

# WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE SCHOOL

## BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING- DRAFT MINUTES

Tuesday January 14th, 2025, 6:30 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, Deb Delworth, Alex LoVerme, Bridget Mooney, Bill Ryan, Jonathan Vanderhoof, and Jennifer Bernet.

**Absent:** Phil Brooks.

Chair Jones called the meeting to order at 6:30.

Chair Jones called for a motion to approve the minutes of the 12/09/2024 meeting with amendments to be made to the correct spelling of Lamire and to make it clear that Deb Delworth who was welcomed as the newest member of the committee at that previous meeting was not able to vote as she had not yet been sworn in. Bill Ryan seconded the motion. All ayes, with Adam LaVallee abstaining.

Kristie LaPlante introduced the 4th draft of the operating budget and explained the most recent adjustments to the budget which amounted to a \$43,854 net decrease from the 3rd draft. The status of the FY operating budget represents a 4.12% increase from our current FY25 budget. A handout explaining the adjustments, line by line, was presented to the board.

Questions about specific line items had been submitted to the administration by some members of the Budget committee. Kristi LaPlante read the questions and answered each.

Jonathan Vanderhoof asked for clarification on athletic repairs and costs. Kristi LaPlante explained the past contract costs.

Jeff Jones explained that with the disposal of \$11,825. through the audit and \$400.00 in dues which is not reflected in the budget right now it puts us at \$15,502,607 which is an increase of 3.96%.

The following table records motions that Jon Vanderhoof made to reduce the WLC school budget.

Vote	Description	objective	result		Seconded	Vote
1	Business Office: Reduce Line 6	\$500.00	Fail		Deb	2-7
2	Reduce lines 19,20, 21, 22	\$500.00	Fail		Deb	2-7
3	Facilities: Line 71, propane	\$2,000.00	Fail		Alex	3-6
4	Food Service: Line 169, library books	\$500.00	Pass		Michelle	6-3
5	Line 172: postage	\$150.00	Pass		Adam	7-2
6	Line 173	\$1,500.00	Fail		Alex	4-5
7	Line 173	\$1,000.00	Pass		Alex	5-4
8	Line 179	\$600.00	Fail		Bill	2-7
9	Line 197	\$300.00	Fail		None	
10	Line 210	\$7,000.00	Fail		None	
11	Line 212	1,500	Fail		None	
12	Line 217	\$500.00	Pass		Jeff	5-3, one absent
13	Line 218	\$1,000.00	Fail		Jeff	3-6
14	Line 219	Eliminate	Fail		None	
15	Line 221	\$5,000.00	Fail		Jeff	4-5
16	Line 222	\$500.00	Pass		Deb	5-4
17	Line 223	\$500.00	Fail		Bill	2-4
18	Line 224	\$200.00	Pass		Deb	Unanimous
19	Line 227	\$300.00	Fail		None	
20	Line 242	\$2,000.00	Pass		Michelle	5-4
21	Line 249	\$500.00	Fail		None	
22	SAU Line 254,255,262,263	\$900.00	Fail		None	
23	Line 289	\$280.00	Fail		None	
24	Line 292	\$250.00	Fail		None	
25	Lines 302, 303... 308	\$3,493.00	Fail		None	
26	Line 310, 311	\$9,980.00	Fail		None	
27	Line 334	\$2,200.00	Fail		None	
28	Line 253	\$250.00	Fail		None	
29	Line 354	\$200.00	Fail		None	
30	Lines 543, 544	\$998.00	Fail		Alex	4-5

These thirty motions, with seven passing, resulted in a budget reduction of \$4,850.00: a total reduction of .03%.

Chair Jones moves on to Warrant Articles.

Jonathan Vanderhoof brings up the idea of using non-expended funds to pay for Warrant articles. Peter Weaver explains that it is unpredictable to project unspent funds year to year so, it's concerning to try to rely on non-expended funds for funding.

The budget committee will vote to accept or reject warrant articles based on majority vote of the committee to determine the collective view of them. The vote has no further impact.

There are two Warrant Articles; both were brought forth by the School Board.

**Article 5: Appropriate to Capital Reserve Fund for Building/Equipment & Roadway**

Bill Ryan moves to vote on Article 5; Seconded by Deb Delworth.

The motion Passes 8-1 with Jonathan Vanderhoof voting no; all others voting aye.

This warrant Article is on the SAU website so the public can see where the \$275,000.00 is planned to go.

**Article 6: School Resource Officer**

A discussion on the pros and cons of having a resource officer in the school system took place. Deb Delworth asked Peter Weaver to explain his history with SRO's, which he did. Alex LoVerme made a strong case for an SRO to be hired. Jeff Jones mentioned that basically we'd be hiring a police officer with a gun to be in the school buildings. Adam Lavalley asked where the officer would be in the summer months (Wilton).

A motion was made to approve Warrant Article 5 by Alex LoVerme, Seconded by Jonathan Vanderhoof. The motion fails 7-2 with Jonathan Vanderhoof and Alex LoVerme voting aye, all others voted no.

Chair Jones states we will move to Public Comment and have the Operating Budget Presentation at a subsequent meeting.

1. **Charlie Post** - Lyndeborough - is disappointed that when the budget committee went line by line this evening through the budget, the committee was not willing to make many more cuts. Should have kept the budget to the inflation rate. People will be very disappointed at the meeting; you've got a storm coming.
2. **Sharon Mace** - Wilton - states that no other towns in the surrounding area have a comparable budget. Asks for committee members to have name plates. Wants to work the budget down by 1 million dollars to make it sustainable for everyone else. Asks about collective bargaining. Feels she's being punished and is looking to move to other towns and wonders what makes Wilton such an outlier.

