

**WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE
SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, November 28, 2023
Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative M/H School
6:30 p.m.**

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

Present: *Dennis Golding, Brianne Lavallee (online/present), Alex LoVerme (6:58PM), Tiffany Cloutier-Cabral, Darlene Anzalone, Geoffrey Allen, Diane Foss (attended the Budget Co. mtg.), and Jonathan Lavoie*

Superintendent Peter Weaver, Business Administrator Kristie LaPlante, Principals Tom Ronning and Bridgette Fuller, Assistant Principal Katie Gosselin, Director of Student Support Services Ned Pratt, Technology Director Nicholas Buroker, and Clerk Kristina Fowler

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Golding called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III. STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Principal Fuller honored two students for their contributions to their class and their positive behaviors, Nadine Vanderhoof and Miles Cardenas. She read what Ms. Reid, their teacher wrote and why she nominated them for this recognition.

IV. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

V. OLD BUSINESS

i. SRO (School Resource Officer)

Superintendent reported receiving an email from Wilton Town Administrator, Nick Germain who apologized for not responding sooner. He has a meeting with the Select Board soon to discuss the SRO. Superintendent notes, at this point we are in the same place we were 3 weeks ago. He does not know if it is an agenda item or not or what meeting structure it will be nonpublic or public etc. They are aware of the survey results and have read the minutes but have not had a chance to discuss it per Mr. Germain. Superintendent reviews that we are running out of time in terms of next year's budget process and if it should be a warrant article or not. Ms. Anzalone spoke that her husband works with police officers and they have provided information about an SRO and what they do. She will forward this to the Superintendent and he will forward it to Chief Olson. A brief discussion was had regarding if the Select Board can discuss this in nonpublic or not since it is not a contract negotiation or a specific town employee. It was suggested that it would have to be a public meeting. Mr. Lavoie requested that the Superintendent formally request that it be put on the Wilton Select Board public agenda for discussion at their next meeting. Ms. Anzalone added we have been asking for this since June or July. It was noted a Wilton resident board member could ask for it to be on the agenda also.

VI. BOARD CORRESPONDENCE

a. Reports

i. Business Administrator's Report

Ms. LaPlante reported she touched on some of the court ruling information that has come up lately and will discuss it further during the budget portion of the meeting. She asked for any questions. Ms. Cloutier-Cabral questioned if the boilers would be discussed during the Facilities Committee portion. Ms. LaPlante confirms it would be part of the discussion.

ii. Technology Director's Report

Mr. Buroker reported getting over the deluge of the start of the year and they are back to business as usual. The tickets are at an average of 7 days until closed. The staff is wonderful and all the glory goes to them. The supply chain is still in shambles, Motorola project was pushed back 8-12 weeks. He will keep the Board informed. The vape detectors are moving along, the cable has been run. He spoke of a security issue, an email storm, where a student emailed literally everyone. That has since been figured out and the hole has been patched. It appears the student did it intentionally. A question was raised if the student was offered a position. Mr. Buroker responded the student is not of employable age but the idea has been floated for when he is.

The Board jumped around a bit on the agenda while waiting for the joint session. A short break of under 4 minutes was taken until the Budget Committee session started.

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

Present: *Jeff Jones, Leslie Browne, Adam Lavallee, Bill Ryan, Caitlin Maki, Michelle Alley, Jennifer Bernet, and Jonathan Vanderhoof*

a. Budget FY 2024-2025

i. Prior Follow Up

Chairman Jones thanked administration for providing the worksheets on special education. They discussed it prior to this meeting and as we get closer to the end of the budget cycle, they want to have a final draft of the worksheet that they can have as part of the operating budget and another document or artifact for annual presentation. Ms. LaPlante clarified that they are asking to summarize what was discussed at the last meeting. Chairman Jones confirms. Ms. LaPlante asked if there are any changes. Chairman Jones responded he doesn't think so and asked the Budget Committee members if they had any. None heard.

ii. Wages & Benefits

Ms. LaPlante voiced she always budgets for the maximum. Our insurance rates have come in at a 4% increase, the same as dental. She bases it on our current enrollment and any vacancies using prior employee's benefits for a net reduction of about \$10,100 on wages and benefits. This includes no budgeted increases in teacher salaries, as that will be on a warrant article and if that does not pass, there is no increase.

iii. Coach Stipends

Ms. LaPlante reviewed there was some discussion at the last meeting regarding coach stipends. The athletic director did some digging and provided the Board with an adjusted matrix, which would result in a 22% increase in coach stipends. She did a look back of 2 years pre-COVID to see what we have been paying our coaches and the increase is about 22% with related costs.

