again as a parent this is something that falls in the purview of the parents to have control and limit what their children have access to. She reminded everyone that we have a dress code at all our schools because we know there are certain standards, what is acceptable out in public, what is acceptable at home may not necessarily be acceptable for a school setting. That is how I "kind of feel" about the books as well. She brought this before the Board in hopes of having a civil discussion where all sides can present their point of view. I read the emails sent to the Board and would like to thank those who came here tonight and are joined online. Thank you again for listening to my concerns. See Ms. Anzalone's complete comments attached to the minutes.

Mr. Ron Brown of Wilton spoke urging the School Board to retain the book "Body Talk". He believes removing this book from the collection serves no constructive purpose. See his complete comments attached to the minutes.

Ms. Judith Klinghoffer of Wilton asked if she asks a question now would it prevent her from commenting later. Chairman Kofalt responded no. Since one of the complainants has already spoken this raises the issue of recusal, which I understand you, are going to address, and are you prepared to address that now. Chairman Kofalt responded I am. The 2 complainants in this case are members of the school board. Several people have raised this question since they raised the complaint do they need to recuse themselves. We did seek legal counsel; he did considerable research on his own on this issue, which aligns with what we got from legal counsel. Recusal is required where there is a conflict of interest. Conflict of interest has a couple of definitions, one for legislators, one for municipal employees, and school districts. Specifically that is where a person has a direct personal or financial interest in the in outcome that conflicts with the interest of the general public. He quoted from NH Municipal Association, "conflict of interest exists where there is an interest that is greater than the general public. Something that is greater than or different the from general public, something that bias's you or motivates you with regard to the outcome of the particular decision before you. He provided examples, as a State Representative if he is called upon to vote on something that affects property taxes, that affects everybody it does not affect me differently than the general public. On the other hand, if I own a construction company and I am voting on whether or not to award a contract to my company or voting on whether or on something that would be favorable to my industry then there is probably a conflict of interest because my interest differs from the general public. In this case, the interest does not differ from that of the general public. We solicited opinions from 3 different attorneys, 2 of those agreed there is not a conflict of interest and no need for recusal. One said as a matter of course, if someone is party to a complaint the school board is hearing it is a good idea for them to recuse themselves. There is some difference of position among the 3 attorneys, 2 of them agree with the statements I made. He read from a section of statute that pertains to Land Use Boards, he could not find specific language in the RSA with respect to conflict of interest in school boards, perhaps something that needs to be addressed. It aligns with our School Board Policy and with all the other materials mentioned. It specifically says, no member shall participate in deciding or shall sit upon a hearing of any question, which the Board is to decide in a judicial capacity if that member has a direct personal or pecuniary interest in the outcome, which differs of the interest of other citizens. He read additional language from our school board policy regarding conflict of interest that is also repeated elsewhere in some of the materials he saw from NH Municipal Association and NHSBA is that the interest must be immediate, definite, and demonstrable that there is a conflict of interest and that it differs from that of the general public. He apologized for the long-winded answer but wanted to be very clear in that conclusion and he does not believe those board members need to recuse themselves. Ms. Klinghoffer commented, "You now have a 4th attorney who agrees with the single attorney who says there is a conflict of interest. She analogized to land use regulation, as a zoning board member she cannot participate in a decision regarding her own application to the zoning board but similarly she cannot participate if it affects one of her neighbors. That is sufficient for her to be able to recuse herself. In this circumstance she would argue the 2 board members who took it upon themselves to submit and write complaints about this book, are in a different position that the thousands of local residents that did not write an submit complaints about this book. She urges their special interest, which motivated them to write these complaints, is sufficient to disqualify them from sitting with the Board during deliberations on their complaints.

Ms. Kate McClure, Lyndeborough, her children went to WLC HS and she is presenting her position that the book "Body Talk" be retained in the library because it is consistent with the policy that was developed to review books. See her full comments attached to the minutes.

Ms. Judith Klinghoffer commented she has a dozen copies of the 2 complaints as well as the prior proceedings at WLC if anyone wants to see the complaints or prior proceedings she has stacks of them on the table.

Ms. Emily Hall, resident of Wilton and teacher at WLC. She spoke on behalf of some of the concerned staff members here at WLC in regard to the appropriateness and validity of the book "Body Talk" in the HS section of the library. We invite you to consider the following points about the School Library Journals Best Book of 2020, "Body Talk". She started with an expression of

commitment to their students. Because we are a public school and serve all students, we feel we cannot make the determination of limiting the types of available content. We find it concerning that this issue is being made public and discussed in such a short amount of time when many adults in our community have not been given sufficient time to consider the issue, make themselves aware of the issue and come to their own conclusions. We feel it should be taken into strong consideration that the book is only available to HS students or MS students with parental consent. We would also like to note there is already a system in place that allows parents and guardians to limit access to their children in the library. Most other districts in our area have this book available in the library for their students to check out. We trust the committee made up of various stakeholders in their previous decisions to keep the book available in the WLC library. We feel that if the value of a book needs to be determined, students should be involved in that determination as they are the ones that directly identify with the value in a book. We would like to end with a statement of trust in support in our librarian's choices to include both contemporary and classic nonfiction in our library.

Chairman Kofalt informed the group, we have a joint Budget Committee session scheduled and he is trying to get a sense of timing of those would like to comment who have not. He asked them to raise their hands, there were 5.

Mr. Don Rankin, Wilton commented he just finished reading this book at 6pm tonight. He did not find anything in this book objectionable. There is talk about sex, white supremacy, and there is nothing that is untrue that is said. The book is basically a help book for young people. He got a lot of help out of it himself because it gave him perspective into other people's lives. We cannot judge other people until we know who they are. This book gave me a great insight into a lot of people's problems. As far as the sexual content it was not salacious, it was actually questions asked by the friend of the person who is making the comments. As far as white privilege goes, I am a white male and if you can't see that, there is definitely privilege in this society for people that are white and male then I think you are not looking at the whole picture. I think stopping kids from reading this book could be very detrimental for some people who don't fit in because what this book showed me is all of these people despite their problems surmounted their problems and got to the point where they enjoyed life. As a teenager, none of us are prepared for life, and what this book can do is help other people that don't feel accepted or feel different who feel much more normal than they would have otherwise.

Chairman Kofalt expressed wanting to continue with public comment. He informed the Budget Committee that we have a considerable public comment on this. There are about 3-4 more people.

Ms. Shawna Bozar, Wilton, has 2 children at WLC. She commented that she didn't have a chance to read the book because she just found out about it yesterday. The little she knows about it is that it does teach teenagers to ask questions about themselves, (reading the title on the articles) that they may be afraid to ask their parents. She was once a teenager, like everyone else here and knows everybody has had been afraid to ask or been embarrassed or to come out with it. It concerns her that we may pull something that will help teenagers get through a tough time in their life.

Chairman Kofalt noted he would defer online comment and reading the email correspondence for after the budget session.

Mr. Adam Lavallee, Lyndeborough commented regarding item 8 on agenda and 2 complaints. He is making comment as a resident not a Budget Committee member. The school board members who made complaints, the years of listening, to some more than others who have been here longer, their comments are selling themselves as champions of freedom and liberty. Whether it is COVID, masks, or vaccines. He was asked to stick to the topic; he responded it is the topic. When you are only agreeing to freedom and liberty as a school board when it aligns with your agenda and you use that as an excuse to do whatever you want regardless of its impact on everyone else. That is not freedom or liberty that we are talking about it is privilege and entitlement. He has concern that one of those complaints was sent from a district email, did not follow the library policy and could have been construed as a board member acting on his own outside of the Board as a whole which isn't a thing. He would like a discussion about the use of SAU email and what authority you have to make requests directly from that without following any written procedure because it does come off as I am a board member and I am telling you to do this. Chairman Kofalt noted that is an appropriate concern, one that was discussed and will continue to discuss specifically if board members have complaints pertaining to a policy ought to follow the same procedures as any other citizen would follow, agreed. In the future, we will make sure that is what happens. Mr. Lavallee noted he was not talking about the Chairman.

Ms. Virginia Day, Wilton, she is a teacher and educator and went through Wilton schools as her children did. She shared she purchased the book, almost finished with it. In her experience as a parent and educator, literature offers our students a safe way to experience new feelings and complex emotions. Reading stories and empathizing with people's success and challenges provides a foundation for students to learn to consider views from other perspectives. The world looks different depending on who you are and where you are from and young adults often seek understanding from multiple points of view. The reading of text can act as a window or mirror to our students. In terms of a mirror, it reflects their own identity, experiences and motivation but it can also act as a window to provide insight to the identities and experiences and motivations of others. Reading literature builds knowledge and helps children become critical thinkers as they gain insight toward a more nuanced perception of the world around them. She pointed out and shared some of the quotes she found in reading in the book. She feels there is a lot to offer. "We tried to be ourselves while being like everyone else", these expectations are poisonous to our young people especially those so visibly different than their classmates which again some of our students may relate to in terms of mirrors and windows and give them a

place to feel that they can share that thought. She is excited for books like the anthology you are reading right now, the more we share honestly about our bodies and listen to others talking honestly about theirs, the closer we get to self-love. “You are amazing right now without a single change”, “You can choose to love yourself for who you are and not despite it”, “Good luck, you’ve got this”, and another “My heart and my body were mine and yet walking around as a teen girl feels vulnerable, scary and can be depressing”. She shared another quote that a lot of our students might find powerful to them and finally from the chapter from the Gold Medalist, “Everyone deserves to feel proud of who they are. I was through letting anyone make me ashamed of my body, everyone deserves to feel proud of who they are” and “Confidence has to come from within”. Ms. Day feels there are a lot of pros and good pieces that can come out of this literature keeping it in the library. She understand some people feel it is a parents job and it has to happen at home the reality is that school is sometimes the only place our students come to be able to gain knowledge and perspectives and maybe feel safe enough to address concerns in their own life.

Ms. Erin Collins, Wilton commented this whole proceeding does not make a whole lot of sense. This title is a book which requires a permission slip for MS and if a parent is super concerned about what their HS student is reading she is quite certain they could talk to the school and a slip could be signed for any and every book the child wants to read until they turn 18. Those of us who believe it is important for our children to be exposed to different ideas presented by different people regardless of their gender, identity, gender identity, religious beliefs, skin color, sexual preference or any differences which makes people individuals and not robots. We should not ever have our children’s education or imagination be limited by the fears of a few. Regarding appropriateness, this book is at the MS/HS not elementary or preschool. Everybody has a body; by the time kids are in MS, they are very aware of this fact. Most if not all of have struggled with some aspect of our bodies and minds at one time or another. Adolescents especially those struggling with their own bodies, their own self-images, or even their own sexuality should not see the adults who are supposed to watch over them and protect them take away and award winning book which could be a truly valuable resource for them. From everything I read this title offers a variety of views, opinions, stories and experiences authored by people from all walks of life. For some kids this book could be a truly valuable resources something that could validate their feelings and even help them express themselves better after reading it. Just because not every parent would allow his or her child to read this book doesn’t mean it should be taken away as a voluntary option. It is not like this is a textbook being forced upon anyone from those children whose parents would have no problem with our kids reading it. Sure this book might be available at the public library, I have not checked however most adolescents are not forced to go to the public library on a regular basis. They are expected to go to the school library though. This is the value of the school libraries. Children are able and expected to make decisions for themselves about what they feel like reading to determine which books would be valuable to them as individuals. If a child is struggling with some aspect of their body or mind or even if they are not struggling with anything at all. A title like this should absolutely be available and in fact, I believe several books on this type of subject matter should be available. Middle and HS aged kids have so much that they are expected to deal with physically and emotionally, they deserve to have every resource at their disposal that we adults are able to provide. If this book was so harmful that it should never had been offered as an option, then I sincerely doubt that WLC or any other the many, many schools throughout our country would have purchased it for their libraries in the first place. I think this would be a good time to note, that since the agenda was written not a single student has tried to borrow this book yet so it is kind of a nonissue so far. Then there is the fact that this award winning book was already discussed and voted on, call me crazy but isn’t that the way democracy is supposed to work, we as citizens vote for people who then get elected, those elected representatives are then tasked with voting on a variety of issues and that vote has already happened. The majority spoke, the majority won, a policy was put in place. This book is in the HS section of the library and parents have to consent if their child is not at least HS age. She doesn’t understand why the rest of us should have it taken away. It seems like a big infringement on my right as a parent to decide what my child is able to be exposed to. I don’t want their education or imaginations to be limited in any way just because I send them to WLC, if I end up doing so.

Ms. Jennifer Bernet, Wilton commented she is concerned about the attempt to remove this book from the WLC library. As she understands, the complaints were brought to the proper channels, brought to the committee. The complainants unhappy with this brought the complaint to the school board. Both complainants happen to be school board members and as far as she knows, no parent who does not have an official capacity of some sort filed a complaint about this book. One complainant says it is indoctrination but I don’t see quotes from the book and a justification for this assertion. In my opinion, the complainant does not adequately define what he means by indoctrination, who is indoctrinating and what the doctrine is. The other complaint on the official form the complainant writes an answer to a question “are you aware of the judgement of this work by the critics, response was “I don’t care”. This book was a School Library Journal Best Book of 2020. Reading the minutes from the committee to reconsider library resources Oct. 25, 22 I am very satisfied members did their due diligence. After reading three chapters, I agree with their findings about the book being about positive body image. The chapters I read, “Looking Straight”, and “How Anyone Can Help Trans People in Their Lives,” written from the perspective of a Trans man were just that, the authors perspectives. There is certainly room for discussion of both essays. I am in the middle of “5 Things People Want to Know About Their Junk And Are Afraid To Ask” which was written by a urologist. She would like to remind the school board that it is budget season; both the principals of FRES and WLC have tendered their resignations. Test scores have dropped due to COVID; she believes that our task as well as school administrations is the need to focus on providing students and citizens of WLCSD with the best education in a fiscally responsible way. We should not be starting and fighting and restarting culture wars using the school library as the battlefield.

