

Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative School District
Annual Meeting March 09, 2024

School Board Members: Mr. Dennis Golding (Chair), Ms. Brianne Lavallee (Vice Chair), Ms. Tiffany Cloutier-Cabral, Mr. Alexander LoVerme, Mr. Matt Mannarino, Ms. Darlene Anzalone, Mr. Geoffrey Allen, Ms. Cynthia Diane Foss, Mr. Jonathan Lavoie

Budget Committee Members: Mr. Jeffrey Jones (Chair), Ms. Leslie Browne (Vice Chair) Mr. Adam Lavallee, Mr. Charlie Post, Mr. Bill Ryan, Ms. Caitlin Maki, Ms. Jennifer Bernet, Ms. Michelle Alley, Mr. Jonathan Vanderhoof.

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

Moderator called the meeting to order at 9:04 am, welcomed attendees and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

School Board Chair Dennis Golding introduced the School Board members. Budget Committee Chair Jeff Jones introduced the Budget Committee. Mr. Jones thanked and recognized Caitlin Maki and Leslie Browne as this will be their last meeting serving on the budget committee.

Moderator Holland asked for a moment of silence for the passing of long time active community member and former school board member Geoff Brock recognizing Mr. Brocks many contributions to our school and community.

Moderator announced the meeting is being recorded and read the proposed rules of the meeting:

Simple parliamentary procedure. Please come to the microphone and announce your name and the town you are from before speaking. Please respect each other's choice and use proper decorum respecting each other's view and opinions. Please do not speak from your seat, all comments go through the moderator. Please no banter back and forth.

If you want to make a motion please write it down. We will use voice vote if, it can't be determined we will use the raising of hands. Five voters may request a vote be by paper ballot. The request must be submitted to the moderator. Moderator gave instructions on paper ballots and to leave them on the way out.

Moderator asked for present with voice without vote for Superintendent of Schools Peter Weaver, Director of Special Education Ned Pratt, School District Business Administrator Kristie LaPlante, WLC Principal Tom Ronning WLC Assistant Principal Katie Gosselin, Principal FRES/LCS Bridgette Fuller, District Curriculum Coordinator Samantha Dignan, Director of Technology Nicholas Buroker, Director of Facilities Buddy Erb and Attorney Abby Tucker.

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

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Moderator Holland read the voting announcement as follows:

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT WARRANT FOR
ELECTION OF OFFICERS ON MARCH 12, 2024

To the inhabitants of the Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative School District in the Towns of Wilton 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 twelfth day of March 2024 At the following places in the Town of your residence:

Wilton	Town Hall	8:00 o'clock in the forenoon 10:00
Lyndeborough	Citizens'	o'clock in the forenoon
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.

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Moderator Holland announced that he will accept a write in vote for moderator.

Moderator read the annual meeting announcement as follows:

WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT WARRANT FOR
ANNUAL DISTRICT MEETING ON MARCH 9, 2024

To the inhabitants of the Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative School District in the towns of

Wilton and Lyndeborough, in the County of Hillsborough, in the State of New Hampshire qualified to vote in school district affairs are hereby notified and warned of the Annual Meeting which will be held as follows:

Date: **March 9, 2024**, Time: **9:00 a.m.**, Location: **WLC Middle/High School, 57 School Road, Wilton, NH 03086**, Details: **Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative Middle-Senior High School Auditorium**

Moderator read 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 \$14,271,384 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)

Recommended by the School Board
Recommended by the Budget Committee

Estimated Tax Net Impact Lyndeborough: \$.42/\$1,000 assessed value
Estimated Tax Net Impact Wilton: \$.42/\$1,000 assessed value

Motion by Leslie Browne to accept Article 4

2nd by Adam Lavallee.

Jeff Jones spoke on Article 4 using the attached slide presentation stating that he feels we have brought a budget that meets the needs of the students, parents and tax payers. We have tried to provide as much transparency as we can. Enrollment is up over 550 now, referring to the slide with the breakdown of student enrollment, we rely heavily on the administration. Department heads gave presentations at our meetings and the budget was finalized at the public hearing in February where the public had a chance to discuss.

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The budget may be offset by revenues but they are estimated revenues. Changing population also affects these numbers.

Sped has an anticipated 34% increase. IDEA grant decrease of \$124,000 with an increase in services \$174,000. These are services we need to provide by law. Contractual obligations, insurance, retirement, transportation and instructional software.

Moderator called for discussion on Article 4

Alyssa Lavoie of Lyndeborough asked for clarification on when we underspend “it goes back to the towns”.

