

**WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE
SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, December 3, 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 Lavalley, John Zavgren, Tiffany Cloutier-Cabral, Darlene Anzalone, Geoffrey Allen, Diane Foss, Jonathan Lavoie, and school board student representatives Hannah Hamilton and Andie White*

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, and Clerk Kristina Fowler

There were internet issues this evening.

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. STUDENT/STAFF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Principal Ronning and Principal Fuller honored teachers, Tyler Kiliulis and Valarie Bemis with nominations for the starfish award. They reviewed the reasons for the nominations. Teacher, Laura Bujak was chosen as the starfish awardee for her many contributions over the years to the students, staff and district. Congratulations Ms. Bujak!

IV. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

Superintendent requested to move the Curriculum Coordinator's Report to the next meeting due to her absence. Chairman Golding requested to remove the Technology Committee's report from the agenda, as there was no quorum therefor no meeting.

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

V. BOARD CORRESPONDENCE

a. Reports

i. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent reported the foreign exchange student from Germany was unable to come as she found another host family in the same community she was attending school. A question was raised how we get the foreign exchange students. Superintendent responded the critical issue is the host family. He spoke of his experience hosting a student from South Korea. The student and families are vetted and at some point, there is a connection and once the host family is set, the student can be enrolled. In this instance, we didn't move as fast and she was missing school days and was able to stay in the community with another host family. Having these students is a great experience for our students. Ms. Foss agrees and spoke of her experience and feels they add something to the student body. Mr. Zavgren asked the Superintendent to elaborate on the CTE program meeting. Superintendent spoke that for some reason parents are not getting the information or it is not timely. We talked about how to increase awareness and thought one visit for students may not be enough. He spoke of increasing awareness with the younger students. He hopes to come up with a plan for the second half of the year and doesn't think 6th grade is too early to make the students aware of the options. He adds the meeting focused on programing. A question was raised if there is a way to get a list and put it on the website. Superintendent responded Principal Ronning and Assistant Principal Gosselin have great ideas about making students aware. We need to ask what other ways we can the information out. Discussion was had that it would be good to make parents of elementary students aware and it may help them make decisions later on. Superintendent spoke of his own experience where in one district they held an open house. He is excited about more kids becoming involved and feels the Board and community would be supportive if we had to increase those budget lines because students were interested. Ms. Anzalone added she feels it would be helpful to families to have the information about other programs as well and suggested an information session or record something that walks families through the process and options and post it. She asked if there is something online if so where it could be found, that would be helpful for families to know. She likes the idea of reaching kids when they younger. Superintendent noted we would be happy to post something on the website, for example a 3-minute video on culinary.

ii. Student School Board Report

Middle School Representative; Miss White reported the following.

Robotics: Some students from last year's Robotics team were looking forward to it again. When they heard that there was no robotics happening they were disappointed. She would like to make it possible for next year. She suggested having suggestion

boxes around the school for the students to make suggestions to administration. Everyone who went to the Halloween dance had an amazing time.

High School Representative; Miss Hamilton reported the following.

November has been a month full of exciting accomplishments and memorable experiences. Our Veterans Day assembly was a heartfelt tribute to those who have served in our military. The high school chorus performed patriotic songs, and the color guard presented a respectful ceremony. Additionally, some of our students had the honor of reading their winning *Voice of Democracy* and *Patriot's Pen* essays, which added a personal and reflective touch to the ceremony. It was a powerful day of remembrance, and we are proud of everyone who helped make the event so impactful. We hosted our Fall Sports Night to celebrate and recognize the outstanding achievements of our fall athletes. We are incredibly proud of our students for their dedication, hard work, and sportsmanship throughout the season. From soccer to cross country, our athletes performed exceptionally and represented our school with pride. Thank you to our coaches and families for their continued support. Our fall play, *Puffs*, was a tremendous success! The cast and crew did an outstanding job bringing the production's humor and charm to life. A special thank you to Ms. Anderson for her exceptional direction and dedication in making this performance such a memorable experience for all involved. On December 5th, all high school students have the opportunity to participate in a field trip to the NCC manufacturing facilities. This visit will provide students with valuable insights into career opportunities in the manufacturing industry. We encourage all interested students to sign up for this exciting and educational experience. Congratulations to our amazing dance team for winning 1st place at their competition in Boston on December 9th! Their hard work, precision, and teamwork were on full display, and this victory is a testament to their dedication. A special thank you to Coach Mel for her continued leadership and support of the team. The winter sports season has officially begun, and we are excited to see our athletes back in action. This year, we are especially thrilled to announce the formation of a new swim team, which has sparked a lot of excitement among students. We look forward to supporting our winter athletes as they compete in their respective sports.

