

**WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE  
SCHOOL BOARD MEETING  
Tuesday, September 24, 2024  
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, Tiffany Cloutier-Cabral, Darlene Anzalone, Geoffrey Allen, Diane Foss, and Jonathan Lavoie*

*Superintendent Peter Weaver, Business Administrator Kristie LaPlante, Director Nicholas Buroker, Food Service Director Megan Nantel, and Clerk Kristina Fowler*

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**III. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA**

Superintendent requested to cancel the nonpublic session for this evening.

*A MOTION was made by Ms. Lavallee and SECONDED by Ms. Cloutier-Cabral to remove the nonpublic session from the agenda.*

Chairman Golding confirms there was a scheduling conflict and it will possibly move to the next meeting.

*Voting: all aye, motion carried.*

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The public comment section of the agenda was read. No one was online and there were no public comments.

**V. BOARD CORRESPONDENCE**

**a. Reports**

**i. Business Administrator's Report**

Ms. LaPlante reported there is not too much to report coming out of the business office budgets are being discussed. The tennis courts should theoretically be starting in the next week or two. We do have some work that needs to be done prior at the request of the vendor. She is coordinating a few things with the vendor and anticipates work will start before the next board meeting. Regarding paving at WLC, some handwork done to reduce slips, trips and falls, and are waiting for Continental to return to complete the job. She has two FY 24 closeouts that she is requesting the Board to act on. The first is we have talked extensively about the \$100,000 to be transferred from unspent funds into the Building/Equipment & Roadway Capital Reserve Fund. She is looking for the Board to confirm the amount because it is "up to \$100,000", then take a formal vote for the auditors and DRA to confirm the amount and the transfer was approved by the Board. A question was raised if we have a status on the sinks on the MS bathroom and art room. Ms. LaPlante confirms these projects are on hold due to timing and being short staffed. It is in the pipeline still and no date to be completed. Ms. LaPlante confirms the dollar amount the Board had discussed extensively is \$100,000 but has the permission to allocate up to \$100,000. She confirms when asked that there are no specific fixes that need to be done at this time. A question was raised if the funds are not used can they be returned at the end of the year. Ms. LaPlante responds it is taking \$100,000 from unspent funds and once it goes into the capital reserve fund it stays in the capital reserve fund until it is expended on a project.

*Mr. Lavoie MOVES the Question and MOTIONS to appropriate \$100,000 from the unassigned fund balance into the capital reserve fund (Building/Equipment & Roadway) as discussed in prior meetings.*

*Voting: all aye, motion carried.*

Ms. LaPlante has a second request, she believes the Board discussed on June 25 to encumber the funds for the tennis courts and at that time, the gym windows were in the pipeline to be replaced but did not happen until August. She is asking the Board to consider formally encumbering FY 24 funds into FY 25. It still meets the intent, it just tightens things up for the auditors and DRA. Sixty thousand of that is coming from the capital reserve and \$4,500 is coming from the operating budget from last year.

*A MOTION was made by Ms. Lavalley and SECONDED by Ms. Cloutier-Cabral to encumber \$64,500 to legally carry forward those funds to be spent for the WLC gym windows replacement project in FY 25.*

Ms. LaPlante confirms the project has been completed.

*Voting: all aye; motion carried.*

Ms. LaPlante reported that we have been able to spend all but about \$70 in ESSER III. We were able to take care of more behavior health initiatives to help support our teachers in the classroom and keep our students in the classroom. We have reported that the boilers were to be installed by September 30 and have been in panic mode behind closed doors figuring out what is going on. They are not going to be installed by September 30; we are working with the DOE to get the formal approval to complete the project after September 30. The vendors came in today, started dismantling the boilers, which are scheduled to be onsite next week. We are not talking an extensive delay but a little more paperwork we have to do.

