

WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE SCHOOL

WLCS Budget Committee - Public Hearing Minutes

Thursday February 8, 2018 at 7:00 PM in the Middle/High School Cafeteria

Committee Membership: Chair Leslie Browne (Facilities Committee Rep.), Vice Chair Karen Grybko, Secretary Lisa Post, Pam Altner (Strategic Planning Committee), Edwina Hastings (School Board Rep.), James Kofalt (School Board Rep./Strategic Planning Committee), William Ryan (Facilities Committee Rep.), Christine Tiedemann, Dawn Tuomala, Charlie Post (SB Budget Committee Representative).

The Agenda was as follows:

1. Call Budget Committee Meeting to Order
 - a. Budget Chairman Leslie Browne opens the meeting with the introduction of Budget Committee members.
2. Presentation of the proposed 2018/2019 Budget with Specified Warrant Articles
3. Public Comments
4. Budget Committee discussion regarding public input and motion to change or accept the budget and Warrant Article recommendations.
5. Other Business
6. Adjourn

Attendees: Leslie Browne, Karen Grybko, Lisa Post, Pam Altner, Edwina Hastings, James Kofalt, William Ryan, Christine Tiedemann, Dawn Tuomala, Charlie Post via phone

1. Chair Browne called the Public Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
 - a. The Budget Committee Members were introduced.
2. Chair Browne gave a review of the process the Committee went through noting that much thought and discussion went into the final numbers and was pleased by the support of this number by School Board. Ms. Browne said the Budget Committee supports the education of our students while keeping the taxpayer in mind through:
 - Salary and benefit increases from the collective bargaining agreement
 - Investment in Technology including 1 to 1 computing
 - Addition of RTI + Curriculum Coordinator positions to improve student achievement
 - Increase Teacher training in area of math
 - Enhancing STEM program
 - Continue to update and enhance curriculum
 - Commitment to building maintenance

*(See attached Power Point Presentations)

Chair Browne went on to read Warrant Article 4 – Operating Budget of \$12,344,685.00 for Fiscal School Year 2018/2019.

Superintendent Lane reviewed the effect of the budget on tax rates for Lyndeborough and Wilton, staffing changes, class sizes and curriculum features that will further enhance student education and achievement. He discussed planned purchases for 2018/19 in the areas of technology, equipment and furniture.

Chair Browne read Warrant Article 5 – CBA with Support Staff: to raise and appropriate \$39,699.00 for fiscal years as follows: \$6,575 for 2018/19; \$16,523 for 2019/20; \$16,601 for 2020/2021 representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement.

Superintendent Lane reviewed the three-year Collective Bargaining Agreement with Support Staff contract noting that the salary increases are offset by the savings in health insurance for 2018/19.

WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE SCHOOL

Chair Browne read Warrant Article 6 – CBA Reconsideration and noted article is put in place in the event the Collective Bargaining Agreement between support staff and the school board is not supported by the voters at the District Meeting. If this warrant article is approved, the support staff and school board could renegotiate a new contract agreement to bring to the voters at a later date. If the DBA is supported, this warrant article will be withdrawn.

Chair Browne read Warrant Article 7 – Full Day Kindergarten to raise and appropriate \$117,745.00 to expand the current kindergarten program. The costs are to be offset by revenues which may be available by the state of New Hampshire on an annual basis. The Budget Committee does not recommend this warrant article although the School Board does.

Superintendent Lane reviewed the cost of implementing full-day kindergarten by adding one full-time teacher and half-day preschool teacher along with a part-time food service worker and additional furniture. He indicated the net cost to the taxpayer would be \$57,545.00 after anticipated revenues based on 40 students. Mr. Lane went on explain that the Strategic Planning Committee consisting of School Board and Budget Committee members did not come to a consensus after reviewing research along with district, state and national data and made the recommendation to bring Full-Day Kindergarten to the voters as a warrant article. Mr. Lane discussed why the School Board supported this warrant article attributing it to the lack of reading readiness in 1st grade students.

