

**WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE  
SCHOOL BOARD MEETING  
Tuesday, March 18, 2025  
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, John Zavgren, Michelle Alley, Erin Collins, Paul White, Geoffrey Allen, Diane Foss, and Jonathan Lavoie*

*Superintendent Peter Weaver, Business Administrator Kristie LaPlante, Principals Tom Ronning and Principal Bridgette Fuller, Assistant Principal Katie Gosselin, Director of Student Support Services Ned Pratt, Technology Director Nicholas Buroker, and Curriculum Coordinator Samantha Dignan*

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Superintendent Weaver called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Superintendent welcomed new board members, Ms. Collins and Mr. White

**III. ELECTIONS/APPOINTMENTS**

**a. Elections**

**i. School Board Chair**

Superintendent reviewed the role of a School Board Chair. He asked for nominations. Ms. Foss nominated Mr. Golding as Chair. Superintendent asked for any other nominations, none heard. Superintendent asked Mr. Golding if he would like to say a few words regarding the nomination and would he welcome the nomination. Mr. Golding welcomes the nomination. He would like the opportunity to keep the momentum going that we have had the last couple of years, it has been a good Board and wants to get the school in an even better place than it is now. Superintendent asks for Board discussion. Mr. Lavoie asked if we could move public discussion/input into this before we vote on Chair and Vice Chair.

*A MOTION was made by Mr. Lavoie to amend the agenda to move public opinion before the vote.  
There was no second to this motion.*

Superintendent spoke of not being sure if legally, we can, he has never seen it done. His role as Superintendent is to oversee the selection of a Chair not to oversee public comment or any other agenda items. The first order of business has to be to elect a Chair and then the Chair can choose to move up public comment based on an adjustment to the agenda with Board's approval. As he understands it once we have a Chair, someone can make a motion to move public comment before the Vice Chair vote.

*Mr. Lavoie WITHDREW his MOTION.*

Superintendent asked for a show of hands in favor of Mr. Golding being Chairman of the School Board.  
Unanimous vote (9-0) for Mr. Golding to be Chairman of the School Board.

Superintendent congratulated him and turned the meeting over to Chairman Golding.  
Chairman Golding voiced appreciation. He read the role of the Vice Chair. He asked for any nominations.  
Ms. Alley nominated Mr. Allen. Ms. Foss nominated Ms. Lavallee. Chairman Golding asked the nominees to speak regarding if they accept the nomination and why they would make a good Vice Chair. Mr. Allen expressed that he thinks his record on the Board speaks for itself. He has been an affirmative consensus builder. The committees he has been involved in or chaired have all done well and received public acclaim. He thinks that change is good for the Board. Based on a lot of what's going on that Lyndeborough could use some representation on the Board, not meaning as a dig to Ms. Lavallee, who has done a great job, it is more based on the calls he has been receiving within the last week or so. He would like to keep the momentum going, Mr. Golding and Ms. Lavallee have done an incredible job he just thinks its time for some new ideas, and Ms. Lavallee has been here longer. He accepts the nomination.

Ms. Lavallee spoke, she accepts the nomination. She we feels have been traveling in a very good direction especially the last couple of years. She has carried out her duties as Vice Chair as efficiently and professionally as possible. She responds to emails that are sent to the School Boards joint email in a timely and professional manner being careful to never express opinions on matters that have not been fully discussed or voted on by the Board. She has a good understanding as to the School Board's role in governance and the Superintendents role in administering the daily functions of the district. When building the agenda, she

focuses on the end results. She tries to build consensus and keep the Board moving forward toward our collective mission, which is prioritizing what is in the best interest of students and enhancing student achievement. She encourages information sharing and dialogue in respectful debate among board members and appreciates the public commentary without trying to engage in viewpoint discrimination. She supports the Chair for the meetings both preparing the agenda prior to the meetings and during the meetings, has a clear understanding of the legal requirements for public meetings and a clear understanding of what the right to know law is and what our policies are, being on Policy Committee, does give her the benefit of being able to weigh in and assist during that. She cannot speak to the phone calls or people that have reached out to Mr. Allen in the last week but she has also has had a number of people reach out to her this week from Lyndeborough expressing their gratitude in her professionalism while on the Board. She is always trying to keep in mind that we are moving toward the goal of doing what's best for the children and not be distracted by personal and political situations that may arise in either town.

