

**WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE
SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, January 9, 2024
Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative M/H School
6:30 p.m.**

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

Present: *Brianne Lavallee, Alex LoVerme, Matt Mannarino (on line), Tiffany Cloutier-Cabral (on line), Darlene Anzalone (online), Geoffrey Allen, Diane Foss, and Jonathan Lavoie*

Superintendent Peter Weaver, Business Administrator Kristie LaPlante, Principal Tom Ronning, Assistant Principal Katie Gosselin, Curriculum Coordinator Samantha Dignan, and Clerk Kristina Fowler

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Lavallee called the meeting to order at 6:46pm (inclement weather-waited for quorum).

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III. JOINT MEETING WITH WILTON SELECT BOARD-School Resource Officer

Present: *Chair Matt Fish, Kermit Williams, Vice Chair DJ Garcia and Town Administrator Nick Germaine and Police Chief Eric Olesen*

Selectman Fish called the meeting to order at 6:47pm.

Selectman Fish spoke of this being a historical meeting between both Boards and they are grateful to be invited. He introduced the group and spoke of some housekeeping items for the meeting. Vice Chair Lavallee thanked the guests for being here and spoke of the goal of this meeting which is to start the conversation regarding an SRO (School Resources Officer) position and she opened the floor for discussion and asked for any questions. Selectman Fish spoke of the purpose of this meeting from their perspective, which is to meet face-to-face, provide the opportunity for that face-to-face engagement, and talk directly as sometimes things get lost in translation. They are looking for that forum. Vice Chair Lavallee agrees. Mr. Allen spoke of his understanding, which is the School Board, had discussed having an SRO last spring, took a vote to move forward if the budget aligned and job description. It was pushed back to us that unless both towns agreed, we can't move forward. Lyndeborough had agreed and Wilton had not. This is what brought us here today, why or if Wilton wants to move forward with in-depth research. The feedback we received via letter from Wilton Selectman sounded to us like it was a definite no. Discussion was had including select board members speaking of having concerns with the perspective of having an officer who is only available for one portion of the year but yet is a full-time employee of the town, not knowing the full cost, the cost in general and having a young officer in this position. Selectman Williams spoke with Chief Olesen who talked about the SRO in Milford being someone who has more life experience. He spoke of the higher cost Wilton would have to pay and that another Board at some point in the future may determine they don't want to continue the program or someone could at the annual meeting, take it out of the budget but yet they are still a town employee and we would be responsible for the cost. He doesn't believe they would terminate someone just because their role had changed. From a cost perspective, this is something they have concern about. He brought up that based on the description of the role of the SRO; wanting them to have a presence at all 3 schools, they would need a vehicle. It would be difficult to do with their personal vehicle especially if they had to take someone into custody. If we did have to send someone to the academy, it would be about a year until the officer could actually do the work but still being paid which adds to the overhead. His personal opinion as a taxpayer is there may be more effective ways to deal with things. He asks what issues the SRO would need to address now, we have not had any real violence that he is aware of, bullying etc. and hopefully someone present to deal with that. He is not sure if the SRO would deal with that, to him you would need a social worker as bullying has some psychological components. He would like to see the schools have "Columbine doors" or something similar, they are a good investment and even if you had an SRO, they are not always at the front door. Selectman Fish added speaking personally, he had talked with some teachers and staff at FRES and the overwhelming response was that FRES needs more support staff and substitutes; there is a giant void in that area, they do not feel backed up and are understaffed. At WLC, they said they need more social work and guidance counselors; there are kids coming to school hungry, there is some bullying and social media issues, the feedback he got did not raise to the level of needing an SRO in any of the discussions he had. As a Selectman he is concerned of the fixed cost of this position and spending that without the use of it most of the time and the need to find something for them to do one quarter of the year. He spoke of the Selectman going through the warrants last night and trying to pare them down, every town is facing large tax increases, and Lyndeborough is 9% he thinks and Wilton 7.5%. They are sensitive to that cost. We are in the very early stages of the discussion and not something, we would jump into and need to do a lot of research and analysis. This is his feedback as a parent. He asked his kids and he heard of the bathrooms being destroyed and vaping. They said we don't need an SRO. Ms. Anzalone spoke of being frustrated about how the process went. She spoke of having a good presentation back in June, the decision was made we would get together with the Wilton Selectman because the person would be an employee