James Kofalt presented the Budget Committee’s decision not to recommend Full-Day Kindergarten as studies of the benefits are mixed. Some of the studies show a benefit through grade 3 and others show no benefit at all. He showed, in a comparison of similar NH school districts with full-day versus half-day kindergarten, there was little difference in subsequent test scores and in fact, schools with a half-day program did slightly better. Implementing full-day kindergarten is a long-term commitment with long-term impacts on cost. In addition, the state subsidies for full-day kindergarten are only guaranteed for the first year. After that, state subsidies could be reduced or eliminated leaving the local taxpayer to make up the difference. In addition, the full-day program would eliminate options for half-day kindergarten for parents who feel a half-day program is more appropriate for their child. Mr. Kofalt reviewed full-day kindergarten scenarios along with supporting articles: Full-Day Kindergarten is failing our Children and Full-Day versus Half-Day Kindergarten: In Which Program Do Children Learn More. Mr. Kofalt added that the cost of Full-Day Kindergarten would create added pressure on the budget and it would be more difficult to find cost savings in the future.

Chair Browne read Warrant Article 8 – Adding Funds to Building/Equipment & Roadway Fund: This is to raise and appropriate the sum of \$60,000.00 to be added to the WLC Building Equipment & Roadway Capital Reserve Fund previously established. The funds will come from general taxation. This is a special warrant article and is not included in the Operating Budget Warrant Article. Superintendent Lane expressed the need to support the Capital Improvement Plan which looks at the needs of the district on a long-term basis and feels it is important to keep the facilities well maintained. (The Capital Improvement Plan is on the last page of the attachment 1.)

3. Public Comments:

- a. Kellie-Sue Boissonnault, Wilton resident and current Selectwomen, questioned what happens if a parent feels their child is not ready for full-day Kindergarten or first grade? Would it be an option for a parent to put their child in Kindergarten or does the district have a Readiness program that would bring the child up to grade level? Superintendent Lane answered that kindergarten is not mandated and that the district does not have a Readiness program and that type of program is usually in much larger school districts, although overall it is on the decline. Mr. Lane stated that the parents and the school personnel

WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE SCHOOL

would work together to determine what is best for their student, however, the ultimate decision is left up to the parents.

b. Fran Bujak, Lyndeborough resident and former School Board member, indicated that he had a working document from January 30, 2018 indicating that the Budget Committee recommended cuts in several areas of the budget and questioned if those cuts are in the current budget. Chair Browne responded, in that document a reduction of \$117,000.00 was presented to the School Board in a Joint Session as requested by Chair Dailey. After reviewing the proposed cuts with the Board and listening to their rational, the Committee kept the funding in place to support the Math Coach, Professional Development and Curriculum. Additionally, the Committee reviewed the budget proposing an \$88,890.00 (1.65%) reduction which the School Board and Mr. Lane supported. Ultimately, Mr. Lane and the Board will decide how to spend the funds in their operating budget. Responding to Mr. Bujak's question, Mr. Kofalt stated that the Committee approved a 10% increase over the previous year's LCS Curriculum budget instead of the proposed 88% increase. Mr. Bujak added that he was happy to hear that the Board and the Committee agreed on the operating budget but felt the budget should be increased during good economic conditions as they are now so we don't fall behind.

c. Carol LaBlanc, Wilton resident and current School Board Member running for re-election, questioned the amount Mr. Kofalt represented for the anticipated revenue from the State for Full-Day Kindergarten. Ms. LaBlanc said she was confused by Mr. Kofalt's presentation as she thought the state would provide the full-day revenue rate that students' grades 1 through 12 receive. Superintendent Lane explained since kindergarten is not mandated, the state only pays a half-day rate regardless of the kindergarten program being half or full day. Mr. Lane offered that the State of NH has only committed to pay an additional supplemental \$1,100 per full-day kindergarten student in "year one" through Keno revenues. Mr. Lane indicated the Keno funds are a new additional funding source and not Adequacy Aid. Mr. Kofalt added historically state funds are available over certain period of time but felt that there would not be an impact to these funds in the immediate future. Ms. LaBlanc stated she was uncomfortable with the Kindergarten presentation. Mr. Kofalt apologized for her confusion and indicated he would be crystal clear in the future.

4. Budget Committee discussion regarding public input and motion to change or accept the budget and Warrant Article recommendations: Chair Browne asked Committee members if there was a motion to change or accept the budget and Warrant Article recommendation.

A Motion was made by James Kofalt to adjourn the Public Hearing without reconsideration; Seconded by Pam Altner. Voting: All Ayes. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Other Business:

- a. **District Meeting** will be held on Saturday, March 10, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. at the Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative MS/HS. (Snow Date: Monday, March 12, 2018 7:00 p.m.)
- b. **District Voting** will be held on Tuesday, March 13, 2018, 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. for Wilton and 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. for Lyndeborough.

6. The Budget Committee adjourned the Public Hearing at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa C.M. Post, Secretary