

# **WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BUDGET COMMITTEE**

**Location: Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative School – Media Room: 7:00 P.M.**

## **January 20, 2015 FINAL MEETING MINUTES**

*Members Present: Chair Don Davidson, Vice Chair Mark Altner, Leslie Browne, Kelly Eshback, Karen Grybko, Cary Hughes, Ellen Pomer, Lisa Post, Harry Dailey (WLC School Board Rep.), Secretary Dawn Tuomala.*

The Agenda was as follows:

1. Call Budget Committee Meeting to Order – in Media Center
2. Review and Approval of Minutes
  - a. January 13, 2015 Minutes
3. Public Comments
  - a. Warrant Article Recommend/Not Recommend
4. Budget Discussion – Final Bottom Line Determination
5. Other Business
6. Adjourn

### **1. Call Budget Committee Meeting to Order – in Media Center**

Chairman Davidson called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

### **2. Minutes Review and Approval**

#### **a. January 13, 2015**

**Motion: To approve the minutes as written was made by Mr. Hughes; seconded by Ms. Eshback; all in favor; Motion carried unanimously.**

### **3. Warrant Article Recommend/Not Recommend**

**WA #9** – to purchase a 4X4 pickup truck with a plow for \$31,319.

**Motion was made by Mr. Hughes to recommend the purchase of a truck and plow for \$31,319; seconded by Ms. Browne;**

Discussion: Questions were raised about how much reimbursements for mileage or personal truck use have been made over the years? What is the liability to the school when an employee drives their own vehicle? Does this create a greater exposure? Who is allowed to drive the truck? Where will they be taking it? Where will it be parked when it is not in use? Will it be driven home by an employee? Have other vehicles been reviewed such as the Tacoma? There wasn't any maintenance or fuel lines put into the budget for this truck. What about putting a sign on the truck identifying that it is school property; what is that cost? It was determined at the last meeting that there will need to be a \$500

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insurance policy on it. Not all of the options have been reviewed for the snow plowing issue. If that is worked out there could be other vehicle options that might be more appropriate for hauling materials between schools. The care and maintenance of the grounds have been contracted out, so what other duties would the truck have?

There are too many questions that still need to be worked out. Mr. Dailey will be meeting with the Lyndeborough Selectmen tomorrow night and they will meet with the Wilton Selectmen on February 2<sup>nd</sup> to discuss an amount to have the Town's plow the schools. They will have the logistics put into place to make sure the schools are adequately plowed during a storm. The school already has a tractor to push back the snow banks and they have a snow blower. If it is icy then they would need a sander in addition and then have a way to get the sand. Having a truck doesn't solve all of the problems.

**Motion was made by Mr. Hughes to call the question; seconded by Mr. Altner; all in favor; question was moved.**

**Motion to recommend the truck; 0 in favor; 8 opposed; 1 abstention (Mr. Dailey) motion fails; Vote to not recommend the Warrant Article.**

**WA#10** vote to add \$95K to the WLC Building & Roadway capital fund out of the undesignated fund balance. Articles 10 and 11 are the same but the money comes from different years but both out of taxation.

**Motion was made by Mr. Hughes to recommend \$95,000 from the undesignated fund balance be put into the Building & Roadway Capital Reserve Account; seconded by Ms. Browne;**

Discussion: Currently there is \$250,000 in the account but they now have a plan to be proactive with facility upgrades and maintenance instead of letting everything fall into disrepair.

Mr. Davidson wanted to make it very clear that the fund balance was already raised out of taxes. It has already been paid for where if the unexpended fund balance were sent back to the towns it could be used to offset the rate to the taxpayers. The difference now is that they have a strategic plan in place that has specific dollar amounts associated with it. Since these costs are fixed the method to obtain the money should be a certain one. Something could happen, and there might not be an undesignated fund balance at the end of the year and then they wouldn't have any way to put money into the account which will defeat the purpose of having an account set up to help level out the taxes.