Chairman Golding asked for Board discussion and each member voiced their view. Ms. Alley sincerely appreciates Ms. Lavallee's service and appreciates what she has done. If she looks at Lyndeborough she sees 2 other candidates that could be a great Chair as well. She thinks it would be good for some leadership change and that is why she nominated Mr. Allen. He speaks well, knows what he is doing and could be just as good. Ms. Collins voiced she does not know Mr. Allen but has seen him speak at other meetings and he seems very capable. She has also seen Ms. Lavallee speak at meetings. From what she has heard, even just now, she appreciates the whole kid's first kind of attitude. She is not sure how things balance out where this is her first meeting as far as Wilton and Lyndeborough and has not received any phone calls but has the utmost confidence in both of them for the position and appreciates being here and getting to learn from both of you. Ms. Foss spoke that she likes having continuity and sees less and less of that overtime. We are very lucky that we've had 2 people willing to do the work involved to be really good, consistent Vice Chair and Chair. She appreciates that and feels there is a very well balanced philosophy particularly with Ms. Lavallee when it comes to some of the things we use for example with NHSBA. There are 2 groups that offer presentations and information on being a school board and Ms. Lavallee has always encouraged her to listen to both and she appreciates that. In the past year or so she was supposed to go to the Concord presentation from one of the groups and there was a vote by the Board that she could not vote on anything and she ended up not going because there was no sense in her going. She doesn't see that as well balanced and feels Ms. Lavallee is solid with the policies. She knows the policies, the regulations and follows them, not just the ones she likes and leaves the others, not to say Mr. Allen wouldn't. She knows from watching Ms. Lavallee that she doesn't do that, she is very fair and very balanced and that's why she wants her to stay as Vice Chair. Mr. Lavoie voiced that the only thing he challenges the Board on, is one thing we're not supposed to bring politics into the Board but a quick reference is we tend to all agree on term limits to some extent and at the national, state and any level. He challenges people to let someone else do a job that someone else has been doing for quite a long time, to bring different ideas, bring different enthusiasm, not saying anyone isn't enthusiastic but it changes the dynamic a little. New energy to different topics that might need some energy. He spoke of one of the big topics that we needed energy in the school for some time was the CIP program and Mr. Allen has a good handle on it, seeing he basically authored it and constructed it. It's just a different way of leading the charge. He challenges this Board to think about term limits and not because someone is doing a good or bad job, it's just to get a different perspective. Mr. Zavgren voiced that Ms. Lavallee and Mr. Golding have done an amazing job and he saw the Board in chaos a few years ago where chaos was content and he doesn't want to go back to that. He wants move forward with people that we have because they are a known entity. Ms. Lavallee is an encyclopedia of policy knowledge. She is the go to person if there is an issue, or if you can do this or that, what are the guardrails, etc. She knows that extremely well, with that in mind, he thinks Ms. Lavallee should be the Vice Chair. Mr. White spoke that he has been a board member before and now back. He hasn't worked with anybody sitting here except for Ms. Lavallee and at the time when he was on the Board last we were on Policy Committee together. We were on the Short-Term Strategic Planning Committee together which he chaired at the time. We got through a hefty budget cut and through a pandemic before he had to leave. He supports keeping her where she is right now, because he feels were moving forward and he doesn't know anyone else here. Having 1 constant that he knows how to work with effectively is good. Chairman Golding voiced that he will not comment right now. Mr. Lavoie asks if we can make an adjustment to the agenda and open up this topic to the public if the Chair would allow.

*A MOTION was made by Mr. Lavoie and SECONDED by Ms. Alley to move public comment before the vote for Vice Chair.  
Voting: all aye, motion carried.*

#### • PUBLIC COMMENT

The public comment section of the agenda was read. No public present commented. Superintendent called out the phone numbers and names joined online to comment.

Ms. Mary Golding commented she feels bad that no one wants to comment since a motion was made. What she heard was a lot of Lyndeborough this and Lyndeborough that. Consistency is key. She was curious regarding term limits, if you are not Chair or Vice Chair does that mean you cannot bring new ideas forward. You are still an active board member. You should want to do what is best for the children of our community not just Lyndeborough. She thanked Mr. Golding and Ms. Lavallee for never singling out one town or the other and for that is what makes you both great leaders.

Ms. Sarah Chadzynski, Lyndeborough commented that she does feel that Ms. Lavallee should continue to carry this position as we have made so much forward progress. She has seen the contributions that Mr. Allen made on the school board and thinks

there should be a few more years before he takes on the Vice Chair role. The things she looks at when looking at roles is looking at the job and a lot of that is administrative tasks and keeping things moving and keeping everyone on the same page. We are at a pivotal moment where we have seen quite a bit of rapid improvement not only on the Board but also within our school system and she wants to keep that moving forward and going. Mr. Allen welcome, and certainly continue being the rock star board member you are and continue to bring your ideas and developments to the table.

Chairman Golding called for a vote via show of hands, for Mr. Allen as Vice Chair.  
Two votes (Ms. Alley and Mr. Lavoie) for Mr. Allen to be Vice Chair.

Chairman Golding called for a vote via show of hands for Ms. Lavallee as Vice Chair.  
Five votes (Mr. White, Mr. Zavgren, Ms. Foss, Ms. Collins, Ms. Lavallee) 2 abstentions (Chairman Golding, Mr. Allen) for Ms. Lavallee to be Vice Chair.  
Ms. Lavallee is Vice Chair.

## **ii. School Board Vice Chair**

### **b. Appointments**

#### **i. Committees**

Chairman Golding reviewed what the committees (exception of Budget Committee) should do. Ms. Fowler will publically post that we are searching for volunteers. All interested members of the public should send a written indication of interest to the office by March 29, 2025.

#### **Budget Committee Liaison**

He asked for a volunteer for Budget Committee liaison voicing what their role is. **Mr. White** volunteered.  
Voting: all aye, no objections or abstentions

#### **Facilities Committee**

Chairman Golding asked for any volunteers for Facilities Committee. A question was raised to explain for new members the purpose of the committees. Chairman Golding explained what the committees are and what they do.  
Chairman Golding asked for volunteers. **Mr. Allen, Ms. Collins and Mr. Zavgren** volunteered.  
Voting: all aye, no objections or abstentions

#### **Strategic Planning Committee**

Chairman Golding reviewed the make-up of the committee which includes community members and he notes he would like to see more community volunteers.

*A MOTION was made by Mr. Allen and SECONDED by Ms. Lavallee to raise the representation from each town on the Strategic Planning Committee to two.*

*Voting: all aye, motion carries*

Chairman Golding confirms we will try to get 4 community members, 2 from each town to be on this committee. He asked for volunteers. **Mr. Allen, Ms. Alley and Mr. Zavgren** volunteered.

Voting: all aye, no objections or abstentions

#### **Negotiations Committee**

**Chairman Golding** volunteered. Mr. Allen was asked and described what is involved in the committee.  
**Ms. Alley** and Ms. Foss volunteered. Ms. Lavallee pointed out that there is not any Lyndeborough Representative. **Mr. White** volunteered, Ms. Foss dropped out, and Chairman Golding stayed.