Kristie LaPlante responded we calculate and report the approved budget and minus anticipated revenues, so we are not cutting a physical check.

Moderator read Article 4

Article 4 passed by voice vote

Moderator read Article 5

Article 5: Collective Bargaining Agreement between School Board and Teacher's 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 Teacher's Association which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels:

Fiscal Year	Estimated Increase
2024-2025	\$629,285
2025-2026	\$279,200
2026-2027	\$254,780

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$629,285 for the 2024-2025 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 Net Impact Lyndeborough: \$.80/\$1,000 assessed value
Estimated Tax Net Impact Wilton: \$.80/\$1,000 assessed value

Motion to accept Article 5 by Darlene Anzalone

2nd by Brianne Lavallee

Matt Mannarino spoke on Article 5 thanking the negotiations committee and members of the union. The goals were to recruit and retain quality teachers. In line with last year's support staff negotiations.

Darlene Anzalone spoke using the attached slide presentation stating the committee met on a regular basis being mutually supportive and very productive. We have struggled recruiting highly educated teachers. There are fewer teachers and a lot of competition to recruit and retain them. Our closeness to Massachusetts has us competing with that state as well. Combined with our lower salaries has a significant impact.

Geoff Allen spoke on the biggest struggle to find teachers is in this area; there are currently 250 teacher openings. We are very fortunate to have a community that gives to their school. Right now 67% of our staff are certified and 33% are not certified, they are working toward certification; otherwise we would not have those positions filled. We still have an open math position and a computer science position. We can try to sell the smaller community but we need the numbers up there to get them in the door.

Matt Mannarino stated getting people in the door requires us to be competitive in the market. Trends of continuity and retaining teachers has an effect on learning and this agreement will help us impact that.

Geoff Allen referred to the slide on turnovers and staff resignations. We need to be competitive and an overall salary schedule. We reviewed other districts and tried to get ourselves in the middle. 2014 to 2024 hasn't had much of an increase. The chart compares salary increases through salary steps. Matt Mannarino reiterated that this is the same as the support staff increase. A few other changes were the changes to the work year reduced by removing two school days and three PD days

Darlene Anzalone stated by asking you to support this agreement we are focusing on recruiting and retaining the best professional staff we have while also being competitive with local school districts in our area .

Thomas Schultz of Wilton spoke referring to slide 2 Collective Bargaining Agreement Cost for Residents. Wilton residents will be responsible for 71.82% that's an increase of \$291.27 for the first year for a home valued at \$364,500. Also on the first page there is no total here so I did the Math; over three years this collective bargaining agreement almost a 7% increase year over year. Referring to the step slides increase 16 to 21 % increase. The town of Wilton is proposing a 4% that is a wide variance and just so everyone is aware this is a substantial increase in the early steps of the program. This will have a substantial impact on the local residents. \$291.00 added to your tax bill in just the first year. We all need to be aware this is what we have to pay and I want to high light that the town of Wilton tries to keep their budget down because for every dollar the town spends the school spends two.

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Geoff Allen replied yes, this is a lot of money but we are making up for years of not having increases.

Alyssa Lavoie of Lyndeborough thanked the school board and budget committee for pushing us forward this year, the increase is still not enough and if this is what is minimum then we have a very low salary wage and we hope the whole community supports this.

Kaye Boser of Wilton WLC class valedictorian spoke on how lovely our school is. Being a military brat she has attended many other schools and she loves it here. The teachers are amazing, helpful in class and contribute to our education. "I wanted to highlight our teachers are quite wonderful and they deserve a lot"

Fran Bujak of Lyndeborough referred to slide 2 and clarified that where it says we are increasing the work day by over 7%. We are not just giving away money to be competitive we are getting the community more services and not just giving away money.

Kim Stevens of Wilton stated she is grateful for the proposed budget presented and in order to have a great education you have to pay for it, urging everyone to spend the money to make our community better.

Ray Humphreys of Lyndeborough asked about the estimated tax impact, are they subjected to the equalized property values?

Kristie LaPlante answered the Department of Revenue provides the Department of Education with the appropriate property values that have been equalized.

Kermit Williams of Wilton spoke on the difficulties of finding substitute teachers when we only pay \$100.00 a day.

Matt Mannarino stated we did increase the sub rate from \$65.00 to \$100.00 but we have to be mindful and don't want to alienate our other teaching staff by paying subs more than they are making.

Peter Weaver stated the CBA for support staff is getting less and we can't pay subs more than we pay them. Concord school district pays \$75.00 a day for subs and that is a more challenging environment. If we could get that number higher without affecting the other groups we have agreements for we could get more substitutes.

