

WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE SCHOOL

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday January 23, 2025, 6:32 PM, WLC Library

Committee Membership: Jeff Jones (Chair), Adam Lavallee (Vice Chair), Michelle Alley (School Board Rep), Bridget Mooney (Secretary), Jennifer Bernet, Phil Brooks, Deb Delworth, Alex LoVerme, Bill Ryan, Jonathan Vanderhoof.

Present: : Jeff Jones, Adam Lavallee, Michelle Alley, Bridget Mooney, Jennifer Bernet, Phil Brooks, Deb Delworth, Bill Ryan, Jonathan Vanderhoof.

Absent: Alex LoVerme.

Chair Jones called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

Chair Jones called for a motion to approve the minutes of the 12/14/2024 meeting.

Bill Ryan made the motion; Seconded by Michelle Alley. The vote was all Ayes, with Adam Lavallee and Phil Brooks abstaining. The motion passes.

Kristie LaPlante sent out a memo to the committee around 5:00 PM on 1/23/25 to explain a new revision to the approved budget. In a shift from prior years, the FY26 budget must include the value of federal grants as understood from feedback from the Department of Revenue, The Department of Education and our auditors.

Kristie LaPlante was online to illustrate this change, explaining that the town is not raising tax dollars to cover the grants, simply that the grants must appear in the budget as part of the operating budget. Our federal funds are 100% reimbursable expenses; the district contributes zero dollars to our grants. The grants cannot be used outside the four designated specific targeted areas: IDEA Grant (~ \$180,500, estimated for FY26), Title I Grant (~\$134,000 estimated for FY26), Title II Grant (~\$21,000 estimated for FY26), and Title IV Grant (~\$14,500 estimated for FY26).

Ned Pratt was also online and explained how grants are used to supplement the carefully constructed budget. Jonathan Vanderhoof asked for clarification of what constitutes a grant eligible cost. Ned Pratt gave examples of what is and is not allowed to fall under grant usage. Ned said that they drain the grant money to zero or close to zero every year.

After some discussion amongst the committee on ways to potentially apply the grant money to offset the operations budget, Jennifer Bernet called for the committee to stop rehashing the budget, as it had already been approved by the committee, and to attend to the business at hand which is to approve the amended budget.

40 Jennifer moved to vote on the approval of adding the grant monies, \$350,000 to the operating
41 budget. Michelle Alley seconded the motion. All Ayes, with Jonathan Vanderhoof voting No and
42 Bill Ryan abstaining. The motion passes.

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44 Chair Jones suggests we add Public Comments at this point.

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46 PUBLIC COMMENT:

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- 48 1. Charlie Post - Lyndeborough Expressed his disappointment that the meeting didn't begin
49 with public comments. He then asserts that with the current proposed FY26 operating
50 budget, the two school Warrant articles and the grants (now added to the operating
51 budget), the district by his math is paying over \$30,000 per student. Further back and
52 forth conversation took place between Mr. Post and various members of the committee.
53 Mr. Post then tried to introduce an issue that disturbed him at the last School Board
54 meeting, but since that is out of the Budget committee's jurisdiction, Chair Jones
55 dismissed the comments.
 - 56 2. Bill Kraus - Lyndeborough spoke to the issue of public comments and when during the
57 meetings it is appropriate to have Public Comments. He believes Public Comments
58 should come before the Board discusses or votes on the budget so that the board can
59 consider the public's interest prior to any votes. The board generally agreed to this idea.

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61 Jeff Jones, Deb Delworth, and Jonathan Vanderhoof have constructed a series of slides to
62 explain to the public the process of creating the budget, state requirements and town
63 comparisons.

64
65 A freewheeling and productive discussion took place with members suggesting what they
66 thought would be the most helpful information to include on these slides, such as: historical
67 data, trends in enrollment, new charts such as comparative tax rate data and a refreshed color
68 scheme.

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70 Adam Lavallee made a motion to remove \$5,000 from line 221 of the operating
71 budget (travel expenses for the Europe trip). Bridget Mooney seconded the motion.
72 The vote was all Ayes. The motion passes.

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74 PUBLIC COMMENT:
75 there were no comments.

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77 Motion to adjourn was made by Bill Ryan; Seconded by Adam Lavallee.
78 All ayes. The motion passes.

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80 The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 pm.

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82 Respectfully submitted by Bridget Mooney, BC secretary.

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