Chairman Kofalt confirmed there has not been a prior vote and for those who feel the process has been circumvented, we did talk about the formal form should be used but this is the process. The process is if the decision of the committee that reviews it is not satisfactory it goes to the Superintendent if that is not satisfactory to the complainant it goes to the Board. We are following the process.

Mr. Brian Fey, Lyndeborough commented as our local lawyer friend here stated I have some procedural questions I hope do not get penalized against my 5 minutes. Part of that is could someone explain to me how a book does end up in the library, could someone explain that to me. Chairman Kofalt responded there is a policy on library in which the Board designates the Superintendent to determine selection criteria. The Superintendent works with members of staff, the Board Packet is available on the website and includes a page that outlines the selection criteria for materials for our library. Mr. Fey responded, correct me if I am wrong, on this book there was an anonymous group of people that consulted on this book and chose it was Ok for the library. Chairman Kofalt responded the board policy specifies that there is a committee that will review that, the members of that committee are anonymous. The appropriateness of that anonymity has been raised and will be on a future agenda. There are arguments on both sides of that. Mr. Fey commented the people that have sat here tonight whether for or against have not been anonymous, it seems odd that it would be an anonymous selection when people are standing up saying their names and where they live and all of that. Chairman Kofalt acknowledged his point. Mr. Fey, commented that Mr. Kofalt brought up, "this book and this library" and he specifically said that none of us would want certain books in a MS library and he thinks that is a great point and excellent thing because there are books in this library that talk about rape, decapitation, dismemberment, multiple murders; these are graphic novel books that we allowed in this library whether it is an anonymous group or not. He went back to the lawyer who spoke that there are thousands of residents being interested in this particular book. There are 50 plus people in this room including the board members. He knows he is the only one up here who is not advocating for it. If you look for a second at the Bible, which I doubt is in this library, can anyone answer that. Chairman Kofalt responded it is. Mr. Fey pointed to Proverbs Chapter 1 where it says the parent's job is to watch over children and care for them. It would be a parent that would be sitting here saying whether they agree or disagree what is being presented to their children. He brings up the dismemberment and decapitation and multiple murders in these books in the library, which Ms. Hall brought to our attention. He thanked her because she is absolutely correct there was a short amount of time for people to prepare for this exact thing and he has not had time to prepare other than what he wrote tonight from notes that the people are saying. There is a procedure to keep students safe but yet my child has a graphic novel of decapitation in these "Manga" books, which are again part of this library. There was no vote that he is aware of that brought these "Manga" books into our schools. He has not read all the pages of this book, he has read certain pages of this book and he knows the particular person who wrote this book and he doesn't disagree or wholly agree or disagree with anything he is trying to say this individual has their own issues and is trying to go through life as we all are. We are talking about exposure here we are not talking about personal privilege or choices we are talking about exposure. To me this is definitely not a situation where we can leave it up to a librarian, a teacher, or even permission slips, because "I am pretty sure I got a permission slip for a PG 13 movie and this is not a PG 13 book". To me this would be a rated R book. This is in my opinion this is a direct attack on the family, which correct me if I am wrong, we are in NH, we are in a place where family is supposed to be #1 we are supposed to be a family based community where the family chooses. This situation I have not heard one-person say family they talk about choices. This is an issue we are taking away from the parents. So you guys say the parents have a choice, I don't have a choice what my kid reads in this library I have never once had a choice, my kid has never come home and said can I take this book out. Not one time. I really believe that we need to pay attention to what is going on in our child's lives and the library is one place we need to pay attention to it. Going all the way back to Tick-Tock where people get all these ideas I really think people are losing the grasp of what school is supposed to be. School is supposed to be a safe place for everyone, school is supposed to be a place where you can be yourself and everyone can be their own person just allow the parents to dictate is exposed at what time. (His time ran out.) I needs you all to understand it is a choice, and we should have a choice in what our kids read and there was no vote to let you know guys know because I never got anything.

Mr. Brian Draton, Lyndeborough commented first that he is grateful for parents who raise questions because questions are how we learn. If you don't ask a question, you can't start the process of learning more than you know. He appreciates this and the concern that every parent has as he did when his children were growing up, now his grandchildren, and that they only encounter what they can handle. He remembers his own time growing up. He grew up on a small island in Maine and when he went to HS off island, he had a lot of catching up about the world to do. Looking back on it, a library is a sacred space because it is not a place that is teaching it is a place of encounter. When he was going through his HS at a religious HS learning theology and doctrine and all this Catholic stuff, in the library he was encountering great literature, like the Bible, Plato, Ernest Hemingway, Steinbeck, etc., the list is obvious. None of that stuff was assigned, no one said read this. He was just wandering around meeting these people speaking in their voices telling me things about the world I had never imagined. His encounters with the views of what manliness should be what patriotism might be, what compassion might be, what faithfulness, kindness, serviceness might be, were constantly challenged by my encounter of these highly respected voices and also with a lot of junk literature that happened to be in there, pulp science fiction or whatever. It was the challenge as a good boy I had abide by the moral teachings I had been given by my church and my family and I had to wrestle with my faith in order to make sense of what I was encountering in these books. I had to out into the world and read newspapers and to see if that was the way it was in WW 1. Was that the way it was in Beverly, Mass, were people committing adultery that frequently, John Updikes view is a pretty weird one. That encounter was precious, something that no one was able to tell me was the State of Maine was ruled by the Ku Klux Klan for many years. That hit me between the wind and water. It made me think a lot about the role of race and white supremacy and stuff like that in my time. That book, "The

Hidden Empire” has stayed with me ever since. You never can tell what you will encounter there. He made lifelong friends in those books and made lifelong enemies in those books and they were really important in how I became a grown up, an educator and a scholar and a religious person and a parent.

Mr. Geoffrey Allen, Lyndeborough as a parent, he gets concerned when he sees things like this because he wants to introduce his children to specific graphic topics at his speed. At my level as we as a family, based on our lives, maturity of our children and faith which we know better than anybody else if we are in tune with what our kids are doing. When he hears about things like this in the library, it concerns him. As a community member, he gets bothered when he hears people up here talking about how they think we should be acting as a community, which is everybody’s right, when they talk about families because not everybody’s family looks the same. I don’t have a problem with our children or our communities being exposed to them. I as a community member I want to be able to allow you and your families whatever it may look like the opportunity to get the exposure that is comfortable for your children. I can easily say school is not the place for that it should be in the public library and I believe that but also want to be sensitive to the community around me. It probably bothers me more to see the vitriol that we talk about each other when we discuss topics like this. I think we can all agree there are books that shouldn’t be in our libraries I can name a couple of books that 90% of us, there is always the odd ball that would say yup, shouldn’t have that in the library, whether it is a book, magazine. We have already decided that as a community there are some books we don’t want to expose our children to. I don’t think there is anything wrong with having an honest, open, kind discussion on where we as a community draw that line and since we all draw it in different places I believe there has to be a safe guarded place for us as parents to make the decisions we feel are correct for our children. My one option is to go through and read every single book we have in our library, which I don’t think is fair and say my children are not allowed to take out these books. I am not necessarily concerned with my children; hopefully I raised them to make the right choices. My options are to exclude my children from the library, send an email tomorrow morning to the Superintendent to say my children will not participate in any library activities from now on or to hope the school board or administration can come up with a way for things that may be mature or there is a section of the library where you have to have a permission slip to go into and even then we will be discussion which books should be in that section and which aren’t. I would like to see it done on a community level because I get disappointed with the way we talk to each other sometimes and I don’t think it has to be that way. I would like the right and privilege to exercise the authority to raise my children in the manner I want and would like to avail you the same opportunities with your children. I just don’t know what that would look like. I would hope you as a school board would come up with a method that will protect me and my rights and my autonomy and my authority to raise my children as I see fit while still allowing others. I don’t know what it looks like but it begins with a discussion that has to be open and honest and inclusive.

Mr. Adam Lavalley commented that it is not every book in the library that has an anonymous vote. Chairman Kofalt confirmed that is correct.

Mr. Andrew Greeley, Wilton, commented however, you want to raise your children is fine; whatever you want to teach in the public school doesn’t concern me that much because I am an anarchist. I raise my kids I don’t really like the public school but don’t worry, I pay my taxes it is all good. I would feel bad if I didn’t voice my concern. He has no issue with the book; he doesn’t even care if his kids see it because he raised his kids to make their own really good decisions. He voiced, I trust them and my oldest kid is only 7. The issue I see with the book is I think it is opening the light that other families are different, other people are different and they experience things differently. I think it is not that hard to find a book that can raise that voice that doesn’t talk about masturbation. He finds it to be pretty simple if you want to talk about transgenderism, self-love, and stuff like that I think there has to be an alternative to where there are not illustrations of naked people in books. He is not saying we should ban the book but if that is the message you are trying to get out, he is sure there other books that do not have illustrations of naked people.

Chairman Kofalt asked for any other public comment from those in the room. None heard.

Moved to Budget Committee Session at 7:48pm.

IV. BOARD CORRESPONDENCE

a. Reports

i. Business Administrator’s Report

Ms. LaPlante reported the tax rate has been finalized. She is pleased to report the tax rate being seen is minimal, less than 1% in Lyndeborough and in Wilton 5.8% for school rates. She reviewed what makes this up. She notes it is commendable given the value of what we try to provide. She voiced we discussed the transportation in that portion of the budget. She discussed with the Budget Committee and now it is getting down to crunch time and we are back Dec. 20, will have more impact as far as warrants, and building expenses funded through the operating budget. We want to provide a responsible budget that meets the community’s wallets and what they can sustain. A question was raised when the transportation contract is coming. Ms. LaPlante responded the bids were received on November 17, she didn’t think it goes to the Board. Mr. Vanderhoof advised it has. Ms. LaPlante acknowledged this.

ii. Director of Technology’s Report

Mr. Buroker reported November seems more business as usual. Our tickets are down to 8, which is under his goal of 10. He hopes to keep it there and if so, he will reevaluate the matrix. We pushed out ID authentication without issue, completed the first closet

clean up and have a calendar going for all of them. This will be included in the tech plan. A question was raised regarding the technology warrant and is that something he feels we need to add funds to. Mr. Buroker responded his personal rainy day fund is 1.5 months of expenses, it is probably reasonable although \$45,000 would be the sleep soundly amount. Mr. Post noted he thought the assertion was the Budget Committee wanted to dissolve that fund and if we do it has to go back to the taxpayers. He thinks it is important to keep it for that type of concern. He notes \$18,000 is not enough, do we add another \$15,000 or \$5,000 at a time. Mr. Vanderhoof voiced we can discuss that later in the meeting. Mr. Buroker suggests he doesn't know how much of his budget he will be spending and how much he will spend next year he asked if a percentage of unexpended amount could be added to the capital reserve. He was informed it does not work that way. He spoke of meeting with Motorola who had a proposal to overhaul the radios and camera system and access system. We will proceed along with that. He noted there is a hang-up with that however regarding the schematics, which are archaic and hard to work with.