Ms. Lavalley expressed if we do not have supplies budgeted for robotics next year we may want to look into what they need and find a way to plan for it next year. Principal Ronning responded to start we didn't have a coach and there was some interest after registration was due. We want to build the momentum for it next year. Mr. Allen commented that if he knew he could have come up with a half dozen coaches and suggested it be brought to the community sooner.

iii. Principal's Report

Principal Fuller reported starting January 13-January 17; we will have an artist in residence, NH Dance Institute for grades K-5 at LCS and FRES. She spoke of the activities and will have a whole school dance. The same week will be the in class Spelling Bee, Ms. Kudlich and Ms. Loiselle with other volunteers are getting it up and running. January 21 she believes will be the whole school Spelling Bee. Our teachers before Thanksgiving were lucky enough to participate in piloting a new reading and writing program; that is very exciting.

Principal Ronning reported regarding foreign exchange students, there are several organizations out there; they are contacted from foreign countries to place students. It is the organization that contacts the schools; they facilitate this for the students. He spoke regarding CTE, they send out several newsletters regarding this and have 8th graders exposed to it during the step up night, they take field trips and we are always promoting it. The information is located in the Program of Studies that includes all the options including Milford. He spoke of the validation process with the teachers, which is going well. The staff appreciates how they are developing their assessments and how to produce a reasonable assessment such as PSAT/SAT and in addition to help with the MS, monthly we will give a NH State SAS model with 15 questions that simulate the test. The teachers end up reading from the manual so they become familiar looking at it, the depth of rigor; it helps teachers with regard to preparing the questions in class and how we can apply the knowledge. Assistant Principal Gosselin spoke about discipline, November numbers are a bit down but reminds the group November is a short month in terms of the number of school days. It is not unusual to see a drop but it still good to see. A question was raised what is Halloween Club. Assistant Principal Gosselin responded it is new this year for the 6th grade, they meet every Wednesday have a Board of Directors, some are in charge of marketing etc. and have a current project they are planning for next year. She spoke of a surprise for the kids coming up. The entire school is behind this club, they want to take this school into a haunted school next year complete with a haunted hayride. They are taking charge and going for it. This group is amazing, they consistently meet, assign jobs and it is exciting to see the kids come up with an idea and see it through it is really cool. It is an exciting time. A question was raised if they take donations of decorations. She responds they will if they are given. Ms. Bartoldus is working with the group.

iv. Curriculum Coordinator's Report

Due to Ms. Dignan's absence, the report was moved to the next meeting.

b. Letters/Information

i. Filing for Candidacy

This is an FYI showing the open seats and dates for filing for candidacy. Chairman Golding reviewed the notice and the following board member's terms will expire, Ms. Anzalone, Chairman Golding, and Ms. Cloutier-Cabral. If you are up and want to run or any public who may be interested in running, that is your timeframe to go in and register with Ms. Ryan. Superintendent added Ms. Fowler would put it in the Milford Cabinet and post it around the towns. Candidates for School District Office shall file their declaration of candidacy with Mary Jane Ryan at the SAU Office no earlier than January 22, 2025 or later than 5:00 p.m. on January 31, 2025. The following officers to be elected are:

- One (1) School Board Member (At-Large Lyndeborough) with a 3-year term
- Two (2) School Board Members (Wilton) with a 3-year term
- One (1) School District Moderator with a 1-year term
- One (1) Budget Committee Member (At-Large Lyndeborough) with a 3-year term
- Two (2) Budget Committee Members (Wilton) with a 3-year term
- One (1) Budget Committee Member (Wilton) with a 2-year term
- One (1) Budget Committee Member (Wilton) with a 1-year term

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

Present: Jeff Jones, Adam Lavallee, Phil Brooks, Bridget Mooney, Bill Ryan, Jonathan Vanderhoof, Jennifer Bernet

Chairman Jones called the meeting to order at 7PM.

a. Prior Follow up

Chairman Jones asked if Budget Committee members had any follow up from the previous meeting. None heard.

