

Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative School District
Annual Meeting March 6, 2021

School Board Members: Alexander LoVerme (Chair), Mr. Jonathan Vanderhoof, (Vice Chair). Ms. Carol LeBlanc, Mr. Mark Legere, Ms. Brianne Lavallee, Ms. Tiffany Cloutier-Cabral, Mr. Paul White, Mr. Jim Kofalt, Mr. Charlie Post.

Budget Committee Members: Ms. Leslie Browne (Chair) Mr. Kevin Boette, (Vice Chair) Ms. Christine Tiedemann, Mr. Dennis Golding, Ms. Jennifer Bernet, Mr. Jeffrey Jones, Mr. Adam Lavallee Ms. Lisa Post, Mr. Bill Ryan.

Other: Moderator Mr. Walter Holland, School District Clerk Ms. Mary-Jane Ryan.

Moderator called the meeting to order at 9: 14 AM

Moderator welcomed attendees and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Moderator read the proposed rules of the meeting:

Simple parliamentary procedure. There will be discussion and debate, please use proper respect at all times.

There has been a request for paper ballot on all articles. Request submitted signed by the following:

Charlie Post—Lyndeborough
Lisa C.M. Post---Lyndeborough
Deborah Mortvedt---Wilton
Mark Chamberlain---Lyndeborough
Jonathan Vanderhoof---Lyndeborough

Moderator asked for present with voice without vote for Superintendent of Schools Bryan Lane, School District Business Administrator Rob Mullin, WLC Principal Peter Weaver, WLC Assistant Principal Sarah Edmunds, FRES Principal Robert LaRoche, Director of Student Support Services Ned Pratt, and Director of Technology Mark Kline.

There were no questions. Proposed rules were accepted by voice vote

Moderator Holland read the voting announcement as follows:

*STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT WARRANT
FOR ELECTION OF OFFICERS ON MARCH 9, 2021
To the inhabitants of the Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative School District in the Towns Wilton*

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and Lyndeborough, in the County of Hillsborough, State of New Hampshire, qualified to vote upon Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative School District affairs:

***You are hereby notified to meet on the ninth day of March 2021
At the following places in the Town of your residence:***

***Wilton Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative 8:00 o'clock in the forenoon
 Middle High School***

***Lyndeborough Lyndeborough Old Town Hall 10:00 o'clock in the forenoon
 (Citizens' Hall)***

Polls will not close before 7:00 P.M.

To vote for District officers:

Article 1: *To choose one (1) Moderator, by ballot, for the ensuing year.*

Article 2: *To choose one (1) Member of the School Board, by ballot, from the Town of Lyndeborough for the ensuing three years; two (2) Members of the School Board, by ballot, from the Town of Wilton for the ensuing three years.*

Article 3: *To choose one (1) Member of the Budget Committee, by ballot, from the Town of Lyndeborough for the ensuing three years; two (2) Members of the Budget Committee, by ballot, from the Town of Wilton for the ensuing three years.*

Moderator Holland read Warrant Article 4

Article 4: District Operating Budget

*To see if the Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative School District will vote to raise and appropriate the Budget Committee's recommended amount of \$12,973,077 for the support of schools, for the payment of salaries for the school district officials and agents, and for the payment for the statutory obligations of the district. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately.
(Majority vote required)*

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Recommended by the School Board
Recommended by the Budget Committee

Estimated Net Tax Impact Lyndeborough – \$(-0.06)
Estimated Net Tax Impact Wilton – \$(-0.07)

Moderator Holland recognized Budget Committee Chair Ms. Leslie Browne to speak on Warrant Article 4

Ms. Brown introduced the Budget Committee members and thanked retiring Budget Committee Members Jennifer Bernet and Kevin Boette. Ms. Brown also thanked Superintendent Lane who will be retiring this year.

Ms. Brown spoke on Article 4 using a power point presentation.

Understanding the Process:

Budget is finalized 6 months prior to start of fiscal year.

Draft 1– 4 October 10 – November 24 - Building the budget

Draft 5 – December 1 - Presentations complete

Draft 6 – January 21 - Staffing adjustments

Draft 7 – February 4 - Budget Committee Final Review

Budget and Taxes

- Projected revenues are estimated.
- Complex calculations at State and Federal level
- Changing student population
- The 2022 fiscal year projected revenue is \$ \$ 3,122,597.00.
- Total taxation is based on **\$9,850,480.00**

Standards set by the DOE

- Offer a curriculum that meets the minimum standards
- Provide instructional resources
- Provide a food service program
- Approve a professional development program
- Prepare students to be college/career ready
- Meet safety regulations in maintaining facilities
- Have school nurses
- Fund required positions
- Create policies as required
- Create culture and climate in schools that create a shared ownership by students, staff and community.