iv. Revenue & Grants

Ms. LaPlante reported until we know the bottom line she cannot estimate the tax impact and same with warrant article funding. She estimated a slight decrease in tuition, which is only pre-school tuitions. There is an increase in child nutrition, slight reduction in other areas based on actuals we have been seeing. She notes if anyone has heard in the news, there has been 2 recent court decisions that will ultimately impact education. First, the ConVal lawsuit, ConVal sued the state and said the Claremont decision in the 90's said you had to provide an adequate education. The state has never really defined that cost wise. The court came back and said the state is really underfunding education by about \$3,256 on the low end. The problem as far as us being able to estimate revenues for FY 25 is that there is a legal process this still needs to go through. She was on a conference call with state partners today regarding adequacy funding and the DOE, is essentially planning that we won't see any adjustments until about FY 26 because appeals will be filed etc. and then they have to figure out how to fund it. If everything went through today, we would be looking at an increase of about 1.76 million dollars. It would be great to have that to reduce the taxpayer burden. The 2nd case has to do with the statewide education tax. Statewide education tax is based on every thousand dollars of assessed property value. In rich towns, they collect more swept than adequacy aid and those towns keep that money, if you were a property rich town, there are not any in our district, but if you were a property rich community and you have excess swept you get to keep that money to run your schools. The courts have ruled that it is unconstitutional as well and that money should be going back to the less wealthy towns. Nothing has come out to say that it will have an impact on us and she will update everyone when she has additional information. Chairman Jones questioned regarding wages and benefits if there is anything administration wants to highlight in terms of new positions or things we should be aware of, and was anything added. Ms. LaPlante responded no proposed additions or deletions.

v. Capital Improvement Plan

Ms. LaPlante informed the group this will be deferred to the next meeting when the Facilities Committee presents. The committee has an important meeting on Monday, starting at 6pm.

vi. Warrants

Ms. LaPlante reviewed the first warrant is for election of officers. The District meeting is scheduled for March 9 and we currently have 7 draft articles; we will not add numbers until they are finalized. She noted the CBA article should say "Teachers Association" not "Support Staff". If the voters defeat that article, we have boilerplate language to go back, negotiate cost items, and come back to the voters. There are draft articles for SPED capital reserve and Building and Roadways, there had been some discussion about what to do with unspent funds and last year the Board agreed to use some of that to do some facilities projects. Schools cannot retain the funds, towns can, but one way to do that is by an article like this (#9). She spoke to colleagues and one way for voters to appropriate funds to use unspent funds that could be used for facilities that we could retain funds beyond June 30 is to vote a percentage up to a certain dollar value. She wanted the Board to be aware of this because of the discussions in the past. Questions were raised regarding this article such as is it something that would be addressed each year or would it be a standard. Ms. LaPlante responded yes. She was asked for the current capital reserve amounts, which she will send out to everyone. There was discussion regarding draft article 9. She confirms if we were to ask for it, it is one time funding. We could ask for 10% or \$10,000 for example, it is whatever you want. Mr. Vanderhoof voiced that if it is done by a percentage you would not know if it is enough to cover a project or not (you don't know what the fund balance is in advance). He expressed it seems unnecessary and inaccurate unless you will have a number in it and it seems tough to pin down that number. A question was raised if for example, a paving project was not done in this year's budget and doesn't look like it will get by year-end you are asking to retain a portion of this year's fund balance to fund it. Ms. LaPlante confirms that it would be next year. A question was raised how comfortable Ms. LaPlante would be in March regarding what the unspent funds will be. Ms. LaPlante responded she is not comfortable with recommending an amount. A question was raised if we are just holding money for the case of holding it. Ms. LaPlante responded that it would not be project specific. We would say we want to reserve up to \$50,000 for example and it would go into the capital reserve building/roadways fund. It was noted we just did that basically, with using unspent funds for projects like the WLC kitchen, LCS siding etc. Ms. LaPlante confirms it is legal either way on a warrant or the