Ms. LaPlante spoke of the meal cost. As part of our National School Lunch Program, we have to certify for the DOE that the meal price we are charging is fair and equitable and we are not asking our free and or reduced meal reimbursements to subsidize any of our meal program. We are not asking our paying customers to pay more to subsidize our free and reduced. Nationwide the USDA is recommending a weighted average per meal of \$3.85, which is an increase of .85 from what we are currently charging. Looking at October 2023 meal prices, it appears that they would like us to adjust our specific meal price to \$3.62. The risk in doing that is we then increase our debt. We increase what we are carrying because students who can't afford or who don't have the financial ability to sustain a \$3 meal certainly do not have the ability to sustain a \$3.62 meal. To stay in compliance with the National School Lunch Program, USDA that says we have to evaluate this every year and consider making market adjustments, speaking with our partners here in NH, they are recommending we increase our price to just under 2% to \$3.05. She is requesting the Board to make a motion of support for increasing the meal price to \$3.05 effective October 1 to stay in compliance. A brief discussion was had regarding the food service debt and if we are allowed to use unspent funds at the end of the year to pay off that debt. Ms. LaPlante confirms she has asked the DRA and our auditors and has not received a clear answer. We talked about this back in April when we were talking about unspent funds. A question was raised if we know what the typical amount of debt we carry over is. It was confirmed the debt is from unpaid lunches. Ms. Nantel confirms from last year and up to now, the current debt stands at \$40,423.39. We have 104 active students, which have accumulated a total of \$7,512.37, and our active student total debt is \$32,911.01. She does not know how much was carried over year after year but we ended last year with about \$37,000. Already this year we have accumulated roughly \$3,000 in debt. A question was raised how we did this fall getting forms back from parents; it has always been an ongoing issue. The debt is multifaceted, we have families that would not qualify and are not paying and families that would qualify and are not filling out the paperwork. Ms. Nantel responded we have a good number of forms coming in and some new ones that she does not recall seeing last year. She cannot control the number that is turned in she can just continue to educate and inform the families. We have received the majority of the MS and HS back. The more that do turn them in, the better for our district. It was noted it is amazing that you can feed a full meal to children on \$3.05. That is a very, very low number and it is wished that legislation would catch up with food prices, food prices are not what they used to be. A school should not have to go in debt to feed children. Praise was given to Ms. Nantel. A brief discussion was had regarding how often the forms for free and reduced are going out. Ms. Nantel confirms families do get multiple forms (if have multiple students) and only needs to fill it out once per year. It was suggested to decrease that for families so that they only get one form per family. Ms. Nantel confirms a letter was mailed last year for debt collection and we could put another letter together one per family. We do not do a mass one right now. It may be more beneficial to wait and not send it home the first day of school when parents are getting multiple other forms but wait and send it out later. It was noted that the number of kids on that program affects the revenue the district gets from the state. It is beneficial for the district to have as many people fill out the form as possible and a follow up letter would be helpful for families, it does not just affect school lunch. Ms. Nantel shared that some families have asked if they would be

audited for it and does it affect their taxes. She thinks there is some concern from parents who do not want to provide their information. She confirms that filling it out helps even if you don't qualify or think you won't qualify and that is part of the education. It was suggested to have a workshop or another meeting as it is not fair to the taxpayers that we are carrying a \$40,000 debt for lunches and if a good percentage of those kids are kids that would otherwise go hungry it is a worthwhile debt and people would likely understand. How do we differentiate from the families who are just not paying and the families who really need assistance? A brief discussion was had regarding debt collection, which it is a slippery slope and for those families who are having trouble just keeping the lights on it is not helpful. A question was raised if we do any type of more compassionate services approach and speak to the parents about the resources available to them to help differentiate. It was noted that it is something the Board needs to look at to make sure we are not incurring unnecessary debt for the taxpayers and are servicing the children that are here that need to be served and how best to do that. Ms. Nantel responds she does not think a form will solve that there are the parents who need assistance and won't fill it out and those who don't know they can fill out to get the assistance. Ms. LaPlante spoke that the feedback they received back from the Office of Nutrition and the USDA, National School Lunch focus on feeding the kids a nutritious meal; that would be a very slippery slope to insert Ms. Nantel into trying to differentiate. She knows the only thing that gets charged or that we are allowed to accrue delinquency for so to speak is, is a hot meal, they are not allowed to charge ice cream etc. the kids truly are getting a basic meal. It was suggested rather to send a letter saying you owe us money to make a phone call asking how can we get these forms done to help or is that too much. The expectation is not that Ms. Nantel is our "welfare director" or anything like that but it is expected that she collects our debts and also expects us as a community feed the children who need it. Ms. Nantel spoke of receiving some donations in the past with a specific purpose of paying down student debt but the issue with those is deciding which debt is valued more. Do we start with the seniors who may not be able to walk (for graduation) or some may need that more, it is deciding who is worthy of the extra help. Calling them afterward is a good approach, some will receive it well and others will not. When we did send out debt letters we did ask how we could help and she had a few parents reach out to ask for a payment plan. The majority of the debt that was paid was the \$10-\$20 ones. A question was raised if other students are knowledgeable that a student is receiving free or reduced lunch. Ms. Nantel confirms no, it is very confidential. It was confirmed the debt just continues to roll over year to year. A question was raised if there is a limit on the amount of donation we can receive to pay off the debt, can we just accept money to pay toward the debt. Ms. Nantel does not think so; she believes it is tied to student accounts vs. overall debt. Ms. LaPlante confirms we have not been in that situation since she has been here but if it was a blanket donation; we would work with the guidance department to determine who would have the most benefit and it would be 100% confidential. Ms. Foss voiced that she knows it is a difficult problem but she would not be in support of taking a family to court over this, there must be another way. Ms. LaPlante responded that is not on our list of things to do. Ms. Lavallee commented that it was discussed extensively last year when we redid the policy and she believes everyone was on the same page that it was not an avenue that we wanted to go down. It was noted that during COVID the Government was paying for the meals. Ms. Nantel confirms she does not know how long it took to accrue the \$40,000 debt and not sure, if she can find out but will look into it.