of the town. Two board members were supposed to be at the meeting but that never happened. The Selectman met with administration and we were left out completely. It started in June and nothing has happened. Her understanding was this position would be for WLC. She thought the school would cover the cost during the school year and that was what the negotiation was to be. She has spoken to people as well and SRO's. She feels people don't have a good understanding of what they do, they are deeply involved with the kids, work with guidance and have training to deal with mental health issues, not just academy training, they have specialized training and national standards. They would be a mentor for kids to go to and be involved in the school and community, more than just security at the school. People went into that in detail in June. She feels the decision was already made when the School Board was not brought together with the Selectman. Selectman Fish informed the group that the letter was not definitive, if it was they would not be here tonight. They were not aware that there were members of the Board who wanted to meet with them this was not communicated and a missed opportunity. Ms. Cloutier-Cabral spoke of the idea of the SRO; it is not just for guarding the school and preventing violence. They become part of the school culture. She gave examples from 2019 when this was first looked at. She felt students feel safer reporting to a police officer. The research showed the benefits of an SRO; they can teach health and safety and be good role models. She believes it makes a dramatic difference having one. We don't have to do something today or in a year, this meeting is to figure out how to move toward this. Other schools are doing it and it is such a great benefit, we miss something if we don't have this important resource. A recap was given of some of the things we already did including a detailed explanation from Chief Olesen and Chief Deware back in June. We had surveys sent out to the community showing the majority are in favor for the Board to research this. Mr. Lavoie spoke of it being mentioned that there is no real issue at the schools, except maybe bullying, he explained he has been on the Board for almost a year and has dealt with drug issues, kids being borderline expelled/suspended, bullying etc. He spoke of an SRO being more than just what a hall monitor is. He has heard from other teachers the exact opposite of what Selectman Fish has heard. It probably goes along the lines of 50/50 or 60/40 like what we saw in the survey. He understands the financial issue and that is the only issue holding him back. We are looking at a year that we are dealing with major increases, potentially due to teachers' contract, overall inflation and the way the world is working right now. This position would be a small fraction of the budget. It is something he believes we should look at and push the "on button" to look at it further. Selectman Garcia commented that he backs up what the selectman have said. We have talked about this at our meetings; our minutes are out there, our personal opinions and his opinion is the money going toward a SRO could go a long way to educate students. He doesn't feel qualified to influence the Board on how to best educate students. It is a fair amount of money, small increases will grow, and all of a sudden, you are looking at a 10 or 20 percent increase. He is in the community and has heard from the community. He doesn't know if the School Board has looked at it enough to see if an SRO solves the problems of what you may or may not be aware of. He has not read into the information and the information he hears is there are a lot more work that needs to be done. He agrees with Selectman Fish that this is not an "off button". He is not here to say no, if this is something the school community and school board want, it would not take the Wilton Select Board to make that decision, you have the ability to outfit the entire budget to pay for it and don't need the Wilton portion to pay for it. You don't need us to bless it or not. Mr. Allen spoke of working with SRO's extensively across Massachusetts and he sees the tertiary effects of having them when it comes to counseling, vandalism, bullying etc. They are a part of the culture and community and develop relationships with students and head off bad behavior before it becomes bad. He believes they have to be an officer of the town department. His concern is the finances and personally, he is not 100% sold on it. He wants to see the money having a serious impact on the issues we have here. He was amazed to hear of the number of things that go on in the district and did not hear of them until he was on the Board. Administration handles it very well and if administration comes to us to say, we need this, I think we should look at it. We would need to have "buy in" from Wilton because it would be an officer of the Wilton PD. We would not want to force it upon you; you are saying it is not a no then if it is not a no what information needs to be brought to you to have you bless it. What specifically do you want? Selectman Fish spoke of the differences in the 2 Boards. He is not qualified to make the decisions for the District. The information they got was fairly short, high level and was not enough to satisfy us, it was not a negative; it was the beginning of the process. He would need to hear more about the interactions with an SRO, hear about the schools who have them. The numbers are eye popping. When he asked staff at FRES, they spoke of using the funds for other purposes and the same was said at WLC. The police department takes 1/5 of our budget. We need information that is more detailed, we don't need to hear from the Police Chief or revisit the presentation given to us. Ms. Cloutier-Cabral commented that she thought the School Board was told the Select Board needed to be involved in the process because the officer would be an employee of the town, (Wilton PD). You needed to be involved and maybe we are incorrect about that and can research this better. She notes what got her interested in this was Chief Olesen's own support of it in 2019. He has consistently communicated that the best interest of the community is in his sights. She thinks it is a community decision and something to consider. It is a good idea to poll the teachers and students. She thinks he still feels the same way now, if he feels it is good for us, I think we should consider it. Discussion continued including what holes in the district are not being filled, the slide deck shows the SRO role which is very broad and asks a lot of someone, the Wilton and Lyndeborough PD partially fills some of that. Selectman Williams noted that perhaps putting additional PD time at the schools could be done if there are specific things for them to do. Part of our job is to back up the towns hiring practices, we have been very aware of how difficult it is to hire police officers and spoke of some of those challenges. He spoke of all the skills that are being asked for is difficult, if you had a teacher who wanted to be an SRO we could send them to the academy and they would have the skills. Finding someone for this would be difficult, Milford School District or Nashua School District are much larger and are bigger roles for an SRO there. His hope is the law enforcement piece would not be as much of the time and someone would need to have broader skills to do the rest. Ms. LaPlante was asked to clarify if the SRO had to be a certified police officer and to be a certified police officer they have to be affiliated with the police department in the town they are working as an SRO. Ms. LaPlante confirms this is correct. It was noted that this leaves us with having to figure out a path that involves the School