Voting: all aye, no objections or abstentions

#### **Policy Committee**

**Ms. Lavallee** volunteered, **Ms. Collins and Mr. Lavoie**

Ms. Lavallee voiced that she feels it would be beneficial to have 4 members on this committee, we have had 4 in the past and is less than a quorum. She ran into this year where she needs at least 2 physically present and did not and had to cancel the meeting. It also very labor intensive and can spread it out a little and provide some flexibility for one who cannot attend in person. We just cannot have other board members show up to the committee because that would constitute a quorum. No objection heard. **Ms. Foss** volunteered.

Voting: all aye, no objections or abstentions

#### **Technology Committee**

**Chairman Golding** volunteered. The committee meets quarterly. A brief discussion was had about representations from town on the committees. Ms. Lavallee reviewed that the committees bring back recommendations to the Board; there is no action by the committees. **Ms. Foss and Mr. Zavgren** volunteered.

Voting: all aye, no objections or abstentions

186  
187 **c. Ethics Policy**

188 **i. BCA-School Board Ethics**

189 **ii. BA-R Acknowledgement of Ethics Form**

190 Chairman Golding reviewed the materials are in the Board packet and asked that new and old board members read it and  
191 acknowledge and sign we agree to it. Ms. Lavallee will print them out for members. The form should be turned into Mr. Weaver.

192  
193 Mr. Allen asks that members read this carefully and look at what it says and we look at following it moving it forward.

194  
195 **IV. SCHOOL BOARD MEETING DATES**

196 Chairman Golding notes the only things we do not know now are the joint dates with the Budget Committee. Ms. LaPlante  
197 confirms that there is not a scheduled meeting yet. She will get with Ms. Mary-Jane Ryan to find out the members and make  
198 outreach for an organizational meeting. Chairman Golding received requests from 2 community members, one from each town  
199 to not move the meetings out of WLC. He asked if the Board wants to entertain it or leave the schedule as is. He notes there is no  
200 way for public to comment in the other locations. He is in favor of going to other schools; Mr. Lavoie is also in favor of going to  
201 the other schools but understands the points made. Ms. Lavallee would like to keep it because when we combined districts, some  
202 people in Lyndeborough feel they have given up a bit of their identity and doesn't have a "school" anymore and she tries to  
203 correct that dialogue, we do have a school in Lyndeborough. One of the things that helps people see that is by being able to visit  
204 and for people in the community that don't have children at LCS. It's important to have at least 1 meeting in Lyndeborough a  
205 year so the public can come in and see the school and participate. A question was raised what was the biggest argument to  
206 keeping it at WLC. Chairman Golding responded, the video and audio, people could not comment. Superintendent added it is  
207 also the unpredictability. You can assume the board meetings occur every other Tuesday but now you have to look at your  
208 calendar to see and also look for the location so it is a second thing you have to do as community members. The technology and  
209 space can also be limiting and we have overcome most of that. A question was raised if you can bring the equipment to another  
210 school. Superintendent responded apparently not easily. Mr. Allen commented it is only 4 meetings a year that are in a different  
211 location. Chairman Golding noted pre-COVID the Board always did this and that was before online participation. He asked for  
212 any opposition to changing locations. A question was raised if there was the opportunity for online people to type their questions  
213 in. Chairman Golding responded there is always that opportunity, he can read their questions aloud. Ms. Lavallee added the  
214 public can at any time send questions or comments to the school board with the request to read it and it can be read during public  
215 comment.

216  
217 *A MOTION was made by Ms. Lavallee and SECONDED by Ms. Foss to adopt the school board meeting schedule as seen.*  
218 *Voting: all aye, motion carried.*

219  
220 **V. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA**

221 Ms. Lavallee requested to remove policy IKF-High School graduation Requirements and move it to the next meeting. Principal  
222 Ronning is doing a double check on it prior to it coming to the Board.

223  
224 *A MOTION was made by Ms. Lavallee and SECONDED by Mr. White to move policy IKF to the April 8, 2025 meeting.*  
225 *Voting: all aye, motion carried.*

226  
227 **VI. DONATIONS**

228 Principal Ronning requested the Boards authorization for donations. He explained the Board was asked last year to use  
229 unexpended funds for technology with regard to plays and the sound system for the cafeteria and gym. At that point, it was let's  
230 put together a committee, let's move forward. The PTO has done that. The PTO has raised money in their tech committee and  
231 they would like to donate to the school of \$7,095 with regard to microphones and things necessary to help with the pay that is  
232 coming up in April. He asks if the Board would accept this.

233  
234 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Allen and SECONDED by Ms. Foss to accept the sum of \$7,095 from the PTO as a gift to go*  
235 *toward the audio system for the upcoming play.*  
236 *Voting: all aye, motion carried.*

237  
238 **VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

239 The public comment section of the agenda was read.

240 Ms. Alyssa Lavoie, Lyndeborough, it may not apply but wants to be sure there is no conflict of interest having Chairman  
241 Golding be part of the Negotiations Committee of support staff. Chairman Golding responded his wife is paid through a grant  
242 and not in a support staff contract.

243  
244 Ms. Darlene Anzalone, Lyndeborough congratulated Mr. White and Ms. Collins. She will send an email but is very interested in  
245 serving on the Strategic Planning Committee. Mr. Allen commented earlier regarding the policy BA-Board Member Ethics that

everyone adhere to it. She echoes this. The other policy she recommends the Policy Committee review this year and or/tighten up is GBEA-Staff Ethics. There may be certain members of staff who need reminders of this policy.