way it was done last year, this is just more transparent. She confirms we would not have to have it for things that did not get done this year we could say \$50,000 every year to be added to the capital reserve for example. Once we look at the projects and what is in the CIP she thinks we will find the CIP is underfunded. It would allow us to add dollars to the capital reserve and feels it is a responsible way to build that up and not come back to the voters. It is to start building up the capital reserve with funds the voters already approved. Discussion continued including this would give us time to plan the projects, get quotes we need instead of being in a time crunch like last year. By being in the capital reserve, it ensures the Board is having those discussions in public; it is very transparent and allows for more flexibility with contractors as they have their own timeline, which does not always match the schools. It allows us to be more proactive with projects and not reactive. Ms. LaPlante will fine-tune the language. Discussion continued including that it would help with better budgeting for the CIP and help keep the tax rate flat. Discussion was had regarding what the benefit would be to the taxpayer with varied views voiced. Ms. LaPlante explained it would not have a tax impact; we are not adding to the money that we are spending but agrees it reduces the amount returned. Mr. Vanderhoof voiced the impact is those funds are not going back to the taxpayer. Mr. Lavallee expressed he has never got a credit or seen a check from the town. Discussion was had regarding having this article or just putting it all in article 7. Superintendent voiced in article 9 it would be earmarked for projects in the CIP, there is a tax impact because we would not be returning it to the taxpayers. Mr. Vanderhoof noted if the offset is not there, it changes the tax rate next year. Superintendent voiced it was more about trying to supplement the CIP so we can fund those projects and have money in there to spend on those larger projects. It is not about taking this money and fixing the siding for example at the end of the year but for funding the CIP. This is why Ms. LaPlante included it so that this discussion could be had. It is one idea to see if we want to continue talking about it at the next meeting. Chairman Jones wants to see it come together with the Facilities Committee presentation. He believes the budget was cut from \$50,000 to \$25,000 (facilities projects). Ms. LaPlante noted the intent is to flush this out on next Monday and again on the 12th. The intent is to not pick projects out; it is to fund projects in the later years. Mr. Vanderhoof provided an example of putting \$200,000 in article 7 and the same in article 9 or just putting \$400,000 in article 7 and asked what the difference is. Ms. LaPlante responded it puts the control in the taxpayers and voters hands. She confirms it reduces article 7 to \$200,000. Mr. Vanderhoof added it is the same tax money you don't get the reduction. Ms. LaPlante confirms the capital reserve accounts are interest bearing, she will find out at what rate. Ms. Maki spoke that she likes article 9 and is not opposed to it. There were comments on the floor last year at town meeting about the fund balance from people that they gave us this money and want us to spend it. She wants to be sure that we are not setting a precedent that we are over asking for money in our budget in anticipating having less left. Some of the taxpayers may not understand. Ms. LaPlante will find out if both the percentage and value need to be in the article and return with more information. She reviewed the goals of the budget process is that at the next meeting, December 12, we are looking to finalize the budget and any last questions to consider and all of that is on the table so we can come back and prepare for the presentations etc. Next week we will have the CIP and more information on the warrant and Facilities Committee report. Ms. Lavallee spoke of the timeline and her notes indicate that as of tonight we were hoping to have all the significant changes discussed so that on the 12th we are only tweaking it with little things, our goal is to have all the significant things settled. She asked if we have accomplished this. Chairman Golding responded he believes we have. Ms. Browne questioned where we are with contracts. Chairman Golding responded we would get an update tonight. Mr. Lavallee voiced that last time we discussed that most of the unspent fund balance is staff we could not hire, there is not any padding going on. Chairman Jones asked if there is any recommendations from the Budget Committee on the budget. None heard. The Budget Committee will meet after the 12th before holiday break to nail things down.

VIII. 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.

Ms. Mary Golding congratulated students Miles and Nadine, they are well deserving of the recognition. She can't wait to find out if we have an SRO. She expressed that we keep mentioning it but it never moves forward and wants answers on that. Facilities, great update moving forward on this. Mr. Bujak is a workhorse but so is Mr. Allen, she appreciates him. Regarding policies, there is a policy for student behavior and she dropped a little knowledge on some students. It is a privilege to ride the bus. She thanked Ms. Lavallee for putting it all together and that she really knows her stuff, she appreciates her and everyone on the committee. Again, another wonderful meeting, thank you so much to those on the Board and Budget Committee, have a great night.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Lavallee and SECONDED by Ms. Browne to adjourn the Budget Committee meeting at 7:44PM. Voting: seven ayes, one nay from Mr. Ryan, motion carried.

IX. BOARD BUDGET DISCUSSION

Chairman Golding asked for any comments or questions regarding the budget and warrants. Ms. Lavallee asked for confirmation regarding the warrants, that the Board determines the dollar amounts and wording and the Budget Committee says they agree or not but the Board creates the warrants. Chairman Golding agreed.

X. ACTION ITEMS

a. Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting

A MOTION was made by Ms. Cloutier-Cabral and SECONDED by Mr. Allen to approve the minutes of November 14 2023 as written.

Voting: via roll call vote, all aye, motion carried.

