

**WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE
SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, January 25, 2022
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, Brianne Lavallee (online), Jonathan Vanderhoof, Dennis Golding, Matt Mannarino (6:40pm), Tiffany Cloutier-Cabral, Jim Kofalt, and Charlie Post*

Superintendent Peter Weaver, Business Administrator Kristie LaPlante, Principal Kathleen Chenette, Director of Student Support Services Ned Pratt, Technology Director Jonathan Bouley, and Clerk Kristina Fowler

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman LoVerme called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. 6:30PM JOINT BOARD & BUDGET COMMITTEE SESSION

Present: *Jeff Jones (6:39pm), Leslie Browne, Christine Tiedemann, Darlene Anzalone (online), Caitlin Maki, Lisa Post, Bill Ryan and Adam Lavallee (7:12pm)*

a. FY 2022-2023 Budget

Ms. LaPlante spoke that it is her understanding that there was discussion of reducing the SPED budget by \$110,000 and increasing the SPED capital reserve warrant to \$100,000, possibly reduce a staffing position at FRES. Ms. LaPlante does have some preliminary numbers based on this but it will adjust depending on what is decided. Principal Chenette spoke about the additional teacher at FRES in the proposed budget. She reports there have been some changes in enrollment and suggest changing the plan. She is suggesting having additional support paid through ESSER in order to continue working on the deficits as opposed to a classroom teacher. Recent scores show there is a need. She confirms there will be 2 classes plus 1 additional support to students. Ms. LaPlante informed the group if this is approved that would decrease the proposed budget by \$85,015. A question was raised if we have a handle on students who are remote or homeschooling and may return. Principal Chenette confirms there are no remote students and does not think if students were returning from homeschooling would impact that grade level. It may go up a student or two. She does not have a handle on who is being homeschooled. It was noted this is something to consider. Principal Chenette explained she thinks it would be very few students and would still have appropriate class sizes. Principal Chenette was asked to speak about the leadership team. Mr. Kofalt spoke regarding the document Principal Chenette created and that he may have misinterpreted the document as it is written. It seems to suggest that leadership is not inherent in one person; consensus is good when you can get it but leadership by consensus has its limitations. He notes there was a sentence in the document that suggested to him that it was a leaderless model, which he hopes he may have misinterpreted that. Principal Chenette confirms that there are decisions that she has to make that none of them will weigh in on. She has worked with this type of model before and has actually never worked in a school that doesn't have it. Mr. Kofalt notes feeling better after hearing her response. He notes the sentence that he was concerned about contained "leadership is a function rather than a person". It was noted she has listed a lot of deliverables, which is good and details steps that will be taken but a lot seem like activities rather than deliverables. A question was raised what the benchmarks are to say yes, we have achieved what we said we would or no we did not. Principal Chenette explained the process begins with data at the leadership team, outcomes are identified, and then there is backwards design by benchmarks and it is determined what data we will use. She confirms the outcomes have yet to be defined because the leadership has to do that as a group. A question was raised what is the criteria; who decides who is on the FRES leadership team. Principal Chenette responded that she would primarily. The leadership team should be designed so we are taking a variety of different strengths that are not repeated. Leaders in social emotional learning for example. It is not by popularity or by vote. A question was raised if she asking for 5 or 6 team members and what is the funding. Principal Chenette would like 5 ideally but 4 would work, it is negotiable in her opinion and the more important thing is that it be considered. Ms. LaPlante confirms there is \$4,000 in the budget, \$500 stipend to each member. Principal Chenette added this is not something that is happening during the school day. Chair Jones asked if the Board supports it being in the budget. Some support

was heard as long as it is clearly outlined. A question was raised when the Board would know regarding the deliverables she delineated. Principal Chenette responded after the retreat we will start addressing some benchmarks and will continue to follow up. Mr. Vanderhoof noted he had thought there would be a presentation regarding this, but as far as the budget, he is fine with this. The Board would like to see how it goes. It is confirmed for 5 people it would be \$2,500 in the budget, \$500 per person; this will reduce the budget. Ms. LaPlante confirms she will reduce the budget by removing the additional FRES teacher (\$85, 5,015) and decrease the number for the FRES leadership team (from \$4,000 to \$2,500).