Matt Mannarino added we are not the only district having a hard time finding substitutes, the pool is very small.

Adam Carrager of Wilton called the question

2nd by Alyssa Lavoie

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Art teacher Emily Hall read a letter on behalf of the WLC teachers that they love working in a close community and how graduations are truly a town event. A school where we feel empowered to make the best education for the students. We are very close to making this a great school but the one thing that keeps setting us back is the teacher turn over because they need to leave to make more money and we also lose them because they are stressed having to cover classes. A competitive contract would close this gap. We love it here and are working hard to make it a great school and it is hard to keep starting over and this new contract may be what it takes to make it.

Moderator read Article 5

Article 5 passed by voice vote

Article 6

Matt Mannarino motioned to pass over Article 6

2nd by Adam Lavalle

Motion passed by voice vote

Moderator read Article 7

Article 7: Appropriate to Capital Reserve Fund for Building/Equipment & Roadway

To see if the Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$275,000 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: \$.35/\$1,000 assessed value
Estimated Tax Impact Wilton: \$.35/\$1,000 assessed value

Geoff Allen motioned to accept Article 7

2nd by Tiffany Cloutier-Cabral

Geoff Allen spoke on Article 7 using the attached slide presentation. He thanked the committee stating he is always amazed at the amount of talent in this community. Looking at the deferred maintenance we wanted to create a capital improvement plan that supports all of our facilities we wanted to be able to plan for items that may come up. We created a policy that is being worked through the policy committee with far more transparency. There will be no changes without board approval.

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In the CIP you will see more money is going into the CRF to keep the budget more flat each year include any emergencies that may come up. Changes in the CIP will be looking at ways to improve our facilities and save you money. For example we had some portions of the parking lot and road way to be repaired; instead of paving a little at a time we are trying to budget to get it all done at once as this will save us money.

Kim Stevens of Wilton asked what classrooms are in section 8. My biggest concern is my daughter is in classroom 101 and there is extreme mold it can be smelled in the air in the room and I can smell it in her hair when she comes home. Everyone needs to know that anyone in room 101 is being exposed to mold every single day. Ms. Stevens also expressed her appreciation to the budget committee for planning ahead and saving money.

Geoff Allen replied that they will look into the mold issue.

Thomas Schultz of Wilton asked if they had applied for the DOE security upgrade grant and if so did they received any funds.

The reason I am asking this is projects were reviewed to be completed, looking at security projects, replacing doors and key fob access. One of the arguments for not supporting an SRO was why do we need an SRO if we don't complete any other security updates. If you are replacing and upgrading for security, hopefully it will remove that reason for not having an SRO. I hope next year we will have it on the warrant and have taken advantage of the security grants

Brianne Lavallee responded she does not have the exact numbers but the administration can answer.

Kristie LaPlante responded that the district has applied and were awarded \$133,883. To replace the key fobs and doors at WLC and LCS and another increase to our direct communications to law enforcement and we will keep the public updated.

Mark Chamberlain of Lyndeborough said he appreciated keeping the budget flat but the math is a little off \$275,000 CIP, \$272,000 where is that money going?

Geoff Allen replied it is \$3000 off, there is a warrant article later to move funds; costs are not exact we round them off.

Mr. Chamberlain replied we want to make sure we know where it goes.

Mr. Allen replied this is posted on the web site, one tab is a change tab so any changes are there.

Mr. Chamberlain suggested that since we have a facilities committee they should have a report in the annual report.

Moderator read article 7

Article 7 passed by voice vote.

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Moderator read Article 8

Article 8: Appropriate Additional Funds for Building/Equipment & Roadway Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative School District will vote to raise and appropriate up to the amount of \$100,000 to be placed in the Building/Equipment & Roadway Capital Reserve Fund, with said funds to come from the June 30, 2024, unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2024. No amount to be raised from taxation.

(Majority vote required).

Recommended by the School Board
Recommended by the Budget Committee

Motion to accept Article 8 by Adam Lavallee

2nd by Matt Mannarino

Jon Lavoie spoke to Article 8 using the attached slide presentation; congratulating the teachers and thanked the administrative staff. Every year we have an abundance of funds. We have issues to fix and we hear just fix it and that's what we are doing but we want more transparencies. We are asking you to give us permission to put these in a fund for unexpected expenses. The CIP is for buildings, equipment and roadway. \$100,000 into the capital reserve.

Geoff Allen responded the towns do this and it will help us to keep the budget flat and we will have funds to pay for unexpected costs.

Mary Golding of Wilton stated the account expires in June.

Mr. Allen replied this will move money into that account and cover any emergency. Moving money from an expired account into an account that doesn't expire.

