

**WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE
SCHOOL BOARD EMERGENCY MEETING
Tuesday, January 5, 2021
Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative M/H School
6:30 p.m.**

The videoconferencing link was published several places including on the meeting agenda.

Present: *Alex LoVerme, Jonathan Vanderhoof, Mark Legere, Brianne Lavallee*

Online participation: *Carol LeBlanc, Jim Kofalt Tiffany Cloutier-Cabral (6:54pm), and Charlie Post*

*Superintendent Bryan Lane, Business Administrator Rob Mullin, Principals Peter Weaver and Bob LaRoche (online),
Director of Student Support Services Ned Pratt, Technology Director Mark Kline, and Clerk Kristina Fowler*

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman LoVerme called the meeting to order at 6:49pm.

II. EMERGENCY MEETING

A quorum of the Board was not present therefore the meeting was moved to the emergency meeting; link had been published several places including on the meeting agenda. Those online were informed and any who needed the emergency link were provided it. Superintendent informed everyone that there will be a nonpublic session for approximately 20-30 minutes and then will return to the emergency meeting via emergency meeting link.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Superintendent informed everyone that there will be a nonpublic session for approximately 15-30 minutes and then the emergency meeting will resume.

IV. NON-PUBLIC SESSION RSA 91-A:3 II (C)

A MOTION was made by Mr. Legere and SECONDED by Mr. Vanderhoof to enter Non-Public Session to discuss a student matter RSA 91-A: 3 II (C) at 6:49pm.

Voting: via roll call vote, six ayes; one abstention from Chairman LoVerme motion carried.

• RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

The Board entered public session at 7:44PM.

There was a brief pause to adjust the technology. The joint session started at 7:49PM and the Board returned to the agenda as written after the joint session concluded.

V. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

Superintendent provided a document showing numbers for free and reduced, this is information not an adjustment.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Due to the change in order of the agenda, public comment was just completed at the end of the joint session.

VII. BOARD CORRESPONDENCE

a. Reports

i. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent gave an overview of his report which included thanking teachers, administrators and parents. He continues to send absentee reports out to the Board of those who are quarantining; there are a number of people but no positive cases concerning students or staff to the best of his knowledge. The Department of Health has closed all the reports on those we have submitted in the past and the cases are no longer considered a risk factor. One of the long term subs will no longer be available as of January 11 as they will be student teaching in our building. We will have 2 long term substitutes to get us through to Martin Luther King Day. Those 2 contracts will conclude and we would go

back to regular substitutes at a rate of \$120 per day. He provided some information regarding voting attendance to the district meeting over the last few years. There was a phone outage for about 30 minutes; parents were informed, the Board was informed, the outage was related to a “switching station” in NY. Ms. Anderson, music teacher did an outstanding job creating the virtual concert and he voiced appreciation for this and to the students involved.

A brief discussion was had regarding extending/or not, the long term substitute positions. Superintendent reports our numbers have dropped significantly after break, some who were intending to travel did not with one exception. He believes things are being handled well at this point and the person is working remotely. When you look at the area numbers of increased cases of exposure it may move in the opposite direction. He confirmed we added 2 regular substitutes. Discussion continued regarding extending the long term substitute contracts, how long should they be extended, should they be extended, the concerns of community, students need the support, expense was not too much and it seems to be working. Superintendent suggested if contracts are extended, extend them through a week or two after February break. It was suggested to see if we have funding this. He spoke that extending the 2 contracts through April 1 for example would still keep us in the parameters of the account. He reported there is one maternity leave coming up the first or second week of May. Working remotely is a possibility for this and if so it would cut it back by 2 weeks. A question was raised if there is reimbursement from CARES funding if we were to extend contracts or even hire an additional person. Superintendent believes we have expended the CARES funds we needed to expend by December 31. Mr. Mullin agrees with this. He spoke that the funds we see in reporting do not reflect the application of those CARES funds back into the account. We have not reduced that amount and will do so by the end of next week. We do still have funds available from the first round of funds of about \$4,500. He confirms the cost of the substitutes are COVID related expenditures and we could use current funds that are remaining plus additional funds we will receive to extend the contracts. A question was raised if 2 is enough. Superintendent responded, the question is could we find another; the Board can authorize the continuation of the 2 substitutes we have for a specified length of time. We can advertise and if we see a need we can ask the Board for additional as we move forward. It was noted when this was first discussed a question had been raised if this would be an issue as far as the CBA is concerned. Superintendent responds contracts were for 28 days initially and if we did another 30 days, it will take us to about March. It was noted educators may be vaccinated in the range of February/March. Discussion was had the word is out on what we have done, we have CARES money for it, if we wait on this we may lose the substitutes to other districts. Support was expressed to extend the 2 long term substitutes contracts right now to keep the schools open.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Cloutier-Cabral and SECONDED by Ms. LeBlanc to extend the 2 long term substitute contracts for an additional 30 days.