b. FY 2025-2025 Budget

Ms. LaPlante confirms there are no updates since the last version. Chairman Jones confirms we are working with the 3rd draft, spent a lot of time talking about the budget and currently sitting at a 4.42% increase. He thinks the Budget Committee felt OK with it from an increase perspective given the challenges we have especially with the increases in SPED and the CBA rolling into this year's budget. Ms. LaPlante reviewed after draft 2, we did a deep dive into staffing, into our student population counts looking at our classroom sizes, looking at staffing as a whole and worked with Mr. Pratt to do some more end of school year evaluation of his projections for FY 26 SPED funding. We were able to reduce the budget by \$465,574. Those changes are coming from the removal of a plow for the facilities vehicle, \$10,000; reduce out of district placements, \$150,000, and adjustments to wages and benefits. Our health insurance came in higher than anticipated, it came in at an increase of 12.3% because historically we have the benefit of a premium holiday credit which we do not have this year because all the reserves have been used up and we are not able to apply that which would have given us a little more credit. We are comfortable with the alignments we made and the adjustments; it will still meet student and community needs, so that we can continue to grow as a district. That is what has changed since draft 2. Chairman Jones asked for any questions from the School Board or Budget Committee. He asked regarding wages and benefits if those reductions may reduce the overall workforce going into next year, total staff. Ms. LaPlante confirms this. Mr. Lavallee comments when you say may, in order to accomplish that it will have to be will. Ms. LaPlante confirms yes, our goal though is to achieve some staffing adjustments through attrition with some of our existing staff. Yes the number will decrease and we are hoping to do that through retirements and some other adjustments within staffing and if not there will be some difficult conversations. A question was raised if it has been decided where the elimination will be and where is the excess we are currently enjoying. Superintendent responded he doesn't want to call it excess. Mr. Lavallee notes if it is being cut, it has to be excess. Superintendent responded he has been in districts where it wasn't excess and we did make cuts. He has been in districts where we went from 20 to 30 in a classroom and he didn't think that was appropriate but we had to make the cut because of a tax ceiling. We have discussed cuts and are not in a position to communicate that right now it is premature. We have had some difficult conversations. The staffing cuts will happen and will be balanced out from administration through all levels in our district and are trying to be careful about those decisions we make and how we roll out the communication both to school district and individuals but also to the community. They are difficult decisions to make and the guiding fact is how does it impact kids that is the number one question we ask. He points out in the 5 years he has been here we have always had staff cuts and the process has always been the same with the School Board and Budget Committee, it feels different this year for some reason and not sure why. This is literally the 5th year we have had to make these difficult decisions. At some point we will communicate that in detail, right now it is a little too soon because we have not finalized those decisions yet. Mr. Lavallee thinks we are saying we want a smaller number therefore there will be an elimination of a mystery number of teachers in a mystery of areas. I guess that is why it feels different, before you could sort of point to an area and have a plan. This year we are trying to just trying to create a smaller number so we know we have to cut staff somewhere and I guess figure it out later. Superintendent responded that he doesn't think it is a fair characterization; we spent a lot of time looking at our staffing. Part of it is trying to get the number down to one that is acceptable. When we agreed to the CBA we had a terrific win, win in negotiations but in that process we also realized there will be some adverse impact on staffing, we can't move forward as a district and keep that percentage increase down but also pay our teachers a fair CBA there has to be some give somewhere. He would like to think we are really close to making those decisions and are in the process where we need to come to an agreement as a team that it is the best decision possible. Part of it is looking at class sizes and enrollment like Ms. LaPlante discussed. We are not going in blindly and are not making it up as we go along. The process is difficult among us and will be difficult conversations with the public as well. Ms. Lavallee spoke that it is a difficult subject because it can be personal. Prior to her being on the board there were discussions of cutting teachers down at FRES and the thing that is hard and we have to keep in mind, although it is a delicate conversation it is one that does involve the public and impacts parents and taxpayers in the district. When we talk about finalizing numbers, but don't have specific details, it is hard to say you support it one way or another because we don't know what that impact will be if we don't know the area it will be in. It is also important for us to know and make sure we handle it carefully so we do not cause upset within the staff but also make sure that the parents and people impacted by this are aware we are having these discussion so that if they want to weigh in with their opinions they can. At the