A Wilton resident asked is this putting money in the same fund that we just did but slightly different? That was a long term and this is a rainy day fund?

Mr. Allen responded I wouldn't call it a rainy day fund but an unexpected expense fund. Resident replied bottom line it's the same fund from the same people.

Mr. Allen replied it is money we didn't spend and moving it so we can spend it next year.

Mr. Lavoie clarified we already have this money we are asking to just move it and retain it.

Tom Schultz of Wilton asked how much money is currently in the fund, not including what we just put in. Is this a petition signed by tax payers?

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Brianne Lavallee responded that the petition was not allowed to move forward because not all the signatures were registered voters.

Mr. Shultz stated he takes exception to the statement that there is no tax impact. There is because had it been returned to the towns it would help reduce taxes. There is a tax payer impact.

Mr. Schultz stated I want the people to know how much money we have approved today and no property tax relief.

Kristie LaPlante responded If this passes we will not be returning it and it will help stabilize our projects so yes, no immediate tax impact.

Jonathan Vanderhoof of Lyndeborough stated it has been discussed at meetings. You put no tax impact, but yet you are keeping money. The tax payers are paying. It's fundamentally dishonest for you to put this up here without putting the tax impact. To say there is not a tax impact is wrong.

Moderator stated the previous article comes from taxation. This one comes from no amount raised from taxation this is money that was left over. Rather than return the money to the towns they chose to put it into the schools.

Kim Stevens of Wilton stated my concern is whether it is a tax impact or not the most important thing is safety. Please move forward and make the schools safe. You get what you pay for.

Darlene Anzalone added people say you have the money use it. When the money goes back to the town it isn't spent on the school.

Adam Lavallee commented on hearing the word dishonest being used; stating this administration has been honest and it is apparent.

Fran Bujak of Lyndeborough stated if we are being honest we need to talk about how we won't know until June 30th. Also, the gym floor was redone except the window above it leaks. Last year we chose to take \$61,000 out of the CIP to do those windows, all its going to do is put \$61,000 back. We will not need to raise and appropriate. We either use it now or we will have to ask for money in the future.

A Wilton resident stated as long as I have been attending meetings everyone knows it is polite fiction to say it has no tax impact, but on the other hand to call it dishonest or underhanded, let's just acknowledge the voters probably have a good idea of what is going on. If you want to treat it like money you find in the sofa and put it back in the household budget it's all good.

Mr. Allen recognized Fran Bujak for his service as this will be his last year.

Bill Krouse of Lyndeborough asked how did we come up with the \$100,000 and what is the most the balance will be this year.

Kristie LaPlante responded we would have permission to transfer up to a maximum of \$100,000. Right now we are looking \$670,000 in unspent funds. The motion for the \$100,000 was made by

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the school board.

Mr. Krouse of Lyndeborough asked how much was returned last year.

Ms. LaPlante replied about \$450,000.

Mr. Krouse asked how much we will have this year.

Ms. LaPlante replied estimate about \$500,000.

Mr. Krouse to confirm we will be asking for \$100,000 from that \$500,000.

Ms. LaPlante replied yes

Follow up inquiring about unexpected fund for SPED is there a way to have a CIP for them

Ms. LaPlante responded SPED has \$309,000 for emergencies.

Brianne Lavallee responded we like to keep that fund around \$260,000. If we were to have a student move in and they needed to be an out of district tuition that could cost upwards of \$100,000 for tuition and transportation.

Mr. krouse responded that is an adequate balance but the facilities is not.

Ms. Lavallee stated the fire panel at WLC had to be fixed and it cost \$45,000. If we are only funding what we have on the list it makes it difficult when something like that comes up.

Moderator read Article 8

Article 8 passed by voice vote.

Moderator read Article 9

Article 9: Transact Other Business

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

Moderator thanked the tech and facilities teams and every one for being here.

Mr. Golding thanked Matt Mannarino as this will be last year serving on the school board

Rachel Chumbly of Wilton stated the web site should have more information and we may get more people here.

Jennifer Bernet thanked Leslie Browne as this will be her last year serving on the budget committee.

Don Rankin of Wilton thanked both boards and the facilities committee.

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Moderator thanked everyone for volunteering.

Mary Golding of Wilton reminded everyone to vote Tuesday.

Bill Krousse of Lyndeborough pointed out the groups and teams in the hall way doing fund raisers.

Motion to adjourn was made and 2nd at 11:07 am

Motion to adjourn passed by voice vote

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary-Jane Ryan".

Mary-Jane Ryan

School District Clerk