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

Ms. Mary Golding congratulated and welcomed all the board members especially the new ones, Mr. White and Ms. Collins. She looks forward to this year with all of you. She will be listening. Thank you for all volunteering and doing what you do, it is not easy work, you are appreciated.

## **VIII. BOARD CORRESPONDENCE**

### **a. Reports**

#### **i. Business Administrator's Report**

Ms. LaPlante reported she and Superintendent Weaver had a chance to meet with Butler Transportation and Beacon Mobility a few weeks ago. They had a great phone call, continuing with the contract we have with Butler, they are in partnership with Beacon so they didn't change ownership. Discussed ways to recruit drivers, ways we can possibly save on some of our athletic transport and will meet again this spring. As far as us hosting stuff or helping to partner with them to get stuff going as part of the new partnership with Beacon it's going to be pulling their assets into our community so it may open up some additional avenues for shuttle services for athletics and SPED transport because right now its just Durham in the area. We are very excited about that. We also talked about cost drivers that could impact our next contract as far as age of the buses etc. As we get close to sending that out they offered to look at the RFP with us to help us better understand what cost implications or what might drive some of those cost factors. Last summer HB1264 was passed at the state level, which requires accessible voting equipment for all local elections. What it requires in each of our communities is a tablet for some of our visually impaired voters specifically to be able to vote and have a paper ballot still print out. Unbeknownst to us during the whole process was the cost for it and each town incurs \$600 for every ballot that gets put out. The district has incurred \$1,200 expense and will incur that moving forward. It is not a big-ticket item but shocked our counterparts in the community. She wanted to let the school board know this and we are working with them as well. Our concern right now is HB 675, which would put a cap on spending in school districts. She wrote about this in her report. It still needs to pass the Finance Committee and make its way to the Senate. If it were passed for our first in 2 years, it would cap our budget at the previous year's appropriation amounts less any facilities, acquisition, and construction, which we don't have those costs, multiplied by the average inflation. The out years would be required to use a 5-year average of our average daily membership in attendance as well as inflation rates to figure out what the amount that we can spend. What is concerning, is we say (example) \$25,000 a student; the calculations are \$25,000 per student. If we lose four students that automatically reduces our budget by \$100,000. It does not necessarily correlate to a staffing position. Four students district wide is not going to automatically save the district \$100,000. If it does go into effect the Dept. of Revenue will have to audit our budgets before implementation to be sure all costs quality and meet calculations. Should we need to extend beyond that budget cap, there is a 2/3 supermajority vote that is required. It is concerning because any costs that come up, it's not clear. She gave the example of a warrant article last year relating to the collective bargaining agreement in years 2 and 3 are automatically put into the budget, does that warrant article per derivative automatically disqualify costs for the out years. Also health insurances increases, SPED services, utilities and energy costs. If all of a sudden, we are paying \$4.25 a gallon for oil we don't have the ability to increase our budget to offset that. She confirms there are a lot of unknowns. Every dollar counts and is assigned to something, a purpose. She spoke of the Jaffrey-Rindge District who are cutting an entire athletics program. These are real concerns and she is keeping an eye on it, it's certainly not finalized by any level. In the Year to Date Reporting, some SPED costs are still not reflected in it that we are going to talk about. Many cost factors are influencing SPED costs including availability transportation, employee vacancies that we've had to hire through contracted service providers. We have a student that moved into the district that was not budgeted. She and Mr. Pratt are going to be working diligently in the next few weeks. We will come back on April 8 to hopefully report out to the Board what we are looking at for costs, why they are here and if we have to draw anything from the Cap Reserve. She wanted to report this out early so that everyone was aware of it for the April 8 meeting. She does not have a concrete number now. Ms. Lavallee attended in the fall a School Governance Association webinar on budget caps. At that time, it was already allowed via warrant article. That was kind of, where the discussion was going, how districts could manage it. We did not have it put together as a Petition Warrant Article this year. The concern she has and Ms. LaPlante touched upon is there does seem to be a lot of stipulation that are not accounted for within the House Bill that being addressed right now. She feels a lot of people don't understand specifically what a budget cap is vs. a tax cap and the difference that would mean for us as a district. She questions if that is voted into law, we are in a situation where we do have a budget cap, say we are in a situation where we may have to dip into that Cap Reserve, would that mean we have to either put it to a vote from the town to see if we can go over our budget? Ms. LaPlante clarifies, no; this would be in our appropriation. Our district meeting we just had, the entire budget process we built, it would be specific for the operating budget that we have. Ms. Lavallee voiced, it wouldn't affect once the budget is made but would affect getting the budget voted in. Ms. LaPlante confirms this. Ms. Lavallee voiced the only way that it could be overrode is by a 2/3<sup>rd</sup> majority of all voters at the time. Ms. LaPlante confirms this. Ms. Lavallee voiced regardless if eating costs went up for example we would still have to stay within that number which could potentially make us having to get rid of programs. Ms. LaPlante confirms. Chairman Jones did a great job of highlighting where our enrollment has been and you can deduce where it might go. Using her example before, 4 students doesn't equate to automatically to a reduction of a teacher. It doesn't equate to any savings in our food costs, energy costs anything like that