end of the day, the taxpayers have a say in the dollar amount we spend but they also have a say when it comes to the quality of education we are providing. She trusts you very much but does also want to make sure we are giving the public an opportunity to be part of the process. Superintendent spoke that part of the goal is to have that conversation publically as soon as possible. It is not something we want to drag out but needs to make sure the timing is right, the Budget Committee and School Board are onboard with this percentage, if we need to cut more then we need to revisit those decisions we tentatively made, where those cuts may be. He gave a hypothetical example if we were going down a position to .80 but needed to cut another half percentage from the bottom line we may need to revisit that. Is that really a half time position, is that right and what would be need to move around to make that work to make sure kids are getting access to the courses they want and need during HS in particular. He feels we are at a place with the School Board and Budget Committee where we are coming to a close with where we are with the operating budget. He feels we have been able to get over the hump where we were in sticker shock in the beginning with 8.5% and we all worked hard to get this number down. It is the right thing to do, and he would like to think the cuts we made to propose are cuts that is not because we have to get the percentage down; it is because it is a reasonable decision to make based on our commitment to taxpayers and coming in with a reasonable and fiscally responsible budget. It is easier to say we need 8% dig into the lines all you want but he doesn't think that is who we are as an administration team and certainly Ms. LaPlante and I are not like that. He thinks the cuts we have to make that brings us to the 4.42% are cuts we would consider anyway because it is the right decision and if we have surplus money at the end of the year, we will figure out with the School Board what to do with that for 25-26. Looking at this year, it is tighter because all the positions are full and he feels we won't have a significant surplus at the end of the year. He agrees with Mr. Lavallee and Ms. Lavallee that more transparency is needed and after this, we will get together and finalize things. Ms. Lavallee spoke in the past, we had to make the large \$400,000 cuts that was part of the committees discussion, we talked about the physical education teacher and could we reduce that, it was all very public, will this work, how will kids be impacted etc. If we are making these decisions, it is important for the public to hear why we made those decisions so they don't think we are cutting just to cut. Mr. Lavallee spoke when you are talking about this and looking at areas you want to cut keep in the front of your mind that when Lyndeborough was pulled into the cooperative, there were about 8 kids per grade. Lyndeborough was promised if we jump onboard to help subsidize the school in Wilton we would not have large class sizes, they are already far larger than anything we imagined at the time of those meetings when that was handed to us. As a representative of Lyndeborough, it has always bothered him that the promise has never really been kept. Superintendent thinks we have to be driven by the district policy around class sizes; he agrees with him, if that were part of the discussion, we would want to look at the class size policy. We don't exceed the policy or the policy of the state around class size. If you are saying there was conversation years ago then maybe we need to revisit this. Mr. Lavallee noted it should not get any worse they are already big. He thinks it is a challenge where the numbers are now and doesn't see how we could be effective to make them larger, the teachers are really good but it doesn't mean we load them up. Superintendent noted there are some districts that are at the ceiling and have to exceed it but we are not there. We have had that conversation and will revisit and relook at those numbers again. Ms. Bernet voiced that as she understands it, you would make the staff cuts regardless of needing to bring the budget into a certain percentage. Superintendent responded we took a hard look at staffing and made some preliminary decisions about where to reduce in our overall staff and factored that in to get to the 4.42% percent. He looked at enrollment numbers and trends with Principal Ronning and did the same with Principal Fuller. He notes (as an example) we started the year with 30 kids in Kindergarten and have 3 Kindergarten teachers, that is 10 students per class. Do we have the ability to move teachers around because in another grade we may 20 or 22 in our upper grades because of kids moving in? Those are bigger conversations and we look at these trends and where those numbers are. The thing about elementary is one year it makes sense to make a cut but if a whole bunch of people move in and are in 1 or 2 grades it could push that number up to a number that is not acceptable even if still below the ceiling within the policy. It may not acceptable for one reason or another including possibly a conversations that Lyndeborough and Wilton had years ago. We need to honor that conversation. He thinks there is a lot of stuff to look at, a lot of moving parts and is being very careful and thoughtful about the preliminary decisions we made. After this meeting, his job will be to work with the Principals to have those conversations with individuals, departments and schools and then as soon as possible communicate that out so the public and all can weigh in. He anticipates that just around the corner. Ms. Anzalone questioned how much he could share with the public; you can't say which teacher etc. Superintendent responded the challenge is for example if we have one teacher teaching one position that is reduced or cut, it identifies that adult immediately and we don't want to do that. In the past when we eliminated a social studies teacher, we had several and it didn't identify a person. We need to be careful about how to have a transparent conversation without undermining the integrity you talked about. Mr. Ryan is appreciative of the explanation given but being here for 34 years he has seen a lot of changes in the school some positive some negative. He has seen teachers let go from math this year and 2 years later we hire another, it is an act of congress to get them back. He thinks we fail our students if we say we will eliminate something because of a percentage, that should be left up to the taxpayers we are supposed to present what we feel is necessary to teach our students to make them worthwhile in the future. He doesn't like paying taxes either until people can come in off the street and talk to us about where they can help he doesn't think we want to just accept the fact we have to cut percentages, it is not fair to anybody. Mr. Lavallee questioned when you talk about eliminating a position where there is only one teacher wouldn't that be eliminating an entire program. Superintendent responded that is just an example he gave to prove Ms. Anzalone's point that we have to be very thoughtful and make sure it does not directly identify a person. He spoke of his experience of building budgets before where the budget wasn't really an issue, no discussion of lines, stay below 6% or whatever it was and we didn't really do a deep dive into how we utilize our resources. He reiterates when we agreed as an administrative team to support the CBA we knew we would have to do a deep dive into staffing. In the 5 years he has been here, we did not really do that deep dive and we have to be realistic. Our enrollment is not going up; it is leveling off or possibly going down. Our numbers are low in certain areas, is that acceptable? He was here when we had a

