

**WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE
SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, September 26, 2023
Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative M/H School
6:30 p.m.**

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

Present: *Dennis Golding, Brianne Lavalley, Alex LoVerme, Matt Mannarino (6:40pm), Tiffany Cloutier-Cabral, Darlene Anzalone (online 6:39pm time exited unknown), Geoffrey Allen (online 6:40pm time exited unknown), Diane Foss (at Budget Committee mtg. 6:30pm-7:00pm), and Jonathan Lavoie*

Superintendent Peter Weaver, Business Administrator Kristie LaPlante, Director of Student Support Services Ned Pratt, Technology Director Nicholas Buroker, Curriculum Coordinator Samantha Dignan (online), and Clerk Kristina Fowler

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

Chairman Golding requested to move the first public comment immediately after the joint session.

*A MOTION was made by Ms. Cloutier-Cabral and SECONDED by Mr. LoVerme to accept the adjustments to the agenda.
Voting: all aye, motion carried.*

IV. OLD BUSINESS

i. SRO (School Resource Officer)

Superintendent passed out a draft survey, which he would like to send out before the weekend. He asked for Board input. He will include links and the PowerPoint presentation that was made to the Board on June 13. He reviewed the questions. It includes a 5-degree scale to determine the degree of support. The survey includes questions to see the level of importance of an SRO and a couple funding questions. A question was raised if it is appropriate to ask what an SRO does, as there seems to be a misconception that they only do one or two things. Superintendent responded we want to have a common understanding of an SRO, and use the PowerPoint; we don't want to overcomplicate it. He gave some examples of what an SRO does. A question was raised regarding what software is available to make sure only one-person fills out the survey once. Superintendent spoke that it would be similar to the technology survey that we put in Google Forms. He does not believe you can guarantee that one person can fill it out only once. He added some want to remain anonymous. Discussion was had regarding this including having a field where they have to put in their email address, needing a clear policy regarding the SRO and what their role is and what training the district will require them to have. The data collected should accurately reflect what the community wants. Mr. Buroker spoke that you can force a recording of an email, it makes it harder to defraud the results but it is not foolproof. Superintendent confirms the survey would be sent to all families who have students in our schools. A suggestion was made to have addresses be listed of the person taking the survey for one more layer. Superintendent will work with Mr. Buroker to see how it can be made more authentic and include something at the bottom stating they will remain anonymous. Discussion was had including speaking with other schools who have an SRO and including what they do in their schools, there is not a clear understanding of what an SRO actually does and the benefits of having one. A question was raised when it will be sent out. Superintendent responded he wants to send it out prior to the weekend. The next step is looking at the data and building an argument to move forward. He does not recommend waiting to send it out. Ms. Anzalone spoke about the involvement in the next step as she and Ms. Cloutier-Cabral should have been included in the meeting with the town and wants to be sure it happens this time. Discussion was had that all taxpayers in both towns should be included in the survey. It was suggested a link could be added to the website. Superintendent responded we could work with both towns and ask them to post the link on their websites. The importance of involving the taxpayers in both towns was noted. It was suggested to ask the library to post the link on their website too and at public places. Superintendent will include a cover letter and encourage people to tell their friends about the survey. It was suggested to have some hard copies at the office for people to fill out. A question was raised if the Lyndeborough Selectman supported an SRO. Superintendent responded he and Ms. LaPlante met with both town managers and yes, one Lyndeborough Selectman was there. Wilton isn't supporting it at this time because they want more information. He senses that Lyndeborough is supportive. It was noted that 2 out of the 3 Wilton Selectman don't have kids in our schools. Superintendent spoke of the change process and it can be challenging; there is a need for patience as the process takes time. He wants to move forward but cannot at this time. He is recommending and confirming he requests a motion from the full Board regarding support for the SRO based on an email he received from the Wilton Town Manager. Then we can take the next step and have a

conference with the Selectman and some Board members. Then Wilton Selectman are open to a meeting with board members and we can share the survey results. He believes that the Selectman are open to having the conversation but they want to know how committed the Board is. He believes the Board has expressed this but a formal vote can be taken. He will be moving forward with the survey.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Cloutier-Cabral and SECONDED by Ms. Anzalone to support having an SRO in our district.