XI. YTD REPORTING

Ms. LaPlante reviewed we currently have about 1.3 million dollars of unobligated funds in our budget. A lot is tied up in wages and benefits. We have 3 teacher positions unfilled and para positions unfilled. She intends to have for the January meeting some of the details, currently 9.3% is remaining in the budget. She has to dig deeper into the way some of the staff is showing up. She needs to clean up how it is showing up in the report and will have it cleaned up for the January report.

XII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

i. Facilities Committee

Mr. Allen reported the committee did not have a meeting, as there was a mix-up on the time. Last month we made steps moving forward. One thing we noticed was we were so focused on using the CIP as a transparent tool that we neglected to look at the projects we already did. We noticed some issues with them due to the nature of the workplace, availability of material, and various reasons not due to administration. We need to bring forward some real action plans of what we will do. The boilers are still hanging out there, the tennis courts as of last meeting, the windows have not been touched and the gym floor is still not done. He thinks the public will ask about these things since it was already approved last year. We will come back with a timeline. We want a policy to govern the CIP to alleviate some of the concerns and issues brought up last year about what is, isn't on the CIP, and where it went when it was taken off. The policy will have details on it like a history of the projects and it will be maintained. He gave a shout out to Mr. Fran Bujak who is "workhorse" in terms of doing data work and bringing his knowledge to put together something the Board can manage and the business administrator can use. Also to Ms. LaPlante for the work she has done. We hope for an "end product" to bring to the Board after the next meeting. Ms. Lavallee informed the group she spoke to the NHSBA attorney who reviewed the policy, and will bring that back to the Policy Committee to review it at their next meeting. It will be posted in the packet on the website. Chairman Golding reminded the group that the gym floor was not a budget item it was an insurance claim.

ii. Budget Liaison

Ms. Foss did not have anything additional to add.

iii. Negotiations

Ms. Anzalone reported the group met on November 15. There are still a few items to discuss and will provide updates to the Board later this evening.

• Policy Committee

Ms. Lavallee reported the committee will meet on December 6 and will have an extensive list of policies to go over, some are ones the Board asked the committee to review and some come from administration. The ones administration asked the committee to look at are, attendance and transportation. They will finish the legislative update policies and will have some ready for the Board meeting on December 12. She will try to split those up, as she wants to be mindful of the budget process being in full swing. A question was raised about a crowdfunding policy. Ms. Lavallee responded it is one of the ways that the Dance Team funded last year; she will work with Ms. LaPlante on this.

XIII. STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE: GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND DIRECTION

Chairman Golding voiced that he has been thinking a lot about this since the last meeting. He is starting to think that this is not just a school board decision to look into. He reviewed the minutes of the meeting and Mr. Lavallee had made some great comments about what does it do our property taxes, any new construction that may or may not happen, what does it do the businesses in the area if we decide to move or tuition students out. He believes this is a 15 million dollar decision and should be made by the town/district whether we move forward or not with any type of discovery or hiring of consultants or whatever before we decide through the Strategic Planning Committee to move forward with anything. He would rather see it on a warrant. Mr. LoVerme asked for confirmation if we are talking about closing the school. Chairman Golding responded, no, we are talking about looking at the viability of the district as a whole that was brought up at the last meeting. Chairman Golding feels personally it should be a town decision, I know they elect us but I feel this is a way bigger decision than the 9 of us should have. Ms. Lavallee expressed she did take time to read over the minutes from the last meeting and there was a comment made regarding tuitioning students. It was unclear if Mr. Post meant all students as a whole. She found the RSA and her understanding regarding tuitioning students is that decision for the school board can only occur if we don't have a corresponding grade, we have pre-k through 12, that is not us, or if we didn't have the schools in our district, and we have all the schools. To tuition individual students or whole schools or grades, it would not be a decision that could legally be done by the Board. She agrees with Chairman Golding that it is not something that just lies with us. She took time to go to the SAU and research how significant decisions were handled in the past by the Board and found a discussion back in 1995 when we were an SAU that included the towns of Mason, Greenville and New Ipswich. Their children were not at our school but we were all in the same district. In order to achieve the end result of dividing the district, we had to hire a consultant because of the amount of information that needs to be obtained and discuss and all situations flushed out. It is a huge decision. She thinks of our community and how our schools are part of our community, to discuss not having that does cause her concern. We have teachers that are part of our community, students that are part of our community. She recommends the Strategic Planning Committee to research what consultants would even be available to us, the cost to hire those consultants and then bring it to the taxpayers. The

taxpayers may want us to hire a consultant and spend money on that and have administration devote their time to that project but they may not. It is a valid point to involve all taxpayers, all community members and towns before we start discussing how to research this. It is a much larger project than anticipated once she started looking into it. She voiced she loves our teachers, community, and thinks of things like the Sustainability Fair, the Harvest Festival and Veterans Day Event and you can't put a dollar figure on that for the people in the community.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Lavallee and SECONDED by Ms. Cloutier-Cabral to have the Strategic Planning Committee be tasked with the objective of researching Educational Consultants that could come in, bring forth a dollar amount so we could create a warrant article for the taxpayers to discuss at the District Meeting in March.