class of 1 student. That means a teacher was getting paid \$10,000 to teach that one student and it didn't make any sense to him. He would rather send the student to Nashua or Milford and transport them because it is cheaper. Part of it is a downward pressure on the budget; our budget is big. We have to be careful how we blow up a budget, price ourselves out of a quality education, and create an animosity within the community. We want to keep our community together and there needs to be a give and take, this has been his practice personally as a parent and as an educator. He speaks for himself. We need to be responsible to the communities and to look at how this is shaping up. We can call it a staff cut, how will it impact kids, if it was going to impact kids adversely he would say we can't get to 4.42% and we would have to have other conversations. When we started this budget process, he wanted the Budget Committee to give us a ceiling and at this point, he is glad they didn't as it forced us to look at things. What kind of an increase have we had over the years and how to stay consistent with that and understanding that we can't just keep taking from the community. He believes this is a responsible one. We hear you about the transparency and will have those conversations soon and go from there. Mr. Allen commends administration, his view has always been every year or every so many years, he hates the idea of giving administration a ceiling and saying this is what you need to come up with instead work with the teachers etc. to come up with what is needed and how can we provide the best education for the kids and community while at the same time doing it efficiently with the best resources as possible and sometimes it is duplicating services. We have seen what happens when the community gets mad at our budgets that is a hard thing. If we can show the community we looking at this every year, projected class sizes, enrollment, what we actually need, etc. and he thinks that is more indicative of what happened this year, we looked at everything. Everyone came in with their top number if we could have it all this is what it would be and then we looked at ways we could remove redundancies of what we need to provide. He is looking forward to seeing the result in terms of staffing and resources he thinks you did a great job. Ms. Lavallee also wanted to thank administration because they did work really hard. She wanted to point out when we talk about being truthful with the taxpayers at some point we need to recognize in the state of NH 70% of our funding to public schools comes directly from property taxes. We in NH have the lowest percentage of state funding in all of the US. It is really hard because she hears people upset about how high their local property taxes are but we live in 2 very small towns with very little industry and very little tax revenue when it comes to funding our schools. It is hard because the general public does not seem to understand that the decisions we all make as individuals impact who we have supporting us at the state level. The state level has continually defunded public school over and over again and now there is talk of federal defunding as well. It is concerning to her because if we are really truthful to the local taxpayers she thinks we should be truthful about why we are in this position in our very small towns and how that affects us. What she hears from parents and from individuals in the community is they don't understand that. They think we are possibly just overspending. Since she has been on the Board there have been a number of things at the state level that have fallen back on us significantly for example, they decreased the payment to NH Retirement System that the state put forward so then we as individual towns had to come up with an additional \$200,000 just a few years ago. There are things like the voucher program, which they didn't have a funding source for and we had to pay that, it was over 28 million dollars that we had to spend on that last year. If we are being truthful with the local taxpayers, she feels like the local taxpayers should know the reason the budget keeps increasing at a rate that is hard for them to handle. It is not just because we are overspending and that is why we have had to cut staff year after year and that is why it gets harder when we do. She does agree with Mr. Allen's statement that you did a very good job and she trusts you looking at the numbers but she does think it is important she thinks that the local taxpayers know what goes into funding public education so that when they go to the ballot box to vote they know what their vote means. Ms. Foss clarified she agrees with everything Ms. Lavallee said, the only thing she may temper a little bit is she doesn't think we overspent. She feels we have been very fair, the people on this Board and people on the Budget Committee are very conscientious about the budgets they put forth. She is sure Ms. Lavallee meant that. Ms. Lavallee confirms she did not mean we overspent. Ms. Foss does not feel we overspent at all but does think it is true that when we have stuff happen at the state level and all of a sudden something is dropped on us and all of a sudden we have to absorb it through our taxes she thinks the average taxpayer does not understand that and we have take the blame for the state and it is extremely uncomfortable. Chairman Jones commented that we need to make sure we tell that story at district meeting both the School Board and Budget Committee. When we speak to the budget, we will speak to that as well.