Board and Select Board. It was noted the Select Board is the gatekeeper of the SRO essentially. Acknowledgement of the inclement weather this evening was made and this has been a good discussion. Selectman Fish suggested it might be fruitful to appoint a member of the Select Board to the School Board and vice versa and we work through the process. He is open for discussion and is proposing to move it along. A straw poll of the school board was suggested but not taken. Ms. Anzalone suggested instead the Strategic Planning Committee does the research on it and asks that the Selectman give the committee specific things they want them to find out, a specific list so the information can be put together for them. She added people talked about wanting more social workers that is something this position would take part in as well. This person would work closely with the guidance counselors. Some kids have a negative experience with police and this gives them a positive and parents talk to them about their kids to keep an eye out or if they are acting up etc. She doesn't believe we would necessarily expect them to be a certified teacher but a lot of SRO's teach D.A.R.E. or Junior Police Academy, talk in a physics class etc. She would see those finding ways to work with our teachers and maybe be involved in specific lessons and provide the counselors with support and go to the games too and get involved with the after school events. She asked for specific information the selectman are looking for to help make a better decision. A question was raised if this meeting is live streamed and the response was yes. The selectman meetings are as well. Discussion continued that we would have a better-rounded discussion if we provide what both Boards need, not having to read between the lines in the minutes and people who are interested can look at the video, see what was said, and know where both sides stand. It is important that we end the advocacy of either Board for their position. It would be more productive if we engage in a process that we gather the information that each Board needs. This is a collaboration and not adversary by any means. We are one; the money all goes to the same place, this is the beginning of the process. It was suggested to structure the meetings going forward so there would be better discovery of what each Board needs.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Anzalone and SECONDED by Mr. Lavoie to task the Strategic Planning Committee to take an in-depth dive into having an SRO.

Mr. Allen questioned why we would bring that to the Strategic Planning Committee, we have the information to move forward, the Select Board doesn't. He doesn't know what going through the Strategic Planning Committee accomplishes unless they have a representative on the Strategic Planning Committee. He doesn't see how this moves the ball forward. Ms. Anzalone responded that they have specific questions and we can answer them. She feels that if the Board wants to do it, and we need buy-in from the selectman and they have questions, we can help answer them. A good place for that is the Strategic Planning Committee. Mr. Lavoie noted that Selectman Fish said he wanted a member from their Board and the School Board to start crossing over meetings. Maybe you want to motion to do that and they can do the same with their group. Vice Chair Lavalley noted part of the rationale, for the committee is the deep dive lies with the committee but we certainly can go the other way if that is the way the Board wants to go. There were a number of questions brought up tonight.

Voting: via roll call vote, four ayes, three nays from Mr. Mannarino, Mr. Allen and Mr. LoVerme, motion carried.