V. JOINT BUDGET SESSION

Present: *Jeff Jones, Leslie Browne, Jennifer Bernet, Geoff Allen, Lisa Post, Bill Ryan, Adam Lavallee*

Chairman Jones called the meeting to order at 7:48pm

a. FY 2023-2024

Chairman Jones asked for any follow up from the last meeting. He questioned if Ms. LaPlante had fixed the numbers on line 352 for custodial funding. Ms. LaPlante confirms it had and it did not affect the bottom line. A question was raised if there was a kitchen equipment list to present. Ms. LaPlante responded she is working on a comprehensive list with the Food Service Director and will have this for December 20. Chairman Jones asked the Superintendent to schedule time with the Budget Committee and the teachers it can be afterschool, they are open and flexible with dates and times. Discussion was had regarding details asked for in the WLC budgets. Ms. LaPlante pointed out where to find those. Mr. Lavallee asked for mics for the Budget Committee like the ones the Board has. Chairman Jones asked for any other follow up. None heard.

i. Transportation

Ms. LaPlante reviewed we waited for the bid that went out which was due back on November 17. Two bids were received, one for regular education and one for SPED. The net increase to and from regular transportation is \$130,700, an average of 49% that went up. Looking at the bid documents the vendor provided she believes it is a fair estimate, it is a reflection of the current contract, which dates back over 5 years, which had minimal increase along the way to help the budget. This is definitely a reflection of market cost in transportation in her observation. Regarding SPED transportation, Mr. Pratt had presented last meeting estimating about a 5% increase as a placeholder. That came in at 30% increase, \$60,525. Again, 1 vendor submitted a bid that has a trickle-down effect to a degree one field trips as we are paying an increase in fuel rate, increase in per mile rate, and the minimal for in and out of district has an increase. It has an impact on our athletic transportation but we are actually saving is on the line item for vocational transportation (line 14) although it does not affect the bottom line much. That has been budgeted at \$10,000 and does not need that cost. She reduced it down to \$8,000 for repairs and maintenance. The van we have is from 2017 and is in good shape, maintained regularly and does not see an issue of significance. She confirms the vendor for regular education is Butler Bus and SPED is Durham. A question was raised how many other districts Butler serves. Ms. LaPlante reported bids were mailed out, put in the newspaper, and on the website. Mr. Bruce Lyskawa, Butler Bus was present and answered, they service 26 districts in Vermont, and NH, and they have 260 buses in their fleet. He reports they are a local mom and pop business that managed to have a little niche carved out for itself. The state of the industry in terms of transportation with fuel, insurance and being able to get equipment, he has a 1-year delay to purchase a new bus. They are actively in trying to get involved in an electric school bus, which is a challenge. Ms. LaPlante confirms it is a 3-year contract with 2 one-year extension options and currently an estimate for projected in for FY 25 with 4.5% and 5% increases. This is our sharp increase now because we are switching vendors after that they are very reasonable increases. She has not awarded the contract yet. It was asked to see the associated cost to determine where they are coming from. Ms. LaPlante will share that.

ii. Business Office

Ms. LaPlante reported the Business Office budget was not included in the SAU portion. She reports it is a decrease of \$700 and feels it is reflective of what the business office needs moving forward.

iii. Revenue

iv. Grants

Ms. LaPlante looked at the revenue and what we have knowing coming in to us for adequacy grants and state, we have a net less than 1% decrease which is phenomenal because some of these federal funds are going away as COVID is becoming more of a norm. She projected revenues to stay relatively the same with a reduction in our food service stuff. We will continue phase into normal with fewer kids getting free meals. She assumes we will maintain the FY 23 capital reserve funding levels \$130,000 for facilities, \$100,000 for SPED. She built this in and if everything passes, we are looking at a 5.3% increase in what we are going to be requesting from the towns. This only affects this needs based budget, it does not include the wants. We have made no cuts to the budget and want to show you where we are going and get a feel from you if that is a palliative percent of increase to go to the taxpayers with. Chairman Jones asked for any questions. None heard.

v. Facilities

Ms. LaPlante spoke about facilities. We are looking at a net increase of \$110,253; about 20% increase because we have an increase of \$156,053, which is offset by the removing the one-time funding of the facilities vehicle. That is how we arrive of the net increase of \$110,253. Looking at that, \$67,290 is electricity alone, that is 60% increase from FY 23 and that is largely in part because the electricity contract we have started in Oct. 2019. With the contract we have now, we are still 10 cents per kilowatt-

hour underneath the industry standard. We just locked in a 3-year contract to minimize a spike in our energy cost. Our fuel is increasing 48%, \$51,795. We have been fortunate to have a vendor who has historically been coming in below market by at least a dollar. She budgeted an estimate of \$4.50 for fuel based on historical data over several years. Those two make up the bulk of the increase for facilities and some other small decreases and increases in cost of materials and an increase in snow plowing. Mr. Lavallee commented he is in favor of clear-cutting the land and using solar. Chairman Kofalt responded the proposal we got previously from Revision Energy; he thinks there was a good business case following the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act (he believes ultimately it was called this) may make that more attractive. If that is something we want to explore further will require a lot more information and detail for entire Board, Budget Committee and public. He notes he may have the name of it confused with another but ultimately it means there may be additional federal funding we may be eligible for. Ms. LaPlante reports when we take our facilities cost and transportation cost and add that to our hard costs it presents a staggering number to the bottom line. She has retooled the image we had. Previous cumulative budget sheets showed the “wants” included where she has now removed those “wants” items. She took out the funding for the gifted and talented program, proposed funding for track repair and soccer field, she took out the basketball pulleys and scoreboard, she took out the custodian and IT support positions. We have compelling justifications for them but when push comes to shove; those are in addition to what we absolutely need. When we separate the two and focus on what we absolutely need to run our budget, we are at 5.59% increase or \$735,809. She broke down what those are, of \$90,935 funding for the 3rd grade teacher, that is a need in order to maintain our policy with student enrollment. We have an \$82,200 net increase in food service if you takeout health insurance savings, we have increase \$6,500 in equipment maintenance, and a \$90,000 increase in food, snacks and milk from what has been budgeted historically. We are looking at a \$177,000 increase in wages and benefits which is a nominal increase given this is the 3rd year of the teachers’ contract which was originally billed at about a 4% increase. We are looking at \$191,225 in transportation, \$131,182 is from the SPED budget but about \$118,000 is offset by how we budget the difference in employee and contract service provider that ends up being only a \$20,000 increase. We are looking at \$156,000 in facilities, which we just discussed and the bulk of that is electricity and fuel. We as your administrative team have done our best to present what we feel is a responsible budget. We have really looked at what our options are to reduce that and are responsible about what we are asking. She asked for any questions. A question was raised if any of the food service increase is due to the change in free and reduced or is that simply the cost. Ms. LaPlante responded that is simply the cost and that is because the cost of food in her observation and had not been accurately budgeted. We had relied on the transfer in from the general fund. If we fully fund food service as it should be funded, we are looking at the \$90,000 increase in food because we are spending it anyway. A question was raised what is that over the actual spent. Ms. LaPlante responded if she looks at what was spent in FY 22 actual is \$139,000 in food we’ve reduce that moving forward because we are theoretically not feeding as many students because not every meal is free and reduced. Again, that is offset in the reduction in health insurance savings but that is where we are at with the cost of food for FY 22. Chairman Kofalt spoke that he appreciates why gifted and talented is marked as a want and not a need but in his opinion there is a very high value for money, it is less than \$10,000. He asked about food service equipment, right now that has placeholders next to those items and there needs to be a larger conversation about replacing aging equipment. Are we going to budget anything for that? Ms. LaPlante reviewed we have the possibility of a donated oven, a grant submitted for WLC but we have not heard back on that. The replacement equipment has never been budgeted historically. She will be meeting with the director this Friday and next week to go over the inventory he has been created to be sure the asset information he has matches years of manufactures useful life so we can provide a complete report to the Board and Budget Committee. Chairman Jones noted on the basketball hoops we still have year 1 listed, he would like to see that “all in” instead of breaking it out. Ms. LaPlante will have this for the next meeting. A question was raised if kitchen equipment should be part of the CIP, as it has never been budgeted before. Chairman Kofalt responded we talked about it last time and he thinks specific items fall below the threshold but he is not sure. In the kitchen, there is a lot that needs to be replaced and we should budget for it whether that is in the CIP or budget. Ms. LaPlante noted that she misspoke, we have not budgeted for it in the operating budget, there has been small projects budget in the CIP but when those were looked at the actual projects did not match the needs as some of those items had been replaced along the way. Mr. Lavallee noted the item that concerns him is the hood; they are expensive well into 6 figures now. A question was raised regarding the p/t custodial position, is it an extra person from what we have now or is it a need and the job is not being done meaning our schools are not being cleaned. Ms. LaPlante responded it is actually because of the diligence of germs that we don’t have extra bodies. Our current facilities staff are inside the buildings all the time, cleaning throughout the day doing their nighttime clean up and disinfecting. We don’t have a spare body and in the process of looking at what projects are coming up on the CIP, we identified we could cut down long-term cost if we had an extra body for some deferred maintenance. We don’t have the benefit of a facilities department that does anything outside our schools and adding the extra position could provide much needed support and the other thing would be when we have a staff member out all of our facilities crew comes together and works whatever hours are needed. Our schools and cleanliness of the schools have not been affected. Ms. Browne noted that Chairman Kofalt commented on the gifted and talented program that it is a good value and well worth it. She wants to make the argument that they all. When the arguments were made, they were all good reasons. We talked in the beginning about improving

our athletic department and keeping up with facilities, we were all in on that, and we need to stick to with that and let the voters decide. It is our responsibility to put forth the things our schools needs and she thinks those items on the want list are things we need to address. Ms. LaPlante responded we do not want to fold those in without direction. A question was raised regarding the IT position, do we need an employee or a contracted person. Mr. Buroker spoke in his experience you need one IT body per 250 people or so. Pre-COVID we went 1:1 devices. He figures that puts us at 3 people. We have a position in WLC that is funded through ESSER and he does not feel it is appropriate, as the Chromebooks will not be going away with ESSER and for that reason; he has put the request in to include it in the budget.

vi. CIP

vii. Warrants

Ms. LaPlante reported a draft of the CIP document was included with the warrants. We have the business portion of things; we do not know what we will be voting on yet. The wording she put forth is the same as prior years and DRA approved. Ms. Fowler confirmed for Lyndeborough elections on voting day they open at 10AM. Ms. LaPlante notes we will need the cost of what we are requesting for SPED, Building & Roadways and if you want to add anything to the Technology Capital Reserve. She confirmed we are just shy of \$300,000 for SPED. Ms. Browne believes \$300,000 was the goal for that fund. Ms. LaPlante notes it is at \$297,000. Ms. Browne suggests calling that good as it is so close to the goal. A question was raised if that fund had any withdrawal since the last administration. It was confirmed there had been no withdrawal since then. It was suggested to not request anything for the technology fund. Ms. LaPlante noted we have \$18,000. She spoke of having large technology needs and suggested investing in that even it is a small amount such as \$5,000 for any buffer if there was a catastrophic failure of some kind. Mr. Buroker spoke that it could be something like raining into the technology/server closet and he gave some figures on what that may cost. If it were to happen in the computer lab for example that could cost \$30,000-\$40,000. Ms. Browne noted the argument is understood but she has a hard time putting funds into that when we still don't have a technology plan. Ms. Cloutier-Cabral spoke regarding the CIP. The Facilities Committee met on November 16 and are trying to reconstruct the CIP and make more sense regarding what is on it and things that are seemingly more acute and need to be pushed closer like for this year. The items on the plan will be addressed accordingly unless there is an acute need and will be moved up if the Board is agreeable. We are looking to make it a live document and also a look back historically on things. It is hard for the committee to make sense of it. We are also looking at a maintenance plan. There are a couple things that need regular maintenance. Mr. Post explained this. We started with the help of Ms. LaPlante and Mr. Erb, went through, and listed all the projects on a white board. We listed all that needs to be in the schools and separated some based on normal to yearly maintenance and other things that needed go on the CIP. The CIP is online. We got away from routine maintenance with previous budgets and the distraction of COVID and funding just trying to keep the schools operating. We will introduce the maintenance plan, which will not include long-term CIP funds. Also a wish list for projects to do down the road if rates drop or a bond expires we can fund it through a bond. Mr. Lavallee spoke of Ms. Lavoie attending a Budget Committee meeting and she voiced of it being frustrating that they can't see what was actually done. At the committee meeting there was a lot of confusion and if we are confused, they are too. She recommended we do it more like the towns do and make warrants for specific projects and if they need to be done, they have to be bumped up and you need to hold a meeting. You cannot see what was funded, done etc. Mr. Lavallee's initial thought is it would not draw a lot of voters and they won't be pleased to go to a separate meeting. Mr. Allen thinks the overall concern was a lot of these projects are lumped into one CRF and so some projects get bumped in favor of others. He reports he believes Ms. Lavoie had questions like that the roof is listed and we have it divided into 8 sections, we replace one every so many years instead of doing it all at once. From a public point of view it would be nice to see what vote on to put funds into and the life expectancy of things and replace it through a warrant. He gave an example. He feels it adds a lot more stability to the tax rate and accountability. It provides the ability to track and decide their funding and it can't be taken out because we decide we want tennis courts or something. Mr. Post spoke that the way a town operates is quite a bit different. The town is able to move funds around and I understand the complaint but you have to sit through the meetings to see how it will happen. It would also lengthen the meeting if we had individual ones. Those of us who live in Lyndeborough, we have a warrant (for example) for a police car, dump truck, computer, roof, etc. for all kinds of things. It takes forever at a town meeting to approve those. He imagines most towns in NH, you argue over the remaining \$10 and not the 2 million. It will just go on and on and on and it will give us the flexibility if the roof fails and it is on the schedule we have the ability to move it around otherwise we have to go back to the public and ask for those funds and increase the taxes if you have it restricted to a warrant article. Mr. Lavallee spoke that he feels part of it is Ms. Lavoie walks around and sees things that are not improving and doesn't see it on the plan. The other scenario is the \$8,000 boiler was covered by ESSER and is on the CIP. Were their funds designated for that and if so what are they used for now. Ms. Post spoke that this time we made a living document so if something happened and we had to move it up, when we move things around it is transparent and that is different from what we had before. Regarding the roof, it was done that way because we had leaks and certain sections had been repaired and will not need to be done. This keeps track of everything so things don't fall off or get missed. It is really a different document than before and different from the towns; if you have to hold special meetings it gets expensive. There is money involved in that and this is a better way to handle it. Certainly, we can all improve on things. Having a maintenance schedule where things get fixed and sticking to what needs to be done vs. having it on the CIP. Mr. Vanderhoof spoke that regarding the CIP you are talking about moving things or bumping things up, that should be exceedingly rare. If we keep treating it like a living document, it will never function properly. He reviewed some examples. He notes the CIP on the website is a draft and he asks for the old one to be put up as well. He notes we asked the voters for those things that are on the old CIP and those items are not on the draft one. It was noted we do not know how much money will be requested on the warrant for facilities. Mr. Vanderhoof explained that the old CIP contains the math behind it if you click on the cell. Discussion continued regarding the CIP's old and drafted one. Ms. LaPlante commented one piece left out of this is a few