Ms. Anzalone commented that her understanding was not that the Strategic Planning Committee was making this decision and ultimately saying we were going to break up or shut down the schools. Her understanding was the Budget Committee brought up looking at the viability, every year the budget keeps going up, up and up, taxes keep going up and people are concerned. Not a dig at any of the teachers because she loves our teachers, but people have questioned test scores are down and concerns of taxes going up and enrollment is going down. It was for the committee to come together, if we decided for instance just to tuition out the HS students, we would not completely do away with the district we would still have K-8 but what would it look like if we tuition out HS students and what kind of questions would be asked. She came up with a few such as, what schools would take us, what would the cost be per student, is there a tax savings, if it will cost more money it just might end the discussion totally because taxes are a big question feeding into a lot of this. What are the pros if we wanted to offer this to people, what activities or classes would be available to our kids that are not available now because we don't have the resources financially to be able to provide that to our students. Look at class sizes if we went to Milford ConVal or something like that, knowing there are 8 kids in class here, maybe there are 30 there, what are pros and cons with this and how to handle the building. It was not a direction to say we as a Board are going to make that decision that was never what we wanted to do. It was to start asking questions and start bringing the information, bring it to the towns, and say here is what we have come up so far and do you want us to continue to look into this. That was her understanding of what we would be doing. Chairman Golding spoke to clarify the Strategic Planning Committee is a Board directed committee. The Board directed the Strategic Planning Committee to look at the viability of the District. In that we have to look at every single possibility that includes moving the entire district, just the HS, just the MS, just the MS and HS, it includes everything. The Strategic Planning Committee would not be making a decision they would be making a recommendation to bring to the Board for the Board to make the decision. No committee makes a single decision without Board approval, just to be clear on that. Ms. Anzalone commented she didn't see it that ultimately we would make the decision, she saw it that we would gather the information to present to the towns. Chairman Golding responded that was not the way it was presented last week by the Budget Committee, that was the way he understood it. Ms. Anzalone responded, she thought that was how we presented it as our motion to do that. Mr. LoVerme spoke with concern, first of all, he is looking at 6 employees and if he were those employees he would updating his resume and be looking for job tomorrow, just by listening to this discussion. He finds it kind of embarrassing because we are basically telling these folks we don't want you. On that list, no one said let's see if we can bring another town in. He knows Temple is not happy with ConVal and are talking about closing an elementary school. He spoke of graduating from WLC and having a lot of pride in this District for these out of towners to come in and even think about this is disgraceful. We are looking to tuition our kids out, we still have mortgage payments on the school, and we have how many millions down at FRES. How much money do we have tied up here because If you tuition the kids out of the HS you have to sell the building, you aren't just going to sit on an empty building and pay the upkeep on it. Our kids will lose their identity; what town would want us. Milford wouldn't, they need a new HS as it is. They don't want Mascenic, they have 85 kids from Mascenic. If they didn't have the 85 kids, there is more room for their town, their kids. Everybody's taxes are going up, it is not just Wilton, and it is everybody in the country whose taxes are going up. A lot of people's salaries are going up. He wants his last child to graduate from this school, he moved back to this town for his kids to go this school and graduate from this school. Ms. Anzalone voiced as an out of towners, she has lived in Lyndeborough since 2017, and her kids go to this school and pays her taxes. Don't say I shouldn't have a say. She highly supports the teachers. She is on the negotiating committee. She would love for whatever we come up with if we agree with our teachers that it can pass. What the Budget Committee was asking is there are people concerned with their taxes continuing to go up and asking us, can our school continue this way. This is not her saying she wants to tuition the kids out or shut down the school. That is not what this is asking. Mr. LoVerme noted it was what it sounded like. Ms. Anzalone voiced she had a couple questions she came up with and asking what else can we ask for, great if there are other schools that want to come to our district, fantastic we have more money coming in and more students that would be something we would discuss. She does not appreciate as someone who dedicates her time to this to have her loyalty to this school questioned or if she cares about this school or acting like, she wants all these great teachers to be out of a job because that is not what we are asking for. There are people concerned with taxes that will vote on the budget. Her concern is maybe this would be something if brought up that no, we don't want to shut down our schools, then great, then you need to be sure you are supporting our teachers and understand the budget will continue to go up so that we can have a great school for our kids. That is all the more reason to present to people this is what it will take. If you want to keep the school here, you have to be willing to pay higher wages to teachers, to make sure we attract teachers and to keep the great teachers we have, we need to improve our school to expand what we offer our kids that is part of this. That is not me or anyone else trying to say we want to shut this school down. That is what the Strategic Planning Committee is supposed to say, the viability of the school, if you want this school to stick around this is what we have to do. That is what we are asking. Mr. Lavoie spoke acknowledging that there are emotions exhibited, when he was a student at Mascenic he was there when they disbanded the cooperative. This