Ms. LaPlante provided copies of the anticipated revenues for FY 26. She reports we are not as adversely impacted by the discussion of reducing the reimbursement rate for catastrophic aid as most districts are. When she looks at the adequacy aid and our SWEPT, our property tax, between the two of them it is a net increase of \$9,212. We are seeing a decrease in our adequacy aid because of the reduction of the number of students, there is a slight increase in the value that they consider to be an adequate education but where we are seeing that offset is in the SWEPT that we get from the State of NH, which comes from local towns. There has been an increase of property values within our 2 communities that is why we are seeing that increase even though the per thousand rate on the state side has decreased by 10 cents. Every cent counts, we decreased 30 cents in the last 3 years on property taxes, what comes to us. These are not hidden but not well-communicated or well-discussed impacts of funding education, it is a significant impact we see on our end. We are fortunate that we have an out of district tuition and expect that to continue next year. We are anticipating an increase on our tuitions and increase on our earnings on investments. In our district, these numbers are tremendously small but this is what we work with. With catastrophic aid, she is not making any adjustments. Once you reach a certain threshold, you are eligible for Catastrophic Aid reimbursement from the state. She met with Mr. Pratt earlier in the year; he wanted her to project based on what he was seeing for SPED cost in the prior year, about \$65,000. She will flat fund it at \$45,000. She reviewed; there are decreases in child nutrition at the state and federal level based on trends, seeing a decrease in grant funds of 30% from last year to this year. We are not doing badly on the revenue side because of increases in property values. She spoke of decreases in SPED funding, and wanted to "piggy back" on what Ms. Lavallee was saying about

the leaders we elect in the state. The State of NH, SPED is funded by 4 sources, including the reimbursement of catastrophic aid (reimbursement for high cost of SPED students), IDEA federal grant we get, any lump sum payments we get for students on IEP, which is all factored into the adequacy aid and local property taxes with that funding a significant burden of it. She reports there was discussion when Commissioner Edelblut presented his 2-year budget. He noted the increase in funding for special aid. He didn't say whether he would continue to do it or present it once we have a new governor but she found it interesting and read from a NHPR article, "the Commissioner wants the State to consider whether it can provide special services more effectively and for less money". He said parents and educators frequently tell him they are unhappy with the services provided, and rightfully so everyone will advocate to the nth degree for their child. What concerns her is the Commissioner thinks that the solution is school vouchers through the EFA (Education Freedom Accounts) accounts are the answer. He cites a conversation that he had with families. "Families are constantly coming up to us saying their kid had a special education program from in school and are not in need of services when they come out. They are no longer suffering from anxiety and depression". What troubles her in this quote and philosophy when we look at the services we are providing to SPED students in our district, we are providing services for anxiety and depression but the bulk of our cost is coming from completely other cost. Right wrong or indifferent, and she could be going out on a limb but she feels that view is very disconnected from the quality of services we want to provide all of our students. She wanted to provide the research she told the committee she would do. She doesn't want the students to not receive the services they need because it was based on anxiety and depression based on what the Commissioner has seen. Chairman Jones asked to keep the discussion nonpolitical we all have viewpoints. Ms. Bernet is concerned as well and asked if it has an impact on our district if those proposals go through. She knows from personal experience that private schools can deny an admission to children based on disabilities that is totally legal especially religious schools that are exempt from the federal laws. It is not a solution and many of these children will have to stay in the public schools underfunded, that has not happened yet, we are dealing with this budget and hopefully it won't happen but from personal experience that does happen. A question was raised how much are the EFA accounts, Mr. Pratt had said it was about \$80,000 to educate a SPED student with an IEP. Ms. Lavalley responded that in 2024, \$5,204 was the average cost per voucher. A parent with a SPED student on an