caveats on the draft we have projects not on it that were on it before. We used a \$15,000 threshold going on the CIP; otherwise, we would fund it through the facilities budget. Some things came off. If we put all the projects on it that we want to do, we are looking at something like \$240,000 over the next several years for facilities alone. At a Facilities Committee meeting, we looked at what do we need and talked about what about asking for \$75,000 for the next 5 years and/or tackle some of these through the budget. If we fund the \$75,000 is that something that is cut in year 2 or 3. If we put smaller projects on it, will add up significantly. Ms. LaPlante does not feel what is on the draft is 100% reflective of all that is needed. If it is determined to put it all on the CIP, we will need to increase the ask. If there is an intent of members to add that funding over the next few years all those things matter in funding the projects. It was noted we have facilities we need to take care of and how are we going to do that and pay for that. How much do we need so that when equipment reaches end of life we have the funding. Ms. LaPlante noted it does have a history and will send out the details to everyone. Regarding the live document it is not just about shifting the funding if something breaks, there will be applicable links to see the scope of it every time something was done. Are we pushing things off because we could do the repairs in the budget, we want to have it so that folks in the future can see everything. She spoke of agreeing with Ms. Lavoie that last years the Facilities Committee didn't get very far. That is because we want to see good data in good data out and we were not seeing that consistency. We want to provide the clarity and transparency. Regarding the boiler, in the 2021 annual report we were funding is about \$135,000 for all 3 boilers. The quote she just got is \$74,000 for each; obviously, it has increased with inflation. There are projects that the cost was not adjusted over time and this also has an impact. She notes there is ESSER funding there for a boiler but it is not complete, we are waiting for it to arrive. ESSER funding expires September 2024. We do however have a grace period to pay out invoices along as the project has been approved and in process. That funding is there and even though the estimate was \$74,000, we bumped it up to \$85,000 to allow room for wiggle room for when the product arrived and any unforeseen needs. There are 3 boilers at WLC, those the 3 we are talking about. At LCS it is 8-years old and is not a commercial boiler, we estimate 10-years of future life on that. She confirms all 3 at WLC need to be replaced; we did not go back to the school board and ask for all of them. Chairman Kofalt noted a specific amount of ESSER funds need to be used for learning loss. Chairman Jones asked how much do we anticipate going out for this year for projects. Ms. LaPlante note that leads to another issue, we have a roof and siding that need to be repaired at LCS. We are assigning \$130,000 value for the 2 projects combined. Conceptually, the money is there but that destroys any future projects we have been setting money aside for. Next year we are looking at \$91,000 for the last phase of the roof and we have deferred maintenance at LCS. Ms. LaPlante confirms we do not have the LCS roof on the draft CIP because we don't know how it will be funded. However, it will be funded, it will impact future CIP amounts, do we increase funding next year, do we do a warrant, we need to determine the details. She confirms the committee did not come up an amount to place on the warrant. Mr. Post spoke that this is a draft document and the Board is just seeing it now. There are some problems we need to address. Will we raise money for the roof at LCS then immediately spend it, if so it would not be a CIP issue. Ms. Browne noted she does not agree with making the LCS roof a separate ask because it has been on prior CIP plans and in taxpayers minds, they have been contributing to that. Ms. LaPlante noted the LCS roof was budgeted as \$16,000 and now we are looking at \$85,000 to complete it and also there is a need for siding and window work. It compounds the issue that the cost were not updated along the way, we were in fact funding projects but not at reasonable costs. Ms. Browne noted the siding repair was talked about 3 years ago, it is not clear for even folks on the committee that things are getting done. It was confirmed the next Facilities Committee meeting is Dec. 6. Chairman Jones asks to revisit this. He also asks the Facilities Committee to consider putting themselves accountable to the numbers here and revalidating them periodically. Ms. LaPlante's goal is to get this document up to accurate standards and develop the legwork, update costs on document, etc. Chairman Jones notes he does not think we should use this document as money in and money out, we shouldn't put in \$200,000 and spend \$200,000 or bring the balance down low. We need to think philosophically about it. Ms. LaPlante responded that everyone recognizes that and that is why it is full draft mode. Discussion was had regarding the \$15,000 cap. Mr. Vanderhoof thinks that is good, he thinks you should talk about potentially about how close to deadline to put in on the CIP. For example if it is something that needs to be completed in 3 years, he does not think it should go on the CIP. The windows in the gym is a brand new project to be done this year and it should be in the budget. Ms. LaPlante noted the practice of money in and money out is inherited and the goal is to change that. Discussions continued. Ms. LaPlante spoke of needing direction (aside from the CIP warrant) from the Boards based on what you are seeing, are you comfortable proceeding with what you are looking at dollar wise or if we move the wants into the budget will that trigger us to be asked for cuts on Dec. 20. Chairman Jones spoke we talked about at the Budget Committee meeting, last year we had a session with administration, it was a good session and we made a lot of decisions in there from a budget standpoint and we wanted to do that again with the Superintendent and the Business Administrator. Ms. LaPlante noted there are not too many meetings left and wants time to work and retool if needed. Both Superintendent and Ms. LaPlante agreed to meeting with them on December 15 at 6:30pm and anyone from the School Board is invited. Chairman Jones spoke that the Budget Committee understands with inflation and decisions we have to make, a 5.5% increase if you asked him last year he would not be comfortable but this year you are a little over 7% with the wants. We may have some items we want to drill down on. He asks the Budget Committee to come with any items and punch list. It was confirmed it is a public meeting.

*A MOTION was made by Ms. Browne and SECONDED by Mr. Allen to adjourn the Budget Committee at 9:05pm.
Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*

Appreciation voiced for the publics patients.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Superintendent called out all the phone numbers and names joined in the meeting asking if they wanted to comment.

Ms. Mary Golding, Wilton spoke as a parent asking to keep “Body Talk” in school library. She read it and can relate to a few stories. She spoke of her experiences and felt the book is empowering and comforting. It does talk about sexuality and menstruation. She notes this generation is moving fast and we need to progress with that. We want to keep our kids as long as we can but they are being exposed to things we can’t keep up with. We can put parenteral controls on things like TV, tablets, phones etc. but their friends may not have those controls and they are exposed to those things. She finds the book to be an excellent tool to start talking to their kids about it if they are not already. Regarding the illustrations, they are cartoony like, she has seen more on TV and she loves them. They represent just about every body type. She asks about the 2 who brought complaints, did they do so as parents or school board members, she feels if they did as parents they should be in the audience as parents and she strongly disagrees with them getting a vote on a complaint they brought to the school board. She also voiced 1 complainant use their SAU account and did not fill out the proper form. She also noted, as a register voter she has the right to not vote to elect them. She thanked the Superintendent and the rest of the Board for listening to everyone’s emails, opinions and comments. She appreciates you all very much.

Chairman Kofalt read 3 submitted emails as public comment. Emails were from Ms. Sara and Rob Spittle, Bailey Bresett and Mikayla Broderick and are attached to these minutes.

Mr. Eddy Anzalone, Lyndeborough spoke to reiterate a couple things that came up in the meeting. One of those is that only 2 people opposed the book and are on the school board. That is not the case. He spoke of being on the same page with his wife. The reason there was not another complaint is we did it together and in lieu of wasting everyone’s time especially the committee that is assigned to this book; they have to do it each time. That is the reason there isn’t more and I can tell you there is more. The second thing he spoke of is one of the continuing comments everyone keeps saying is the book won awards these bestselling novels by arbitrary group the libraries or teachers or whoever it is and no one should question that. His children are brought up to question everything because someone says it is so does not mean it is so. People are being ridiculed for questioning something is not something he believes necessarily to be right. He does not believe that because a certain number of people think it is correct means it is correct. He thinks everyone can have a conversation about certain things in a healthy manner and he thinks that is something that needs to be brought forward. The teachers in the school who have his kids will attest to that his questions everything. It is not out of disrespect, it is out of knowledge, they wonder why things happen and he thinks that is a healthy thing. When I dove into the book and noticed things about privilege and I thinks that is a horrible word in regard to certain subjects and white males being the problem with certain things in society. That was his big issue in this book along with some of the explicit sexual things in this book. Although I will not tell any parent to raise their child in any manner, it is their right. For us to come up to the School Board and address these issues is our right as well. I don’t put that down on anybody and would hope that no one would put that down on me. That said I think the book in certain instances blames certain people for certain things. He feels the word privilege or whatever you want to call it should be used sparingly in today’s society because there are people who are white that are suffering having issues with putting food on the table or getting to work etc. and lumping everyone in as the same group he doesn’t think is a smart thing. As far as the males go, my boys are strong, straight, white males and I don’t think there is anything wrong with that. That is the way I raised my children and I don’t think it is fair they should be essentially reading books that say I am the cause of certain issues. The only part of this that is part of the democratic process is you were elected by towns based on what you support, that is why they elected you. I think all parents should have a voice. I did not in any way shape or form have a problem with race, gender, religion. I think legitimate concerns were brought up about this book. I don’t envy you or what is about to happen.

Ms. Erin Collins, Wilton requested the emails that were not be read be included in the minutes. Chairman Kofalt responded they would. Ms. Collins voiced public school at its best should be inclusive and welcoming, outside the walls and outside of Wilton there are all kinds of different people and pretending certain types of people don’t exist, that is indoctrination and I don’t want my kids to be indoctrinated to that. By banning a book just because people take issue with transgender or white male privilege, everyone has strengths and weaknesses and if you want to pretend something doesn’t exist doesn’t make it not exist. I don’t want any of our kids to see that essentially after something has been voted on, since this is a reconsideration and not initiation, I don’t want to see something be brought back in a nice tidy package. Chairman Kofalt noted he believes Ms. Collins has gone over her 5 minutes combining her time earlier. He noted this is not something that will be brought back. He asks Ms. Collins commented I don’t want my kids to see hate can win when it is a situation of parents rights. Every parent has a right to decide things; I think we can all agree to that. She agrees with Ms. Golding’s comments, we have the right to not vote these people in and that is coming up soon so pay attention.

Ms. Lavallee spoke as a parent not a school board member. She spoke of her personal experiences with the library and her child. There were some things that I heard tonight that I would be concerned with. It sounded like it is difficult for parents to find out what is in the library. She informed the group there is a link on the school website that will say what is in the library and what has been checked out. You can access it 265 days, 24 hours a day. It is a supervised library by people we hired in the district. Her experience with the librarian Mary Beth has been amazing. She spoke of an incident where her 6th grader wanted to check out a book, a Stephen King book, and she thought it may be questionable for a 6th grader and she contacted me. I think it is important we pay also had discussion with her about how supervised the library was; if there is not a staff member present, the library is actually locked. There is also sections quartered off for MS. We have different scenario for MS, HS, and some I would not want MS students to read them. The MS students are directed to go to their area. It has been a positive experience and she thanked the staff for helping her and her child to navigate that and she encourages people to access the data base and reach out to Mary Beth, I am sure she will be willing to help anybody else.

Mr. LoVerme commented in support of the Principal and Superintendent he made A MOTION to leave these 2 books in question on the shelf in the library...

Chairman Kofalt reminded him we are in public comment. He asked if there was any more public comment, if not we will move the agenda item 8 (Library Book Reconsideration) up.

Mr. Don Rankin commented that recusal normally occurs when a director has conflict of interest or prejudice concerning a particular matter. A conflict of interest is a situation by which financial or other personal considerations may unduly influence the director's judgement.

Superintendent called out for the additional people on line to see if they wanted to comment.

Mr. Adam Lavallee commented that he feels this started with the outcome of the library policy vote that it didn't go the way people wanted it to. The board voted and his concern is if it doesn't go the way they want it to that we may circle back and revisit the library policy. Chairman Kofalt confirmed this is not something the Board voted on. Mr. Lavallee noted he acknowledged that. Mr. Lavallee's concern is that after this vote we will bring back to the library policy. Chairman Kofalt voiced that there have already been requests to revise the library policy, to consider that and other requests regarding reviewing the selection criteria. As a Board if someone brings that to us, we can put it on the agenda and cover it. His concern is that our mission is to educate children, while I have my own opinions of this book and others I am willing to defend my point of view and allow others the opportunity to speak. I will say all the time we spend debating a book or books is time that we are not spending doing things that fulfill our core mission. Mr. Lavallee noted that is the point he was making. I want to be very clear; I am not saying that with any kind of criticism of someone bringing a complaint, people have the right to bring a complaint. I will defend the right to bring a complaint. One of the principles we heard from the staff in this district is when you enter into a difficult conversation, a constructive assumption to make going into that the other people in the conversation whether you agree or disagree are coming to it with some positive. That is the approach that I tried to take towards this. I feel like most of the people in this room who have made comment, have taken that approach and I deeply appreciate the fact that people have maintained an air of civility. Mr. Lavallee commented the time spent on the library policy has been significant and we have a lot of other problems.

Chairman Kofalt voiced given the fact people have been sitting here patiently he proposed we move the library reconsideration up and then finish the agenda. He asked if there was any objection, none heard.

• LIBRARY BOOK RECONSIDERATION

A MOTION was made by Mr. LoVerme and SECONDED by Mr. Golding to keep the book (Body Talk) in the library without changing our approach to it.