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Much of the operating budget is federally mandated or determined through previously negotiated contracts. \$11,618,376 of the General Fund is made up from the following 5 items:

- Salaries & Benefits: \$9,038,659
- Special Education Services: \$1,024,561
- Debt Services: \$610,224
- Facilities and Utilities: \$447,346
- Transportation: \$497,586

This leaves roughly \$1,354,701 for items such as curriculum, supplies, software, and equipment.

Jeff Jones presented the following:

Areas Impacting the Budget Increases

Category	Adj FY 20-21 \$	FY 21-22 \$	\$ Change	% Change
Retirement Contribution <i>(shift in state funding formula)</i>	\$830,543	\$1,019,672	\$189,129	22.77%
Computers & Technology	\$375,645	\$478,228	\$102,583	27.31%
Replacement Equipment	\$31,163	\$37,692	\$6,529	20.95%
Special Education	\$1,730,858	\$1,787,673	\$56,815	3.28%

Shift in Retirement Funding

- NHRS changed their funding formula for retirement plan putting more on the local level
- Teacher's rate increased from 17.8% of salaries to 21.02%.
 - \$147,246
- Support staff rate increased from 11.3% of salaries to 14.06%.
 - \$41,882
- **Total increase \$189,129**

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Areas Impacting Budget Decreases

Category	Adj FY 20-21 \$	FY 21-22 \$	\$ Change	% Change
All Insurance	\$2,068,260	\$1,854,667	(\$213,594)	-10.33%
Books & Other Printed Materials	\$75,958	\$58,909	(\$17,049)	-22.45%
Total Salaries	\$6,189,141	\$6,154,484	(\$34,657)	-0.56%

Areas Budget Committee Reduced

- Books and other printed materials (online vs paper)
 - Postage and fees
 - Printing and binding
 - Maintenance training
- (\$5,942.00)

Adam Lavallee presented the following:

FY21 vs FY22

- Operating Budget 1.67% Increase
- Operating Budget Inclusive of Warrant Articles 1.93% Increase

How the Budget affects Tax Rates over last year

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LYNDEBOROUGH

The proposed budget would create an estimated decrease in the tax rate of (\$.06)

This would create an annual tax decrease of (\$16.59)

For the average home in Lyndeborough valued at \$280,000

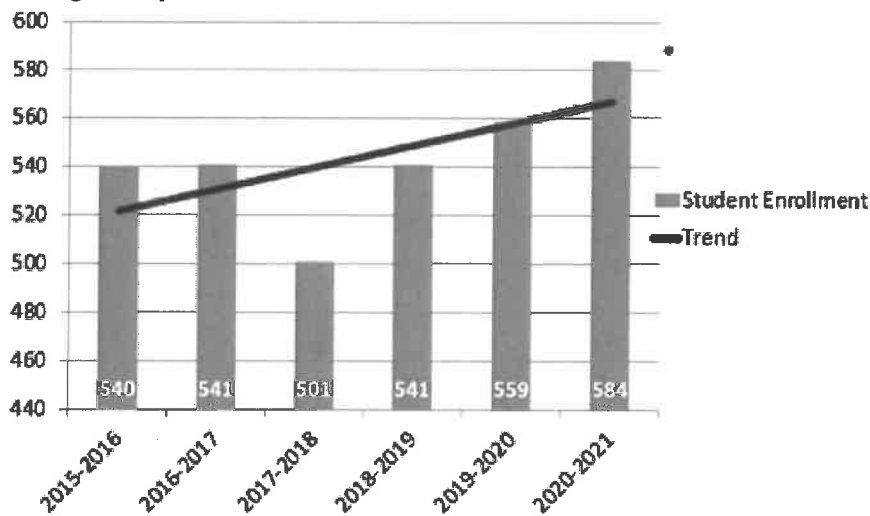
WILTON

The proposed budget would create an estimated decrease in the tax rate of (\$.07)

This would create an annual tax decrease of (\$14.99)

