

Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative School District
Annual Meeting March 5, 2022

School Board Members: Mr. Alexander LoVerme (Chair), Ms. Brianne Lavallee (Vice Chair), Mr. Jonathan Vanderhoof, Ms. Tiffany Cloutier-Cabral, Mr. Jim Kofalt, Mr. Charlie Post, Mr. Dennis Golding, Mr. Matt Mannarino.

Budget Committee Members: Mr. Jeffrey Jones (Chair), Ms. Leslie Browne (Vice Chair) Ms. Christine Tiedemann, Mr. Adam Lavallee, Ms. Lisa Post, Mr. Bill Ryan, Ms. Darlene Anzalone, Ms. Caitlin Maki.

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

Moderator called the meeting to order at 9: 01 AM

Jim Kofalt spoke of the passing of former long term school board member Harry Daily; announcing a Scholarship fund has been set up by the school district and to contact Kristina Fowler for information .There will be a celebration of life tomorrow March 6 2:00pm at WLC. There was a moment of silence for Harry.

Moderator welcomed attendees and led in the Pledge of Allegiance. The National Anthem was sung by WLC Principal Sarah Edmunds

Moderator read the proposed rules of the meeting:

Simple parliamentary procedure. There will be discussion and debate, please use proper respect at all times. Moderator explained the setup of the room and the area designated for persons preferring to wear masks.

Moderator asked for present with voice without vote for Superintendent of Schools Peter Weaver, School District Business Administrator Kristie LaPlante, WLC Principal Sarah Edmunds, WLC Assistant Principal Katie Gosselin, FRES Principal Kathleen Chenette, Director of Technology Jonathan Bouley, District Curriculum Coordinator Emily Stefanich, Food Service Director Erin Smith, and Director of Facilities Buddy Erb.

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 8, 2022

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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 eighth day of March 2022
At the following places in the Town of your residence:**

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

| | | |
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| Lyndeborough | Citizens' Hall | 10:00 o'clock in the forenoon |
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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) At Large 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) At Large 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; one (1) Member of the Budget Committee, by ballot, from the Town of Wilton for the ensuing two years.

Moderator 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 \$13,152,064 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

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Estimated Tax Net Impact Lyndeborough – \$0.50

Estimated Tax Net Impact Wilton – \$0.59

Motion by Adam LaVallee to accept Article 4 as read 2nd by Leslie Brown

Jeff Jones Recognized Mr. Lavalie and Ms. Tiedermann for their work on the budget committee and gave notice that the open seats they will leave on the budget committee will bring the committee from nine members to six members. Please reach out if you are interested

Mr. Jones spoke on Article 4 using the attached slide show presentation that covered:

- A district overview
- Average daily enrollment
- NH Department of Education School Requirements
- Understanding the Process
- The Operating Budget
- How the budget affects tax rates over last year
- Understanding Budget and Taxes
- FY23 vs FY22
- Information on the operating budget
- Key budget discussions
- ESSER Funds
- Wages and Benefits
- One-time costs
- Ongoing costs
- General Funds and Revenue Trends

Mr. Jones spoke on the overview of the district using the attached slide show. Our cost per student is \$17,832. That is not the number we pay, it is the number calculated by the Dept. of Education, it doesn't include transportation or tuition. The state average is \$18,434. Our base adequacy aid per student is \$3,786.

Daily enrolment rising with full time kindergarten and next year we anticipate homeschool students will be coming back into the district.

Mr. Jones went over what the NH Dept. of Education requires of every school district. The minimum standards, curriculum, instructional resources, food service, prepare students for college, provide safe facilities, school nurses, having policies and procedures. He also explained the process this year; we had a lot of new people with a lot of new ideas to rethink the process. The budget was looked at from the ground up. Started fresh. A full budget review was done finding out we have a \$60,000. Technology grant, we applied that to some things that were going to go into this year's budget. The final draft had a 3.1% increase.

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The proposed budget would increase Lyndeborough's tax rate by \$.50 with an annual tax increase of \$146. for the average home valued at \$250,000 and for Wilton an increase of \$.59 in the tax rate that would create an annual tax increase of \$183. For the average home in Wilton valued at \$250,000.

FY23 Projected revenues \$3,138,675. These are estimated, changing student population affects that. The revenues we receive are based two years in arrears. Free and reduced lunch forms are very important. For students that qualify under that the district receives just under \$2000. Per student.

The proposed operating budget is \$395,365 or 3.10% vs FY22 operating budget, much of the budget is state and federally mandated or determined through previously negotiated contracts. This leaves about \$1,345,006 for items such as technology, curriculum, supplies and equipment.