Ms. Anzalone thanked everyone for coming and expressing his or her opinion. People mentioned a matter of privilege and I raise concerns as a parent not a board member. Someone mentioned library policy, the policy we discussed was about this policy and I am on record saying yes I agree and follow it and that's what I did. I filled out the form, I did that, it goes to the committee and if you still have concerns, they are brought to the Superintendent. I wasn't satisfied, it's sensitive and we need to bring this forward to the community, let's get it out in the open. It's a good discussion to have. People talked about permission slips, the policy was not clear to me, I was in the library and saw the book. I am not sure if parents are aware of what is in the library. You have to dig 12

layers deep to find it. To let you know whatever the Board decides I will go along with it. I want more clarity for parents. First, the book was on the shelf nothing was said to me nothing was restricted. When I brought my concern that was when it was decided to put on the restriction. My concern is I have students in the school; this is still unclear to me if my MS student wants to get that book out, what is the process. How does it work, will you email the parent, will you call the parent, how does it work, and what is the process for HS students if they want to get the book. Most parents have no awareness of what is in the library. If every parent is asked to find the list and come up with a list and I make a point to send it to the school and as more books are coming in am I notified of that? I am not trying to tell any parent or make any judgement on parents. There may be books I am comfortable with that others are not. Since I ran for the school board, I have constantly said I am about transparency and making sure parents are involved. I want to be involved. It is about helping parents knowing what their kids are learning and getting more involved. When it comes to sexuality, some parents have different level of comfort. My whole point is let's get this discussion out there and make people aware and talk about the different sides, how do you get that information out there. When it comes to issues about sex, having it out there for everyone to see doesn't mean I have to be comfortable with it and having them have full access to it. I was trying to err on the fact that parents have different levels of comfort. I want to make it clear to you the thing about transgender, I don't have a problem and don't think they should be sheltered or act like they don't exist. We are raising our kids to stick up for the person being picked on and you are the person who is picking on people we will deal with that too.

Mr. Vanderhoof voiced he heard many say tonight that the book was separated in the HS library always; that was a decision of the committee. I don't know where administration or the committee came up with that idea. It is out and out wrong it is not the case. It was out there on display for anyone to see. Chairman Kofalt responded his understanding is it was designated as a HS book. He understands it was in the "What's New and Interesting" section. His understanding is that had always been the case.

Mr. Post voiced the book was at the end of the computer section it is not a HS section. He believes the assertion is not correct; he has a photo of it if you want to see it. Disagreement was noted.

Mr. Vanderhoof spoke it is false it is not HS only. Ms. Anzalone said a lot of what I felt. Some comments were made that only I (parent) should decide what my child is exposed to, I agree. Kids today are exposed to more things that maybe they should not be. A lot referred to transgender, if you read the complaint, it talks about the approach of the subject and not the subject itself. Mr. Greeley said books can have the same topic and not talk all about it; you can make all the gestures out there. I sat and listened to all of you and your opinions but there is another side of the story. If we put books in the library and say check these out, that is the whole point of the shelf. You can get it at the library or anywhere else; it does not have to be provided by adults.

Ms. Lavalley expressed we are reviewing a library book, not curriculum; this is a book of choice and offering a choice to our students. When I did my review, I took policy KEC and KEC-R, the questions that were asked of the parents. I read the first question asked what educational value is in this book. I saw what the complainant wrote but I noticed it covers discussion from acne, eating disorders etc., and 37 different perspectives. There were things about shaving etc. and she read a quote from the book. She expressed that she felt it has a plethora of information beneficial to students. She looked at 120 reviews on the book including reviews from Good Reads, Barnes and Noble and Amazon. The lowest rating was 3 stars and she did not read one negative review. She learned in 2022 it was nominated here in NH for NH Flume Award, it did not win, it comes from school librarians. She read a quote from one of the librarians. The overall theme she thought was it would help to empathize with our peers. Her goal as a board member is to help, not teach what to think but how to think. We need to offer various perspectives, she took time to see various books, and we have books on abstinence, the Torah, Mormon, endocrine system, changing bodies, sex and health. She ended with the idea that it is our job to teach kids how to think, not what to think what better way to that by providing, not restricting information. What would we do if a parent requested we remove all US history books that do not contain the indigenous perspective? What if a vegan parent decided they wanted to remove all health books that had a diet containing meat in them or an atheist family came in and wanted to remove all the religious books in the library? I don't think that would be providing the wholesome, diverse and inclusive experience that we need to in a public library. We live in a rural area where kids cannot take the bus to the public library they cannot take the T; they cannot walk to the library. I think it is important that the school provide the resources that the children need in this entire community need to prepare themselves to go on and be adults.

Mr. Mannarino expressed he didn't want to repeat a lot of what Ms. Lavalley said but the point she made about what happens if we remove everything that someone objects to and Mr. Allen made some great points wanting to handle your kid's objectionable material when you feel they are mature enough. Removing everything from the library that a parent feels is objectionable or too mature for their particular student would reduce the library significantly. He understands some specific complaints about the book and he is not trying to diminish those, on balance, he thinks the positives outweigh the negatives. If you want to remove all

incidences of nudity from library, that is a good chunk of Renaissance art books or if you want to remove all instances of violence, someone mentioned the Bible is in the library. There is objectionable material in that torture, murder etc. These are all things that in a vacuum you can say are negatives, but if you throw the baby out with the bathwater, once again the library will be reduced to a point where it is meaningless. He commented about the procedural aspect about what they were about to do, this is speaking as a parent and community member having board members who brought the complaint, adjudicate that complaint, rule on the grievance that they brought to the Board. He doesn't see how it is not a conflict. If we are talking about a 9-member board, and he appreciate the complaint was by a husband and wife, the perception is however that this vote has a 2-vote handicap. That is a very real perception.

Mr. Vanderhoof expressed the idea that I have to recuse myself because I have an opinion is ludicrous. Everyone up here has opinions, has kids in the school, and just because I voiced that doesn't mean I shouldn't vote. You are all going to vote so I am going to vote too. We are all here to talk about one book, I get it is a powerful argument to say what if we ban everything. We know there are other books in the library about transgenderism and no complaints about those; it was not even the main topic of the complaint. It was the about the racists aspect, the sexuality, the idea we want to ban a whole topic is ridiculous.

Ms. Cloutier-Cabral spoke of having a lot of respect for the board members who have strengths and she leans on those regularly. She thinks it is good to have this discord. She also really thinks we have a gem in the library, Mary Beth is thoughtful and a great resources and guide in there. She enjoyed the book and is finishing it. It reminded her a lot of "Chicken Soup for the Soul". It is essay form from people and their experiences. It is not trying to sway someone to do one thing or another. It is just here this is my experience. She notes it is great to hear other experiences.

Mr. Post voiced we have a very small school district here and you all sit and listened to the budget challenges. We are 2 communities with larger school districts around us. Part of the challenge is we have a small library for children starting at age 11, 6th grade to 12th grade. The challenge is the way this library is laid out, it was described as Fort Knox. It is right across the hall. If you go in there, you will see how small it is. I don't have a problem with HS kids reading it. It was on display and that was not the first time it happened, it happened last year. I felt it was inappropriate, spoke to the Chair about it, asked for a list and had to file a Freedom of Information request to get it. The book was taken off the shelf, fine. Now this book is here with access to children. Do you want your 11-year-old reading it? I don't know how we got an anonymous group that makes the judgement on this; it was not in the policy. There is not enough care given to take this type of material away from 6, 7, and possibly 8th graders. He doesn't think you have developed enough control or care with respect for community standards around it and that needs to be addressed before I would go along with this. We can do better but also need to let them be children when they are in 6th grade. There are a lot of political overtones of this, he asks you set that aside. We are trying to educate our students. It has not been easy the last few years; he saw every email that came in. He is not trying to ban book, he asks the staff to come back with a more concrete proposal as to how you will keep this book out of the hands of younger students.

Mr. Golding commented there is not a whole more to say other than he agrees with what Ms. Lavalley and Mr. Mannarino said and the majority of the parents who spoke at the 1st public comment. He spoke of letting his son thumb through it; his son said he knew this when he was 13, he has internet; they are seeing it over and over again. You let them watch Walking Dead; Game of Thrones that is what is in the book.

Ms. Anzalone voiced her concern is the policy is kind of vague she tested it out. It said fill out the form. Without a policy, I would have just gone to the librarian. I followed the policy. I don't have a lot of expectations about what will happen after. I would like to see a clear process of what parents can do if they don't want their kids to read certain material. Does it mean you have to dig through the list and find it yourself and say these are the 10 books I don't want my kids reading. Is that the expectation? Mr. Vanderhoof and I followed the policy and people are upset with it. Every parent has the right to do that and I encourage you to, I respect it and welcome it. I don't think this conversation should be end here and there will be books in the future and should we have the debate again. If parents have concern and want more insight, tell them how they can do it.

Mr. Golding noted we have a motion and a second, he asks for a roll call vote to be taken.

Chairman Kofalt spoke he thinks one of the things that became apparent when we make policies and forms and in this case with parents raising objections. He is not sure we can map out that level of detail and every bump in the road but an opportunity has to come up with improvements and have some clarity. He voiced Mr. Allen expressed an opinion that mostly meets his, it is important for us to respect each other and respect each other rights as parents and a community. He doesn't think the discussion

should end here, there are things in the book he liked and things he didn't and do not agree with at all. It is not his place to decide whether someone should read it or not. The table of contents is marketing to teenagers. The bottom line is he thinks it would be a mistake; it is a slippery slope if we start to remove something like this from the library.

Mr. Vanderhoof voiced you don't want to be the one to decide someone else can't read the book. There isn't anyone saying you can't read the book, this is about who supplies the book, you have the school supplying to minors without consent. It has nothing to do with anyone saying who can read the book at all. Chairman Kofalt agrees and clarifies, there are other things in the library that he finds objectionable and he never raised an objection to them because he feels they fall within a range of opinion that is not so far outside the window that we ought to say we don't want to have it here. Earlier he referenced there are some things we don't want to supply, he would hold to that statement. He understands what Mr. Vanderhoof is saying and he agrees and is sorry if he was not clear in his wording.

Voting: Via roll call vote, five ayes, three nays from Ms. Anzalone, Mr. Vanderhoof and Mr. Post, motion carried.

Ms. Anzalone expressed to be clear if a parent has a concern what is the process if I don't want my kids reading it. Superintendent responded he would get back to her, give us some time to get that in writing and get that communication out.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Post and SECONDED by Mr. Vanderhoof to direct the Superintendent to develop a written policy with dates of action to restrict MS students to HS material only books.

Ms. Lavalley commented she feels there is a procedure in place for that and her experience going through the procedure and given everything we have going on, she needs to be clear it is important for us as a Board is to think of all administration has going on. She calculated the hours we spent on reading the book, it was a little over 90 hours. She asks that we be cognizant of the task.

Superintendent responded it is a reasonable request.

Mr. Vanderhoof commented it was referenced that it was a HS only book and it was not in the HS only section. It is a reasonable request.

Voting: six ayes; one nay from Mr. LoVerme and one abstention from Mr. Golding, motion carried.

VII. YTD REPORTS

Ms. LaPlante reviewed all our encumbrances are wage related or large ticket items like transportation, SPED and are tied back to a purpose. She is not seeing the open encumbrances she had seen last year. A question was raised regarding a lot of unspent funds in new equipment and maintenance spread throughout the budget. It was noted it would seem that would be spent first. Ms. LaPlante will take a deeper look at this. It was expressed some of the lines are 100% unspent, see lines 455-457, 522 for examples. She asked for specifics and the lines in the budget were highlighted for her to research. She will review and provide more clarity and report back.

VIII. LIBRARY BOOK RECONSIDERATION

See above, this item was moved up on the agenda.

IX. POLICIES-3rd READ

i. EHAB-Data Governance and Security

Ms. Lavalley reviewed there were no edits, comments, or questions at the last meeting regarding this policy. Mr. Post suggested we postpone policies to the next meeting and approving the minutes of the prior meeting and move directly to the capital reserve fund request.

A MOTION was made by Mr. LoVerme and SECONDED by Ms. Anzalone to move all policies and approving minutes to the next meeting's agenda.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

ii. IHAM-Health Education & Exemption From Instruction

Moved to the next meeting.

iii. IHAM-R-Health and Sex Education Exemption/Objectionable Course Material-Opt-Out Form

Moved to the next meeting.

iv. JI-Student Rights and Responsibilities

Moved to the next meeting.

v. GBCD-Background Investigation and Criminal History Records Check

Moved to the next meeting.