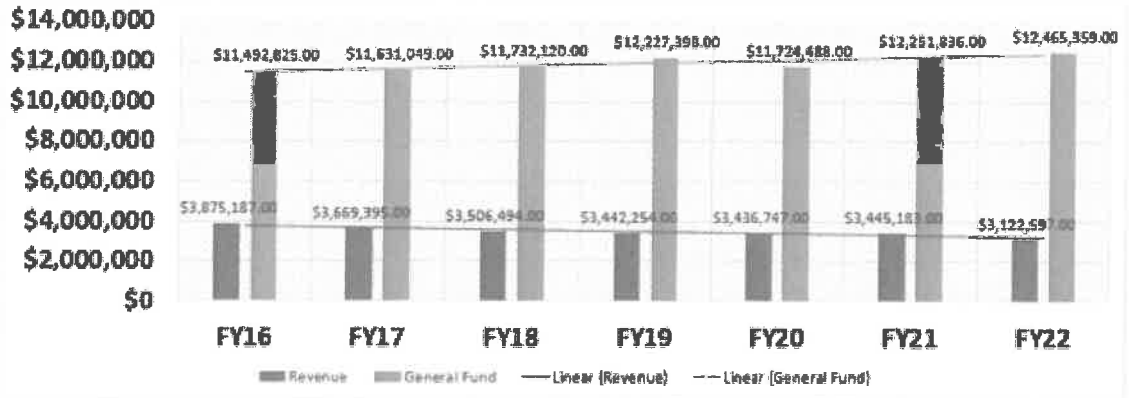
For the average home in Wilton valued at \$217,000

Average Daily Enrollment



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General Fund and Revenue Trends



Moderator called for discussion

Darlene Anzalone of Lyndeborough made a motion to increase the budget by 40,000 for a full time middle school counselor.

2nd by Dan Nelson of Wilton.

Mr. LoVerme spoke on the part time counselor being changed to full time, stressing the importance of the middle school counselor being full time. A part time counselor does not have the time needed.

Mr. Post speaking as a Lyndeborough citizen stated there are federal funds available for this due to COVID and we should think about where the money will come from.

Carol Leblanc speaking as a resident of Wilton stated that after having heard all the requirements, we could use a use a middle school part time counselor in addition to the full time if there are federal COVID funds available for COVID issues that may arise.

Christine Keller Wilton, advocated for the full time counselor stating middle school is the hardest time for students and families lives. Pointing out there has not been a steady counselor. The students need a full time person they can confide in. This is not just a COVID issue it has been going on for a long time. Ms. Keller asked that if we get the COVID funds for a full time Counselor will it be a onetime thing.

Mr. Lane responded, the funds are federal and have to be spent by 2023, limited to that time period. If it is not in the budget.

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Ms. Keller asked is there a way to vote in the position now? Or do we wait?

Mr. Lane responded if passed the \$40,000 would go into the budget to fund the full time counselor and we would still have the COVID funds for related expenses that have to be approved by the state and federal government.

Jim Kofalt stated the budget is also a one year thing, and asked the moderator if it is appropriate to make a motion that next year's budget include a full time counselor.

Moderator responded that would be a separate motion.

Brianne Lavallee spoke as a Lyndeborough citizen in support the full time counselor, and stated these concerns were here before COVID.

Tiffany Cloutier-Cabral spoke as a parent on the importance of a full time middle school counselor.

A resident of Wilton stated 139 students on a part time counselor is impossible and would even be difficult for full time with or without COVID.

Dan Nelson of Wilton asked has anybody shown what the increase would be per household?

Mr. Lane responded 6 cents on the tax rate.

Moderator read amendment to increase budget by \$40,000. Possibly with the use of federal funds for full time middle school counselor.

Amendment passed by Voice vote

New operating budget 13,013,077.

Paper ballot for operating budget Warrant Article 4

***Article 4 Passed by paper ballot with amended amount
65 yes 9 no***

Moderator read Warrant Article 5

Warrant Article 5: Collective Bargaining Agreement between School Board and Teachers' Association

To see if the Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative School District will vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative School Board and the Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative Teachers' Association which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels over the amount paid in the prior fiscal year, 2021-2022 \$117,914:

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Estimated Increase</i>
<i>2021-2022</i>	<i>\$117,914</i>
<i>2022-2023</i>	<i>\$150,755</i>
<i>2023-2024</i>	<i>\$152,748</i>

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$117,914 for the 2021-2022 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately.

(Majority vote required)

Not Recommended by the School Board

Not Recommended by the Budget Committee

Estimated Tax Impact Lyndeborough – \$0.19

Estimated Tax Impact Wilton – \$0.22

Mr. LoVerme moved that Warrant Article 5 be approved as read 2nd by Mr. Vanderhoof

Mr. LoVerme introduced the school board, recognized Carol LeBlanc who is retiring after nine years also recognized Bryan Lane who is retiring after five years.