topic brings a lot of emotions to the table; it gets people worried and scares people. From his experience and what Chairman Golding was trying to say from the beginning trying to avoid a big blow up, is that he is trying to say they don't really want to do anything. We shouldn't explore anything and call for a committee or an examination until at the annual district meeting if somebody and a group large enough to put it on a warrant and voted on. If that day comes then he believes we need to start looking into it but until the town people tell us to look into it, it may be best to table it because it will become a big heated discussion as it already has. When the towns in Mason, Greenville and New Ipswich had that discussion that is how it was brought to the table. It came to the district meeting, added as a warrant article and voted on. The way it came up was because it was a funding issue trying to displace funds to towns and different ways to do it. He doesn't think we have that issue here and feels we have a lot to be proud of. He would like everyone to rest easy, table this discussion and not act on it until we are being asked to act on it. Mr. Allen voiced everyone is throwing out good points and would hate to see the Board slide into it or get divisive or segregate us into groups dependent on how we came to town or where we went to high school or college. We are all here because we love our kids, love our district, we love this school, and we want to do the best for our kids. We have a responsibility to the school, teachers and taxpayers to always evaluate how we are doing business, what is in the best interest, what is the right class size, what is the best interest of the teachers, students and tax payers. He might love the idea of a consultant. He asked what an education consultant does. He would hope they look at the district as a whole perhaps like we brought up in the beginning of this year, how best to organize the resources, students, funds etc. to provide the best community for our students and be the best stewards of taxpayer's money. To Mr. LoVerme's point, there is pride in being where you are from. He would love to hear about the consultant he doesn't know what they do he didn't know they existed. Ms. Cloutier-Cabral spoke of appreciating what everyone has said. She voiced that the Strategic Planning Committee has not met in a while but when they did meet, it was Board directed and not an unusual for the Strategic Planning Committee to do research like this or for the SRO. You put a lot of work into it. It is also researching how the schools are managed, the leadership, whether part-time people or full-time people etc. It is just part of what they do and she doesn't feels it is unusual for us to discuss it. Whatever ideas people have for the committee they should bring them forward and the Board would decide if they should explore it.

Ms. Lavallee voiced that she heard what Mr. Lavoie said and *WITHDRAWS* her *MOTION*. Ms. Cloutier-Cabral withdraws her second.

Ms. Lavallee spoke that the reason she made the motion was because of the request from the Budget Committee, and tasking the Strategic Planning Committee with something. She agrees that ultimately the decision is with the taxpayers of both towns. She spoke of having sentimental reasons as she went to WLC and hearing from people who read the minutes from the last meeting, she felt it was important to have some direction. A question was raised if the motion is withdrawn, where are we now, are we still discussing it or is it a dead issue. Mr. Allen spoke of concern that we talk about where we are at and we went to closing schools and tuitioning kids out he doesn't think that is what anyone wants or was talking about but we are a different district today than we were 10 years ago and are we still operating the way we should be to better suit everyone. He would still like to know what an education consultant does and would it benefit the district. Chairman Golding voiced that during public comment by a district member, they made the comment that if we as a school board did not do something, the towns would do it for us, that was a direct threat to the school board and that is where all of this coming from in his opinion. The Superintendent spoke of it being hard to separate the emotion out of fact-finding. There is a lot going on here, he has heard conversation about withdrawing from the cooperative, conversation about amending the Articles of Agreement there is a whole legal processes to do all of this. Including what you just mentioned, a petition warrant article to amend our Articles of Agreement, which can easily be done by voters signing it. The elephant in the room and we are seeing it. The education consultant is one way but he is not really hearing what we would want an education consultant to research for us. Is it the viability of the district, is it the issue of the cost and is it more cost effective to tuition out the HS kids. Are we concerned we are still paying on the bond and is Lyndeborough invested or are they considering withdrawing. There are a lot of questions out there and I don't know where we are heading with the conversation. He does know that he will be meeting with Principals Fuller and Ronning about this tomorrow because we need to talk about how to support staff. We have a whole school year to get through, we have a budget process to get through, we have kids we need to get to graduation, we have testing and we don't want this conversation to be defining how we will move forward in terms of our staffing and moral. We have worked really hard and he appreciates the Board working hard in the negotiation process and really understanding that we need to be improve retention and recruitment by being competitive with our salary schedule and he respects where we are with that process, but it these kinds of conversations that move us 5 steps back. Since we are not clear about it, people get more anxious and maybe all the work we have done to retain staff our best staff, we may have just undone by having this unclear conversation about what we want to do moving forward. He would prefer to take over the narrative. His understanding is we were having a Strategic Planning Committee to try to figure out what questions we needed to answer, if there are any questions to answer because there are so many things and then come back to report to the Board. The Board would have to decide how to move forward. That is what I thought we were talking about but at this point, I am not sure where we are with the conversation. He wants to reassure the community we are not talking about closing the schools. Having the conversation and being a small community it is reasonable to ask those questions. Does it make sense to tuition kids out, districts have this conversation, and there are other schools that don't have a HS. He tried to reassure the public that the intent is not to close the schools. Chairman Golding agrees. Ms. Lavallee spoke that the reason she thought of the education consultant was that as she did research there were so many questions. Some we could task administration with, but there is a lot of other things though, what about transportation, is it even available, it is difficult to get drivers, if we can how long with the kids be on the bus 2 hours etc. When she looked at it she looked at it as if she was on the Strategic Planning