- 86 3. **Mike Belanger** - Wilton. Appreciated the committee going line by line. Questions are we  
87 sending students to Europe on taxpayers' money? He is looking to move elsewhere to  
88 maintain his standard of living. What is the taxpayer going to do? Hears different things  
89 on social media. He moved to NH for lower taxes but not finding that in property taxes.
- 90 4. **Jenny Lord** - Wilton thanks the committee for trying and doing their best
- 91 5. **Piotr Chadzynski**- Lyndeborough - Thank you for taking the time and going through the  
92 budget. Attacking the budget committee is low hanging fruit. Public Education is one of  
93 the most important things a community can offer and picking away at the budget items is  
94 just backwards. There are other ways to increase funding.
- 95 6. **Brianne LaValle** - Lyndeborough -public education is the bedrock of community and one  
96 of the foundations of our democracy. Her family here from the 1700's. She thanks the  
97 committee and explains that being reactionary is not the way to create a budget. In  
98 terms of taxes, we have the second lowest tax rate in the country except for property  
99 taxes. She likes not having a sales or income tax. She suggests people spend time in  
100 our schools to see how well the schools are doing; don't trust social media comments.  
101 She explains that the budgeted money is going to the success of our students and as an  
102 example explains the Science SAS improved school outcomes and higher outcomes  
103 than other state schools.
- 104 7. **Rachel Chumbly** - Wilton - asks about money not spent going back to a fund - the  
105 general unspent funds. (Kristie LaPlante explains that it's a credit on the revenue.  
106 Unspent funds are discussed at the school board meetings.) She approves of going line  
107 by line and cutting little bits here and there. Approves of cutting books as there are  
108 already books in the library. (Kristie LaPlante is willing to meet to discuss unspent funds  
109 and will be transparent if anyone has a question.)
- 110 8. **Barry Bradwater** - Wilton new to town. He understood the property tax situation when  
111 he moved here. When does the economy of scale not work? (Kristie LaPlante explains  
112 the economy of scale and that we don't have big reductions in class sizes.) He wonders  
113 about moving students to another district (Kristie LaPlante explains the process. - some  
114 side conversation with Charlie Post happens.) (Peter Weaver says if we want to have  
115 this conversation (moving to a different district) we'd have to do the research; sometimes  
116 it ends up being more expensive.) Bradwater says going line by line is not the way to  
117 reduce the budget. He suggests leaving it to the Superintendent or the Principals.
- 118 9. **Lynn Kraus** – Lyndeborough. She speaks on behalf of her three children who attended  
119 the school and wants to speak to how great the school is. Love the sports. At the top of  
120 their classes. There are issues everywhere. Daughter has gotten into every school she's  
121 applied to and is looking to play D3 basketball. Come and participate and don't nickel  
122 and dime everything. It's not easy but be part of the solution.
- 123 10. **Bill Keefe** - Wilton. Wilton taxpayers got a 10% tax increase this year. He has supported  
124 the school for a long time and has served on the budget committee. However, he feels  
125 the school cannot continue to raise taxes year in and year out or people will need to  
126 leave. He suggests taking a few hundred thousand more out of the budget and leave it  
127 up to the professionals to take more. This is a tough budget to sell. Money for a Europe  
128 trip is unnecessary; he was not the recipient of such an appropriation.

- 129 11. **Mary Golding** - Wilton (online) - Likes the amendments to the previous budget  
130 committee minutes. Likes the most recent decrease to the budget (version 4). Kudos to  
131 Mr. Ronning and Mr. Weaver for saying they support reducing the budget more. She  
132 does not like hearing "we can make due" when it comes to our children and their  
133 education. If you want to impact your taxes pay attention to your town's budget, your  
134 zoning rules, go to meetings, ask for more industry, talk to selectmen. Our schools are  
135 amazing, the keyboard warriors have had kids in our schools. Teachers spend a lot on  
136 supplies. Warrant articles need to stop.
- 137 12. **Geoffrey Allan** - Lyndeborough (online) - appreciates the board. He understands the  
138 frustration with the budget, but, he has gone through it line-by-line and sees no places to  
139 make cuts. He is aware of teachers buying supplies for their students out of their own  
140 pockets. He knows where the money goes; he is involved in fundraising. Coming to the  
141 last budget meeting asking for big cuts is unfair. Does not envy the budget committee.  
142 Supports the budget.
- 143 13. **Darlene Anzalone** - Lyndeborough (online) - Praises the schools, and the great  
144 teachers. She sees a lot online and wants to stick up for the staff and teachers. They  
145 finally have good pay, but not the highest in the area. If we want a good school we must  
146 have well-paid teachers. Our schools are great - come see them. She clarifies that  
147 taxpayers are not paying for the school trip to Europe. She thanks Jonathan for going  
148 line by line.

149  
150 Chair Jones - Public Hearing February 6th at 7:00 here (WLC Library) Will explain the operating  
151 budget and how we got here including the collective bargain agreements that was approved last  
152 year.

153  
154 Budget Committee Meeting to discuss the budget presentation.  
155 Thursday January 23rd at 6:30 pm  
156 Kristi LaPlante and Peter don't need to attend.

157  
158 Annual District Meeting March 8th 9:00 am here (across the hall). The public can vote at this  
159 meeting.

160  
161 Motion to adjourn by Bill Ryan, second by Alex LoVerme. All ayes.

162  
163 Meeting adjourned at 9:26 pm.