because we don't have an economy of scale with an entire grade moving out. We still need those and it is a significant concern. She confirms for Ms. Foss that every voter at the district meeting would have to go up and vote so that you can count to see if you have 2/3 vote with the tickets. Mr. Allen spoke that it is likely to be amended several times and moved through and then reconciliation so we are guessing what it will look like, it could be potentially devastating for us often with bills like this it gets to be amended and regulated so much that often it ends up being nothing if it passes at all. He questioned regarding busing when we spoke last year, potentially looking for an alternative for sports. Did we look into that? Superintendent spoke of one of areas of critical need is transportation and the easiest area to tackle would be athletics and some extracurricular such as the Dance Team going to Endicott College a couple of weeks ago. Rather than getting a bus that may have cost \$1,000 or more is to purchase, a 2<sup>nd</sup> van or lease one. He spoke of saving some of that cost for a bus to be used somewhere else that there is a need and thinks it is an easy one to tackle now. He thinks it's a good conversation to have once we have more of a handle on how much unspent funds, we have to see if the community is willing to support the consideration of a 2<sup>nd</sup> van. He believes we could save substantial amounts of transportation costs. SPED transport is a little more complicated because it requires specialty transportation, certification on the driver's license and challenging if we even have a driver. He gave an example. He would like to have the discussion once we have a handle on the unspent funds and as Ms. LaPlante has mentioned before we are looking at significantly less than years before because all our positions are filled but maybe have enough to have that conversation. We can put together draft numbers if we had a 2<sup>nd</sup> van what the savings would be. This is an issue every district is having that there are not enough van drivers. He has not heard back from the bus company yet and it has been 3 weeks. He believes the problem is bigger than we see it. Mr. Allen would like to see the numbers, encouraged the Superintendent to reach out to Lyndeborough as they have a couple avenues to purchase things like that, and saved the town a ton of money. Superintendent confirms we cannot renegotiate the contract. Ms. LaPlante confirms if they had changed ownership (they didn't) we could have easily had an out but not the way they did the partnership and there are also no other vendors. Ms. Lavallee spoke about the Year to Date Report and being concerned about line 182, and 182 SPED teachers and SPED aids. Line 244 is over, listed as OOD and we were notified earlier in the year that was a potential. Even though it is over, she doesn't like it. Also, line 452, ABA therapists and then lines 900 that have to do with transportation. It causes her great concern. She asked if we have a root cause yet as to why we overspent by such a significant amount. Ms. LaPlante responded that is what we are figuring out if our current projections match contracts. We are doing a deep dive to make sure we are at where we need to be. Until we do those deep dives and in speaking with Mr. Pratt today we're not confident answering that yet because we don't want to give a partial answer. Ms. Lavallee asked in preparation for that discussion she would like to know if all our positions are filled, para and ABA's. Ms. LaPlante responds no. Ms. Lavallee asked if they are not filled or filled with contracted services. Mr. Pratt responded we have some actual openings, had some resignations and prior to that we filled the openings we had with as many contracted services we could find to make sure we fulfilled the IEP. We have para and ABA's from agencies. He confirms we have relationships with local vendors and they have been able to fill some of the needs and then we go national and each agency has different cost per hour. Ms. Lavallee asked if we are locked into the contracts. Mr. Pratt responded each is different. We have had situations in the past where we work with the agency if we didn't want to continue with the person it worked out fine and do not do multiyear contracts. The requirement is different because it is so competitive to get people and if you try to do a flexible contract, you usually lose out on people. One of the dilemmas for this is being sure we have enough support staff for our kids. It has been challenging to navigate. Ms. Lavallee expressed when we discuss this at a future meeting, as a word of caution prior to her joining the Board there was a lot of spending that was unexpected related to SPED and they had to dip into the SPED fund. Her only ask is that we are very transparent with the public as to the reason why while also adhering to confidentiality rules. Also transparent about what we can potentially do to rectify it because she wants to ensure the public that we're doing as much as we can to provide the service but provide it in the most financial responsible way. She gave an example. Ms. Alley asked lines 450-453 and asked if they are in-house people or contracted out. Mr. Pratt believes it is a combination of both. He confirms we have had postings for ABA therapists mostly all year long and refreshing the para. He has candidates interested that could not start this year but could next. Mr. Allen asked if there is a breakdown, percentage as to the amount of our SPED budget that is sent to private individuals contracted services as opposed to handled in-house. Mr. Pratt doesn't have that figure but can talk to Ms. LaPlante about that.

## **ii. Director of Student Support Services Report**

Mr. Pratt reported the ESY program we are planning now, June 30-August 8. Reminded the Board the RISE program for students on the autism spectrum run Monday –Thursday and general education ESY runs Tuesday-Thursday and end on the 1<sup>st</sup>, a week before. We have put out a call for staff as we do every year and information packets for parent registration will be sent out shortly. It is generated through IEP team meetings throughout the year and we determine who is invited based upon that and have a number in April. After the budget was approved we are looking closely and carefully how we allocate staff, we have kids shifting grades. We have these conversations every year and in terms of what we just talked about we are still in the middle of IEP season, we are keeping a close watch on any resources we need or reducing resources depending on the need. He spoke of the IDEA grant and he comes to the Board every year and says we don't know what is going on, we really don't get notified until June. We are hoping for the allocation we received this year. He spoke of discussions being had on both sides of the coin with grants being cut and not being cut and the possibility of the Federal DOE being abolished. The IDEA grant predates the Federal DOE; it used to be handled through the old health education and welfare group, HEW. We are hopeful we are going to be able to get our amounts and as soon as we know you will know probably the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting in June we will have that discussion. He spoke of working hard to get qualified candidates for para and ABA positions. We have been blessed with the teaching staff here being great. It is a credit to all that has been going on and the vitality of the district but as so many other districts we are scrambling to get folks. He spoke of it being a balancing act to try to provide the necessary services and when you don't have candidates in-house the cost becomes exorbitant and that's just the market right now. Hopefully when we meet