Mr. LoVerme spoke on Article 5

The total cost of the contract is \$117,914.

Lyndeborough is responsible for 27.295% of the cost which is \$32,184.

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If the contract is passed, a homeowner in Lyndeborough with a home valued at \$280,000 will have an estimated annual tax increase of \$53.64.

The total cost of the contract is \$117,914.

Wilton is responsible for 72.705% of the cost, which is \$85,720.

If the contract is passed, a homeowner in Wilton with a home valued at \$217,000 will have an estimated annual tax increase of \$48.54.

The negotiation process was not an easy one this year. The Board and the teacher's association could not come to an agreement as of December 1 and an impasse was declared with the major factor being salary increases. The process went to mediation and then to Fact Finding. The final step of Fact Finding allows both the Board and the WLCTA to make a verbal presentation supported by a written presentation to the Fact Finder. As a matter of law, if either the District or the Union accepts the Fact Finder's recommendations the warrant article must go to the voters. The Teachers accepted the recommendation, the Board did not.

Beyond the salary issue, the Board and WLCTA agreed to schedule additional days to the contract while decreasing the length of the workday so that the number of hours being worked over the school year would not change. Both sides agreed to create a Professional Development Committee with strong teacher involvement to guide the direction of the District in the future. There was also an agreement to limit the number of staff who could receive service awards in any given year.

When it came down to it the disagreement came down to the cost of the warrant article. The Board had a great deal of discussion in considering whether or not to support the Fact Finder's recommendations. Over the three years of the proposed contract, it is estimated that the taxes in Lyndeborough will increase by \$191 an in Wilton \$178 separate from any budget increases or additional warrant articles.

The warrant article in the first year includes a step increase for all staff as proposed by the school board creating an average annual increase of just under 3%. The salary schedule as it was created was intended to reward those teachers who chose to earn a master's degree. As you can see, the salary increases proposed by the Board would have done that. To incentivize earning a master's degree, the WLCTA contract has \$20,000 designated to pay for teachers to take classes and earn their master's degree without cost to the employee.

The Fact Finder recommended that in the second year of the contract, all employees would have a step increase and adjustments to the salary scale would be made to increase the step for everyone on the bachelor's track and the first five steps of the master's track. Essentially giving 31 employees a step increase and a cost of living adjustment.

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The percentage of salary increase for the different salary tracks are listed on the slide.

Excluding staff on longevity, those people whose years of experience take them off the salary schedule, the average raise for 50 employees in year two of the contract is 4.29%.

In year three of the contract the Fact Finder recommended a step increase and another adjustment to the salary schedule for the bachelor's track and the first ten steps of the master's track.

The percentage of salary increase for the different salary tracks are listed on the slide.

Excluding those employees on the longevity track, the average salary increase for 47 employees would be 4.01%.

The Board identified at the beginning of the negotiation process that the starting pay for our staff was lower than competing districts. It was also identified that the salary scale needed to be adjusted. The Board in its' initial proposals wanted to increase all steps by 2.5%, eliminate the first two steps for over two years with no step increase and a step increase in the third year. This did create a problem in that second year teachers would be paid the same amount as those teachers who new to teaching. While this would have affected 7 of the 62 members of the unit, it was not acceptable to the WLCTA. Adjustments to hiring would have eliminated the issue for all others not in an area of critical need.

In an attempt to come to an agreement, the Board changed course and offered step increases for everyone in an effort to come to an agreement even though it was more of a percentage increase than the Board had originally wanted.

The teacher's proposals had little to change from the opening until after mediation was done.

The WLCTA used comparisons to geographical competitive school districts in their original negotiation larger school districts like ConVal, Milford and Mascenic.

The slide shows the number of students per grade in the school districts we were compared to in order to give you a frame of reference.

Using a comparison to Districts that do not have middle and high schools does not create a fair playing field because they do not have the same costs as our district.

With 28 more students per grade than WLC in grades 1-6, New Boston receives \$583,200 more adequacy aid than our district.

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If Hinsdale has 39 students per grade, they will need three less elementary school teachers than WLC to keep class sizes under 20 in the coming school year. The comparisons from district to district really do not show the true costs that are incurred and how they affect the budget as well as the tax burden.

The WLCTA presented information to the Fact Finder comparing us to districts that are larger than we are. Larger districts don't have the economy of scale that we do. With 13 students per grade, Mascenic would receive more than \$560,000 in adequacy aide as well as more Special Education funding.