Selectman Garcia suggested adding to the committee work, going through the job description to make it fit this district and community and work logs of what that person would do, what does it look like in September, October etc. vs. doing that once they are hired. It was confirmed the next Strategic Planning Committee meeting is scheduled for February 19 at 5:30pm; it would be helpful for the Vice Chair (Ms. Anzalone) to email those questions to the Board so we can figure out how to tackle them. She welcomes anyone from the community as well. Vice Chair Lavalley suggested in accordance with our policy, if we have the Strategic Planning Committee work on it, she would like to delegate that we give a voice to the Wilton Selectman if they want to provide us with a nomination to send someone to represent them. A brief discussion was had about when they could meet. Selectman Garcia volunteered as long as it would work with his schedule, Mondays the Selectman meet therefor that is not a good day.

Selectman Fish MOVED to appoint DJ Garcia to be the Wilton Select Board representative to the WLC School Board.

It was clarified that the School Board is asking for a representative to the Strategic Planning Committee.

Selectman Fish modified his MOTION to appoint DJ Garcia to be the Wilton Select Board liaison to the WLC School Board Strategic Planning Committee, SECONDED by Selectman Williams.

Voting: all aye, motion carried.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Lavoie and SECONDED by Ms. Anzalone to adjust the agenda to move up public comment to now, and just prior to that for administration, the police chief and Lyndeborough Selectman (who are present) to provide any comments then move into public comment.

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

There was no comment from administration.

Chief Olesen commented that all of the information we have been gathering all along is information we gathered from other towns that have an SRO. He notes it doesn't necessarily have to be a new officer we can find a veteran officer. He asked Chief Douglas to come up and speak as he brought the SRO to the Milford School District.

Chief Fred Douglas, (Lyndeborough resident and Selectman) was asked to speak. He noted that there are many questions in this. He has been a police officer for many years. He wrote the job description and the grants for the SRO in Milford, which were accepted. The grants, unless it has changed as recently as last year, funded it for 3 years, \$125,000, the only big obligation is at the end of the 3 years the administration, and municipality must fund it for 1 year. He is providing the information that he is aware of, the SRO is a vital role to every administrator, teacher and every child in the school. He is a part-time police chief in a small town under a different school district. Although we are small, we had 3 incidences where females have been bullied and one committed suicide. He contacted the DOE, they did an interview, and investigation as to why it was not dealt with when we knew about it and the school as far as he is concerned failed that child. He gave another example. If we don't have a conduit between these children and parents it's not just about the ALICE training, they have to work with the school district and parents to get them help before it is too late. The school district needs the help they can't do it all. We need a good core value with the superintendent and staff. There is only one way this will go if they are not here. Don't you want the PD to be proactive instead of reactive when it is too late? He noted there are a number of issues in Milford and if we didn't have the conduit they would have never heard of it. When a child is bullied, under the Safe Schools Act, administration is required to report it to PD each and every time and they work through it with staff and parents. There is nothing to say the PD can't be involved with a parent, child and social worker or through their insurance company. The reports would be clear. That PD and SRO will be that proactive conduit for these children. He understands there is a cost factor but there is a bigger cost if we don't have it, it is a ticking time bomb, it's a matter of time. You cannot put a price on a kid's life, never mind a school shooting. The job description should include the SRO making a trip to every school at least 1-2 times a week and stepping inside. He has a policy where he is that if he has a domestic violence petition, he lets the school staff know. He spoke of why that is important. He spoke of asking for an emergency ring button but it was not approved. He explained his point is that we need to put all in place within reason, the SRO is a valuable member of this community and that community but they need to go around to each school. He spoke of the Uvalde shooting and the importance of the SRO having exposure to all the schools. He spoke of the funding and that there is a time limit. He acknowledges you have a new road to travel. Vice Chair Lavallee asked for any further comment.

Selectman Fish needs to exit the meeting and leaves Vice Chair Garcia to close the Selectman's session of the meeting. Selectman Fish is the representative for the Land Use Boards, Planning Board and Zoning Board and wanted to thank administration and Mr. Erb for their use of the school facilities, it is important to us as they are still following some COVID guidelines and have some big cases that attract a lot of public attention. A big thank you to Mr. Erb, we appreciate it.