885
886 **X. ACTION ITEMS**

887 **a. Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting**

888 Moved to the next meeting.
889

890 **b. Request Funds from Building/Equipment & Roadway Capital Reserve-WLC Roof**

891 Ms. LaPlante reported school boards are the agents to spend funds from the capital reserve and acknowledges she will bring the
892 requests to the Board before the work is done in the future. We did have the shingle and roof work done at WLC at a cost of
893 \$68,805. She is looking for approval of funds for this through the capital reserve although we could pay it from the operating
894 budget.
895

896 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Vanderhoof and SECONDED by Ms. Cloutier-Cabral to authorize the withdrawal of \$68,805 from*
897 *the Building/Equipment & Roadway Capital Reserve for the purpose of paying for the roof project as budgeted.*

898 *Voting: all aye; motion carried.*
899

900 **XI. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

901 **i. Facilities Committee**

902 Ms. Cloutier-Cabral reported the committee had an additional meeting to discuss a lot of things that were discussed earlier. We
903 want a live document so that when administration updates it we will be able to see it and have historical facts. We are looking at
904 those projects ongoing, talking about the tennis courts and how to deal that that and with track and field and all things we would
905 love to have and repair and make useful again. We are not sure how the community wants to do that. We want to look at it as a
906 warrant possibly. Mr. Vanderhoof questioned if there are final numbers on the tennis court estimates. Ms. Cloutier-Cabral
907 responded we have a \$20,000 number that we talked about at district meeting and have numbers for replacing or getting them “up
908 to snuff”. Ms. LaPlante reviewed the estimates for 3 scopes of work total \$71,000 and we have \$20,000 funded. This includes
909 cracks, surface repairs, fence work and site work trimming trees and improving drainage. She confirms there is no warranty on this.
910 Mr. Vanderhoof recommends we continue with the original plan, they can use it at the end of this year but moving forward we
911 should go with the original plan. He doesn’t think repairing it is a wise use of money and if we want it, it needs to be on a warrant
912 for \$300,000. He wants the topic brought back at the next meeting to bring back the original plan. He notes I can make a motion
913 but there would be no time for people to prepare for that motion. He wants it on the next agenda. Ms. Cloutier-Cabral confirms the
914 next facilities meeting is Dec. 6 and it will come up again. The idea of the warrant is to let the town decide. Mr. Vanderhoof voiced
915 all of this was presented to taxpayers, they saw, and voted on this and had the assumption we were doing it. In 2 years from now
916 when we ask for locker room renovations, cabinets and paving all those things that were pulled off the CIP. I don’t think it is
917 reasonable way to go about this. Mr. Post commented he does have a good point. He asked what those things are. Mr. Vanderhoof
918 had compared the old CIP to the draft and he requested to have both on the website. He reviewed some of the items that were on
919 the old CIP. He requests it to be put back on the website.
920

921 **ii. Budget Liaison**

922 Mr. Post reported he told the committee what he was going to say at this meeting so that it aligned. The last meeting they didn’t
923 have a quorum; he tried to call in but was unable to get in. They had concerns about staff pay increase, nonunion increases. They
924 wanted a meeting with the department heads and leadership, what we talked about tonight. He kind of supports this. They describe
925 it as more of a collaborative meeting. We reviewed the CIP. He talked about the work that Ms. Cloutier-Cabral, Mr. Bujak, Ms.
926 Post and Mr. Mannarino had done and were going to try to finalize that tonight. Mr. LoVerme questioned what the concern was
927 about support staff. Mr. Post reported Mr. Ryan was concerned about their pay not being in the market.

928 **iii. Negotiations Committee**

929 Mr. Mannarino reported we met and finalized the contract copy and we will meet and vote on that tonight. The pay scale has not
930 changed since it was the last time.

931 Chairman Kofalt had exited for a short time and returned.
932

933 **XII. BOARD BUDGET DISCUSSION**

934 Ms. Lavallee commented looking at the numbers does give her a bit of anxiety. She spoke of thinking of those retired and believes
935 we can be fiscally responsible and still move in a positive direction. She wants to do things to increase the student experience, we
936 are moving in the right direction. She hopes for more feedback from the community before we go to town meeting. Mr.
937 Vanderhoof thinks the gym windows should be pulled off the CIP and put in the budget; it creates less havoc on the CIP and is
938 more transparent. He understands the inflationary aspect we are pushing up over 14 million. We need to understand we are not the
939 ones dealing with inflation, everyone else is too. The last time we asked for a million plus it didn’t go well. A lot can be explained,
940 it just needs to be explained well. He will be taking a second look to be sure everything is absolutely necessary and encourages
941 others to take a second look. Mr. Golding commented he is not totally upset to be at 5.4% but believes to sell it we need to be
942 under 4. He doesn’t know how that will happen yet with transportation and everything else on the ride. He thinks it will be a tough
943 sell. Mr. Post expressed about transportation that Steve Brown of Steve’s Bus provided a great service, and he was affordable. He
944 did a great job for us, and through the pandemic. Butler is a big and will do a good job. They fell short for a lot of school districts
945 from what he understands but we are out in the market now. He would like to be under 4% on the budget but doesn’t know how we
946 get there. We need to be very careful with the warrant articles given the big raise in the budget. We have a lot of challenges. As

part of the budget discussion, we talked about the CIP and deferred CIP. People need to remember what a big challenge COVID was and it took a lot of work to keep this place clean and in a careful position; some things fell away like the rest of society and when people are hard on us and we are hard on with the facilities. We have to remember that.

Chairman Kofalt noted he already voiced his opinion regarding the gifted and talented program. He disagrees with the Budget Committee member about just adding everything back regarding the “wants”. He spoke of certain things like the track and road and suggests considering putting that on a warrant and letting the voters decide it is big enough to merit a warrant. Superintendent voiced that the Board has been reluctant to give us a ceiling and the Budget Committee was reluctant. We asked for it last year and this year. It helps us be more specific. We are in the process of difficult decisions and we are looking at cuts. He knows how much fuel costs. We have to be cognizant, we are building the best budget we can, and it would be helpful to hear if the Budget Committee or community would say it would be great to get it to 4% etc. If we could get it at 4%, he thinks we could sell that but he doesn’t know if we can get it there. We are closing in on 7% and I think that is unacceptable. He knows it is unusual for a Superintendent to be saying this but he thinks we can make it work at a lower percent. If we are looking at increases for the WLCSSA, we need to look at our other staff, food service and front office. Chairman Kofalt voiced his number is 5%. He is hesitant to put a number out there, he wants it to be lower but inflation is inflation it is real. We have to keep operating the school district and not hurting that process. We did have a conversation at the beginning of the process that we should spend the entire budget, he doesn’t agree with this. He doesn’t know if that means we carve out a contingency or what. We should set expectations that just because we budgeted it we should not go on a free for all. Mr. LoVerme suggested another way of helping the budget by closing for a month when we use the bulk of our fuel and opening half a month in July, it would save on fuel. He understands most people will not want to do that. Mr. Golding suggested removing from the want portion is the repair to the road by the soccer fields as it was going to be fixed as part of the tennis court proposal; we were going to grind it up and repair the road to the soccer field. Ms. Anzalone voiced regarding Mr. LoVerme’s suggestion that parents may have childcare issues; she is not against it but just putting it out there. She likes the idea of providing a percentage. She suggests presenting the initial budget and showing them where the areas are that we have no control over and we did our best with what we do have control over. Superintendent voiced we can take a hard look and that is where we are at with this. We need to take a deeper look at the lines Mr. Vanderhoof brought up that are not spent. We really appreciate hearing the 4%, 5%; it gives us a place to shoot for. We are in the place where we need to find areas to cut the budget to offset the increases that are out of our control. Mr. Golding reminded the group this is the Budget Committee’s budget. Superintendent voiced understanding and wants to go on record to say we worked equally hard to fund things and also to find places to cut; we understand where are in the community. He has gone through this exercise before. We are in a good place our budget supported, a solid budget for our district and we owe that to them. Ms. LaPlante asked what the Board’s position is on folding the needs portion for the custodian and IT positions. Chairman Kofalt spoke that we talked about the custodian position potentially saving money and he encourages administration to put a proposal together. Mr. Vanderhoof asked for a roster for next meeting with all the employees; he wants to see overall numbers by building. Superintendent will get that out by building and position.

XIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Brian Fey voiced appreciation for listening to him and all the members of the public. A couple of things were said and he doesn’t want to rehash everything. He had said there were a few members in no votes and yes votes; it felt like the people in yes votes were saying things that were not accurate. Mostly for him it was access and he thinks that will be addressed. It is not only the book in the library that he believes parents would object to. He has a list of all these books that are graphically worse than the one we are talking about tonight. He wants a clear path and not have to have a 5-hour meeting about it. Ultimately, there are things that work in this world and Charlie mentioned community values. There is an agenda beyond this school. He gave a quote from a song from the San Francisco Gay Men’s Choir. If you don’t understand there is an agenda with these books, you are mistaken. It is not a gay/straight issue it is an access issue.

Superintendent called out all the phone numbers and names joined in the meeting asking if they wanted to comment.

XIV. SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Anzalone commented that she has said it throughout the meeting. She knows it has been long, a topic she brought up, and not one we should shy away from. She felt it was important enough to bring forward. I am not questioning the policy I want clarity around it. I want more clear procedure for parents who may have concern and for parents to know how things work in the library and know more about the access issue.

Ms. Cloutier-Cabral loved the community coming out; people are engaging and providing their input. She thanked everyone for coming out.

Mr. Vanderhoof expressed that went exactly as he thought it would, that is fine, he has no problem with it, most of the stuff people said. The one thing he thought was offensive was the idea because he has an opinion or because he brought a complaint forward, a topic, any board member at any time can ask for anything to be on the agenda. It was ridiculous that he or Ms. Anzalone were asked to recuse themselves because their opinion was known. That was the only thing that bothered him.

Mr. LoVerme voiced the biggest problem he has is the way it was brought forward. It was brought forward on a school board email. There is a proper way to do it and should have brought forward on a personal email.

Ms. Lavallee voiced it was great to see lots of people out tonight and would be great to have them here regularly. In regard to Mr. LoVerme's and Mr. Vanderhoof's comments tonight as board members we have a responsibility to always behave in a responsible manner and part of that is recognizing where our power comes from and that only comes from us all together. We do not have power as individuals and we should not be providing direction. If she has a concern, she always is clear and uses her personal email and it is important to remember that distinction and that we behave in a way that does not intimidate or cause confusion for administration.

Mr. Post gave his comment time to Mr. Vanderhoof.

Mr. Vanderhoof commented multiple times he has used his personal email to administration about his kids and in turn they respond to his school board email the idea of what email that I am using is represented of me saying that I am speaking for the Board is ridiculous. This is brought up more than once, you can't speak for the Board, and everyone knows that everyone in the room knows that. Just because it comes from a board email, I didn't say this is an official board email by consent of the Board, he clearly put his email on it, it came from his email, not the Board as a whole. He finds it completely and utterly ridiculous. He does want to agree with Ms. Lavallee that no board member has the authority to do anything however, what does have the authority is the policies and that is what was followed, it was kind of followed but we got there in the end where we should have ended up after it not being followed. The policy is what has the power and the authority given by the whole board because the whole board votes on those policies.

Chairman Kofalt expressed his concern is that he would like to see us move forward in a positive direction. He is a little concerned we could be bogged down in debating details that don't matter to outcomes. Having said that, there are points of procedure that are important and some that are not. A key take away is people on both sides had their opportunity to voice an opinion. The conversation should not end here. He hopes we continue to engage with an eye toward how we can satisfy the broadest range of concerns no matter where they stand and that may include access. He thanked everyone for their time.

XV. NON-PUBLIC SESSION RSA 91-A: 3 II (A) (C)

A MOTION was made by Mr. Golding and SECONDED by Mr. Mannarino to enter Non-Public Session to review non-public minutes and negotiations RSA 91-A: 3 II (A) (C) at 11:18pm.

Voting: all aye, motion carried unanimously.

RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

The Board entered public session at 11:57pm.

A MOTION was made to seal the non-public session minutes by Mr. LoVerme and SECONDED by Mr. Golding.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by Mr. LoVerme and SECONDED by Mr. Mannarino to adjourn the Board meeting at 11:57pm.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristina Fowler

Darlene Anzalone Statement Board Meeting 11.29.22

First, I want to thank the board and members of the public for their willingness to hear out my concerns about this book. There seems to be some misinformation about what happened during this process, so I would like to address by going over how this whole thing unfolded, as well as and also go into specific details around my concerns. First and foremost, this has to do specifically with materials within the libraries at our schools and has nothing to do with the town public libraries.

During one of the school boards non-public sessions in the WLC Library I happened to look over at a bookshelf display highlighting “New Books” for students to check out and saw the book prominently displayed on the shelf for any student to access. The title of the book “Body Talk” 37 Voices explore our radical anatomy instantly drew me in to take a closer look at the book and subsequently emailed Ms. Edmunds directly to follow the appropriate steps to raise my concerns. FOR THE RECORD I AM ATTACHING THE EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN ME AND MS. EDMUNDS FROM A PERSONAL EMAIL NOT MY SAU EMAIL. FROM THIS WHAT WAS PRESENTED TO ME WAS THAT AT THAT TIME THERE WERE NO RESTRICTIONS AT ALL ON THE BOOK AND IT WAS OPEN TO ALL STUDENTS AT WLC

In opening the book, the first chapters that drew me in was “Your Complete Guide to Shane’s Sex Life” on pages 104-107 by an author names Shane Burcaw who has Spinal Muscular Atrophy or SMA who has a blog, and he shared the types of questions he gets asked. The entire chapter focuses completely on his sex life and sexual abilities in detail. He answers questions like do you have a penis, can you get a boner, do you masturbate and here he goes into detail about how much he did masturbate as a teen and describes his cleanup process. He is also asked if he has sex which he says he does and then proceeds to go into some detail about what he and his girlfriend do. The chapter doesn’t address any other aspects of SMA and how he has dealt with anything else in his life aside from sex. Sex is discussed very casually throughout the chapter.