Ms. LaPlante notes the other piece that needs to be addressed are decisions regarding the OOD (out of district) SPED budget, are we reducing it from \$110,000 and are we increasing SPED capital reserve amount from \$50,000 to \$100,000. Ms. LaPlante reviewed what the changes would mean to the bottom line. If we reduce the OOD by \$110,000 and increase the SPED capital reserve fund, and reduce \$1,500 for FRES leadership team, it brings the budget increase (including warrants) down to \$425,105. The operating budget is increased \$339,105, 2.68%. Including everything, minus the truck, the bottom line number is \$13,328,304. Ms. Browne asked for a brief review of the OOD reduction discussion. Mr. Vanderhoof responded it was a nonpublic discussion. Mr. Pratt explained we had some movement in the OOD district budget through team meetings and placement decisions. Chair LoVerme added the SPED warrant article would be increased to \$100,000 vs. \$50,000. Ms. LaPlante voiced if we take out wages and benefits (contractually obligated) from the overall increase, the non-wages is only increased by \$12,829.

The discussion shifted to the truck and whether it be in the budget or on a warrant article. Mr. Vanderhoof noted it is the Budget Committee's budget and is up to them if they want it in the budget and if not it would then be up to the School Board if they wanted to put it on a warrant. Chair Jones spoke that previously the budget was up 4.5% but it is a different situation now. They had spoken of it being a warrant article and they did support it. He asked for any opinions or changes and if members wanted it in the budget. It was noted the philosophy has been if it were important to the district, we put it in the budget. We need to determine lease vs. purchase and this changes some of that. Ms. LaPlante spoke that we have 3 different quotes, ranging from \$42,370-\$45,800. She spoke of the options, 2 ways to buy it and 4 ways to fund it. She reviewed each option. Option 1 put it in the operating budget for up to \$45,800 and option 2 not put it in the budget and put in a warrant article for \$45,800 for full ask. If we lease it, it requires voter approval. She notes the van was not purchased in accordance to municipal budget law. If we lease vehicles and there is no escape clause, we have to have to put it in the warrant for the payment each year. Another option is to lock in a lease with 2/3 vote. It all depends and we do not have all the specifics from the vendors yet. She does not know if there is an escape clause or not. A municipal lease you are essentially financing over 3-5 years. Currently we have budgeted \$3,500 for mileage, there would be no registration fees except the cost of a plate and it would not have an impact on the insurance rates. She confirms the interest rates on the leases are 6.7% in both scenarios. She adds we did try to contact a municipal lease bank but we are not within the catchment area. She explained we are looking at a 6.7%, it is an annual payment, looking at \$10,700 a year with interest. We don't have an obligatory deposit and after 5 years, we buy it for a dollar. She needs to confirm if there is an escape clause or not. A discussion was had amongst the group including if it is a warrant and does not pass, it cannot be purchased and purchasing outright is less complicated as either a budget item or a warrant article. Ms. LaPlante noted there is an additional \$6,500 in cost if it's leased; it is cheaper to buy it outright. A question was raised how much adding in \$45,800 brings up the budget. Ms. LaPlante responded on the operating budget, it would be 3.04% if we add in the truck. They spoke about looking at it from 2 angles, one will it pass and two how it is presented. Members discussed this. Mr. Vanderhoof voiced he is not in favor of the truck but will still vote for the budget although doesn't like to be forced to especially since it was a warrant in the past and did not pass. He thinks it is less transparent by putting it in the budget. Chairman LoVerme spoke about needing to give the staff the tools to do their job and this is another tool. He believes it should go in the budget and having to use your own private vehicle is not preferred. Some members voiced having it in a warrant is more transparent. Ms. Post noted the last time it was a warrant, the people may not have known it was a liability and that is why she supports it. If somethings happens and we have a lawsuit, we will pay more. There are ways to get it out to the public and may give us a different outcome this time. A question was raised regarding liability and is it the same situation when an administrator/staff drives to another school. Ms. LaPlante responded yes but it is more common practice throughout school government. This is different in the way that we are knowingly jeopardizing an employee's personal policy. On the district side, liability could arguably be the same but are putting enhanced risk by not providing the tool. Mr. Lavallee expressed if we were comfortable at (an increase of) 3.5% then we should be at 3%. Members spoke to what they support in terms of the truck request being in the budget or on a warrant. There was support for both voiced. Some noted it would be more transparent if it were on a warrant. It was noted that everything in the budget is transparent; we can point it out but do not do that with other line items. It was voiced the presentation matters and when it is presented it needs to include