The budget committee has never been given a copy of the report and what is to be done and at what estimated cost. Mr. Dailey recited several of the items to be done. It is a very good plan that spells out 1.2 million dollars in repairs over the next 8 years. This report is a combination of both of the McCormick Report of a few years ago and the Honeywell report last year. The report needs to be sent to the budget committee so that we can review the expenses coming in the future.

There was discussion about choosing one and having the other one removed from the warrant articles. It would be too confusing for the public to have both of them. If there were two and they both passed there is the possibility that \$190K would have to be put into the account which isn't the intent.

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**The question was called: 0 in favor; 7 opposed; 2 abstained (Mr. Dailey); motion fails; the warrant article was not recommended.**

**WA#11** to add \$95K to the WLC Building & Roadway capital fund by general taxation.

**Motion was made by Mr. Hughes to recommend \$95,000 from taxation to be put into the Building & Roadway Capital Reserve Account; seconded by Ms. Browne; 7 in favor; 0 opposed; 2 abstained (Mr. Dailey); motion passes; recommended.**

**WA#13** regarding 2.5% balance retention based upon the current fiscal year assessment.

**Motion was made by Mr. Hughes to recommend the 2.5% balance retention; seconded by Mr. Altner;**

Discussion: the 2.5% allows the School Board to hold back funds that would go to offset the taxes. According to the law this money can only be spent in the event of an emergency.

**Mr. Altner called the question; 0 in favor; 8 opposed; 1 abstention (Mr. Dailey); motion fails; WA #13 was not recommended.**

**WA#14** to allow the School District to accept unanticipated funds such as donations.

Motion was made by Mr. Hughes to recommend that the School District be allowed to accept donations; seconded by Ms. Browne;

Discussion: The School Board only has the right to spend money that was in the budget, they can't exceed that amount. There was discussion whether they could even accept the money right now. Mr. Hughes stated that if the ice storm damaged the school then the School couldn't accept the money from FEMA to be able to repair the damages. He reminded everyone that at the end of the year the school has to have a zero balance and any remaining money is turned back over to the Town. This article would allow them to accept and to spend the money.

**Question was called; 8 in favor; 1 abstention (Mr. Dailey); motion passes to recommend the article.**

**Motion was made by Ms. Pomer to recess the meeting; seconded by Ms. Brown; all in favor; meeting was recessed at 7:53 PM;**

**Chairman Davidson called the meeting back to order at 8:57 PM**

#### **4. Budget Discussion – Final Bottom Line Determination**

Chairman Davidson explained that he had a discussion with Dr. Tyrie after the meeting last week and asked her to come up with an extra \$150,000 in reductions to help offset more of the increase due to the increase in the teachers' contract and the State retirement fund. She has provided handouts taking out another \$65,000. She also provided a sheet with 5 year

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projected future outlook. There is still going to be an impact to the taxpayers this year because there isn't as much unexpended fund balance going back to offset the 1% increase.

In order to achieve the \$65,000 reduction Dr. Tyrie has suggested cuts in not funding the crossing guard, removing the championship jackets, the 3<sup>rd</sup> science lab (which appears that this will be done before the end of this year), and the remainder coming out of the tech hardware from the students computers. They will tell the students to bring their own devices to school. This will achieve ½% of the total increase. The School Board might not want to cut this deeply especially where it affects the student's technology. Dr. Tyrie will be encouraged to leave that line alone and find the money from somewhere else in the budget. Regular education keeps being cut at the cost of everything else. Technology today is very important to the students. The exact values for each item have not been given to us.

The \$65,000 in cuts brings the operating budget subtotal before grants and food to 11,438,208. This is on the table, these cuts can be recommended; changes can be made, nothing taken out or any combination thereof.

**Motion was made by Mr. Hughes for an operating budget before grants and food of \$11,438,208 and seconded by Ms. Browne;**

Discussion: Mr. Altner questioned the well at LCS and why that number is so high. Mr. Dailey explained they are hoping to have this fixed under the remodel of LCS but they won't know if there is any money left for this until at least May. They can do this since they were planning to remodel LCS as part of the bond project. They need to have the money in the budget just in case they can't or if they have to totally replace the well. They are continuing to go through testing and doing everything to not have to go to the expense of a new well and filtration system.