Mr. Mannarino requests to see defined parameters regarding the SRO and we should have the full Board prior to taking a vote. Superintendent reminded the group that Chief Olesen spoke about the training the SRO is to complete, there is a training program for SRO's and the expectation is that any police from Wilton serving as an SRO would have to complete the training and annual training as well. Mr. Allen asked for clarification, his understanding is the SRO is dependent on a vote of support from the Board assuming the funding works out. Assuming it fits within the parameters of what we are looking for and not necessarily on the results of a community poll. He spoke about working with survey data and how inaccurate these polls can be, they are based on whoever has the ability to take the poll as many times as they like. Keep in mind, this vote is not to hire one but for support of pursuing, the process if funding works out. Chairman Golding confirms that is correct. Superintendent was asked if he supports an SRO. He spoke about the value beyond safety he has seen working with 3 SRO's in past schools he has worked in. He sees them make a difference in kids' lives and being a resource to the community and families. He strongly recommends having an SRO even in a small district like ours. It was suggested to include in the motion that the Policy Committee is to create a policy to clearly outline the training requirements, we as a Board recognize the role, making sure, the training is in place, and the role is clearly defined. Ms. Cloutier-Cabral agrees and suggested there are policies from other districts that could be looked at. She spoke of the research she and the Strategic Planning Committee did in 2019. She believes the SRO has to meet national qualifications. They are not here to crack down or be an intimidating force, they are here as a resource and often kids will talk to them when they are not comfortable talking to others as they can be anonymous with the Police. It can really save a community; her eyes were open when Chief Olesen brought it to them in 2019. She explored other schools who have an SRO and can't recall any negatives from the school or students. They are someone who will protect our children and bond with them and things are confidential, it will only improve the community.

Voting: roll call vote, six ayes, three abstentions from Ms. Foss (came in during the vote), Mr. LoVerme (wants to see survey data) and Mr. Mannarino, motion carried.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Moved to the end of the joint session.

VI. BOARD CORRESPONDENCE

a. Reports

i. Director of Student Support Services Report

Mr. Pratt reviewed his September 2023 report. He highlighted a few things in his report. We have 116 students identified which is up from the 106 last year, increasing by 10 students. Our SPED rate is 21.3%, the state rate is 19.1% and the national rate is 16.4%. All these are rising. We have 4 students in the referral process and 2 students are aging out this year. He highlighted the first table, at FRES, the FRES sped rate for 21-22 was 17.9%, it dropped last year and rose this year to 21.9%. This is what we have been talking about for a year, seeing increased numbers of kids having difficulty especially our younger kids. We are seeing a similar pattern and a lot is due to missing school and forming language. He wanted to reference that as we move forward. The disability types are steady and the rest of the schools are steady. It is really the jump at FRES. When he meets with the Board and Budget Committee regarding the budget, one of the areas of increase is related services and how that has broadened, deepened and the acuity of kids. Everyone is doing a great job, talking about how to best meet the needs of the kids. This is a precursor to the budget.

ii. Director of Technology's Report

Mr. Buroker reported in the past 30 days we had 343 new tickets, an increase of 238 from the prior 30 days. The beginning of school is the busiest time for us. His goal for staff support and tech support is an average close time of 7 days and keeping open tickets under 10. The average ticket close time was down to 3 days, since he submitted his report it is down to under 10. He spoke about the radio upgrade; we have received the FCC licensing. We are moving forward with set up starting in mid-October, wrapping up the beginning of November. The Board had requested he look into having a social media presence. He suggests the Board establish a policy such as the ones he included KD, KD-R so that there is approval of all that would take place. The concerns brought up about social media are addressed in the policies. There is a generational divide, Facebook is used by adults not kids, they are using things like Tick Tock which he is not recommending but suggests it would be best to know the audience. Ms. Cloutier-Cabral voiced appreciation for Mr. Buroker providing some policies to look at and questions to consider. Chairman Golding asked if we decide to pursue it do we have to pay for read only accounts. Mr. Buroker explained not the case with Facebook but he didn't look into all the platforms but he can do that. He confirms the Board wants to turn off comments. Chairman confirms yes. We will need to know the cost to do that for various platforms. Mr. Buroker will get the figures and a list of platforms.

b. Letters/Information

123 **i. Enrollment**

124 Superintendent reported district enrollment at the end of August and first day of school was steady at 544.

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

127 **a. FY 2024-2025**

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

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131 Chairman Jones called the Budget Committee to order at 7:03pm.