next time we'll have a plan for this year and will keep looking at the budget very carefully. He is confident that as part of our review we will be looking at making sure we are in good shape for the budget that just passed. A question was raised regarding ESY program, and if it is required. Mr. Pratt confirms it is. A question was raised if RISE is available to out of district tuition students. Mr. Pratt confirms it is our internal program for students on the autism spectrum and we do not bring outside students in from other districts at this point. Ms. Lavallee asked in the future regarding IDEA, she thinks it would be helpful for the Board and public to have an understanding of IDEA and FAPE and what the process is, what our legal requirements are vs. not legally required. She asks that it be presented to the Board. Mr. Pratt responded he would love to do that and one of the things he has thought about is doing a half hour program regarding the law and how it applies here and then another time the fiscal concerns. Ms. Lavallee would support that on the agenda. No objection heard. There was a brief discussion about this. Mr. Lavoie asked if there was anything, we do well in SPED where we could possibly take in another student. Mr. Pratt responded we have lots of things we do well in house. Mr. Lavoie asked if we have a selling point such as this program is done very well but it only has 1 student in it. Could we as a Board or Administration, reach out to other districts to tell them about our program, save them money and it would help us. Mr. Pratt responded, our RISE program but we do not have the staffing levels we need to have. If we had a rich, robust staff without contracted service that would be one thing. He thinks starting at the preschool and going all the way through HS our programming is outstanding. He thinks we could be models for any district in the state. The biggest hurdle right now is we don't have enough staff for our own students right now. Ms. Lavallee spoke of in the past looking at the turnover rate of staff and it may be good to do that with the SPED support staff because it seems to be a recurring problem that we can't find the people and then when we do it seems there a lot of the resignations. Maybe we should look at that the way we did with the core teachers. Mr. Allen advised to have that listed as one of the things because he thinks we are right on the precipice of coming to a point where we can be attractive not just to families moving in but also tuitioning kids into some of our services. It makes a huge difference when it comes to our budget discussions and our bottom line is that we're bringing money in.

### **iii. Director of Technology's Report**

Mr. Buroker voiced support being stable, with the amount of tickets etc. His staff is getting better and better. He had the most productive break in his career, completed all on his to do list. Our technicians through a grant have been able to participate in computer network plus certification training. He has just been approved himself and will be taking that course. It's one of the entry level certifications in the field. He spoke of PowerSchool's data breach, which has been sent out to the public a couple of different times. Recently they came back with the 3<sup>rd</sup> party's auditor's results. It is the largest breach of student data in the history of the country and we got hit. All of our staff and students had their information exfiltrated. At this time we have no reason to believe that it is out on the dark web as PowerSchool has paid off the hackers. Answering a question, he confirms they were paid off they have not released the number. What they got was a video of them using the shred command in Linux Kernel on the data. He explained this. There is no guarantee they did not copy it. He confirms PowerSchool did not turn off the account of a contractor that no longer worked and those credentials were compromised. An IP address from Ukraine logged into the account in question, happened to be a tech support account similar to his account and used that to log into every PowerSchool instance they have including some of the district's that have theirs posted on site. It does seem like it was one of those "break glass" in case of emergency accounts where you can always get in. They used it to great effect. He confirms the data was segregated the problem was the account in question because the account in question was a system administrative account they had access to every single instance. He was commended on his efficiency during February break. He spoke of the areas he did professional development in, the spare hardware that was not being used, they set up a test network because you rarely get the opportunity to stand up servers to configure switches unless something terrible happens. He thought it was a good opportunity to give them random requirements he has had in his career and see if they could do it. If they couldn't it's a teachable moment. He was asked if we plan to stay with PowerSchool and he explained the reason, why the data breach was so large is because they are the largest vendor for a reason. It is not unreasonable to say they have the most support of any student information system in the country but there are a few other options but are more expensive. There is also a concern because it's in a manner similar to Microsoft we could move all our computers over to Linux and spoke of the concerns of training staff, finding staff with experience in it etc. He was asked and responded to what the value in the data was. He was asked what happened to Alma. He explained it was more expensive and our administrative staff changed and while the predecessors were onboard the newcomers were not and we lost the will on the faculty end in order to make the change and he was not comfortable forcing that. He confirms the state has switched over and in fact, INHDEX the reporting platform is an Alma product and is a reason we are going through a heavy lift right now in order to get our reports in order is that the state switch and we never did. He does not believe there was a breach with Alma. Mr. Allen notes that is great to blame PowerSchool but we have an obligation here to our kids, staff and ourselves to keep them safe. If you as the technical expert here think that is better, he wants him to be advocating for it. If it keeps the kids information safer, he would appreciate it. He thinks you should make recommendations to the Board too and they will follow up on them not put them on the shelf because we changed staffing. He wants to know what Mr. Buroker thinks we should be doing regardless. Mr. Buroker thinks we should stick with PowerSchool, 1 because the damage has already been done. If there is one thing that puts you on your toes it's this happening to you. He thinks we can count on them to be extra vigilant. In the webinars he has attended hosted by PowerSchool, they went over the security they have implemented since they discovered this breach. He is confident it will not happen again anytime soon. Answering a question, he confirms the things we put into the system are things like medical alerts, parents' names, addresses, phone numbers, and contact information. It would be very hard not to keep in the system, we can certainly look at pulling back on some of the fields but for the most part, it is boilerplate stuff. Mr. Allen spoke of what PowerSchool said what was taken including names, addresses birth dates, social security numbers in some cases, payroll information, medical, IEP information, it was not as simple, they came in and they took everything. He doesn't think we should downplay this. Superintendent voiced there is value in breaching a very secure system