Our special education rate is 19.2% as of the end of last year with a 16.5% NH average and 14.9% national average.

Mr. Jones spoke on the onetime cost of a vehicle for the facilities director \$45,800.00 for a F250 truck. Right now it is a \$3000.00 stipend for the director to use their own vehicle. There are insurance issues with the use of a personal vehicle. Surrounding towns have their own facilities vehicle. Other options including leasing a vehicle were explored. This is the most cost effective solution.

Mr. Jones spoke on the \$20,000 for tennis court removal stating the tennis courts would be very expensive to fix and are not workable or usable right now. The best option is to remove them replace it with loam and seed it. We could pursue replacing it down the road in that same spot if we choose to. The tennis team will be able to continue to operate using other courts in the community to practice.

Ms. Browne spoke on the ESSER funds, using the attached slide show.

These must be COVID related expenses and not items that were already budgeted for. The funds were distributed in three separate tiers. The first was just over \$45,000 and was to be used by 2022. It was used for cleaning, transportation, technology and food service expenses incurred as a result of COVID. There are no remaining funds.

The second tier was just over \$300,000 to be used by 2023, it was used for more cleaning, technology, air purifiers for the district, improve social distancing, food service, SPED and summer school. There are no remaining funds.

The third tier has a deadline to be used by 2024 at this point of the \$684,000 we have only used funds for a sound system, additional nurses stipend, IT assistance , long term subs to cover

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absences. We have discovered some learning loss so we have money set aside for afterschool programs to accommodate some learning loss, replacing the boiler for additional air flow. We have a remaining \$517,010 that has not been allocated toward anything. The district is being conservative with the remaining ESSER funds as they don't know what next year will bring.

Mr. Jones stated wages, benefits and insurance varies each year with rates and what coverage an employee may choose. There is an overall increase of \$336,736.

Mr. Lavallee spoke on general fund and revenue trends, this chart does not include ESSER funds, warrants and food service. 2017 to next year's budget has gone up just about 10% but revenue has gone down 14% since then. Since 2017 our average is less than 2%.

Moderator called for discussion

Deb Mortvedt of Wilton asked for an explanation of the budget spread sheet that was handed out.

Mr. Lavallee responded it is a line item budget so people can see each item line by line.

Mr. Jones added all documents are posted on the web site and all materials are public.

DJ Garcia of Wilton thanked the boards and commented on the revenues on the graph, asking if there is any word or news if the revenues will change in the future; stating the operation of the school in such a small community is becoming a financial burden. Is it being discussed to speak with the state for aid and can the local businesses and select board maybe help? How do we get the state help so we don't have to cut programs for the students? The state should be giving us support. Can someone speak to the revenue discussion with the state?

Lisa Post responded the state felt with local control they would look at numbers that would benefit all. There will be additional funding coming next year. With local control we make the choices and can make better decisions. Every two years the Dept. of Education looks at the funding source, sees how much things are costing.

Mr. Lavallee stated the average daily enrollment student population is going up and revenue is going down.

Ms. Post responded we get paid out in arrears.

Kermit Williams of Wilton asked is payment per student reduced by 10% or is there some other draw lowering the price the state is able to pay?

Ms. Post responded funds have been turned over to the towns. Last year and this year and you will see it again next year.

Ms. LaPlante stated within the last two years The Conval school system has a law suit with

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about a dozen other districts to change the amount per student that the state pays, which has to make its way through the court system.

Thomas Shultz of Wilton. Clarified it is 26 districts in the law suit. In light of revenue numbers dropping why is WLC not showing support for the law suit. The state is currently drawing money away from the public schools for private schools, asking Mr. Kofalt about the school board participating in this law suit.

Mr. Kofalt responded he cannot respond to the graph at this time, he has made a note to look at it. Costs are going to go up all around. One key driver is student enrollment, which number has been steadily going up. There was a question about the school choice savings account. Mr. Kofalt did ask the Dept. of Ed how many students were lost due to the school choice savings account. The answer was two. \$7400 per year is what this district is losing in funding. The state needs to kick in more money for SPED, it has not lived up to its' commitment. Mr. Kofalt explained how the SPED AID works. You have to spend a certain amount and above that amount you get state aid. Last year legislation was passed to lower that threshold from 3.5 to 2 times the annual spent, those amounts may not be accurate but we are working on lowering that amount. Trying to get the state to kick in a higher amount. Accountability matters and that best happens at the local level.

Bill Keefe of Wilton complimented the boards for excellent presentations. Pointed out a math error on the first slide; cost per student, divided the budget by the number of students. Mr. Keefe made the observation that an increase of \$183.00 for a \$250,000 house and Wilton voters have a substantial increase at town meeting too.