*A MOTION was made by Ms. Lavallee and SECONDED by Ms. Foss to accept the suggested increase of less than 2% to \$3.05 per meal.*

*Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*

A question was raised if that cost will cover the cost of lunch or will every single lunch drive us further into debt. Ms. Nantel responds no, it will cover it.

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

Mr. Buroker reported 262 tickets; fall is the busiest time for them, which was compounded by replacing all of our printers, implementing ParentSquare and the website's facelift. Overall, the summer was productive and he accomplished all of the goals. Regarding Chromebooks we got the majority out on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day, everyone who had a form signed received a Chromebook. We are conspiring to get them out earlier next year maybe even before school starts. Regarding ParentSquare, people seem to like it. We sent out permission slips digitally which was well received and the inability to lose a form is handy. He gave a shout-out to the intern who handled the lion's share of the website facelift. A brief discussion was had about parents getting more than one email or phone call and questioned if there is a way only send one per household especially if they are in the same school. Mr. Buroker responded you should only be getting one if it is district wide but he will look into it.

## **VI. ELECTION DAY**

Chairman Golding reviewed that the Board had a couple of long discussions about this. He attended the Wilton Selectman's meeting along with the Superintendent and Ms. Lavallee, it turns out that Ms. Jane Farrell and Mr. Bill

Keefe decided to hold elections at the Town Hall. Essentially, it all works out. The Superintendent spoke of the work we did trying to build a partnership and a win, win solution and wanting that to be reflected in the minutes. He passed out the email he sent them and wanted it to be attached to these minutes. It is really important because we spent a lot of time with our teachers' association, the Board had long a discussion, we as an administration team had a long discussion really listening to Lyndeborough, Wilton and teachers and our administrators really trying to create a solution that would work for Wilton and the needs they had. He was hopeful they would accept using FRES. He thought it was a great solution and great compromise; it is over 4,000 square feet in the gymnasium, it is handicap accessible, has 60-70 parking spaces that are marked plus the front, and we would move all of our teachers out of FRES to WLC for a PD day so that all of the spaces would be available. We listened to no remote and canceled that, we would rework the district calendar, which is challenging, the kids would make up the day in March, swapping that PD day for November 5 but at the end of the day, they must have felt it was a better decision for the community to have it at the Town Hall. Personally he was disappointed because he thought it was really good work on our part. We will work earlier next time in 2028 to get it into the calendar. It was noted if nothing else that it was a good drill on how to prepare for it, we may think about them wanting to do other elections here like every 2 years, maybe they will consider it and hope they reach out to us as soon as possible so that we can plan. She hopes there are no hard feelings over this. The Superintendent gave a shout-out to the Wilton Selectman who were adamant in making sure we had a positive relationship with Wilton and a positive relationship with Lyndeborough as a trifecta. A comment was made by one of the Selectman that we are in this together to educate our students and can't do it alone and really need to move in the same direction. Obviously, we would have some roadblocks but at the end of the day, they really stressed the partnership with the communities and he really appreciated that, he thinks all 3 of them agreed, Mr. Williams, Mr. Garcia and Mr. Schultz, thank you for those comments.

