

Budget Committee Meeting Minutes

Draft

WLC October 24, 2023

Meeting Called to Order 6:03 PM

Members Present: Jeff Jones Chair, Leslie Brown Vice Chair, Jonathan Vanderhoof, Jen Burnet, Caitlyn Maki. Michele Alley, Charlie Post, Bill Ryan, Adam Lavallee

The Director of Student Support Services, Ned Pratt, reviewed Student Services Report and highlighted the increased costs. He provided talking points which were distributed. Ned described the increased costs and shifts in spending he would like to make. The proposed FY'24 increase proposed was \$134,634 or 13.8%.

Discussion ensued about the flat budget working number the Budget Committee proposed at the last meeting. Adam Lavallee stated that he couldn't find where the school board suggested a zero budget as was discussed in the school board meeting. Jonathan suggested that we move along in the interest of time.

The business administrator, Kristi LaPlante reviewed her FY'24 proposed budget. She said that based on a conversation with Jeff Jones, the changes to the proposed budget would not go to zero. The new proposal cut discretionary costs by 3% or \$152,648. The new proposal included a \$416,233 for an increase with no cuts to staff or programs. A list of the changes was distributed to the committee.

Bill Ryan wanted to know what costs couldn't be cut. The business Director said she would provide a list but that it included staff and programs. Jonathan Vanderhoof pointed out that the budget could still be cut.

Adam LaValle stated that we need a responsible number for FY'24. He wanted to know how much we spent on normal budgeted costs in FY'23 vs. FY24.

Charlie Post asked if the Esser funds were a factor for the increased budget, for example, was the IT position was an addition paid for by ESSER and now proposed for the FY'24.

Kristi said no, there are no incremental positions from the 23 budget.

35 Adam Lavallee asked about the unfilled positions from the previous year. Charlie Post asked if the  
36 unfilled positions were the reason for the unspent funds returned.

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38 Leslie Brown asked about uncontrolled expenses which were \$24,000 unspent.

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40 Kristi talked about pay for click charges and estimated amounts that built credits for unspent funding  
41 balances.

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43 Leslie stated that she wanted to go zero budget off of the unspent funds. Adam Lavallee stated that FY  
44 20 Unspent funds were \$709,460 -FY21 \$914,256-FY22 \$666,837-FY 23 \$588,466

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46 Charlie asked if we had the numbers for 2019 which was the last normal budget year. Kristi said that  
47 data was unavailable.

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49 Johnathan wanted to know how much was added for the staff principal. Kristi did not have that number  
50 with her.

51 Ned and Kristi Left the meeting 6:34

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53 Jonathan wanted to have a vote to change the working budget proposal percentage if necessary. Adam  
54 said he wanted to have a no guidance. Diane said the budget Jonathan wanted to have was the zero-  
55 based budget.

56

57 The group agreed that they wanted as small of a budget as possible. Michelle and Adam said agreed.

58

59 Jonathan said we would be pragmatic to go up from zero, Jen thought it was a target. Jen had concerns  
60 if the budget was too high in addition to the teacher's contract, the public would not support it.

61

62 Michelle asked what a change would do to the process. Adam thought it was being lazy by adding a  
63 target.

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65 Diane stated that the board not understanding the flexibility to go from zero. She said that this put too  
66 much pressure on the budget. It was going to be a lot of work to get to zero. Jeff Jones said that's why  
67 he brought Kristi to the meeting tonight.

68 Diane said she thought her communication to the School Board lead to the confusion outlined in a letter  
69 that Dennis Golding circulated that Charlie wrote. She thought Charlie Post misunderstood her thoughts  
70 in the letter he sent.

71 Charlie Post stated that his request was strictly about the delay in submitting the 25 report by the SAU  
72 office to State DRA. He said the deadline had been missed. The completed report from the DRA is what  
73 the towns use to determine the tax rate.

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75 Diane said that made sense.

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77 Adam wanted to work with the 3% budget. This is absolutely critical to people keeping their careers  
78 everyone across the district because we need schools.

79

80 Caitlyn wanted to know if we had the guidance to go to zero percent, why was a 4% proposed budget  
81 returned from the Business Administrator. Michele said 5 people voted for zero percent. Jeff wanted to  
82 add back in some items. Leslie asked about the school lunch cost and wanted to know why we couldn't  
83 increase the cost of lunches to cover the actual expense. It was pointed out that last year the  
84 administration didn't want the admin position for FRES but it is now added into the proposed budget.

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86 A motion to adjourn was made by Bill Ryan and seconded by Leslie Brown. The vote was unanimous.

87 The group adjourned for the joint Budget Committee/School Board meeting at 7:01.

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89 Minutes submitted by Charlie Post