132
133 Chairman Jones reviewed tonight we will go through the proposed schedule and first draft. He thanked administration for
134 providing the requested first draft back in August, which was received over the weekend. It is helpful for us to see it and gives us
135 a nice foundation. Ms. LaPlante reviewed the timeline, which was sent out to all Board and Budget Committee members. There
136 are 6 sessions proposed and tonight is the introductory meeting, general discussion and any strategy or goals. The next meeting
137 will start with our budget partners coming in and beyond that all the schools, athletic director, curriculum coordinator, SPED and
138 food services will present. Revenue, grants and facilities committee (different from Mr. Erb's budget) are scheduled. She spoke
139 of the importance separating the Facilities Committee CIP budget being different from Mr. Erb's facilities budget. November 28
140 is a recap for anything we need to revisit, any outstanding questions and in December will be a full budget review and any
141 changed made along the way. This will set up for budget hearing on February 8, which sets us up for having warrants submitted
142 on time. Chairman Jones asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the schedule. None heard. Ms. LaPlante
143 requested since we have this full draft, if either during or after these meetings there are questions that they be asked before the
144 joint meetings so that all are prepared to come to the table. This would be a good practice moving forward. A question was
145 raised how many days in advance would the budget be available prior to the presentations. Ms. LaPlante responded when each
146 group come in the administration will do their own presentation and discuss it. We asked them to give her all the budget
147 information, which you have, and any changes happening along the way to be sent out prior to the meeting. The intent is to
148 update it all along but she won't update with information you didn't see. For example, if SPED needs changes, she won't update
149 it until we talk so that you have the continuity. Regarding the contract with the teachers, we are hoping for preliminary
150 information by December 1. We are actively working on that now. A question was raised when salary information will be
151 available as it is not on the schedule. Ms. LaPlante responded she can talk about it as a whole under the business office
152 presentation but won't have final information until we have a warrant article. Chairman Jones spoke of concern that someone
153 will come in and preset something dramatically different from what they see. Ms. LaPlante responded all administration would
154 give you a written brief, which will be sent out and would be a good primer for any changes. Mr. Vanderhoof requested that if
155 any lines are added throughout the process they be formatted differently such as if the line is 360, the addition be 360.1 so that it
156 can be seen the same way on all the drafts going forward and easily identified. Ms. LaPlante thought this is a great idea. Ms.
157 LaPlante gave an overview of the first draft. We asked administration to find out what the teachers need and put that in the
158 budget, only things that benefited students and the programs. For example, the air conditioners were left out. How do they
159 benefit the students? We may talk about it during the process though. We maintained the facilities piece for things that do not
160 meet the CIP guidelines, removed the track \$26,000 and \$75,000 for the tennis courts, as those were a one-time purchase.
161 Transportation will be in year 2 of the contract and support staff contract will be in year 2. We don't budget any salaries for
162 teachers, as that will show up in the CBA warrant article. There is no buffer built in. She estimated health and dental at 7.5%
163 increase, that number was arrived at by doing a 3-year and 5-year look back. There are many other communities seeing a 14%-
164 25% increase. We won't get the information until November. She is hoping to stay with the 7.5% range but it could be a sticker
165 shock we just don't know yet. The cost of insurance and care is increasing because during COVID people were not going to the
166 doctor and now some of those medical issues are much deeper rooted and require advance medical care. It was suggested to
167 move the warrant article items and CIP funding below the total line as it skews the percentage, having apples to apples helps to
168 better compare. It was also suggested to keep formulas in. Ms. LaPlante will put those back in and move requested items below
169 the line. She asked for any feedback on this revised format. In prior years, it was hard to follow the sortable format and was not
170 always user friendly. She provided a sortable tab and another summarized tab to better track things. She asked if everyone was
171 ok with that. No objection heard. Chairman Jones spoke overall the Budget Committee didn't provide any guidance. He asked
172 how the Board feels. He added we asked you to think about needs and wants, bring the wants to us for evaluation, and see how
173 the overall number looks. With taking out the overall warrants, we are at about 4% increase. Seems we are off to a good start. A
174 question was raised for things that are being removed like the track, will maintenance be put in the budget to keep up with those
175 things or will certain elements be in the CIP. Ms. LaPlante responded for future replacement it will go in the CIP, she increased
176 maintenance for those cost. It was confirmed we are at a 4% increase without the WLCTA contract. Chairman Golding noted
177 that the Board would discuss how comfortable they are with that later tonight. He would like to see it around 2.5% considering
178 the WLCTA contract. Ms. LaPlante confirms not many wants are in the draft, some didn't necessarily enhance a program. If
179 they wanted to add more curriculum and we felt that it was appropriate we added it. A lot of wants were hard to tie into
180 supporting programs and students. She can share that as it comes along. For example, rehabbing the greenhouse and funding it
181 through the budget. How can we justify those expenses to improve student test scores, if funds are cut we would have to cut
182 programs. Chairman Golding asked the Budget Committee if they were any closer to having a number. At their last meeting he
183 heard, 9%, 5%, flat budget, any direction they can give to administration to help in this process would be beneficial. Mr.
184 Vanderhoof noted we didn't discuss it further. Mr. Lavallee voiced find out what they want and need. We found out some things