that is recognized internationally and nationally. The value is just the settlement that they probably settled with the hackers. Who knows how many millions of dollars they paid to get them to videotape apparently the shredding. He assumes there has to be a lawsuit against PowerSchool for the breach. He spoke about Alma and when we first were researching it and had the guests/salespeople come in and do a presentation, the colors are pretty and it just seems fresh and new. The dilemma was the learning curve in the implementation process. It became really tedious for us because we didn't have a lot of time, we were in a big push to get our student learning and we zeroed in on that. All of our PD was focused on teaching and learning. The idea of having to run 2 platforms, both PowerSchool and Alma. The turnaround cycle was not manageable. It also costs more. The only drawback he sees with not having Alma is trying to upload our reports because we did them a certain way and then the state went to the Alma platform. We have to learn how to load a lot of data differently that the state collects. He compliments Mr. Buroker, he is on top of the cyber security and when it all happened. If Mr. Buroker suggests something, we are not second guessing him unless it involves money then we question. Chairman Golding spoke that when we had the presentation we heard we were going in that direction and then to hear everybody else decided we were not yet we did not hear that as a Board. We need to hear things like that. A question was raised if there are any other vendors doing this type of thing. Mr. Buroker named off a few additional ones he is aware of. Ms. Foss spoke about it being a matter time, not to minimize that and questions if we decided to just change to Alma and what do we when they have a breach. She asked if this was human error. Mr. Buroker confirms yes. A question was raised who is liable. Mr. Buroker is aware of 2 different class action lawsuits for negligence and damages with PowerSchool. There is a separate class action being spun up from school district who had essentially their digital privacy agreements and believe PowerSchool to be in breach of those contracts. He confirms administration was talking about the possibility of joining that but does not have the details, other than it would take approximately 1-3 hours of staff time. It would be no money upfront, we have no notion about how much we would get, and the Board would need to vote and approve joining it and some paperwork as well. Superintendent adds with the attorney's recommendation and Mr. Buroker's recommendation it would come to the Board in April.

## **IX. YTD REPORTING**

Ms. LaPlante spoke of touching upon some SPED deep diving that needs to be done. The report shows we are estimating about \$94,000 at year-end. She is very concerned about this. Because we don't have any wiggle room she has locked up all funds that we anticipate needing for the end of the year. She gave an example. She last reported that *if everything goes through*, we were estimating about a shortage of \$48,000 and as things progressed, we were able to release encumbrances, reevaluate purchase orders and staffing. We have been able to on paper, recoup \$150,000. She is confident in our budget administrators that we have throughout the district that they are doing their part to make sure whatever we are spending is essential. In looking at the budget, several lines appear over. A lot of them are on the health insurance side but if you do a net calculation, we're over by \$30,000 on that but that is ok because of staff changes and that is what we expect with new staff and benefit change circumstances. She spoke about SPED teacher salaries line 123 that is a contracted service provider doing reading specialist work at WLC who was budgeted as a contracted person but we were able to pull that person in as an employee and nets out to zero on 521 and 522 lines. She reviewed several other lines including ABA Therapists are significantly over and the offset for that is when Mr. Pratt was forecasting his budget he budgeted for an OOD placement who was able to receive services in district with an ABA and have had to retain other ABA's through contracted services. We are doing a deep dive other than SPED costs, she is not overly concerned, we have been very transparent and if anyone including public have questions, she is happy to share the information of where we are at as long as it does not break student confidentiality.

## **X. POLICIES**

### **a. 1<sup>st</sup> Reading**

#### **i. IGE-Parent Objection to Specific Course Materials**

Ms. Lavallee reviewed the changes to the policy, which were minor and revised to updates from RSA186:11, IX-b. Ms. Alley asked why it says social media. Ms. Lavallee responded some districts (and we are moving in that direction) use it another way to push out information to parents. This will come back on April 8, 2025 for 2<sup>nd</sup> read.

#### **ii. IHAM-Health Education and Exemption from Instruction**

Ms. Lavallee reviewed this is related to HB 1312 regarding the curriculum requirement and notifying parents. No questions or comments heard. This will come back for a 2<sup>nd</sup> read.

#### **iii. IKF-High School Graduation Requirements**

This was deferred until the next meeting.

#### **iv. JLCJA-Emergency Plan for Sports Related Injuries and Additional Protocols for Athletics Participation**

Ms. Lavallee reviewed this was updated in 2023 but needed additional updates to reflect the passage of SB379 which amended RSA 200:40-C. Added a mandate that all school sports grades 6-12 be supervised by a person trained in CPR. It is a requirement. This will return for a 2<sup>nd</sup> read.

### **b. 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading**

#### **i. EBCH-Chemical Safety and Chemical Hygiene Plan**

Ms. Lavallee reviewed there were no new changes. No questions heard.

#### **ii. KFD-Use and Location of Automated External Defibrillators**

Ms. Lavallee reviewed there were no new changes. No questions heard.



iii. **IC School Year**

Ms. Lavallee reviewed there were no new changes. No questions heard.

iv. **IMBA-Distance Education**

Ms. Lavallee reviewed there were no new changes. No questions heard.

v. **JLP-Parent Notification of and Involvement in Student Welfare**

Ms. Lavallee reviewed there were no new changes. No questions heard.

vi. **BA-School Board Self Evaluation and Goal Setting**

Ms. Lavallee reviewed there were no new changes. No questions heard.

*A MOTION was made by Ms. Lavallee and SECONDED by Ms. Foss to adopt policies EBCH-Chemical Safety and Chemical Hygiene Plan, KFD-Use and Location of Automated External Defibrillators, IC-School Year, IMBA-Distance Education, JLP-Parent Notification of and Involvement in Student Welfare and BA-School Board Self Evaluation and Goal Setting.*  
*Voting: all aye, motion carried.*

**XI. ACTION ITEMS**

a. **Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting**

It was noted there was a motion made at the last meeting that was tabled and needs to be addressed first.