Ms. Eshback stated that she has received an answer to a question asked last week in regards to the CIA position. This is not a new position; the person was doing this job part time this year and also teaching at the high school level. Next year they will only be doing the curriculum and will no longer be teaching. Therefore they are only changing the duties. This then begs the question is the teaching position going to be filled with a new person, this was not made clear.

Mr. Altner again questioned the well on the LCS green sheets page 8 shows the water testing at \$23,000 and if it is done under the remodel why does it have to be here. Mr. Dailey explained that there needs to be money in here to fix the well and the filtration system just in case there isn't money left over from the remodel. There is only \$350,000 designated for LCS remodel/repairs. If everything goes well at FRES with the demolition of the 1950's building and the extra \$10,000 contingency fund does not have to be used then that money can be allocated to fix the well. This won't be known until May which is months after the adoption of the budget for the year. In any event some or all of this money will need to be used. If the well situation is not fixed, then they will need to shut down LCS.

Mr. Davidson believes that Dr. Tyrie has done a diligent job of scrubbing the budget. He has concerns about impacting the students once again with removing the technology hardware. The children need this technology to be able to work in today's job market. There have been \$250,000 in uncontrolled expenses due to the teachers' contract and the

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State Retirement Fund in addition to increase from the bond. The deal last year was to be able to offset the bond amount of \$331,690 by the cost reduction due to the consolidation. Dr. Tyrie was able to achieve that and a little bit more. The actual savings from consolidation was \$346,635 which includes 4.64 staff reductions and the SAU rental. In addition to covering for the bond amount Dr. Tyrie was able to absorb more of the unanticipated increases from health insurance, the teachers' salaries which are at an increase of 2% per year and the State Retirement Fund increase.

Dr. Tyrie has now offered an additional 0.5% which isn't bad trying to offset the addition of \$250,000. From Mr. Davidson's perspective the process has improved all the way around, the right people are now in place and the philosophy appears to be changing. It appears that the 3<sup>rd</sup> classroom lab will be done this year which will knock out \$7,500 from the budget. He hopes that they will be able to save money in the operations and still be able to purchase the computers and not to cut regular education any more.

The Budget Committee only dictates the bottom line of the budget, how it is spent is the job of the School Board and the Administration. They can redirect funds to other places throughout the year as they need to. A transfer request is usually heard at least once a month; it is not always easy to know exactly where expenses are needed when the budget is created 18 months in advance.

There was a question regarding the average cost per student. Three years ago it was \$18,900, and how does that compare with other similar districts. We are ahead of Conval and Conant school systems because we have already gone into consolidation and they both have schools that are only being half utilized.

Ms. Pomer is concerned about the technology cuts to the students. These would be part of the lap top carts that are being cut in regular education. SPED has been cut so much in the past years but there are so many regulations that govern it that it is hard to cut too much more from that budget. It would be a shame if those students who are on the borderline and could use a little instruction would not be able to get it especially if it helped them for the future.

**The question was moved for \$11,438,208; 8 in favor; 1 abstention (Mr. Dailey); motion passes.**

It is important to have the same number being presented by both the Budget Committee and the School Board. The School Board doesn't meet until next Tuesday and they haven't seen the \$65,000 in reductions. They start at 6:30 PM so if we came in at 7:00 PM that would give them time to discuss their number. We have had different numbers in the past and it doesn't work well. We need to meet next week to have a joint session with the School Board so that we can reach a consensus to be presented at the Public Hearing the following week.

## **5. Other Business**

Mr. Altner stated that he is concerned about voice votes at the annual meeting and whether people who are there but aren't registered to vote are voting any way. The way to solve this would be to ask for a show of hands which are counted by the supervisors.

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Mr. Davidson wanted to Thank everyone for another year and apologized for missing the meetings due to work.

**6. Adjournment**

The next meeting will be a joint meeting on January 27, 2015 at 7:00 PM location Media Center. A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Mr. Hughes and seconded by Ms. Pomer; all in favor. The School Budget Committee was adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Tuomala, Secretary