were more want than need and that changed things. Mr. Ryan spoke before we start discussing a limit we need to hear the presentation of what we have. Looking through this it doesn't show a lot. We used extra money last year and look at what we did with it. If we continue on that course, we will have a good district. Chairman Jones asked if anyone on the Budget Committee felt uncomfortable with 4%. Mr. Vanderhoof responded it depends on how things shake out, if we get a 25% dental increase and medical goes up 18% that 4% is a lot different. If you are saying overall 4% is a good discussion, he doesn't think it represents where we will end up but it is a starting point. We can start wherever, it sounds like a lot has increased costs; we have to be careful starting high. Discussion was had regarding the SRO. Superintendent confirms it is not in the budget and having a percentage helps administration prioritize needs. If we move forward with an SRO, we would need to make some decisions. We cannot lose sight the WLCTA warrant will be in the budget 2 years from now. Even though they are separate votes, people look at it as one ginormous increase. We have issues with retention and it impacts the kids and learning. Mr. Lavallee voiced he is not supportive of cuts to programs. A question was raised if the district is looking to fund the SRO this year. Chairman Golding responded it would be next year's budget. Ms. LaPlante responded unless we have a ceiling it is tremendously difficult to have a sound budget. Chairman Jones voiced having the wants below the line was helpful last year, some went into the budget, and some didn't. Ms. Cloutier-Cabral voiced any SRO funding or structural changes is difficult, we are trying to gain a sense of how the look and feel would fit in our school. This season is planning. She spoke of it being discussed in 2019 when we were getting ready for district meeting and we "threw out the baby with the bath water" it was a mistake and best to plan it into the years coming whether an SRO or a structural change. Let's plan this year and work on how we want to build those years going forward. Mr. Vanderhoof asked for specifics as to why it makes it hard without a ceiling. Superintendent responded having a ceiling forces us to look at needs differently and see if we can prioritize or space out things that can wait until next year. There is a sense of urgency to dig deeper into those needs and if we identify them as equal, we have to a hard decision. In his opinion, we don't want to put forward a budget that is not supported by the community. It is disingenuous to say everything we put in there we need. Ms. LaPlante added it forces that conversation of need. We can support a lot of needs that administration put forth but in the end, if what we had throughout is not palatable those are hard conversations. It is asking them to do more unrealistic work while they are still managing their time and only being a month into school. We would like to have that context. Mr. Vanderhoof spoke of that being a key issue, we sit here meeting after meeting and then December comes and that is when we start saying can we cut this or that. As a Budget Committee we are procrastinating giving a number, we are piling on this work and then say it is crunch time. If we take it seriously, give or take half a percent or whatever it would, make this process a lot easier. Discussion was had including wants and needs are a matter of prospective. Mr. Lavallee spoke of over the years learning that the concept of what is a priority and moving something to the next year doesn't work because there is always some other priority. He spoke of it being the Budget Committees job presenting it to the public, we are asking what is everything and let us know what it all is and we decide what is acceptable and as a committee decide what works while collaborating the school board. You know where we were last year; you know what is somewhat reasonable. Mr. Vanderhoof added somewhat reasonable might be a \$400,000 difference which changes the decision making process when making the budget. You are creating a budget, and then we have the discussion if we agree and now ask them to cut \$400,000. It creates a crunch time issue for those who have to do the work. Chairman Jones asked if there was anything else from the Budget Committee, do we want to take that back to the next meeting. Ms. Browne agreed yes, we should talk about it. The next joint meeting is October 10. The committee will meet prior to the meeting.

• PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public comment section of the agenda was read.

Mr. Don Rankin spoke about the SRO, 1 for all 3 buildings. A copy of his comments can be found with the minutes. He spoke of many parents seeing an SRO or an armed guard at our schools as a safety net against an active shooter. Sounds good but it is not in any way accurate. There is no statistical data to support this position, in fact, statistics show there are more deaths and injuries at schools with an SRO or armed guard present than in instances where there is not. He provided some hyperlinks in his written comments. He spoke of some wanting to paint it as a difference in our towns because the Wilton Select Board denied funding for this position. The Select Board have input and he believes it was the correct position to take because it would involve spending on an off budget item for multiple years, that has not been vetted or voted upon at a town or school meeting. It should be brought as a warrant article to the next town meeting or school district meeting. It is statistically proven that an armed guard does not prevent or lower the harm done by a shooter, but what about an SRO. The data shows the same lack of impact on an active shooter, but SROs have stopped multiple shooters prior to the shooter carrying out their threat. This has happened because the SRO was notified by concerned students and/or staff. Those incidents happened because of the respect and trust that had been developed between the parties prior to the incident. That trust was built over time. If we want an SRO who can establish that kind of trust we have to offer a position that pays well, has great benefits, and has a work environment that is free from stress caused by rancor or divisiveness within the administration and boards. This is the only way to develop that type of relationship. We lost the majority of our middle school teachers and some of the best teachers we have in our schools this past year. We are a small school community and because the lion's share of funding comes from local taxes and not state or federal support, we will have a hard time competing on the basis of pay and benefits so our only advantage would be the work environment. This applies not only to an SRO, but to our teachers and staff as well. Unfortunately, last year our school board did not function well. Valuable time and energy was lost due to recurring efforts to control library content. This item was voted down but then recycled until community involvement showed the board that this was enough wasted time. Coordination between the school board and the budget committee was limited due to the wasted time over this issue. This cannot continue. I would like to point out to the

board chair as well as the other members that your policy states in (BEDDA B15, 16) that motions for reconsideration are limited by both time and content. Furthermore, KEC states concerning library content and material, the complainant must request a review by the WLC School Board whose decision will be final. No further time should be wasted here. Personal agendas over books in our library and curriculum taught in our schools or any other personal position have no place before the School Board that is why we hire professionals with training and backgrounds in public education to make sure we have quality schools. He spoke of the survey and that we need to send out an EDDM alerting towns to the survey and directing to them that way we can be assured everyone in the town knows. EDDM is inexpensive and very effective. As far as the SRO goes, that is something to be put on the budget and his thought is the Budget Committee tries to stay within, same thing with the School Board. Last year at the school meeting, we voted for more money that you authorized. If you are not sure of something, put it on the budget and leave it to the town meeting and if people don't show up they have no say, everyone both towns is entitled to go to the meeting let the town decide.