IEP would only have to come up with \$5,000 a year or so. Ms. LaPlante added we would still have to provide services if that student was from our community or goes to school in our community we are not exempt from providing those services. She confirms the cost would still fall to us anyway with less funding. She voiced her intent was not to make it political it was to point out that we be aware of the totality of those cost that go into our students. She apologized. Mr. Vanderhoof commented that it sounds like for the last half hour we got political. He is curious where the state gets its money, this is an argument every year that the state has to pay more money, and he is curious where they get this imaginable money, where does it come from if the state pays it instead of local taxes. Ms. LaPlante responded she doesn't have an answer to that. Mr. Lavoie responded it comes from us one way or another. Mr. Vanderhoof commented, just a quick observation. Mr. Lavalley added it comes mostly from business taxes. A question was raised regarding the out of district tuition and is there a cost benefit analysis if we hire a staff person ourselves and keep the student in district as opposed to sending them out, the number of students going out was reduced from the first projection of 8 to 6 now. Mr. Pratt responded he starts to look at his budget in June and tries to figure out where we would be with kids not having the least restrictive environment. Backing off the out of district tuition is a result of some students reacting well to programs we put in place. One was the student support center at FRES and the coordination of staff at the MS and HS. He spoke of the team being tremendous at WLC and working well with each other and guidance counselors, teachers, and the students. We had a couple of student that may have left us, for right now we are able to reduce that. We have hired staff in the past long term or short term and have used grant money to support some of that when specialized instruction was warranted. We are constantly looking at staffing. We are keeping the students in district now. Discussion was had that we reduced that to 6, it is a significant cost and are we able to reduce that further down 1 or 2 more students and keep them in district. Mr. Pratt responded keeping them in district or is a decision by the team and certainly would if we could meet their needs here; none that are out of district now are ready to come back at this particular time. It is not as easy to bring a student back into district, as we would like it to be. Ultimately, the parent decides to bring them back or not. If they have been there for many years the parent is comfortable where they are, the next step would be due process hearing and that costs anywhere from \$10,000-\$15,000. He does not see a need to develop a new program at this point. It takes about 1-2 years to get programs approved. He spoke of examples of situations such as a student is so medically involved that we can't service the student or a student who may be on the autism spectrum and has intense needs that we could not work with them or in order to work with them we have to gown up and wear padding etc. The other can be social emotional issues that is the biggest track most schools look at in terms of sending them out, another is academic needs, and rarely do we send them out for that. When you look at building a program, you are usually looking at more than 1 person. At the elementary level, we have a contracted person who deals with specific reading needs and the program at the MS, HS; we have a reading teacher that supports those students being integrated into the classroom. It comes back to the case managers, paras, ABA's and RBT's, it is a team effort and you don't see that in every district. Lots of times, those types of services are siloed. Our reading teacher integrates with all staff, general education and SPED. It is a team approach to keep the academic focus in mind. It was noted our district does a good job putting in the science of reading to help with this. It sounds easy, its only 6 kids but those 6 kids are very likely not easy to educate and if you try to keep them here you may impact other students. Mr. Pratt commented that every year we look to see if our school can meet the free and public education at the rest restrictive environment. Chairman Jones noted it is an important discussion but maybe we can table that for the Board discussion later. Mr. Pratt confirms back in June/July we felt that 2 students may go out of district and now we do not think that is the case. A question was raised if Mr. Pratt felt \$300,000 in the SPED capital reserve account was sufficient or does he feel it should be increased. Mr. Pratt spoke of the level of appreciation he has for that reserve, the idea of a student moving in that require a \$350,000 placement or a number of students moving in is a