114 why it is so important to us. Ms. Cloutier-Cabral noted we do not ask a chef to provide a stove and should not ask the
115 facilities manager to provide his truck. It was voiced it may not have passed before because there was no basis in the
116 cost when it was presented and it will go a long way if show we need it and this is what we get for the price. Budget
117 Committee members were polled asking if they support the truck in the budget specifically; six are in favor and three
118 are not. It is confirmed the purchase of a truck will be included in the budget.

119
120 Mr. Chris Carter is present to answer questions regarding his quote for removing the tennis courts. Mr. Carter
121 questioned why they are being removed. Chair LoVerme responded they need quite a bit of work to get them back
122 into shape. Mr. Erb was asked about how much that would cost. Mr. Erb responded there was not a price to bring
123 them back; the ground has shifted, if you want to build them back up you need more material on top but it is
124 underneath that is the problem. It can cost anywhere from \$300,000-\$400,000. Mr. Carter spoke so we are looking
125 at a liability issue. Chair LoVerme confirmed yes. Mr. Carter recommends we reclaim the existing asphalt, strip it,
126 and use 3 inches of loam. He notes people have asked him about taking care of the road above and this is the
127 opportune time to do that. It is difficult to get an emergency vehicle up there. It has not been built as a road in years
128 past and this would give us the opportunity to do it. It is about \$7,000 to reclaim it, the rest of the work is about
129 \$3,000 for the loam and the balance is what he has to do to put it on the road. The road going to the baseball field is
130 not bad he spoke to Mr. Erb about making it a parking area and turnaround for the ambulance. The road to the track
131 will need substantial work to make it right. That material would be good for that. He confirmed he will include
132 grading the road and putting material down, the one up on the track will be done and ditched at the same time the
133 new material is put on top. He quoted \$16,500 for all and wanted to be sure he was on the same page with what he
134 was being asked to do. A question was raised if that included removal of the fence. Mr. Carter responded no. When he
135 spoke to Mr. Erb he was told Mr. Rimes wanted the fence and he didn't include taking it down in that price. He did
136 include time to take the posts out and concrete pads within the court area. Ms. Browne spoke that that there is talk
137 about using it as an extra practice field and questions if that is enough loam. Mr. Carter responded he doesn't know
138 because he doesn't know what is underneath it. If we can get suitable material, more clay like, 3 inches would be
139 more than sufficient to grow grass. Ms. Browne also questioned regarding the drainage, will he have to do anything
140 with that. Mr. Carter responds he doesn't think it will need a lot. We should investigate that and be sure it is still
141 working although he thinks it is; it is just slow. Ms. Browne also expressed when Mr. Erb first brought his proposal
142 up he spoke of including the tractor. Mr. Carter responded he did speak of a couple of the areas around the school he
143 has noticed since he has been plowing that need work especially with gravel and he could do those. Chairman
144 LoVerme voiced he could pay a dollar for the tractor. It was noted the tractor has depreciated and does not have any
145 value. Mr. Carter updated his quote including the fence (\$1,000) to take it down quote including the truck is now
146 \$17,500. He can run the fence to a company that may give money back for the metal. Ms. Maki suggests someone
147 she knows would take it. It was suggested it could be sold online; there are many fence companies that may buy it.
148 Chairman LoVerme notes we are better off having Mr. Carter take care of it. There was no objection to moving
149 forward with the proposal from Mr. Carter. Ms. LaPlante confirms it is in the proposed budget for \$20,000. The
150 Budget Committee was asked if they support having it in the budget. There was no objection heard. Ms. LaPlante
151 questioned if the number should be lowered or stay at \$20,000. Members discussed this with some support to leave it
152 in at \$20,000 and some to reduce it to \$17,500. It was expressed that one thing to consider is the fence would not fit
153 into a pick-up truck and we may be better off having someone get it. Discussion continued regarding the budgeted
154 number. It was decided to keep it in the budget for \$20,000.