Mr. Lavallee spoke about the track; it went a long way just looking up there is more pleasant. We don't have to spend a ton of money to have people proud of our facilities.

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

Ms. Mary Golding voiced that Mr. LoVerme pointed out regarding the Select Board that it is a good reminder that elected officials should make these decisions based on the community as a whole, not personal feelings. She would have rather had an SRO than the tennis courts. She spoke of the amazing teachers and asked the Board to do what you can to keep them here. She voiced appreciation for the board members and acknowledged the long hours they put in and don't get much appreciation she appreciates you. She gave a shout out to Ms. LaPlante, noting her brilliance.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Lavallee and SECONDED by Mr. Ryan to adjourn the Budget Committee session at 7:44pm. Voting: all aye, motion carried.

VIII. BOARD BUDGET DISCUSSION

Ms. Cloutier-Cabral spoke of being off to a great start and alleviating some of the issues we had in the past. Chairman Goldin agreed we are off to a good start right now, it is early and once the teacher contract is added, it will jump. He doesn't know if we will be comfortable with a fifteen million dollar budget. He would like to see it lower. Mr. LoVerme spoke of some concerns that our education could suffer because we don't want to make cuts and gas and electric is going up so what do we do, cut a class or two, teachers. That is his concern. Education should always be first.

IX. DELEGATE ASSEMBLY ATTENDANCE

Chairman Golding voiced we need to ask for a volunteer to attend the Delegate Assembly, he asked if anyone volunteers. Ms. Foss asked what they have to do. Chairman Golding responded you attend and vote on the resolutions; you are there to do the Board's bidding. It is in Concord on Saturday, October 14 at the Grappone Center. Ms. Foss volunteered if the Board makes sure she understands what she has to do. Chairman Golding noted we would give you guidance and vote on the resolutions at the next meeting.

X. POLICIES

a. 1st Read

i. JLC-Student Health Services & School Nurses

Ms. Lavallee reviewed this is a required policy; it was reviewed with one of the nurses. She asked for any questions or comments. None heard. This will return for a second read.

ii. JLCJA-Emergency Plan for Sports Related Injuries and Additional Protocols

Ms. Lavallee reviewed this policy is one we didn't have, it was reviewed with one of the nurses and some minor changes were made before sending it to you. She asked for questions or comments. None heard. This will return for a second read.

iii. JLCCK-Special Physical Health Needs of Students

Ms. Lavallee reviewed this is a required policy. She asked for any questions or comments. None heard, it would return for a second read.

iv. JLDDBB-Suicide Prevention and Response

Ms. Lavallee reviewed this is a required policy. It was reviewed with administration and school nurses. Administration consulted the counseling offices without any changes recommended. No questions or comments made, it will return for a second read.

v. GBEBA-Staff Dress Code

Ms. Lavallee reviewed this policy was suspended during COVID and reinstated. Administration the WLCTA and Policy Committee looked at it and it was a bit antiquated. We met last week and made some changes they requested and are moving it for a first read tonight with the understanding that the latest draft would be sent to the WLCTA for feedback. They did provide feedback, which she shared with the Board and reviewed. She reviewed discussion was had regarding the term "business casual" and they did not like the use of that term. We didn't have an alternate term to use, it had been previously "professional dress" in the past and we changed it all to business casual. The feedback from the WLCTA was instead of business casual to use

“appropriately professional for their role”. A question was raised what the term “business casual” is defined as and what is “appropriately professional for their role” defined as. Ms. Foss spoke that she is comfortable with appropriately professional, she understands it is not specifically defined but that is different depending on your role. People should look decent but comfortable enough to do their jobs. It was noted there are different temperatures in the building. If someone shows up inappropriately dressed, you have a conversation with them. It was noted business casual has changed over the years. It was pointed out that according to the policy, clothing is optional but shoes and sandals you have to wear. It was suggested to rectify that. Mr. LoVerme suggested staying away from blue jeans and t-shirts. Mr. Mannarino prefers the term “professionally appropriate”, he used the example a gym teacher, business casual would rule out sneakers and that is important. Professionally appropriate means they will dress for the class (like a gym teacher). Ms. Lavallee asked for a consensus to change business casual to professionally appropriate for their role and that will be replaced in all areas it is written. Ms. Anzalone and Mr. Allen are not online any longer. Consensus was reached to make that change. She reviewed the next section, under minimum standards, WLCTA suggested using “free from holes, stains or obvious distressing”, Ms. Lavallee prefers this and no objection heard to change that. Under jewelry, they asked for wording from administration on this for clarification. Currently it reads, Jewelry may be prohibited or limited in certain learning spaces for safety reasons or to preserve the quality of school materials. Administration and WLCTA are accepting of this language. There was discussion at the committee level what if it was a distraction, we added, “Administration may request removal of excessive jewelry that may be deemed as a distraction”. The WLCTA was concerned with that wording and as long as it is safe and not interfering with teaching or materials, they felt it should be allowed. The Board discussed this including the example of long feathered earrings or a long chain and is working in shop class this could be unsafe or a distraction. It was pointed out that would be covered under safety. Chairman Golding does not like the word excessive. It was noted “may request”, is not a hard and fast rule. A suggestion was made to change “deemed as distraction” to “deemed as a disruption to the learning environment” or disruption to class. Ms. Foss questioned if there is a history, is there something that has been a problem in the past you want to narrow down. Mr. Lavoie voiced that we did have a little bit of discussion and no; he doesn’t think we did but if we do in the future, we need something for administration to fall back on for the future if it does happen. Discussion continued including, it is opening a can of worms, it could it be discrimination and instead it should be looked at on a case-by-case basis. Ms. Cloutier-Cabral voiced she envisions this situation arising not being one student or a one-off thing. It would have to be obstructive to class after class and probably the teacher would get rid of it. In that instance, maybe it would be warranted if we had evidence to support class after class being an issue and ask them to not bring it in. Otherwise, it probably won’t come up much. In the second paragraph it says, “Clothing is considered appropriate if it does not disrupt the educational or workplace environment” that is already covered; the suggestion is to strike “administration may request removal” and just leave in the portion about safety. It is cleaner and less ambiguous. Superintendent was asked for his opinion. He suggests adding clothing and accessories to that. It will now say, “Clothing and accessories are considered appropriate if it does not disrupt the educational or workplace environment” and strike “administration may request removal”. All are in agreement with this change. The policy will return for a second read with changes. Ms. Lavallee asked if administration or WLCTA has any questions or comments to get those to them before the next meeting so that it can be discussed as a board, hopefully after that it can be finalized.