Vice Chair Lavallee noted the Strategic Planning Committee is a public meeting and there is a time for public comment there as well. Selectman Garcia provided his email address djgarcia@wiltonnh.gov in addition, his phone number 603-801-7394 if the public wanted to reach out to him.

Selectman Fish departed the meeting at 7:52PM.

• PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public comment section of the agenda was read.

Mr. Don Rankin, Wilton spoke of being a data driven person, and that you can prove anything by citing examples, take the opposite, cite an example, and prove it. A copy of his comments can be found with these minutes. Why do we need an SRO? Some believe having an armed SRO would enhance security should an intruder come into our schools. That belief is a fantasy. A study by the Violence Project found the opposite, in cases where an armed guard was present there were actually 3 times as many casualties. The study noted that prior research suggests that many school shooters are actively suicidal, intending to die in the act. We also have 3 widely geographically spread areas and I do agree that if we are going to have an SRO, we need that SRO to be in all of our schools. We will need 1 person to cover 3 schools or 3 SRO's. A study cited by Poytner states, "Multiple studies have found no association between the presence of armed officers in schools and the deterrence of violence." A 2021 study from researchers at SUNY Albany and RAND Corporation indicates that the presence of guards actually "marginally increases the likelihood of a school shooting" as well as chronic absenteeism, and the occurrence of other gun-related offenses. How do students feel about having an armed officer in their school? The presence of an armed officer does nothing to enhance the comfort level of the students. The opposite is, once again, true. The Trace article notes, "they feel surveilled -particularly black and brown children or anyone who is marginalized. The National Association of School Psychologists has argued that, like violence itself, the fear that results can harm the learning process. We don't have many black and brown students but we do have other students that (for example) can't dress as well as other students and they are marginalized. This goes on to cite racial disparities. It is possible that an SRO can have a beneficial effect. I agree with that, if you can properly screen the person, have the right people in place, and they have to establish the relationship with the students. The fact that the federal government has 3 year grants tells you it will take 3 years for that process to settle in for that SRO to have an effect. What will it cost? According to Indeed, the base salary for an SRO in New Hampshire is \$117,499. That doesn't include benefits such as healthcare and retirement accounts, or vacation, which would increase that figure substantially. For the same amount, we could easily hire 2

persons trained in psychology to help students without introducing the negative effects of a person who is armed with a gun, a Taser, handcuffs. Due to time constraints, (30 minutes for public comment) he was asked to conclude and if there is time left over for public comment, he may continue. He will provide an email to the Board with all the hyperlinks supporting his comments.

Mr. Jonathan Vanderhoof, Lyndeborough wanted to reiterate his support for an SRO. Sending it to the Strategic Planning Committee... they already did that and the committee said lets do it. He knows you started this months and months ago, you have agreement and a survey, it sounds like you are starting all over again. It is disappointing but he does support an SRO.

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

Ms. Mary Golding commented to drive carefully home and be safe. Thank you for all you do.

Mr. Don Rankin continued his comments, as there is time still available. Our current School Board and School Budget Committee have done an excellent job of spending the monies appropriated at last year's school meeting. They have rectified many outstanding deferred maintenance items and plan to fund accounts for future major renovation and repair projects that we know are coming. The last projection for monies to be returned to taxpayers was \$57,000, which is substantially less than in previous years. They have done what the voters asked by fixing problems and planning for future major expenditures. The School Board also negotiated a new 3-year contract for teachers. The intent was to make our school attractive enough to keep the excellent teachers we have and to make hiring to fill vacancies easier. The new contract will add to the expenses in the coming years, I am in support of that contract. The State provides only half of what the New Hampshire Supreme Court says funds an adequate education. Unfortunately, just like the Claremont decision, we cannot rely on the current legislature or Governor to appropriate the needed funds so relief for local taxpayers. Our tax rate is high because we are essentially a bedroom community with families paying for most of the local expenses. For these reasons, I don't believe funding an SRO in any way needs a cost benefit analysis.

