

WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE SCHOOL

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING- DRAFT MINUTES

Thursday February 6, 2025, WLC Cafeteria

Committee Membership: Jeff Jones (Chair), Adam Lavallee (Vice-chair), Michelle Alley (SB rep), Bridget Mooney (Secretary), Jennifer Bernet, Phil Brooks, Deb Delworth, Alex LoVerme, Bill Ryan, Jonathan Vanderhoof

Present: Michelle Alley, Phil Brooks, Jeff Jones, Adam Lavallee, Alex LoVerme (in person, then online), Bridget Mooney, Bill Ryan (online), Jonathan Vanderhoof

Absent: Jennifer Bernet, Deb Delworth

Chair Jeff Jones called the meeting to order at 7:14 pm

Chair Jones then proceeded to set the ground rules for the presentation:

1. Jeff Jones will present the presentation in about 15-20 minutes representing nine months of work on the budget.
2. Questions from the public will follow the presentation
3. Two warrant articles will be presented but not discussed.

The meeting was interrupted at 7:16 PM with the realization that people listening online could not hear the speaker. The technicians worked diligently to get the system working properly, employing several configurations with some start and stop moments. At 7:29 the meeting resumed with Jeff Jones once again stating the ground rules.

The presentation began at 7:33 and ended at 7:48 (slides available online).

Chair Jones called for comments from the committee.

Michelle Alley spoke explaining that she and her family are grateful to be here and appreciate the schools and the teachers. She explained that as a School Board liaison to the Budget Committee with voting privileges, she voted NO for the SRO Warrant Article, feeling its financially unsound, but as a School Board member, she voted YES for the SRO Warrant Article to support the views of the public.

Public Comments

Fran Bujak - Lyndeborough: thanked the Budget Committee for its work, would like more clarity on reducing FTE and if that would have an impact on education. He went on to say that salaries in the presentation should show the last five years and not just the last big increase. Taxes over the last 10 years have gone up just 13%, so that's 1.3% per year which someone moving to the district would find reasonable.

(Kristi LaPlante replied with explanations about the capital reserve. Adam reiterated that NH is the last of the 50 states receiving State funding for education.).

Karen Brickel (?) - Lyndeborough: Congratulated the school on moving up from the lowest rating to number 39 out of 87 in the state. She wonders why we have three schools when all the current students would fit in one school. (the school board would need to address this, but in the past parents didn't like the idea of younger kids being together with the older kids).

Charlie Post - Lyndeborough: States the "lots of people" want the budget lower, closer to the rate of inflation (the rate of inflation was not defined). He wondered if the budget committee had investigated structural changes such as tuitioning the students out to other school districts.

(It was explained that the budget committee does not drive the structure of the school district and that tuitioning kids out usually results in more money than keeping them in town, plus parents lose the opportunity to have a say in the classroom.)

Fran Bujak - Lyndeborough spoke again in response to Charlie Posts suggestion of consolidating schools by forcing a \$400,000.00 budget cut. Mr. Bujak, who was on the School Board for 15 years, gave a brief history of how WLC was formed and said they looked in to moving the administration to another location, but space was hard to come by

and costs were high. He reminded everyone that a big, unexpected budget cut was done four years ago with dire results.

(Jonathan Vanderhoof asked isn't it valuable to revisit the ideas of school consolidation and out of district tuitioning). Mr. Bujak agreed it is valuable to investigate options every 3-5 years, looking at the facts and devising a plan. It is not valuable or useful to simply slash a budget and expect a good outcome. (Adam Lavallee added that Milford's cost per student is \$2.00 per \$1,000 higher than Wilton and they won't be charging less for our students to go there. Plus, they don't have the space for everyone).

Lisa Post - Lyndeborough: wondered if the budget committee presentation slides were on the website. (yes)

Jennifer Gagnon - ?? (online): wondered about a breakdown of SRO costs. Is it really \$166,000 for one officer for 10 months, seven hours a day?

Dennis Golding - Wilton (online): thanked the Budget Committee for getting it done and Marissa for resolving the technical issues.

Mary Golding - Wilton (online): wonders about the SRO officer and how the officer is paid during the two summer months (Town of Wilton pays). Thanks everyone.

Chair Jones asks if there is anything else from the committee such as adjustments, comments or questions.

Adam Lavallee thanks everyone for a good year and states he's glad it's his last public meeting on that side of the table.

Kristi LaPlante states that technically the Budget Committee must vote again on its approval of the Budget.

Adam Lavallee makes the motion to approve the budget of \$15,841,908.00.

Michelle Alley seconds the motion.

All ayes, with Johnathan Vanderhoof voting nay. Jennifer Bernet and Deb Delworth were absent. 7 ayes -1 nay

Adam Lavallee moves to adjourn the meeting; **Michelle Alley** seconds the motion. All ayes

The meeting adjourns at 8:24

92

93 Respectfully submitted by Bridget Mooney

94 (Apologies for any omissions or inaccuracies. It was very difficult to hear).

FINAL