Voting: via roll call vote, seven ayes; one abstention from Chairman LoVerme, motion carried.

ii. Business Administrator’s Report

Mr. Mullin read his report which included welcoming everyone back after the holidays. Prior to the break, the US Congress approved a second round of federal grant funding, known as the CARES-ESSER Act. As of the date of this writing this, it is believed to include an amount for school districts and he confirms that there is an amount there for us. He hoped to have more clarity on the amount and acceptable uses but unfortunately the delay in signing the bill has pushed this out at least another week or so. He has heard several different opinions on how much we could expect, it would be at least the same amount as last time, \$70,000. In this bill there is additional funding for private schools which means we would not have to share any amount we will receive. During the next several months the department will be evaluating process and procedures looking for ways to function more efficiently. He provided an example; Ms. Spurrell is working with SchoolCare to move more of our onboarding of new employees and benefits selection to a secure, online site which should reduce process times and trips to the business office. He is confident they can identify more time savings process improvements throughout the year. Ms. Spurrell and Ms. Fowler worked quite a bit today updating the website with new/updated documents for employees to access. Once the budget is complete for FY 2022 he asked the Board to being the process of reviewing policies specifically in section D-Fiscal Management which should be reviewed on a regular basis. He is happy to work with the Policy Committee in reviewing and suggesting any possible revisions to be considered.

Appreciation was expressed to hear that the business office is looking at the process and procedures.

VIII. 7:00PM JOINT BOARD & BUDGET COMMITTEE SESSION

Present: Leslie Browne, Christine Tiedemann, Dennis Golding, Bill Ryan, Kevin Boette and participating online: Jeff Jones, Jennifer Bernet and Adam Lavallee

114 The meeting started at 7:49pm. The Budget Committee was already in session as they met prior.

115 **a. FY 2021-2022 Budget**

116 **i. Final Draft Preparation for Public Hearing**

117 Superintendent reports that at this point we are waiting for the Budget Committee to finalize a budget number. At that
118 point the Budget Committee would prepare a presentation for the public hearing and town meeting. He adds, we are
119 available to assist Chair Browne and the committee anyway possible and provide documentation as requested. A final
120 number has not been determined or voted on to the best of his knowledge. He confirmed the number for the operating
121 budget on the warrant is a place holder only and has no significance. A question was raised if they have seen final
122 numbers for revenue and food service. Mr. Mullin confirms they were already presented. Chair Browne notes the
123 committee will meet next week and go through everything but thinks the Boards need to discuss the meeting format.
124 She questioned if the School Board has discussed this. Chairman LoVerme confirms there has been a little discussion
125 on this. Superintendent spoke that according to the measurements using the gym and cafeteria combined, with seating
126 6 feet apart in all directions can hold 240 people. The Boards would be on the stage in a tiered manner. The moderator
127 will have space and there will be a need for an assistant moderator. We would fill the gym first and any additional
128 would go in the cafeteria, mics would be in both places for public comment and make sure all parties have the ability
129 to speak; all will remain seated and if needed hand votes can still be counted. The ballot box could be placed in the
130 hallway and people can come out their vote, there will be no milling about, no tables or sales for food. Even if we had
131 a large turnout like last year, we could seat 250 or so and use any overflow in other rooms. A question was raised if
132 there would be a zoom component, Superintendent responded we could create a format like this to be at home and
133 listen. He does not know the legality of having anyone speak remotely and he would have to look into it because there
134 is no way to confirm they are citizens unless it is in a written format and could be read out loud. The vote could be
135 called at a certain time to allow the people to drive in and vote but they cannot leave and take the ballot card with
136 them. Chairman LoVerme spoke that voting would need to take place on a different day, it be drive up and the clerk
137 would have to check voter registration in order for them to get the ballot and then vote. A question was raised if there
138 are state limits on the number of people gathering, Superintendent doesn't believe so but will check. It was noted
139 there are more staff and students here on a daily basis. Superintendent added if we used additional rooms we would
140 need an assistant moderator in each room and to hire a sound person to hook into the sound system; we don't have
141 that capability on staff. It was noted social distancing is not required but recommended. Superintendent also said an
142 option was to have on stage only those who would be presenting and all others sit in the audience. A question was
143 raised if anyone had reached out to Moderator, Mr. Holland. Superintendent will be calling him this week. He noted
144 both towns are doing in person voting he believes. It was agreed there is a lot to work out. Superintendent notes if we
145 do the annual meeting in this facility, in person, there wouldn't be a lot of changes. He questioned if masks would be
146 required. A brief discussion was had regarding this including can you require it, can you prevent someone from
147 coming in who doesn't want to wear one, and how is that enforced. Superintendent believes citizens were allowed to
148 enter without a mask during the town voting recently. It was noted we do have a mask mandate. It was noted you
149 cannot exclude anyone as there are exceptions for those with medical conditions; it was agreed we need to be sure. It
150 was recommended to reach out to the Moderator. Superintendent also would like information from the State of NH. In
151 summary, the plan is to have the meeting (in person) and a few things will need to be planned, reach out to the
152 Moderator and look into facts around masks. Superintendent adds he doesn't know that we will have the same level of
153 turnout as last year but we may. Discussion continued on the matter. Superintendent confirms there will be no
154 childcare offered. It was noted the Moderator has given this quite a bit of thought and it has been solved at the last two
155 elections. It was further noted fundamentally this is different than an election and we need to determine what is legal
156 and what is not, it is unchartered waters and it is suggested to reach out to the Secretary of State's Office.