Ms. Olivia Siekman, Wilton Patrol Sergeant and resident, she spoke in support of an SRO. She spoke of her experience and being part of the ALICE program in the schools, she is an ICAC representative (Internet Crimes Against Children). She would do the training for an SRO and the biggest issue we see now is social media and inappropriate images back and forth amongst children. She notes you won't hear about those cases because they are private but they do happen and we do investigate them. If a police officer were in the school, they would be a positive person for students to go to. When she comes in the school students come to her with praise and excitement, it is a very positive thing for kids, kids past and present. There are kids she constantly deals with on the road and they still love her. They even say I swear, I will be better they respect her. There is a mindset of police officers that having an SRO may make them discontinue bad behavior. At the least, it has been a positive interaction with students in school and they ask when I will come back. She supports the position of an SRO. A comment was made about her taking the position. She says she would take the position as an interim but it would put a lot on her plate as a patrol sergeant. She would do it if it meant it was a way to get someone in there and she would then train someone new.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Williams and SECONDED by Selectman Garcia to adjourn the Wilton Selectman session at 8:07pm.

Voting: all aye, motion carried.

The Selectman thanked the Board for inviting them.

IV. STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT-

Principal Ronning respectfully asked for this to be tabled to the next meeting. Vice Chair Lavallee agreed.

V. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

Vice Chair Lavallee asked for the following adjustments, table the budget discussion and non-public to the next meeting, no action needed is tonight.

A MOTION was made by Mr. LoVerme and SECONDED by Mr. Allen to accept the adjustments to the agenda.

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

VI. BOARD CORRESPONDENCE

a. Reports

i. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent reported in addition to his report, he thanked the facilities staff, Scott, Josh, Bill, Pete, Ann, Jackie and Mr. Erb who all worked shoveling on Sunday and probably all night long tonight. They put in a lot of time and effort and don't complain he wanted to recognize them.

ii. Curriculum Coordinator's Report

Ms. Dignan's report is submitted as written.

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310 **VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

311 See above.

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313 **VIII. BOARD BUDGET DISCUSSION**

314 **i. FY 25 Budget**

315 **ii. Warrants**

316 Tabled to the next meeting.

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318 **IX. POLICIES**

319 **a. JLCJ-Concussions and Head Injuries**

320 It was noted there are no changes to the policy. This is the 2nd read.

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322 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Lavoie and SECONDED by Mr. Allen to approve policy JLCJ-Concussions and Head Injuries as*
323 *written.*

324 *Voting: via roll call vote, aye, motion carried.*

325
326 **X. ACTION ITEMS**

327 **a. Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting**

328 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Lavoie and SECONDED by Ms. Foss to approve the minutes of December 12, 2023 as written.*

329 *Voting: four ayes, three abstentions from Mr. Mannarino, Mr. Allen and Mr. LoVerme, motion carried.*

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331 **XI. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