Committee and found there are so many questions to answer and with so many projects we are have and with so many things with curriculum, facilities etc. is it reasonable for us to task administration with another project. It did come from the Budget Committee. She doesn't understand what we, as a Board would be asking. If we needed to research it, it would be appropriate to find out what an education consultant would cost and bring that to the taxpayers, as she doesn't want to devote so much time to it when the taxpayers have not said they want it. Ms. Anzalone spoke that there may misconceptions out there; the thought is we will save all this money but maybe that is not the case, or your kid will go from a class size of 8 to 30 or they have to travel further. Some people are asking questions out there. If we want to keep our schools and all that, it is going up; this is the reason we have to pay for it. Mr. Allen spoke of not wanting this to be another issue that drags on at every meeting, meeting after meeting that he saw with the Board before. It is obviously a hot topic and tempers have already flared. If we as a school board say it is dead, let's move on or if we want to research it put it on a warrant to see if the town wants to hire a consultant. He would be disappointed if this keeps coming up. Mr. Lavoie spoke that just because a couple of people bring it up doesn't mean we have to act on it. If enough people want to do it they would have to be serious about it and can come to a meeting and say they want to dissolve the cooperative. It worries people and scares people. We don't have to put it on a warrant they can do it. Until that happens, I don't think we have to talk about it. Chairman asked for any further comments. Ms. Cloutier-Cabral spoke about the Strategic Planning Committee having a meeting coming up. She questioned if we have any direction. Chairman Golding responded aside from that, no, we have no other reason to meet unless we bring something to the next meeting. Ms. Lavallee voiced one of the things we wanted to do as a Board this year and didn't get to is having a meeting regarding our goals and objectives. Perhaps the Strategic Planning Committee could look at our district as a whole for goals for the next year, and next 5 years. We get busy reacting to day-to-day things and lose sight of the overall picture. It would help us to focus on things that matter and look at the vision of the graduate and how to achieve it; it could be positive message for staff and a good message to send that we are looking at that and we are all in this together. Chairman Golding asked if the Board agrees on that, looking at future goals for the district at Strategic Planning. No objection heard. Chairman Golding thinks it is a great idea and will be the Strategic Planning Committee's first objective, future goals for the district, what Ms. Lavallee proposed. Superintendent agrees and noted at that meeting the 20th we will figure out the scope of that. The scope is a wider range of the Strategic Planning process; maybe we can do that on the 20th. It will be brought back to the Board to discuss it.

XIV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public comment section of the agenda was read.