vi. IKFA-Early Graduation

Ms. Lavallee reviewed this policy is required by law. She asked for questions or comments. A question was raised regarding the 4-unit requirement per year, and that it can be waived. Was this put in by the state or district? Ms. Lavallee would have to look at the NH Code, she will find out. Mr. LoVerme suggested adding the different diplomas in this. Ms. Lavallee agreed the district, state and certificate of completion. Mr. LoVerme asked if you could add in what you can and can’t do with those diplomas. He would like more information in the policy. Superintendent spoke about the diplomas and gave examples. We increased our district diploma as the kids have more time today. The minimum 20 credits has been stable. There are other ways to add to the curriculum without adding credits. He doesn’t foresee anything changing. We do a good job giving kids choices. For some kids the 20 credits is all they need, he likes that there are options, where to take classes and how to gain credit. It was suggested if we are looking to add additional language to reference the HS graduation requirement policy that way if that changes we don’t have to open this policy and change it, it will be consistent. Discussion was had regarding a student needing to make a decision if they are graduating at the end of their junior year the decision has to be made at the beginning of the year. Superintendent spoke regarding this and that there are a lot of kids who want to graduate early but we want to be sure they are on track to graduate and don’t fall short. The early request is important to make sure with their family, the courses they need are mapped out and they know what is at stake. He spoke of it being tricky if in December a family decides to graduate early. A student can only graduate early if they are driven, self-motivated etc. You have to take more classes than the average student does. If a family changes their mind, he would hate to say no but would recommend they do it on a certain date and give the principal the ability to change it. It does not affect us in terms of graduation the only impact is making sure it is the right decision for the parent and student and the student does not fall short. There was a brief discussion of a student skipping a grade. Superintendent suggests coming back with this policy so that he can discuss it with Principal Ronning and Assistant Principal Gosselin. He wants to maintain the option for the principal to listen to the request, make a decision and keep the deadline to encourage people to plan. Ms. Lavallee will work on the wording and it will come back for a second read. There was no objection heard, all are in agreement for changes to be made with administration.

b. 2n Read

i. IHBA-Programs for Pupils with Disabilities

Ms. Lavallee reviewed this is the second read without changes.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Lavallee and SECONDED by Mr. LoVerme to accept policy IHBA-Programs for Pupils with Disabilities as written.
Voting: all aye; motion carried.

ii. JJJ-Access to Public School Programs

Ms. Lavallee reviewed one change was made to this policy regarding letter, B, "The building principal will provide this eligibility criteria including class syllabus". There were no comments or questions. This policy will return for a third reading.

iii. IMBD-High School Credit for 7th/8th Grade

Ms. Lavallee reviewed this is the second read without changes. No questions or comments were made.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Lavallee and SECONDED by Mr. Mannarino to accept policy IMBD-High School Credit for 7th/8th Grade as written.

Voting: six ayes; one abstention from Mr. LoVerme, motion carried.

iv. EFA-Availability and Distribution of Healthy Foods

Ms. Lavallee reviewed this is a required policy and there are no changes since the last read.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Lavallee and SECONDED by Ms. Cloutier-Cabral to accept policy EFA-Availability and Distribution of Healthy Foods as written.

Voting: six ayes; one nay from Mr. LoVerme, motion carried.

c. Withdrawals

i. JICIB-Bullying & Cyberbullying-Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention

Ms. Lavallee reviewed the reason to withdraw this policy is that it is incorporated into JICK policy.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Lavallee and SECONDED by Mr. Mannarino to withdraw policy JIBIB-Bullying & Cyberbullying-Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention.