*Mr. Lavoie WITHDREW his MOTION tabled on March 4, 2025.*

*A MOTION was made by Ms. Foss and SECONDED by Ms. Alley to approve the minutes of August 23, 2022 as written.*

Mr. Allen requested an amendment to line 346, he did not vote no to this motion.

*Ms. Foss AMENDED her MOTION to approve the minutes as amended.*

*Voting: seven ayes, two abstention from Mr. White and Ms. Collins, motion carried.*

**XII. RESIGNATIONS / APPOINTMENTS / LEAVES**

a. **FYI-Resignation-Lindsey Lowrey-ABA Therapist-FRES**

Superintendent reviewed the resignation, she is an RBT not ABA.

**XIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The public comment section of the agenda was read.

Mr. Adam Lavallee, Lyndeborough, regarding the message he received about driving the van as a coach, not a lot scares him but this would. Regarding Alma, he saw that presentation and thought the cost was only more expensive the first year and after that was less than PowerSchool. He does feel it is almost better to deal with a company that was just hacked and gave an example. He does not think they wanted the data they wanted the ransom. We are all protective of our kid's data and they know that. It is baseball season!

Ms. Kelly Gibson, commented regarding the fixing the tennis courts. She was happy that the new Board was more receptive. She spoke of Advantage Kids who are an amazing organization and are willing to work with us at no cost to the taxpayer for 2 years. She spoke favorably of the organization. She believes we need a better plan moving forward and we should have had an information night and she did request it. She suggests meeting the owners and asking questions, they are more than receptive. She said a request was made to have a table at sports night and was told no. Doors are being shut to create this team. The paperwork was not completed for the NHIAA to have her child play with Milford if we had 8 people. She spoke of the idea of joining with other districts in the area if they can't make 8 players altogether the students could play given there are other districts who are looking to cut their athletic programs. She asks the Board to look at other ways to have kid's plays sports and offer more and realistic given the budget cuts happening. She welcomes anyone to come on a Saturday to Hampshire Hills to watch the students. She spoke of a lot of questions tonight about having students with IEP's come here and that is confusing to her and most should know why. She thinks to do that you have to make sure every SPED family, even the ones that are very quiet that are happy with the services provided before we look at bringing students in and look into the RISE program. Do we really have a life-skills program, do we have a stove to teach kids to cook or laundry, these are the thinks parents are looking for. She feels that conversation is jumping the gun. She values paying staff more but doesn't thinks it is necessarily the reason is all about pay and urges the Board to dig deeper as to why people are leaving.

Mr. Lavallee asked when you were talking about budget caps; our small government majority and House of Representatives has passed a bill that will regulate how our small government entities are allowed to budget? He asked was “off base”. Ms. LaPlante respond he is not off base.

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

Ms. Mary Golding thanked the Board; she looks forward to a great year. Ms. LaPlante, thank you for always looking out for us at the state level. Ms. Lavallee, you do your homework; don’t know how you do it you are always so busy and make time for this. You are appreciated. Mr. Buroker, amazingness. FYI-FRES welcomed 5 new students this week!

#### **XIV. SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Ms. Alley welcomed the new board members and congratulations to the Chair and Vice Chair. She looks forward to working on the Strategic Planning Committee and negotiations. Congratulations to the PTO for raising \$7,095, it’s amazing. She thanked Ms. LaPlante and Mr. Buroker for their reports. She voiced concern about PowerSchool and wants to make sure Mr. Buroker feels confident that it is the choice and something like Alma isn’t. She is looking forward to hearing from Mr. Pratt about SPED, costs association especially in-house staff vs. contracted services, and feels it’s important to have them in-house.

Ms. Collins thanked everyone for having her here. She appreciates the clarity given breaking down the topics it is helpful. She will be learning a lot and thanked the community members who came; she likes to hear from different voices and likes looking out of the box.

Ms. Foss welcomed the new board members. There is a tremendous amount of work the Board does and it is always nice to have people on who want to be here. She agrees the idea of a budget cap seems like overreach and is appalled it even reached the House.

Mr. Zavgren agrees the budget cap is outrageous and has a fundamental flaw, setting a cap based on inflation. He questioned what part of the economy to create this number, is being measured to cap it. He wonders if the inflation index even reflects the economy in the 2 towns. It doesn’t make any sense to him and thinks it is ridiculous.

Mr. Allen welcomed the new members and prior members. He appreciates the Board discusses hot topics with a smile even if we don’t agree, we move on and get down to business. He congratulated the Chair and Vice Chair. Great job staff, Mr. Buroker especially who knocks it out of the park. He encouraged community members to join the committees we need people from both towns. Your feedback is valuable. We had a lot of the success on the Facilities Committee from community volunteers.

Mr. White commented it is good to be back. There are a lot of new faces that will be good to work with. You have done a good job the past couple of years, thinks he can be a strong member, and keep it moving forward and he will think about other committees if help is needed.

Chairman Golding thanked the Board for entrusting him with this at least one more time. We all do what amounts to a thankless job for no pay and lots of time and effort and he appreciates what everybody does here.

#### **XV. NON-PUBLIC SESSION RSA 91-A: 3 II (A) (C)**

*A MOTION was made by Ms. Foss and SECONDED by Ms. Lavallee to enter Non-Public Session to review the non-public minutes RSA 91-A: 3 II (C) at 8:55pm.*

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

#### **RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION**

The Board entered public session at 8:57pm.

#### **XVI. ADJOURNMENT**

*A MOTION was made by Mr. Allen and SECONDED by Mr. Lavoie to adjourn the Board meeting at 8:57pm.*

*Voting: all aye, motion carried.*

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Kristina Fowler (via recording)*