157 **ii. Warrant Articles**

158 Superintendent provided the warrant articles; he assumes the Budget Committee will vote on them next week. The
159 CBA with the WLCSSA has been ratified by both the School Board and the WLCSSA. The CBA with the WLCTA is
160 going to "Factfinding" and hoping for recommendations to be voted on prior to the public hearing. There are additional
161 articles listed that have been previously discussed.

162 **iii. School Counselor/Social Worker Position**

163 Superintendent reports this was a request for information and he has provided a document with approximate costs. For
164 counseling-contracted services, hourly rates can range from \$85 per hour to \$140 per hour, using the lower cost for 4
165 hours per day at 174 days, would cost \$59,160. To increase a school counselor to full time, additional cost to budget
166 would be \$46,727. He provided a list of school districts who have social workers; cost is determined by the salary
167 schedule, by degree and step. He confirms regarding social workers and school counselors, one does not replace the
168 other, the schools who have them have both. He believes they follow the same guidelines of no more than 100
169 students per counselor. He confirms there didn't seem to be an issue in the language that would preclude having 2 half

time positions although it may be difficult to find. He adds a prior candidate who is still interested is being interviewed and there are one or two that live in NY that we will reach out to if needed. It was noted it is difficult to determine what the impact of a half time counselor is during normal times; this is why the job description had been asked for. Superintendent notes there are 3 applicants currently for the half time position and they are speaking with one at this time. It was noted there had been discussion regarding the need for the remainder of the year. Superintendent reviewed the information Ms. Kovaliv provided regarding duties associated with a MS counselor. Superintendent believes about 2 hours are already allocated before the counselor comes in for the day which leaves roughly 2 hours to complete the rest of the work. A question was raised regarding disadvantages of going with an employee vs. contracted service. Superintendent believes the issue would be that it is more expensive initially for a contracted person (\$59,160) and a person on staff although less expensive to start, would move up the pay scale each year. Concern was raised that initially this was a problem related to this year due to COVID and the problems may or may not exist next year. Superintendent confirms COVID has not been a part of budgeting for next year. The amount of need regarding social and emotional needs and acclimating student back into the school environment after having such disruption will be difficult and transitioning from 5th to 6th grade is always an issue. When the counselor position was reduced it was not reduced because it was not needed, it was reduced because we needed a budget reduction. Concern was raised that we are trying to stay within a certain budget and there are not any offsetting costs being offered. Superintendent spoke wanting to be clear that this was not brought forward by administration, this was a School Board discussion. There was no request to provide offsetting reductions nor would he recommend them at this time. It was confirmed this was not presented to the Board during the budget, it was a request made by Chairman LoVerme. Superintendent confirms current MS population is 140 students and the incoming 5th grade is about the same size as the outgoing 8th grade, he anticipates this to be consistent. A school counselor should not have more than 300 students and it has been a full time position since he has been here but prior to that he believes half of the time was spent teaching and the other half was spent as counselor. A question was raised if the Superintendent thought it could be reduced back to half time in 2 years if this is a short term need due to COVID. Superintendent responds it would “behoove” the district to determine the number of students needing social emotional support and how many referrals were requested; that information should be requested from the school to determine if it justifies a full time vs. half time position. Superintendent confirms the counselor serves the students but has a role in working with families helping as a resource. A question was raised regarding what the process is for referrals to a counselor and how many are there. Superintendent explains at FRES, MS and HS the counselor meets with a core group of students daily, anywhere from 10-20, “lunch bunch” groups by grade; the day may alternate. He was unsure of the number of referrals; he doesn’t know how many 504 plans we have, they are student specific and he can look into that. The MS has a teaming approach and referrals can be done on a regular basis, he does not know how formal the process is but it can come from a teacher or a parent. Suggestion was made if this is a Board fact finding mission that the budget discussion continue. It was noted that this is on the agenda to be discussed during the joint session and it is important information for the Budget Committee to hear as it may show up on the budget. The Budget Committee will take this up when and if a decision was made. There was a suggestion that perhaps it should be a warrant article.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public comment section of the agenda was read.