155 156 **b. Warrants**

157 Ms. LaPlante spoke regarding prior discussion of a warrant article to provide options for the date of district meeting.
158 She has confirmed we are not required to have a warrant to change the meeting date. Anytime it has been in the past,
159 it was done as a good faith effort to keep everyone informed. As long as we hold the meeting between March 1-
160 March 25, we will meet the state guidelines. She spoke that we need to notify people through postings and follow
161 what is required. She confirms it is the same with the time of the meeting and confirms there is no requirement to
162 hold it before voting or elections. Discussion was had regarding the day of the week and time of the meeting. Mr.
163 Ryan remembers it being discussed at district meeting and there were pros and cons plus discussion on getting
164 babysitting. It was passed by a warrant article; the people spoke and he questioned if we can legally change it this
165 year. If we entertain something like that, we need to give people the option. Mr. Lavallee explained we are just trying
166 to give some flexibility because of school vacations. Mr. Ryan thinks we should give the option to the people and
167 point it out. Ms. LaPlante spoke that one thing the Board could start doing is putting it as a topic of discussion in
168 September for example. That way it is discussed ahead of time. She understands the need for making it transparent.
169 Ms. Post added we could talk to the people at this year's district meeting. Ms. LaPlante notes it could come under
170 "other business". Mr. Lavallee pointed out so the people who are most affected from February vacation won't be

there. He suggests maybe not doing it at this meeting. Ms. Browne spoke noting there has been a few shifts in discussion and the potential to switch from Thursday to Saturday depending on the Board's whim could be upsetting to NH people who vote every single year. She doesn't think much leeway should be taken with that. She thinks waiting until September may be a little late. Discussion was had regarding when it is preferred the meeting be held. Chairman LoVerme voiced you can always change the school calendar. Mr. Lavallee suggest it be a warrant article. Ms. LaPlante spoke that the warrant is not legally binding. Ms. Browne notes it may not necessarily matter if you change the week and you are not going against the will of the people. It was expressed they wanted flexibility in which Saturday. Chairman LoVerme expressed no warrant. Ms. Browne agrees and we should discuss it at the district meeting.

Ms. LaPlante spoke that she did not provide a new warrant article document and will have it finalized on Tuesday February 1. Chairman LoVerme questioned how the Board and Budget Committee feel about it, having the warrants ready for next Tuesday. Mr. Vanderhoof spoke the only thing changed was SPED was going from \$50,000 to \$100,000. Chairman Jones added we could vote on them next Tuesday. There was a brief discussion about when the Budget Committee would meeting, as there was not a scheduled joint session February 1. It was agreed the Budget Committee would meet on February 1st, review final warrant article language and vote on them. It was voiced the increase is 3.04% including the \$45,800 for the vehicle. Ms. Tiedemann spoke that her math does not come up to Ms. LaPlante's number. Ms. LaPlante will send out proposed budget draft 7 soon.

The Budget Committee will continue their meeting this evening, next meeting is February 1 and the Public Hearing is Thursday, February 3.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public comment section of the agenda was read.

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

No public comment was heard.

Chairman LoVerme thanked all members of the Budget Committee, Board and administrative team.

V. ADJOURNMENT

*A MOTION was made by Mr. Post and SECONDED by Mr. Kofalt to adjourn the Board meeting at 7:53pm.
Voting: seven ayes; one abstention from Chairman LoVerme, motion carried.*

*Respectfully submitted,
Kristina Fowler*