Voting: all aye, motion carried.

ii. IJOC-R-Coach Education

Ms. Lavallee reviewed this is not a required policy. The committee researched it and found legally we have to follow NHIAA coach's requirements, which can periodically change. It is more appropriate to follow those than have a separate policy with different requirements. We address those in IJOC.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Lavallee and SECONDED by Mr. LoVerme to withdraw policy IJOC-R-Coach Education.

Voting: all aye, motion carried.

iii. EF-Food Service Management

Ms. Lavallee reviewed this is not a required policy. Administration is working on job descriptions and this is more of a job description. We recommend withdrawing it and letting HR create an appropriate job description.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Lavallee and SECONDED by Mr. Mannarino to withdraw policy EF-Food Service Management.

Mr. LoVerme voiced that he would not withdraw it until HR has completed their task. Superintendent suggested bringing this back to the next meeting and he will bring the job description. Mr. LoVerme wants the job description to include they are food safe certified at the expense of the school.

Ms. Lavallee WITHDRAWS her MOTION.

iv. IHBA-R-Procedural Safeguards

Ms. Lavallee reviewed the procedural safeguards are provided to all SPED students, legally monitored and signed off on each year which are determined by the state. We felt it was not appropriate to have in our policy. They update it every 3 years or so. We discussed withdrawing the policy but still have the information accessible and discussed having a hyperlink to the website. Superintendent informed the members that the procedural safeguards are on the website.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Lavallee and SECONDED by Ms. Cloutier-Cabral to withdraw policy IHBA-R-Procedural Safeguards.

Voting: eight ayes; one abstention from Chairman Golding, motion carried.

XI. ACTION ITEMS

a. Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting

A MOTION was made by Ms. Cloutier-Cabral and SECONDED by Mr. Lavoie to approve the minutes of September 12, 2023 as written.

Voting: all aye, motion carried.

XII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

i. Facilities

Ms. Cloutier-Cabral reviewed the committee met last month. We went over the CIP and continue to talk about crafting it. The goal is to provide historical data, make it accessible and something we can follow, not take items off without reason and trying to make it more comprehensive. We have good information and are getting somewhere with it. She recommends people attend the meetings and read the minutes. We are looking at an architect for the locker rooms and looking at the work to be done this year. We are retooling the CIP and a policy, which was forwarded to the Policy Committee, and has been sent to the NHSBA attorney for review. We are looking to see if there is anything they would caution us against or anything to add. It is a work in progress. We are asking for your patience. We want it to be lasting and a good product.

ii. Negotiations

Chairman Golding reviewed the two groups did not meet but the Board met to discuss the WLCTA proposals. We still have a lot of work to do. We will discuss it tonight and the next meeting is next Monday.

iii. Policy Committee

Ms. Lavallee reviewed we are still working on the required policies. We have 3 more that are forthcoming. The NHSBA has been sent the CIP policy for review. We discussed the legislative changes. She attended the legislative update and on October 10 will attend the policy update webinar. The committee will take action on items we need in order to comply with the state. We discussed the dress code. We discussed policies that we want permission from the Board to look at. BBBE-Unexpired Term Fulfillment is one, last year when the position opened, we had legal advice from many sources and the RSA is vague and felt a more specific process would be warranted regardless of when the absence would happen. We can lean on the policy to provide more direction to the Board and administration. We discussed tonight having an SRO policy and we have begun to work on that. Mr. Buroker presented tonight the social media policy. She asked for comments or questions or concerns regarding these and if there is support to look at these 3. Administration had also directed her tonight to look at the transportation policy, as it needs updating. Chairman Goldin asked when they would look at the BBBE policy. Ms. Lavallee responded October 26 would be the first time working on it. We assign it to a committee member and if you say yes, she will assign it and have a first draft done. It will be discussed and changes made. Chairman Golding acknowledged it is a good idea. No objection heard to look at the 3 policies.

XIII. RESIGNATIONS / APPOINTMENTS / LEAVES

a. FYI-New Hire-Jared Browne-WLC Title I Tutor

b. FYI-New Hire-Deb Waldo-WLC Title I Tutor

c. Resignations-Candice LaPierre-WLC Paraprofessional

Superintendent reviewed the new hires and resignation.

XIV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public comment section of the agenda was read.

Mr. Jonathan Vanderhoof noted he forgot during the joint meeting to say thank you for the getting the whole budget to them. It has been asked for many times and it is the first time it was actually done. He spoke regarding the dress code, noting he has lots of thought on it but it is not an enforceable policy as he reads it. He doesn't think for a second it will be enforced. He suggest looking at that. He supports the SRO and heard multiple people talk about statistics and how it does not support having an SRO. Personally, he thinks that is garbage if you have a school having a significant problem it doesn't mean it will wipe it out, you have to compare schools prior to the SRO and after to see the impact it has. The statistics don't make sense they are not even related. He supports moving forward with that.