Mr. Jonathan Vanderhoof spoke, from his personal view having been to both the Board and Budget Committee meetings, is that the conversation was blown way out of control. The conversation at the Budget Committee meeting from his perspective was way more positive, there was no urgency in the conversation put on the request that you guys seem to adhere to. We were looking at prior budget and what will happen in 3 years from now when we are asking for 18, 19, 20 million dollars. We have 130 kids in the HS; maybe we should get ahead of this and look at some demographics. What are we able to offer the kids being a small school, what can we do that bigger schools can't, what can a bigger school offer our kids, what opportunities will they get from the classes they are offered, the extracurricular activities offered in bigger districts, there is a whole huge number of things that has to be asked. He doesn't know anyone anywhere in this conversation that thought the Board had the authority to close the school, tuition out kids, or anything like that without the permission of the voters. From his understanding a request for the Board to take seriously the size of the district, the cost to taxpayers and just look at gathering information. To Ms. Anzalone's point, maybe you gather the information and it says it will cost 3 thousand more per student so we are done with that. An information gathering process, the Board took it to, make a decision, take action, this is going to happen that was not the intent. He does think it should be looked into, it won't happen this year or next year, and it could come to a head. We are up another million this year; we could be up another million next year and the year after and still have only 130 kids. It is not uncommon in NH for multiple towns to send their kids to one town and keep their elementary kids in town it happens everywhere. It is a reasonable request. As someone who did go here, who does live here and sends his kids here for now, it is a reasonable request and you guys way over thought it. He doesn't understand how it was miscommunicated and it feels like it was miscommunicated. The Strategic Planning Committee looks at this stuff all the time at a cursory level. Let's find out what the cost per student is at the HS level vs. the elementary level because it is just lumped into one. You may find it is 12 thousand per student and all the funds are at the HS. There are so many questions, so much research that would need to be done, and a lot that could be done at the Strategic Planning level that would not have to drastically involve the staff or pay for a consultant. He thinks you guys missed the request and should rethink it and maybe get some more clarity. Chairman Golding responded noting he would normally not do this, interrupt public comment but according to what was written in the last meeting minutes, a Budget Committee member did say that the school board can tuition kids out of the district without town approval. That is what led to part of this discussion to Mr. Vanderhoof's point saying the school board can't do it, a Budget Committee member stated that we could. He is guessing it's based on this Budget Committee member's prior school board experience and anybody can read those comments and see that. Mr. Vanderhoof responded, maybe you can but it doesn't change it.

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

Ms. Mary Golding commented that she had flashbacks of the old Board meetings. You all have worked so hard to remove the decisiveness. She thanked Mr. Lavoie, Superintendent Weaver and Mr. Allen for getting us back to civility. You are all amazing, have a great night.

Ms. Mel Jones commented that the way it was brought up at the last meeting, Chairman Golding was right, that is how she took it when she was in the room with you. They were saying the Board could close the school without any warning.

Ms. Sarah Chadzynski commented that she is looking forward to having some direction and activity on the Strategic Planning Committee. Having done this in the past, setting goals will be a way to address some of the items brought up and having that discussion think about the sustainability of the district; how to sustain it, the community and the success of our community and students.

XV. SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Anzalone questioned regarding the SRO, do we have to wait to be invited to the Wilton Select Board meeting or can we invite them to one of our meetings. Chairman Golding will look into it.

Mr. Lavoie commented he is glad we were able to move on from that, it will be ok. He congratulated students Nadine Vanderhoof and Miles Cardenas. He looks forward to having a nicer, easier meeting.

Ms. Lavallee apologized for being partly remote this evening. She thanked everyone for their patience and expressed total love for the district as an alumni and for the community, she loves the staff and students and all are doing a great job.

Ms. Cloutier-Cabral commented the highlight of the meeting tonight was hearing about Nadine and Miles and what Ms. Reid wrote about them. She thanked Principal Fuller for reading it.

Ms. Foss commented that she enjoys being on the Board because everyone is so dedicated and appreciates all the comments.

Mr. Allen seconds that and appreciates the public that join us. He congratulated Miles and Nadine and likes that student call out that was added to the board agendas and the staff call out as well. He congratulated Mr. and Mrs. Wiley (teachers) on their new son. He is looking forward to having them back. He knows things get testy at times but appreciates that it is all coming from a good place.

Chairman Golding commented that he appreciates that we can come back from that type of discussion and continue to do what we do.

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

A MOTION was made by Mr. Lavoie and SECONDED by Mr. Allen to enter Non-Public Session to review the non-public minutes, and discuss personnel matters RSA 91-A: 3 II (B) (C) at 8:35pm.

Voting: via roll call vote, eight ayes, motion carried.

RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

The Board entered public session at 8:55pm.

A MOTION was made to seal the non-public session minutes by Mr. Allen and SECONDED by Ms. Foss.

Voting: all aye, motion carried.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by Mr. Lavoie and SECONDED by Mr. Allen to adjourn the Board meeting at 8:56pm.

Voting: all aye, motion carried.

XVIII. NON-MEETING-NEGOTIATIONS

Negotiations were discussed.

*Respectfully submitted,
Kristina Fowler*