332 **i. Facilities Committee**

333 Mr. Allen reported the committee met last night and made some significant headway. The B Wing bathroom is mostly complete
334 but incomplete, still waiting on countertops. Same with the art room. The architect has come for the locker room and measured.
335 The next step is for administration to determine which layout is preferable and get quotes. The gym floor is complete and looks
336 awesome. One of the bigger ones is the problem we were having with the boilers the efficiency requirements have been rolled
337 back and we can now go back to oil boilers rather than switching to propane. New boilers could be switched to propane at a later
338 date per Mr. Erb by doing the propane work that would have been needed anyway but keeping oil if desired can be achieved by
339 swapping out the burners. This should be a much less expensive option than propane and would result in less construction. Ms.
340 LaPlante mentioned at the last facilities meeting that the cost of propane, over oil are higher and for every 25,000 gallons of
341 propane we burn we would save \$31,000. He believes she was using standard pricing. He believes it would be worth a
342 discussion if that were truly the case. We discussed the \$50,000 maintenance budgeted items. Front doors were the only item
343 completed thus far. Some of those items will be scrapped potentially based on paving issues and we discussed what the best use
344 of that funding might be. Other unknown expenses have come up such as a sewer pipe that potentially needs replacing for
345 \$9,000. The committee also discussed having a line item in the CIP for this type of contingency. We kicked out the new CIP
346 proposal and discussed that. Everyone felt pretty good about it and felt it would help with budgeting and transparency moving
347 forward. The school lockers are up on the maintenance schedule for SY24-25. It was discussed whether these are worth doing as
348 they are largely unused. It was asked that the administration review this, put a plan of action together and report back. While
349 discussing the CIP warrant article there was concern about the WLC pavement, which is coming up in a couple of years. A quote
350 was almost \$100,000 less than our anticipated expense. By raising our ask this year by \$22,000, we had planned on raising
351 \$85,000 for paving to complete in the next few years, and if we raise this year to \$107,000 we could complete the entire project
352 allowing us to delete the \$85,000 ask for next year. The next couple of years will be large "asks". Mr. Erb brought to the
353 committee's attention that the FRES roof might need to be moved up as well. He will get recommendations and quotes if repairs
354 are needed. The committee is unsure what the CIP balance is. It was reported that there is \$51,000 available, but we requested
355 administration report back on the \$30,000 set aside for FRES, which was erroneously labeled, it is actually LCS heating
356 elements that were also planned in the operating budget. It was suggested to cut that out of the CIP and need to determine if we
357 actually have \$81,000 in the CIP as opposed to \$51,000. If we only have \$51,000 in the CIP then the Facilities Committee
358 requests a warrant of \$300,000 to complete the scheduled projects and move the paving forward. This will reduce next year's ask
359 by \$85,000. If there were \$81,000 available, the committee would request a warrant of \$275,000. Discussion was had about a
360 "miscellaneous" line item in the CIP to allow for emergencies such as the broken sewer pipe or anything else like overages on
361 quotes that come up. It was reported a history of "robbing Peter to pay Paul" to do projects that were emergencies or came in
362 higher than planned which makes the other projects being kicked further down the road which is not how we should be doing
363 business. There was talk of sending unspent funds into the CIP to build up a balance. We were not comfortable with that and
364 suggested to bring that to the School Board to see if they want to add a line to the CIP that will be a balance for contingencies or
365 emergencies or unplanned expenses. If that were the case they would support funding that in full or part this year via a warrant
366 article to transfer unspent funds into the CIP for that line item. If they do not support it the facilities committee doesn't support a
367 warrant article to transfer unspent funds to the CIP. A question was raised regarding a boiler if an engineer is needed. Mr. Erb
368 has met with one; we have Web and another company. We are trying to find out when we can get the boilers; it will save time in
369 the long run by moving out the old ones and in the new ones and not having to do the re-piping. Mr. Erb recommends going with
370 oil. Ms. LaPlante clarified regarding the \$31,000 savings, if all were equal that it is the same efficiency for oil as it is with

propane, theoretically there is that savings for the cost of oil vs. propane. She does not know the efficiency of gallons of propane vs. oil; we don't know what that would be. Without doing that conversion, it is her best guess not a confirmation. Mr. Allen confirms oil would be the easiest but if there is a potential to save \$31,000 per year we should look into that. It is a School Board decision not a Facilities Committee decision. Mr. Lavoie spoke of the possibility of additional rate savings if you choose propane route and the right company. A discussion was had regarding the lockers. It was suggested to keep in mind the size of the lockers because during baseball season, they have giant bags and some carry them around all day. Superintendent noted we have not gotten that far, we will get a basic blue print; we need lockers kids can use and of adequate size. The lockers in the hall some kids are using but some are not; we could remove some further back and not replace them. A brief discussion was had why kids are not using the lockers. Superintendent notes, it is a trend he has been seeing, there are less textbooks, more Chromebooks and it is not uncool to carry a backpack. It was noted we stopped using them due to COVID. There are posture issues and we should push kids to use them. Superintendent responded we encourage them to use them; the younger kids are the ones he worries about, as they do get very heavy.

XII. 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.

Mr. Billy Boylan, Lyndeborough had questions regarding a specific employee benefit. Vice Chair Lavallee requested the employee contact Ms. LaPlante directly.

Chairman Golding commented the roads are not very good, it is freezing rain, hopes every gets home safe. He noted it was a good meeting. He appreciates the Wilton Select Board coming.

XIII. SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Mannarino commented be safe to everyone, the roads are terrible; he tried to get to the meeting; he imagines they have not improved.

Ms. Cloutier-Cabral appreciates Selectman Garcia joining the Strategic Planning Committee. She likes the feedback from Chief Douglas and from Sergeant Siekman, those comments and feedback are helpful. She invites them and Chief Olesen to come to the Strategic Planning Committee or send over any information that would be helpful. She thanked everyone for a great meeting and hopes all are safe getting home.

Ms. Anzalone echoed what Ms. Cloutier-Cabral said about the SRO discussion. She hopes all there are safe getting home.