The Board felt the comparison of school districts that weren't regional but were our size was appropriate as well as those with a similar tax base. The reason for this is that districts of our size have to run small class sizes but have similar number of teachers. In this comparison we are competitive.

The Fact Finder disagreed and felt that comparing us regionally was more appropriate.

Two additional factors that the School Board took into consideration were increases to the budget that were outside of the control of the District or its' employees.

The New Hampshire Retirement system increased the District's contribution to the retirement system by 18% over the current budget. Even without any increase in salary, the increase to the budget is more than \$94,000.

Health insurance rates increased for all employees by 4.2% over the current year. This is the first increase in three years but it will cause substantial increases from all employees in the District including the WLCTA staff.

The Board does not want the decision not to recommend this warrant article to be a reflection of the support they have for our staff. To the contrary, we recognize that they have come to work during this pandemic and created the best possible educational environment for the children of Lyndeborough and Wilton. They are dedicated individuals who work hard for our kids.

The Board bargained in good faith making compromises and changing emphasis in order to come to an agreement. The Board offered a package that include annual salary increases that would bring average a salary increases around 3%, a larger increase than most of our citizen have or will experience in these times.

The Board did not feel that they could support annual raises for the majority of the staff of 4% in the last two years of the contract while considering the increased cost of running the district, the economic situation our towns are in and the effect that the pandemic has had on our citizenry as a whole.

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Moderator called for discussion

Darlene Anzalone of Lyndeborough, asked for clarification on comparing to area schools.

Mr. LoVerme stated we cannot compare to surrounding towns, we don't have the same industry.

Darlene Anzalone asked what happens if we don't approve?

Mr. Lane responded the teachers would have no increase in salary and negotiations would open and vote again next year.

Mr. Boette stated it was not a unanimous vote of the budget committee but significant. It was felt this is not the time or year to come into the district with a large increase of 6%. People are struggling now everywhere and to start at 6% is high.

Deb Mortvedt of Wilton thanked the committees and administration, teachers and staff for the work this year and spoke on voting no to support our school board and budget committee

Darlene Anzalone of Lyndeborough asked if it could be amended to give some type of increase.

Mr. Lane responded according to RSA we cannot.

Mr. LaVallee stated there was a split on this for the budget committee, the teacher's deserve a raise but the percentage reflected was too high to ask for.

Fran Bujak of Lyndeborough shared fact finder results on comparable districts and said the school board used northern towns for comparisons, the fact finder used surrounding towns for comparisons.

The fact finder believes that comparing us regionally was more appropriate.

Mr. Bujak stated last year we returned money to the community and he urged people to support the teachers .We will have a hard time filling positions with this rate.

Mr. Vanderhoof stated the money that was sent back last year was a result of the COVID shut down.

Darlene Anzalone of Lyndeborough expressed support to keep the teachers, stating we are fortunate to be in school every day and the teachers are there every day.

Geoff Brock of Lyndeborough thanked the board and budget committee, they are in a tough position. Do you want the teachers to not get a raise or do you want to pay the extra over the next three years.

Barry Kemmerer of Lyndeborough disagreed that we can't compare with Milford. More correct we can't pay as much as Milford, he spoke in support of the teachers stating we need to keep teachers.

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Mark Chamberlin of Lyndeborough stated the board being compared to the fact finder is not really comparable. Both sides may have erred on the comparisons, not just the boards. The teachers have costs but so do every tax payer and urged all to keep that in mind.

Matt Ballou of Lyndeborough spoke in support of the article, stating our starting pay is lower than our surrounding schools, our competition.

Charlie Post of Lyndeborough pointed out the other districts are larger than us, we are smaller, a small community school if we are comparing to them then perhaps we should form a larger district.

Julie Lemire stated we need to keep educators long term and not be a stepping stone for them to move onto other districts

Moderator called Warrant Article 5

Article 5 passed by paper ballot

47 yes, 23 no

Moderator read Article 6

Warrant Article-6 Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Support Staff.