The next chapter I initially addressed “Five things people want to know about their junk and are afraid to ask” on pages 114-119 shares some common questions a urologist gets asked. While some of the information I could see may be helpful to students whose bodies are changing the final two questions “what is the best thing I can do for performance and if size doesn’t matter then what does”, the response to the questions should be geared towards adults not children, and let us all remember that the population in our middle school is children ranging between the ages of 11-13 and between 14 and older in the high school, where it speaks of sex in a very casual manner assuming that these are completely normal everyday topics and issues for children again between the age of 11-18 or 19 to be asking about.

Sex and sexuality are sensitive subjects, topics which as a parent first and school board member second, I feel strongly is a topic that should be left for discussion in the home with the parents, not in school. I am not naïve and fully aware of how much the topic of sex is “out there” in culture and being shoved in our kids faces everywhere you look. As a parent, I feel it my job and role along with my husband to guide our children in this area. We monitor the movies and shows they watch, monitor their social media and have conversations with them about this topic and other areas of their lives and issues they are facing. When it comes to what they are learning in school and what they have access to, again we ask questions. My main reason for running for the school board was to get more transparency into our schools and what our kids are learning and issues they may be facing, not only for myself but I am working to make this information more accessible to all the parents in our district. I asked for the syllabus and have requested copies of textbooks and other materials my children are given. Up until this point, I honestly did not really feel like I needed to at all be concerned about what is available in our district as far as what is appropriate for the school to teach my kids and what should be left to the parents/families of our students to be discussed at home. Had I not been in the library that night, I would have never had any idea books like this were even in the library, and I now wonder, what other books are in there that I just haven’t discovered yet. While we can request information around what is being taught in the

classroom, what insight if any do parents have into what materials are in the library that their students have access to?

After the first review of the book, I received a short email on October 25th from Ms. Edmunds where she copied Mr. Weaver which simply stated. "The committee decided via anonymous ballot vote (4-3) to do nothing with this book. It will remain in circulation for high school students and available to middle school students with parent permission" with no further explanation provided to me at that time. Upon receiving this I asked that it then be elevated to the Superintendent per the policy. (correspondence attached)

In speaking with Mr. Weaver a few weeks later, I was told that he had no plan to overturn their decision, at which time I then requested per the policy for this matter to go before the board. Another parent submitted their own concerns. My initial form I submitted stated overall that I did not feel the materials in the book were appropriate for a school setting, that it was mature material that was best left for the parents to discuss with children at home. Upon reviewing this new concern, the book then went before a committee again, this time they voted 5-2 to keep in the schools.

I will be honest, in seeing this I had a little doubt in my mind, was I overreacting regarding the book, so I also shared this with several people who have children the same age, I sent pictures of specific pages for them to see for themselves and all but one of them agreed with me that this was not appropriate materials for a school setting. I decided to go back and read the book again and will say that in doing so, my objection to this book was only strengthened. My concerns again are around the sexually explicit nature of some of the chapters already discussed, but I also have concerns about comments scattered throughout the book that can pit our kids against each other, specifically the expression from the many of the authors that the root of their problems could be traced back to white people, specifically straight white men. Here are specific examples from the book

- In the chapter titled "The body that betrayed me" (page 14-21) by Eugene Grant who has achondroplasia as he describes as the most common form of dwarfism. He starts off by saying how he did benefit from the privileges of being "White, straight, cisgender and middle class" and later talks about standards expected from people, which could be

something all students could relate to. Granted it's been quite a while since I was in middle school/high school, but I remember all too well how hard it was, your body is changing, you are insecure and trying to figure out who you are, and you feel the pressure to fit in and be accepted. But the author then goes on to state **that standards are used to build worlds where white, straight, average height and nondisabled men have more power, and women, people of color, LGBTQ disabled, and dwarf people have less power and that standards are used to enable racism, sexism, homophobia and misogyny.** It pits anyone who is a straight white male against the rest of society blaming this population for all the world's problems insinuating that if you are in this group, you are racist, sexist, homophobic etc.

- Chapter "Blood on their hands" (110-112) the author who describes themselves as "a Latina who is **generally nervous around law enforcement**" and **"Medicine is designed mostly for white, straight, cis, able bodies in mind because our world has for so long been meant for white straight cis able bodies"**
- Chapter Trigger Warning (149-155) about a woman who deals with chronic pain and went to several doctors over the years to try to figure out what was wrong with her **"there are much larger stories here, stories about the crisis of untreated chronic pain. Stories about how we've all learned as a society to turn away from acknowledging the pain of others, especially when they aren't white or male"**
- Chapter "Visible Scars" (60-64) the author talks about how it's easy to go through her day as a supposedly average person enjoying the **"Privileges as a cis white woman"** as though any white woman has no right to feel insecure due to all their privilege
- Fifty Swimsuits 68-72 which could be encouraging for young women self-conscious about their bodies how **"Hating my body allowed the patriarchy to control me"**
- My Body, My Feelings (73-76) again which could be encourage to any self-conscious teenage **"Body positivity movement tells me that outside forces are the reason we don't love our bodies. The diet industry, beauty industry, WHITE SUPREMACY, ableism, transphobia, fatphobia and so on"** **"My body is brown skinned and therefore more likely to be victimized by police brutality, which is proven by the disproportionate number of black people killed by police"**

- **My Body a Crime (85-89) “I felt shame because I thought eating disorders were just for skinny white girls” “Body positivity spaces continually center on white women and lighter skinned women of color”**
- **“Loving on me is prayer, queer journey into black girl self-love” (92-97) “This is when I first learned about eating disorders, which seemed to me like a symbol of privileged white girl angst”** these statements diminishes the feelings many of the young girls in our district may have around their bodies, that because they may be white, they don’t have an problems and their body image issues are more about vanity and they do not face the same pressures as minorities thus causing them even more shame about how they feel.
- Finally in the chapter titles **How anyone can help trans people in their lives” (202-206) ,** the chapter automatically assumes and depicts anyone who would call themselves a conservative as a dangerous person. **Specifically, page 205 where is states “Is there a family gathering where CONSERVATIVE members of the family will be present? Don’t force a trans kid to make nice with people who openly and regularly decry the community. Its not about not wanting to be with family or not wanting to be social it’s about safety and self-preservation,** again insinuating that if someone is conservative they are dangerous to someone who is trans

School is a place where we as parents send our children to learn things like English, Math, Science and History. We trust our children to other adults for about 7-8 hours a day, 5 days a week for 9 months a year. When it comes to shaping our children and sharing values and morals and beliefs around issues like sex, that is a job for parents and guardians raising the children of our district. The culture that is on tv in the movies or online definitely does not align with the beliefs and values of all parents and families. Just because information and viewpoints are out there, does not mean all families have to accept them and have no say over what their children are exposed to more specifically what is presented to them as the truth. Again, we are talking about kids between the ages of 11-18 or 19 who are very impressionable and are looking to adults to guide them. Much has been said about Trans people and how concerns over this book is all about transphobia which could not be further from the truth about why I am opposed to this book. For me, this is distinguishing between what topics are appropriate for a school setting, to include a school library which is separate from a public library, and what topics and viewpoints

belong to families and are the rights of parents and guardians to instill value and belief on their young, impressionable children. Feelings and attitudes about sex is a topic I strongly feel belongs in the home and not school. And, as far as teaching our kids to be good people, who respect the thoughts and ideas of those around them, this is not going to be accomplished by teaching kids that people of a certain race or gender are to blame for all of the problems in the world and or teaching kids that feelings of insecurity that they may have are frivolous because they happen to be a certain race or gender only leads to more problems. When it comes to attitudes about sex, again, this is a sensitive issue and there needs to be guidelines around what is and isn't appropriate in a school setting. Much like the school has a dress code, there are something that people wear outside of school that just is not appropriate in a school setting. Just a few weeks back an email was sent out about this reminding students and parents there are certain standards around this, and what kids wear around town or at home is not necessarily appropriate for a school setting.

As I shared above, the only reason I knew about this book was because I happened to be in the library. I wonder how other parents that may not have regular access to the library, how are they to know what is available to their children. While the committee decided to limit to Middle School students without parent permission (again if the child asks for the book will they reach out to the parent) but what about our high school students whose families may not feel comfortable with their child reading material like this. Outside of getting a full list of all books in the library and then providing a list of books to the school that they prefer their child not take out, how are parents able to have any say in this? I believe that in the end it is the parents right to decide what is best for their child when it involves sensitive subjects like this.

I have brought this before the board in the hopes of having a civil discussion, where all sides can present their point of view. I have read the emails sent to the board and thank those that took the time to reach out to us as well as those who are present tonight in the room and online.

Anzalone, Darlene

Subject: FW: Concern about library materials

From: Sarah Edmunds <s.edmunds@sau63.org>
Sent: Monday, October 17, 2022 10:28 AM
Cc: j.kofalt@sau63.org; Peter Weaver <p.weaver@sau63.org>
Subject: Re: Concern about library materials

Hi Darlene,

The board will only be involved with this if you are unhappy with the response from the committee as well as an appeal to the superintendent. If it goes through the committee and the superintendent and you are not satisfied, you can appeal it to the board. I have asked the PTO to ask for a volunteer to be on the committee. I asked other school principals last week what they do and this was the most replied answer.

I am convening the committee this week hopefully. I will keep you updated on our timeline and will let you know the decision of the committee as soon as we have one.

Thank you,

Sarah

Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 17, 2022, at 10:19 AM, Anzalone, Darlene

Please find attached the updated form. I do have one question, will the board be involved in this discussion at all, I would like the opportunity to share more about my concerns and also, how are community members chosen for this?

Thanks

From: Sarah Edmunds <s.edmunds@sau63.org>
Sent: Friday, October 14, 2022 2:55 PM
Subject: Re: Concern about library materials

The other questions were on the back of the page. I can get it back to you if you would like next week. That way you don't have to redo anything you already did.

The next step in this process is that I gather a committee together and we look at the book. The committee will consist of administrators, librarians, community members, reading specialists, and teachers. We will make a decision about what to do next with the book (**it may be to restrict access to it, remove it, etc.**).

Sarah

Hello, I had Linda print the form I only got the two pages I left. Sorry maybe the form currently on the website is not updated if you can send me the correct one I can redo and scan to you.

For my knowledge, what is the next step in this process?

From: Sarah Edmunds <s.edmunds@sau63.org>

Sent: Friday, October 14, 2022 2:33 PM

Subject: Re: Concern about library materials

Hi Darlene,

All of the media titles and authors that we offer in the library are available online here

: <https://www.sau63.org/Page/223>

Also, I was wondering if you missed a page of the reconsideration of library materials? There was more to fill out. Let me know if you want to fill in those sections or not.

Thank you!

Sarah

Sarah – I left the book and form on your desk yesterday, I would like to come in maybe one day after school is out next week to visit the library as well.

From: Sarah Edmunds <s.edmunds@sau63.org>

Sent: Thursday, October 13, 2022 7:54 AM

Subject: Re: Concern about library materials

No problem!

Thank you! It will probably be a little after 11 that I manage to get in appreciate it

Darlene

From: Sarah Edmunds <s.edmunds@sau63.org>

Sent: Thursday, October 13, 2022 7:50 AM

Subject: Re: Concern about library materials

Hi Darlene,

I will have the book in the main office for you today. I am leaving at 10:30 today, but you are welcome to spend time looking at it in the main office. I will let Cheryl know!

Sarah

Sarah – Thank you, I had a chance to read a little bit of the book the other night and would like to come in sometime today if that is ok to get a few specific references from the book. Is there a preferred time that I stop into the library today?

From: Sarah Edmunds <s.edmunds@sau63.org>

Sent: Wednesday, October 12, 2022 12:04 PM

Cc: k.gosselin@sau63.org; Peter Weaver <p.weaver@sau63.org>; j.kofalt@sau63.org;
b.lavallee@sau63.org

Subject: Re: Concern about library materials

Hi Darlene,

Thank you for your email. I will look into this and start the process for reconsideration of materials per policies KEC and KECR. The first step is for you to fill out the form in policy KEC-R and we will move forward with this request.

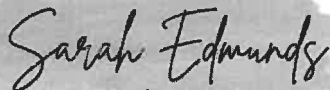
Thank you so much,
Sarah

On Wed, Oct 12, 2022 at 11:15 AM Anzalone, Darlene

Good morning. I am writing to you as a concerned parent in regards to a book I saw on display in the library last night. As you can see from the pictures attached, the book wasn't just on the shelf, but attention was drawn to it as a new book in the library I also took pictures of the table of contents, and upon looking closer at some of the material it talks about masturbation and other such topics as a parent of a 12 and 14 year old student at the school I do not feel that this is appropriate materials to have in a school library. This makes me concerned about what other materials may be on the shelves. At past school board meetings we touched upon a very vague guideline for how materials are chosen for the library. I will be honest upon seeing a book like this I personally would like to delve into exactly what the criteria is when choosing materials and who is the one choosing these materials. While some may argue that a student who is a senior in high school that a book like this is appropriate I personally still do not agree with that but I definitely feel that 11 year old children, which is what many of our six graders are a book like this is definitely not appropriate, it must be remembered that we have a wide range of ages in the student population that is attending the school. It is still a little vague in our policies what exact steps as a parent need to follow in order to request that this particular book be removed from the library and again I do plan on coming in to take a closer look at the materials that my children are being exposed to

Thank you

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Ed.D | Principal
Wilton-Lyndeborough Coop. MS/HS

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Sarah Edmunds

Ed.D | Principal
Wilton-Lyndeborough Coop. MS/HS

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Sarah Edmunds

Ed.D | Principal
Wilton-Lyndeborough Coop. MS/HS

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Sarah Edmunds

Ed.D | Principal
Wilton-Lyndeborough Coop. MS/HS

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Sarah Edmunds

Ed.D | Principal
Wilton-Lyndeborough Coop. MS/HS

Anzalone, Darlene

Subject: FW: Reconsideration of Library Materials

From: Sarah Edmunds <s.edmunds@sau63.org>

Sent: Tuesday, October 25, 2022 5:25 PM

Cc: Peter Weaver <p.weaver@sau63.org>

Subject: Reconsideration of Library Materials

Hello Darlene,

The committee decided via anonymous ballot vote (4-3) to do nothing with this book. It will remain in circulation for high school students and available to middle school students with parent permission.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Sarah

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Ed.D | Principal
Wilton-Lyndeborough Coop. MS/HS

Ronald E. Brown
979 Isaac Frye Highway
Wilton, NH 03086
November 28, 2022

Wilton Lyndeborough Cooperative School Board
SAU# 63
192 Forest Rd
Lyndeborough, NH, 03082

Dear Board Members:

My name is Ron Brown and I live at 979 Isaac Frye Highway in Wilton. I'm here to urge the School Board to retain the book "Body Talk" by Kelly Jensen as part of the collection.