Mr. Allen echoes some of the comments before. He feels like we keep beating this SRO thing. He would have liked to see us get more traction tonight. Great job to the facilities staff for all the shoveling and everything they do. They are the unsung heroes.

Vice Chair Lavallee spoke about being excited for the cyber safety training. It is much needed education for students and parents. Great job everyone, thank you for coming tonight.

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

Tabled to the next meeting.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

*A MOTION was made by Mr. LoVerme and SECONDED by Ms. Foss to adjourn the Board meeting at 8:31pm.
Voting: via roll call vote, all aye, motion carried.*

*Respectfully submitted,
Kristina Fowler*

Don Rankin
925 Mason Road
Wilton, NH 03086

January 9, 2024

Why do we need an SRO? Some believe having an armed SRO would enhance security should an intruder come into our schools. That belief is a fallacy! A study by the *Violence Project* found the opposite, in cases where an armed guard was present there were actually 3 times as many casualties. The study noted "Prior research suggests that many school shooters are actively suicidal, intending to die in the act," (1).

We also have 3 widely geographically separated schools so the odds of an SRO being present are 1 in 3 and it is likely a shooter would know where the SRO would be and would choose to either confront or avoid the SRO depending upon intent.

A study cited by *Poytner* states "Multiple studies have found no association between the presence of armed officers in schools and the deterrence of violence." (2)

A 2021 study from researchers at SUNY Albany and RAND indicates that the presence of guards actually "marginally increases the likelihood of a school shooting" as well as chronic absenteeism, and the occurrence of other gun-related offenses. (1)

How do students feel about having an armed officer in their school? The presence of an armed officer does nothing to enhance the comfort level of the students. The opposite is, once again, true. The *Trace* article notes "they feel surveilled -particularly Black and brown children. The National Association of School Psychologists has argued that, like violence itself, the fear that results, can harm the learning process. An SRO also seems to enhance the trouble for black and brown students as noted in the *Trace* article "This criminalization of school misconduct is particularly problematic when applied to Black students, given the stark existing racial disparities in arrest and incarceration," wrote the researchers." (1)

It is possible that an SRO can have a beneficial effect. That is only if "When you have proper vetting, and you have the right people in place, security, police, whatever you categorize them as or whatever their role is, can build really great relationships with students," Jaclyn Schildkraut of the Rockefeller Institute of Government said. "But unfortunately, not every person who wears a badge or carries a gun belongs to the school." (1)

What will it cost? According to *Indeed* the base salary for an SRO in New Hampshire is \$117,499.(3) That doesn't include benefits such as healthcare and retirement accounts which would increase that figure substantially. For the same amount we could hire 2 persons trained in psychology to help students without introducing the negative effects of a person who is armed with a gun, a taser, handcuffs and possibly a billy club.

Our current school board and school budget committee have done an excellent job of spending the monies appropriated at last year's school meeting. They have rectified many outstanding deferred maintenance items and plan to fund accounts for future major renovation and repair projects that we know are coming. The last projection for monies to be returned to taxpayers was \$57K, which is substantially less than in previous years. They have done what the voters

asked by fixing problems and planning for future major expenditures. The school board also negotiated a new 3 year contract for teachers. The intent was to make our school attractive enough to keep the excellent teachers we have and to make hiring to fill vacancies easier. The new contract will add to the expenses in the coming years, I am in support of that contract. The State provides only half of what the New Hampshire Supreme Court says funds an adequate education. Unfortunately, just like the Claremont decision, we cannot rely on the current legislature or Governor to appropriate the needed funds so relief for local taxpayers is nonexistent. Our tax rate is high because we are essentially a bedroom community with families paying for most of the local expenses. For these reasons I believe funding an SRO fails in every way to pass a cost benefit analysis.

1. <https://www.thetrace.org/2023/08/guns-armed-guards-school-shootings/>
2. <https://www.poynter.org/fact-checking/2022/do-armed-school-police-officers-prevent-shootings/>
3. <https://www.indeed.com/career/resource-officer/salaries/NH>

Additional resources?

1. <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/states-cannot-rely-school-resource-officers-stop-school-shootings>
2. <https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/07/us/school-officers-impact-on-black-students/index.html>
3. <https://education.uconn.edu/2020/10/27/the-prevalence-and-the-price-of-police-in-schools/>
4. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/26/us/mass-shooting-school-security.html>