## **VII. POLICIES**

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

#### **i. JLDDB-Suicide Prevention and Response**

Ms. Lavallee reported there were changes due to last year's legislation. The changes were small and we brought it right to the Board, the changes are in red. It was revised to reflect HB 1109; it changed the phone number requirements and the name of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and then added the eating disorders helpline. Administration had reached out to her, our student id's had already been ordered but have put up posters around the school with the information and any id's ordered moving forward will have all the information on the back of it. She asked for any questions or comments, none heard. The policy will come back for a 2<sup>nd</sup> read and adoption at the next meeting.

## **VIII. ACTION ITEMS**

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

*A MOTION was made by Ms. Foss and SECONDED by Ms. Lavallee to approve the minutes of September 10, 2024 as written.*

*Voting: all aye, motion carried.*

## **IX. RESIGNATIONS / APPOINTMENTS / LEAVES**

### **a. Appointment-Zachary Girouard-Computer Science-WLC**

Superintendent reviewed the nomination. Excitement was voiced for the fact that we have a full teaching staff, which has not been accomplished in several years.

*A MOTION was made by Mr. Allen and SECONDED by Ms. Foss to appoint Zachary Girouard as the Computer Science Teacher at WLC, Bachelors, Step 1, salary of \$46,000.*

*Voting: all aye, motion carried.*

## **X. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The public comment section of the agenda was read. Superintendent called out all the phone numbers and names joined in the meeting asking if they wanted to comment. There was no public comment.

## **XI. SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Mr. Allen welcomed Mr. Girouard, we have an incredible team in place, and he is hearing nothing but positives things from staff, parents, and students. Good job to Ms. LaPlante and the administration team, you knocked it out of the park with your accounting and staying on top of things. You don't always have the answer he wants but you have

the answer, we can't ask for anything more. You do a great job balancing the budget and getting all the projects that need to be done around here done. Mr. Buroker and the IT department, what a smooth start to the year, you made it seamless for everyone. When you look at the size and scope of what we transition from over the course of a summer, it is unheard of. He understands it may not be seamless on the back end but the fact that you can protect everyone in the district from seeing some the issues, kudos, to a really good team in place. Thank you.

Mr. Zavgren echoes Mr. Allen and you all are doing a great job, he appreciates it.

Ms. Anzalone echoed what Mr. Allen said, great job to the start of the year for everyone. Thanked the staff for all the hard work they are doing. She spoke of the food service debt and if there is anything we can do to help with finding creative ways to help with it, she is sure it is mostly because people can't afford it, let's see if there is any way to help or to use unspent funds.

Mr. Lavoie spoke that the busses continue to be a problem for sporting events, soccer in particular from what he reads from Ms. Brewster, Athletic Director. He knows 100% it is not the districts fault but it is another peg against this company and contract, the bus company is hindering us. It needs to be noted that this is still a problem.

Ms. Lavallee commented if anyone wants to become a bus driver, they are hiring as all companies pretty much across the state. If you have a flexible schedule, you are available in the morning, afternoon, or evening for sporting events contact Butler Bus Company.

Ms. Cloutier-Cabral commented that she missed hearing from Ms. Golding this evening and looks forward to hearing from her at the next meeting. She commented on how fast the meeting went tonight. She commented on how exciting it is that we have a computer science teacher and hearing Mr. Buroker's report turning over tickets and hearing about the intern. She is sure the intern program will grow. Ms. LaPlante you do a great job as always, \$70 left over from ESSER III. It has to be a record she can't imagine anyone else could do that. She voiced appreciation for Ms. Nantel and Ms. Jones who is right there supporting her.

Ms. Alley thanked those in charge of IEP's and working with children who have them. She thought they really analyze what is needed and for HS students having extra work, those 2 periods have really helped them. She appreciates the school looking at that and seeing those needs. She thanked the Select Board, she thought the process that the Superintendent spoke of that the Board went through and the Superintendent went through was really good to come up with a solution, as a new school board member it was great to see that. She is excited about the new computer science teacher and for our school to be his first school.

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

### **i. Student Matter**

This was removed from the agenda.

## **XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

*A MOTION was made by Ms. Lavallee and SECONDED by Mr. Allen to adjourn the Board meeting at 7:16pm.  
Voting: all aye, motion carried.*

*Respectfully submitted,  
Kristina Fowler*