To see if the Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative School District will vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative School Board and the Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative Support Staff Association which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels over the amount paid in the prior fiscal year, 2021-2022:

<i>Fiscal year</i>	<i>Estimated Increase</i>
<i>2021-2022</i>	<i>\$24,148</i>
<i>2022-2023</i>	<i>\$19,546</i>

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$24,148 for the 2021-22 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately. (Majority vote required)

*Recommended by the School Board
Recommended by the Budget Committee*

*Estimated Tax Impact Lyndeborough - \$0.04
Estimated Tax Impact Wilton - \$0.05*

Mr. Post moved to accept Warrant Article 6 as read 2nd by Mr. Jones

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Mr. Post spoke on Article 6

This two-year agreement with a cost of \$24,148 in the first year and an estimated cost of \$19,546 in the second year. For Lyndeborough residents, the estimated annual tax increase in the first year would be \$10.98 and in the second year an estimated cost of \$8.89. This is a two-year total estimated increase of \$19.87.

In Wilton, the first year of the agreement has an estimated tax increase of \$9.91 and in the second year an estimated increase of \$8.03. This is a total estimated increase of \$17.94 over two years.

This is a two-year agreement representing 27 employees. The agreement includes a 2.25% annual increase in hourly wages for all employees.

The District will change the percentage of insurance that the District will be responsible for from 83% to 85%, this will then have all employees in the District at this percentage split for health insurance. The cost is about \$212 per employee.

The District currently contributes to a Health Savings account to support staff that do not take the insurance. This contribution will be increased to \$212 annually.

Hearing no discussion the Moderator stated that paper ballot vote is waived for Warrant Article 6 and called the vote.

Warrant Article 6 passed by voice vote

Moderator read Warrant Article 7

Warrant Article 7- Increasing the Funds for the Building/Equipment and Roadway Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$95,000 to be added to the Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative Building/Equipment & Roadway Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum is to come from general taxation. This article is a special warrant article and is not included in the operating budget. (Majority vote required)

*Recommended by the School Board
Recommended by the Budget Committee*

*Estimated tax impact Lyndeborough - \$0.15
Estimated tax impact Wilton - \$0.18*

Mr. Vanderhoof moved that Warrant Article 7 be accepted as read 2nd by Mr. Post

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Mr. Vanderhoof spoke to article 7

If the warrant article passes, Lyndeborough residents would be responsible for \$25,930 of the total warrant article. The tax impact would be an additional 15 cents to the tax rate. This would create an estimated annual tax increase of \$43.22.

If the warrant article passes, Wilton residents would be responsible for \$69.069 of the total warrant article. The tax impact would be an additional 18 cents to the tax rate. This would create an estimated annual tax increase of \$39.03.

The WLC School District created a Capital Improvement Plan several years ago to make sure that the District's investment in its' facilities was taken care of. The projects for the upcoming year will be to:

- Continue the roofing project at WLC
- Repair and replace a portion of the roof at LCS
- Replace the boiler at LCS

As of March 1, 2021, the balance in this account is \$260,513. The funds for the roofing project for WLC done this summer have not been taken out of the account at this time.

Hearing no discussion Moderator announced that paper ballot is waived for Warrant Article 7

Warrant Article 7 passed by voice vote

Moderator read Article 8

Warrant Article 8- Increasing the fund balance in the Special Education Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000 to be added to the Wilton-Lyndeborough Educating Educationally Disabled Children Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum is to come from general taxation. This article is a special warrant article and is not included in the operating budget. (Majority vote required)

*Recommended by the School Board
Recommended by the Budget Committee*

*Tax impact Lyndeborough - \$0.08
Tax impact Wilton - \$0.09*

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Mr. Vanderhoof moved that Warrant Article 8 be accepted as read 2nd by Mr. Post

Mr. Vanderhoof spoke to Warrant Article 8

If the warrant article passes, Lyndeborough residents would be responsible for \$13,647 of the total warrant article. The tax impact would be an additional 8 cents to the tax rate. This would create an estimated annual tax increase of \$22.75.

Wilton residents would be responsible for \$36,352 of the total warrant article. The tax impact would be an additional 9 cents to the tax rate. This would create an estimated annual tax increase of \$20.54.

This fund was created to offset the cost for unanticipated special education incurred after the budget was created and approved.

The current balance in the account is \$147,558.

Barry Kemmerer of Lyndeborough asked is there more need for this because of COVID?

Mr. Lane responded this is an insurance in case a student with special needs comes in to the district we will have needed funds available.

Moderator announced that paper ballot is waived for Warrant Article 8

Moderator put Warrant Article 8 to vote

Warrant Article 8 passed by voice vote.

Moderator read Article 9

To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting.

Hearing no further business Mr. Moderator thanked the staff and attendees.

Motion to adjourn was made and seconded at 12:09 pm

Respectfully submitted



Mary-Jane Ryan
School District Clerk