Mr. Jones explained, the cost per student is from NH Dept. of Education. The actual numbers do not include some items, it is the number the state uses, not the actual number of students divided into the budget.

Mr. Lavalley added in order to compare you have to take those costs out.

Melissa Knight of Wilton

Thanked the board for keeping the increase down. Asked if the assessed value is on the new assessment.

Ms. LaPlante responded that is correct, it is on the new assessment.

Moderator called Article 4 to vote.

Article 4 passed unanimously by voice vote

Moderator read Warrant Article 5

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Article 5: Appropriate to Capital Reserve Fund for Facilities

To see if the Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$130,000 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 – \$0.17
Estimated Tax Impact Wilton – \$0.19

Motion by Mr. Loverme to accept article 5 as read 2nd by Mr. Vanderhoof

Mr. Vanderhoof spoke to article 5 using the attached Capital Improvement Plan slide.

Explaining that some things were removed. There was a lighting plan that has been removed, it was for two different phases, and we had the opportunity to move forward with that project sooner. The total projected cost \$178,688. We were able to get it done with a cost to us of \$47,621. Due to a substantial sum of money the utility was going to kick in was \$75,000 of the total cost of the project.

ESSER funds were used for the boiler. The Air conditioning project for the library was removed, it may end up back on the plan in the future. Paving of the road was removed, that also may show up again in the future. Misc. repairs line for unexpected expenses was removed. Cafe renovation was moved from 2025 to 2027. This needs more work and will be built out to at least 10-15 years. Other projects need to be put back on, the roof, flooring more paving projects, windows in the gym.

Kermit Williams of Wilton

Net tax impact \$80,000 increase over last year's capitol reserve. What is the net difference from last year?

Mr. Vanderhoof responded the total number for this year about half, a little more than half.

DJ Garcia of Wilton

This is the entire for repairs on the property. Do you intend to raise 130,000 each year?

Mr. Vanderhoof replied yes, if no changes

Mr. Garcia asked 130 with 150 left at the end

Mr. Vanderhoof replied yes, give and take.

Moderator called Article 5 to vote

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Article 5

Passed unanimously by voice vote

Moderator read Article 6

Article 6: Appropriate to Capital Reserve Fund for Special Education

To see if the Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$100,000 to be added to the Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative 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

Estimated Tax Impact Lyndeborough – \$0.13
Estimated Tax Impact Wilton – \$0.15

Motion by Mr. Loverme to accept article 6 as read 2nd by Ms. Lavallee

Mr. Loverme spoke to Article 6 using the attached slide titled Why do we need a Capitol Reserve Fund for Special Education?

Mr. Loverme stated we currently have 112 special education students. As part of our yearly budget process, we anticipate actual special education out of district placement costs and budget for them accordingly. Special education placement decisions are made by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams and are not subject to change by administrative decision, must be fully implemented as written and the IEP is a legally bound document. We must immediately implement an IEP for students who move to our district with an out of district placement and the costs for the program immediately become the responsibility of the school district. Unanticipated out of district placements to a specialized school can cost from \$45,000 - \$200,000+ for just one student. While we already have \$198,180 in the Special Education Capital Reserve Fund, one can see that just one move in student with a high cost placement could almost deplete the reserve fund. Keeping the Special Education Capital Reserve will provide a cushion for these unexpected special education costs while allowing the school budget to remain solid with no adverse impact by these unexpected costs.

The school board has always supported this. If grants come up they are used to supplement the budget.

Ms. Post stated that she worked with Director of Student Support Services Ned Pratt to come up with a bill to have the money follow the child but the state said it would cost too much

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money for them to change their system and it had to be withdrawn. Hopefully we can work toward that. It is being worked on.

DJ Garcia of Wilton asked if we can use ESSER funds for special education as opposed to raising additional money.

Ms. LaPlante responded we cannot. The expense has to be directly related to COVID.

Moderator called Article 6 to vote

Article 6 passed unanimously by voice vote

Moderator read Article 7

Article 7: Transact Other Business

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

Sarah Spittel of Wilton thanked everyone.

Jim Kofalt commented on the tech survey, the board has a tech committee, the state does not require us to have it but we feel we need to. We are gathering input from the community. There are paper surveys at the door and can be done on line by scanning the code. The Link is also on the web site.

DJ Garcia of Wilton spoke on the scholarship event he had at his business and challenged to reach out more to the community to see how people can help. The businesses are willing to help.

Hearing no further business Moderator thanked the staff and attendees.

Motion to adjourn was made and seconded at 10:32 pm

Respectfully submitted



Mary-Jane Ryan
School District Clerk