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

XV. SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Foss concurs with the Ms. Golding, how wonderful Kristie is. She couldn't do her job and is so grateful to have a confident person.

Ms. Cloutier-Cabral is seeing a huge increase in school spirit and energy. Everyone is doing a good job, the schools look good and there are a lot of comments on the track. I think when we invest in our school; students feel it and show pride.

Ms. Lavallee thanked Ms. LaPlante and echoed what Mr. Vanderhoof said about having the budget last week, which gave her lots of time to look at it. She agrees with what Ms. Cloutier-Cabral said about seeing it in the kids an staff. That is great and at the same time, we are enforcing a higher standard in students and staff and with us by demonstrating we support it. She voiced appreciation for the staff and teachers doing a great job; we are off to a great start.

Mr. Lavoie commented that the FRES teachers did a good job at Curriculum Night. This was a good meeting.

Mr. LoVerme voiced that Ms. LaPlante and her team have a lot of work to do. Your numbers will go up; your numbers will go down. You will want to make cuts where you can't and be expected to pull a rabbit out of your hat with no rabbit in it. Good luck to you. There has been a lot of talk about an SRO. He wanted to remind people that there was an SRO at a school when an active shooter came in and it took a teacher who was shot to call 911 while the SRO hid. One of the parents went in and took out the active shooter who was a child. That SRO never made it into the building. There are no guarantees with an SRO.

Chairman Golding voiced it was a good first joint session; he looks forward to the rest of them. He thanked administration and thanked everyone for a good meeting.

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

A MOTION was made by Mr. Lavoie and SECONDED by Ms. Foss to enter Non-Public Session to review the non-public minutes RSA 91-A: 3 II (C) at 8:57pm.

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

RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

The Board entered public session at 9:06pm.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by Mr. LoVerme and SECONDED by Mr. Mannarino to adjourn the Board meeting at 9:06pm.

Voting: all aye, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristina Fowler

Good Evening

I would like to address the call for an SRO to cover our 3 school buildings. Many parents see an SRO or an armed guard at our schools as a safety net against an active shooter. Sounds good but it is not in any way accurate. There is no statistical data to support this position, in fact, statistics show there are more deaths and injuries at schools with an SRO or armed guard present than in instances where there is not. (hyperlinks attached).

Some would like to paint this as a difference between our towns because the Wilton Select Board denied funding for this position. Two schools are located in Wilton so the select board has input. I believe this was the correct position for the Select Board to take because it would involve spending on an off budget item for multiple years that has not been vetted or voted upon at Town Meeting. It should be brought as a warrant article at the next Town Meeting to progress.

It is statistically proven that an armed guard does not prevent or lower the harm done by a shooter, but what about an SRO. The data shows the same lack of impact on an active shooter, but SROs have stopped multiple shooters prior to the shooter carrying out their threat. This has happened because the SRO was notified by concerned students and/or staff. Those incidents happened because of the respect and trust that had been developed between the parties prior to the incident. That trust was built over time, it didn't happen in a semester, or a year, but over longer periods of time. If we want an SRO who can establish that kind of trust we have to offer a position that pays well, has great benefits, and has a work environment that is free from stress caused by rancor within the administration and boards.

We lost the majority of our middle school teachers and some of the best teachers we have in our schools this past year. We are a small school community and because the lion's share of funding comes from local taxes and not State or Federal support we will have a hard time competing on the basis of pay and benefits so our only advantage would be the work environment. This applies not only to an SRO, but to our teachers and staff as well.

Unfortunately, last year our school board did not function well. Valuable time and energy was lost due to recurring efforts to control library content. This item was voted down but then recycled until community involvement showed the board that this was enough wasted time. Coordination between the school board and the budget committee was limited due to the wasted time over this issue. This cannot continue. I would like to point out to the board chair as well as the other members that your policy states in (BEDDA B15,16) that motions for reconsideration are limited by both time and content. Furthermore, KEB states concerning library content and course material that "all decisions of the school board are final". Hence forth, any issue that has been discussed and brought to a vote needs to be actively and forcefully prevented from coming to the board again until the next year or taken by the complainant to the State level. No further time should be wasted here.

Personal agendas over books in our library and curriculum taught in our schools or any other personal position have no place before the school board, that is why we hire professionals with training and backgrounds in public education to make sure we have quality schools.

VOTE ONCE AND DONE!

Verbally added at the meeting

We should send out an EDDM to both towns to alert people to the survey about an SRO.

Last year we added money to the budget. If you think an item deserves to be heard by the citizens but are worried about the size of the budget, let the voters decide by putting it as an article on the budget for the school meeting.

<https://www.thetrace.org/2023/08/guns-armed-guards-school-shootings/>

<https://www.poynter.org/fact-checking/2022/do-armed-school-police-officers-prevent-shootings/>

<https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/states-cannot-rely-school-resource-officers-stop-school-shootings>

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/07/us/school-officers-impact-on-black-students/index.html>

<https://education.uconn.edu/2020/10/27/the-prevalence-and-the-price-of-police-in-schools/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/26/us/mass-shooting-school-security.html>