Superintendent called out all the phone numbers and names joined in the meeting asking if they wanted to comment.

Chair Browne expressed the following public comment, she asked for confirmation if the Superintendent Search Committee is made up of only 3 Board members Mr. Post, Mr. Kofalt and Ms. Cloutier-Cabral. She voiced concern that this is a very narrow committee and she asked if there is an ad posted yet. Superintendent has drafted an ad based on the last ad that was used and has sent it to Mr. Post and Chairman LoVerme for review. Ms. Browne spoke that previously we have used consultant services and one of the biggest thing they helped us to do was to come up with a job description and that was one of the most important needs; it takes time to determine that and she feels it is rushed and is a disaster waiting to happen. Mr. Post asked if this was a discussion for the Budget Committee or the School Board. Mr. LoVerme agreed and closed the discussion.

The Budget Committee will meet on January 12, 6:30pm at WLC and the next joint session will be January 19. Superintendent offered to attend the January 12 meeting if the committee would like.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Tiedemann and SECONDED by Mr. Goulding to adjourn the Budget Committee session at 8:40pm.

Voting: via roll call vote, seven ayes; one abstention from Chairman LoVerme, motion carried.

X. ACTION ITEMS

a. Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting

A MOTION was made by Mr. Vanderhoof and SECONDED by Ms. Lavallee to approve the minutes of December 15, 2020 as written.

Voting: via roll call vote, seven ayes; one abstention from Chairman LoVerme, motion carried.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Vanderhoof and SECONDED by Ms. Lavallee to approve the nonpublic minutes of December 15, 2020 as written.

Voting: via roll call vote, seven ayes; one abstention from Chairman LoVerme, motion carried.

XI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

i. Budget Liaison

Mr. Vanderhoof attended for a very brief moment then returned for the nonpublic session. He reports that the majority of the committee is OK with the budget, there was not a lot of specific talk about it. Discussion was mainly about the meeting set up.

ii. Negotiations

Chairman LoVerme reports they have come to an agreement with the WLCSSA but not with the WLCTA. Superintendent added they are in the process of "Factfinding" where the Association presents a list of information and our attorney has asked for information. Both parties will finish presenting materials to the "FactFinder" and it is being requested to expedite the report so that we can have this for month end. The report is presented to both parties in nonpublic. At that point both sides will vote. If both sides approve it, the warrant will go on as approved by the School Board and wait for determination from the Budget Committee. If either side, one or the other choose to say yes, the warrant is created and if the School Board did not approve, it would show not approved by the School Board on the warrant and the Budget Committee determines if they approve or not. If neither side accepts it, we move forward with no contract, no increase for teachers and negotiations reopen in the fall.

XII. RESIGNATIONS / APPOINTMENTS / LEAVES

a. Retirement/Jo Anne Dufour-FRES School Counselor

Superintendent reviewed that Ms. Dufour will retire on February 1, 2021. We have advertised for the position and have 2 applicants. Principal LaRoche will be speaking with them this week and we will also fill the position for the remainder of the year.

XIII. BOARD BUDGET DISCUSSION

Mr. Vanderhoof spoke regarding the curriculum coordinator position and does not feel there is a solid plan surrounding how this person will be used and what is expected of them. With new administration coming in next year, he would like to see a plan for this position that is more than a job description but a 3-year plan. He would like a plan set up that indicates what we need, by when etc. and have this be part of the hiring process and for it to be most likely an actual employee vs. a contracted person. He is not confident we are spending the money wisely and thinks the Board/Budget Committee should consider removing it from the budget (\$70,000). Concern was raised that we are good about finding areas that need improvement but not the follow through on it. Goals are needed, what we want to achieve in the district and these should be clearly laid out. We are constantly instituting changes based on the person and not based on data. We need to lay out what we want them to do and have the curriculum evaluated and reviewed.