After 40 years as a professional writer, I'm familiar with the power of the written word. And after 32 years as a library trustee, I'm familiar with the process of handling a request for reconsideration. I don't do collection development, but I'm involved in hiring people who do and I trust the professional librarians we have in this town.

I purchased a copy of the book and read it completely. The book presents first person accounts of how the authors have dealt with challenges in their lives, including scoliosis, disability, cancer, other illnesses, body image, and gender issues. I was struck by the honesty and forthrightness of the authors. I found no intent in these stories to titillate or indoctrinate. These are people talking about the reality of their own lives with no other objective than to foster empathy and understanding. They also endeavor to offer support to people who are dealing with similar challenges. As the dedication reads: "For every person who has wanted answers to questions they've been too afraid to ask." There's a reason why this book was named 2020 Book of the Year by the School Library Journal.

One of the goals of education is to help people understand reality, not to obscure it or deny it. Students **will** come into contact with people who are dealing with the issues described in this book. Isn't it better that they are able to approach relationships with honesty and understanding rather than fear and discomfort? I could have used the section on supporting trans people 40 years ago when I had colleagues dealing with transition in the very public environment of a high tech workplace.

I feel that some of the objections to the book were based largely on the titles of the individual pieces rather than a holistic view of the content. Titles are often designed to catch the interest of the reader and to encourage them to do the work of reading the rest of the content. The other sections called out in the challenge constitute about 1 or 2% of the entire work. Frankly, there's very little in this book which would have been shocking to me during my high school years,

Board Members
November 28, 2022
Page 2

which go back to the late 1960s. And there's nothing here which would have been detrimental. Quite the opposite; reading these accounts would have made me a better person and a better friend. Removing this book from the collection serves no constructive purpose.

Thank you for listening to my thoughts on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ronald E. Brown". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid.

Ronald E. Brown

November 29, 2022

To the Wilton-Lyndeborough School Board in Lyndeborough. My husband's and my three children attended WLC Cooperative High School. I will be attending the School Board Meeting tonight. Please place my comments about the challenge to the book "Body Talk" in the public minutes of the school board meeting. Thank you.

S/s Katherine McClure

A. The School Boards Book policy requires that "Body Talk", edited by Kelly Jensen be maintained in the school library.

1. The policy states that the library is to provide "various perspectives", the books are to be diverse ...and inclusive" (paragraphs 1 and 2, shortened; please refer to the policy for the full language)

The gist of the parent's complaints is that these parents do not agree with what is written in the book. That may be, but their disagreement with what is written does not constitute a basis for the book to be removed.

If the world view of one or two parents is allowed to determine what is in the library that by definition, IS NOT inclusive. Since the policy values diversity and inclusivity, the parents objection that they don't agree fails to meet the requirements of the policy.

2. The policy states, "The parents have the right to guide their own children's use of the library." (Paragraph 2) The parents have the right to guide their children's reading but not of any other child. The solution is simple: if the child is in the middle school the parent may decline to allow the student to take the book from the library. If the student is in high school, the parent may contact the library and apply the same restriction. The parents may control what their children are exposed to but do not have the right to control another parents' child.

3. The charge of "indoctrination"

Simply exposing students to ideas that do not conform to one or two parents' views is not indoctrination.

Indoctrination is "the process of teaching a person or group to accept a set of beliefs uncritically. " (Oxford English dictionary) However, Body Talk clearly states in the introduction that the book "offers but one perspective among many others around the world and throughout history". (Introduction, page 1)

What the complainant parents appear to be trying to do is twofold: have students learn only about their personal world view and to actively prevent students from learning about other views. One complainant is uncomfortable with his child possibly listening to "his friends rather than his parents" (the October 13th complainant, third to last paragraph). The October 15th complainant answers the question "Are you aware of any judgements of this work by critics" with the startlingly closed minded remark "No, and don't care". These parents want only their opinions to be presented to the students so their views will be accepted without examination or question.

The actions of these parents is “indoctrination by omission”. By reducing the choices of world view to one, the one they hold, the parents prevent the students from learning about other viewpoints. That denies students the opportunity to read analytically and think critically, the stated goals of the book policy.

B. The policy was not followed by the complainant

“The reconsideration policy stated “the instructional material will remain in use unless the current committee or designees desire to remove or restrict the book or instructional material decision until a final decision is made.”

The notes of the Committee meeting stated that the adult complainant checked the book out from the school library during the course of the appeal process. This adult prevented the students from the reading the book for during the appeal process

In essence, by checking out the book the complainant achieved the desired goal of removing the book from circulation. This backdoor approach negates the intent of the policy to keep the book accessible to students during the appeal process.

I make the request that the language of the policy be changed to address this action by stating that a complainant may not check the book out of the school library. Either the parent can read the book in the school library or take the book out from a public library.

B. Has a chilling environment been created

I question if a chilling environment has been created during this appeal. The reconsideration decision was overwhelmingly positive in favor of the book. No-one on the committee agreed with the complainants the the book should be removed. However, the decision was made to put it directly into the shelves and not be returned to the new book shelf. This discrepancy is noticeable and raises the question of whether a need was felt to appease the complainant when the vote did not go the complainant’s way. Such nuances can’t be determined by reading the committee notes. However, this action raises a concern of whether the complainants acted in a respectful manner;

CONCLUSION

The book meets the criteria of the School Boards Policy. It should be returned to the library immediately. The book should be placed on the New Book shelf for the length of time any other new book is placed there.

Kristina Fowler

From: sau63-schoolboard@sau63.org on behalf of Sara Hikes NH
Sent: Sunday, November 27, 2022 9:14 AM
To: sau63-schoolboard@sau63.org
Subject: [From External Account:] Book Banning Discussion

To The Board,

We have been following the community discussion regarding potential banning of books in the Wilton-Lyndeborough school district as well as at the Wilton Public Library and want to put into the public record that we fully support the current position of the school board and library staff to make all books available to our community. We fully understand that the topics covered in the books in question can be uncomfortable and challenging to deal with - an outright ban should not be considered for this, or any, topic.

The community, the school board and school library staff should work together to make sure that information and support continue to be available to our children, students and citizens.

Thank you for being good stewards of our children's education in all aspects of learning - including allowing a full range of books for their reading and research.

Sara and Rob Spittel
748

Kristina Fowler

From: sau63-schoolboard@sau63.org on behalf of Bailey Bresett
Sent: Monday, November 28, 2022 5:07 PM
To: sau63-schoolboard@sau63.org
Subject: [From External Account:] Don't Ban Books!

November 28th, 2022

Hello WLC Board Members,

Don't Ban Books!

I have just heard that Body Talk, a non-fiction **health** book in our library, is at risk of being removed from the library at WLC. I feel that book-banning is off-base and behind the times. Do the people requesting this be removed actually think that kids today can't get any information they want through the internet?

I don't care what locks or security you've placed on your computer devices at home. Unless you are willing to lock your children up, they can always go to a friend's house or use a friend's phone to access any information they want on ANY subject, the books they can access in the SUPERVISED library at WLC are the least of their concern.

Personally, I am outraged that so many books are being banned in schools, but to see this behavior in my own town is scary and sad, you should be encouraging our kids to read not preventing them from it. Removing books that address current events or issues of gender identity, reproduction, sexual education, tell historic stories and explore diversity in our communities is un-American and stinks of fascism.

If kids don't get proper sex education in school, they will get it from other sources!

Please add my letter to the public minutes for the next School Board meeting and you can read it during public comments.

Thanks,

Bailey Bresett

Resident of Wilton

Class of 2021

Kristina Fowler

From: sau63-schoolboard@sau63.org on behalf of Bailey Bresett
Sent: Monday, November 28, 2022 5:10 PM
To: sau63-schoolboard@sau63.org
Subject: [From External Account:] Body Talk.

November 28th, 2022

WLC Board Members,

I have just heard that Body Talk is possibly being removed from the library at WLC. I feel that to remove a book based on one or two complaining parents is a dangerous path to go down. Will the book inventory change with each board, each complaint? Is it appropriate to restrict the choices in the library based on one specific viewpoint, to cater to one specific perspective?

Also in regard to the objection being related to Trans people, I find this even more disturbing. Removing this book would only send a message of hate to people in our community because when books are removed or flagged as inappropriate, it sends the message that the people in them are somehow inappropriate. How can the Board support this view?

At a time when our country is experiencing an alarming rise in hate crimes, we should be searching for ways to teach kindness and compassion whenever possible. At a bare minimum we should at least be teaching respect, respect for other people, other views, other lives. We are not all the same and the library should reflect that.

Please keep this book in the library and you can read this letter during public comments.

Thanks,

Bailey Bresett

Resident of Wilton

Class of 2021

Kristina Fowler

From: sau63-schoolboard@sau63.org on behalf of Bailey Bresett
Sent: Monday, November 28, 2022 5:05 PM
To: sau63-schoolboard@sau63.org
Subject: [From External Account:] Concerns

23rd November 2022

Wilton Lyndeborough Cooperative School Board

SAU #63

Dear School Board Members,

I am a recently graduated student at WLC and I am writing about the recent attempts to restrict kids' access to Body Talk by Kelly Jensen. I understand that the book has been challenged because of topics related to Trans people.

All people, including and especially young people, have a right to read. When we ban books we dislike or disagree with, it deprives others of their freedom to read and form their own opinions.

I have read Body Talk and formed my own opinion about the book. I believe it is a valuable book because it includes useful and helpful information about a vast variety of health problems. The book is also widely celebrated and available in many public libraries across the country.

Body Talk was awarded the School Library Journal Best Book of the Year in 2020. If parents do not want their children to read a particular book, then they are free to request the librarian uphold their individual choice. But they may not deny others access to the book or tell other parents what their children may read.

WLC has a responsibility to prepare its students to succeed in our diverse and complex world. Helping students understand and tolerate different views is a key part of that. By removing the book, you are abandoning this responsibility. Removing the book also sends a message to students like me that the views of a few members of our community are more important than the quality of our education.

Please, show that you value our right to read and think freely by keeping Body Talk in our school library. Thank you.

Please add my letter to the meeting minutes for November 29th, you have my permission to read the letter during public comment.

Sincerely,

Bailey Bresett

Resident of Wilton

Class of 2021

Kristina Fowler

From: sau63-schoolboard@sau63.org on behalf of Mikayla Mae
Sent: Monday, November 28, 2022 10:46 AM
To: sau63-schoolboard@sau63.org
Subject: [From External Account:] Book Bans

WLC Board Members,

I have just heard that Body Talk is possibly being removed from the library at WLC. I feel that to remove a book based on one or two complaining parents is a dangerous path to go down. Will the book inventory change with each board, each complaint? Is it appropriate to restrict the choices in the library based on one specific viewpoint, to cater to one specific perspective?

Also in regard to the objection being related to Trans people, I find this even more disturbing. Removing this book would only send a message of hate to people in our community because when books are removed or flagged as inappropriate, it sends the message that the people in them are somehow inappropriate. How can the Board support this view?

At a time when our country is experiencing an alarming rise in hate crimes, we should be searching for ways to teach kindness and compassion whenever possible. At a bare minimum we should at least be teaching respect, respect for other people, other views, other lives. We are not all the same and the library should reflect that.

Please keep this book in the library and you can read this letter during public comments.

Thank you,
Mikayla Broderick
Resident of Wilton
WLC Class of 2021

Kristina Fowler

From: sau63-schoolboard@sau63.org on behalf of J. R.
Sent: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 7:45 PM
To: sau63-schoolboard@sau63.org
Subject: [From External Account:] Body Talk

November 27th, 2022

WLC Board Members,

I have just heard that Body Talk is possibly being removed from the library at WLC. I feel that to remove a book based on one or two complaining parents is a dangerous path to go down. Will the book inventory change with each board, each complaint? Is it appropriate to restrict the choices in the library based on one specific viewpoint, to cater to one specific perspective?

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At a time when our country is experiencing an alarming rise in hate crimes, we should be searching for ways to teach kindness and compassion whenever possible. At a bare minimum we should at least be teaching respect, respect for other people, other views, other lives. We are not all the same and the library should reflect that.

Please keep this book in the library.

Thanks,
Jude Roberts
Resident of Lyndeborough
Class of 2020

Sent from my iPhone