Chairman LoVerme asked the Superintendent how long it would take to get a clear plan with input from school administrators and possibly head teachers. Superintendent believes by mid-February at the latest. The map is already there; we just need to find the pathway. Chairman suggests before we take it out of the budget, we need to see if we can have a plan. Superintendent does not disagree we need a plan and if it doesn't meet Board requirements or is not sufficient to justify the scenario, the Board doesn't have to spend it; there are no budget transfers. Mr. Vanderhoof voiced that part of this issue for him is also because there will be new administration and he wants the people who will be here ideally be those who will implement it to create it. Superintendent notes a plan like that is a living document; if you create a map and the Board agrees with it, you tell the candidates this is what we are hiring you to do, any changes would need to be submitted to the Board. Ms. Lavallee added she would like to see a plan that the Board can follow the progress of the curriculum and where we still need to go. Superintendent suggests using a Gantt

Chart (timeline) that shows overlapping responsibilities over time for the Board and public to follow. Mr. Post noted part of the process is to look back at what is achieved and not achieved and we found a lot was not accomplished; there needs to be a roadmap and format of expectations and measure against those expectations. Mr. Post warns the Board about creeping up on expenses and notes if we are going to assign a full-time dollar amount we need to be cautious. Mr. Vanderhoof spoke to clarify that he is questioning if the \$70,000 will be used effectively without a plan in place. Currently there is no path that a Board member has seen that we could hire someone and say this is the expectation whether it is a contracted person or not or part-time/full-time; we should have a plan in order to move forward with funding it so that we spend that money effectively. Chairman LoVerme notes if we do not have a plan, we don't move forward.

Mr. Post questioned if the Budget Committee approved of the capital reserve warrants. Mr. Vanderhoof responded that he believes they are not ready to vote on the warrants, mainly because they want to determine the final budget number then see everything in place although they could have after he departed their meeting.

XIV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public comment section of the agenda was read.

Superintendent called out all the phone numbers and names joined in the meeting asking if they wanted to comment. There was no public comment to report.

XV. SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Legere asked for clarification/refresh his memory, regarding the Superintendent Search Committee, as he thought that there would be other stakeholders included in the search after things got started by the committee. Mr. Vanderhoof confirmed this and Mr. Post added he hopes to be able to work on this next week.

Mr. Vanderhoof questioned if the MOU/Sunset Clause had to be put on the agenda for the 19th. Superintendent responds, we can have it on the agenda, he understands the concern of the Association; he thinks the District has worked in very good faith in working with people to work remotely and minimizing the days to be used for the FFCRA leave. As far as he knows the FFCRA, 80-hour scenario does not exist although this could change. We have very few staff who have not been able to work remotely. Documentation has been kept by Ms. Spurrell to track these things and for teachers who are working remotely not necessarily due to COVID. It was suggested an action item be put on the agenda to go over it (MOU). Superintendent agreed.

Chairman LoVerme thanked everyone.

Superintendent questioned if the Board needs to have a non-meeting for negotiations; no objection was heard to cancel it. No motion was made but a roll call vote was taken so that all understand.

Voting: via roll call vote, seven ayes; one abstention from Chairman LoVerme, motion carried.

Chairman LoVerme confirmed the non-meeting would not take place this evening.

XVI. NON-PUBLIC SESSION RSA 91-A: 3 II (C)

i. Student Matter

A MOTION was made by Mr. Vanderhoof and SECONDED by Mr. Legere to enter Non-Public Session to discuss a student matter RSA 91-A: 3 II (C) at 9:30pm.

Voting: via roll call vote, seven ayes; one abstention from Chairman LoVerme motion carried.

RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

The Board entered public session at 10:43pm.

A MOTION was made to seal the non-public session minutes (inclusive of both sessions) by Ms. Lavallee and SECONDED by Mr. Legere.

Voting: via roll call vote, seven ayes; one abstention from Chairman LoVerme, motion carried.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by Ms. Lavallee and SECONDED by Mr. Legere to adjourn the Board meeting at 10:44pm.

337 *Voting: via roll call vote, seven ayes; one abstention from Chairman LoVerme, motion carried.*
338
339 *Respectfully submitted,*
340 *Kristina Fowler*