source of his nightmares. It is hard to say, from his experience he is just grateful for the funding we have and hopes and prays we don't have an unavoidable move in that is the best answer he can give.

c. Warrants

Ms. LaPlante reviewed article 4 is the operating budget, once the Budget Committee votes to finalize it we will update it. This is boilerplate language used in years past and blessed by the DRA. She spoke of the Facilities Committee recommending of \$275,000 for article 5, Building/Equipment & Roadways Capital Reserve. The SPED capital reserve is there awaiting any recommendation from the Board if they want to add funding for it or remove it. She was asked to provide language for the SRO; article #7, Wilton has provided in-depth numbers of a total of \$166,320 with our district funding it's at \$124,740 and the Town of Wilton funding it at \$41,580. This is contingent upon passage of both articles, Wilton and ours; if either does not pass, it becomes null and void. She owes this language to Wilton and once this is approved, she will give it to them. It was noted the School Board has not voted on the article yet. A question was raised why it was now 75% when discussion had been 70%. Ms. LaPlante responded it was based on how other districts did it. Once we know if it is moving forward we can fine-tune it. Superintendent added he thinks we got to that because we were looking to have 180 days. Discussion was had about the article and a question was raised if it had to be voted on every year. Ms. LaPlante responded the School Board wanted the language for a warrant article and if it passed, it could be folded into the budget subsequent years if they wanted to do that. Discussion was had that we would not have input on salary etc. in future years. Ms. LaPlante responded she would like to think these costs are looked at and discussed through the MOU each year but cannot say for sure. It was suggested to see the scale of what officers are paid especially for Lyndeborough who does not get a police officer out of it at all. Ms. LaPlante confirms it does not need to say it is specific for a year. Discussion was had regarding the difference in pay for a police officer and a teacher. Ms. LaPlante gave examples and indicated by the time you factor in NH Retirement, FICA etc. for a teacher they do become more costly depending on where they are on the salary scale. It was noted that it is weird we would cut teachers but add an officer. A discussion was had about reductions. Chairman Golding would not want to trade a teacher for an SRO, it is another reason it is a warrant article. When the survey went out, 60% of the people wanted us to look at it. Ms. LaPlante confirmed the SRO numbers are for a senior officer and we can't give them a ceiling because we do not know the applicants they will get. Mr. Lavallee voiced he was in a strategic planning meeting and a question was raised if the district has a need for a full time SRO and the Superintendent's answer was no. Superintendent responded he doesn't recall saying it but isn't surprised if he did. The measures we took with cameras, locks, staff and vigilance from administration etc. he has some questions if we can afford an SRO. He is on the fence with this. He has worked with SRO's in larger districts with 1500 kids not including the CTE kids. He understands the discipline and you are dealing with an unknown but he says either way we would still maintain those structures we have put in place regarding safety. We just wrote a grant for cameras at WLC and LCS. He will be 100% behind whatever decision is made and make it work. Ms. Cloutier-Cabral spoke about the SRO being different and a unique professional. They are trained to work with kids and develop relationships with them; we don't often know about the catastrophes with kids. We don't take putting one in lightly and she was convinced it was a great thing when Chief Olesen brought it to us and spoke of experiences in the Nashua district. All the districts she spoke to that have one had positive things to say that outweighed any negative, which were hardly any. She spoke of the incident at Dollar General and that being scary. Every bit helps. The officer is a part of the community and district, it would be positive. It was noted Lyndeborough does benefit also, anytime you see anything happening in surrounding towns they all go and they would know the families intimately. Spending money is difficult but the benefit we can get should be considered. Mr. Lavoie noted we are not voting on it now, the community said they want it and all this discussion will have to take place at district meeting. Tonight we just need to look at how to put it on the warrant that is our only responsibility. Ms. Lavallee noted we are just discussing it, we have not voted to move it forward. There have been times when an article was proposed and neither the Board nor Budget Committee recommended it but the town approved it such as the CBA. We have not voted to move the article forward yet. If we do then the Budget Committee can vote to support it or not. Chairman Jones confirms the Budget Committee will meet Monday, December 9; we want to wrap up the budget. He asked if the School Board would vote on it tonight. Chairman Golding responded we would discuss it and the other articles we may take up tonight. Chairman Jones asked the Budget Committee to use their time wisely and review the budget and we can decide on the warrants if it is OK with the committee on Monday. No objection heard. Mr. Vanderhoof questioned if the Board planned on doing anything with article 6, SPED capital reserve and adding funds to it as it has been a big discussion and feels it is an appropriate thing to do. Chairman Golding confirms he planned to discuss it.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public comment section of the agenda was read. Ms. LaPlante called out all the phone numbers and names joined in the meeting asking if they wanted to comment.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Lavallee and SECONDED by Ms. Mooney to adjourn the budget committee session at 8:20pm. Voting: all aye, motion carried.

VIII. BOARD BUDGET & WARRANT DISCUSSION

Ms. LaPlante reported regarding article 5, the capital reserve fund for Building/Equipment & Roadway is based on the current CIP. We are looking to fund the article at \$275,000. The Facilities Committee reviewed it and agreed on that number. Ms. Cloutier-Cabral spoke that there was some discussion of using the \$100,000 to purchase the plow for the truck and a riding floor scrubber and asked if the Board if there were any other things they may recommend. It was confirmed she is speaking about the

\$100,000 from last year's fund balance that went into the capital reserve account. Ms. Lavallee spoke that she thought it was presented to the taxpayers as an unexpected expense like the fire panel as it was a safety issue and has concern using those funds for projects like that is she feels it wasn't presented to be used that way. It makes her uncomfortable. It was also presented if we had a project in the CIP and for example, the quote was \$120,000 but when the actual came in it was higher and that money would be used to offset a project from the CIP. Ms. LaPlante checked to see if we could use those funds in that way and it is not an easy answer. In 1967 when the district was created, then when everyone combined again in 2009 we have to go back and find that source warrant article. The Articles of Agreement said whatever trust funds you have in place now become the property of the district. We need to go back through the Town of Wilton and the Town of Lyndeborough to see who had the original warrant and what the language of the warrant article was and any subsequent language. We need to do more digging and it dictates back to the Articles of Agreement. We have talked about the truck, based on the warrant article language now we can't put it in, it is not necessarily a piece of equipment, we can argue that it is but need the clarity of when it was created, are we talking about the equipment as building equipment or does it mean equipment to do our jobs. That is why we have to go back to that source article to find out what has changed etc. Discussion was had last year we asked for \$275,000 and this year we would be asking the same, would that be consistent. Ms. LaPlante responds it goes down after that. The way the CIP was done was strategic there is a policy in the works on how the CIP was created and that was part of the discussion. We didn't just want to dip into it for another funding source we wanted to be strategic with what goes into it. Right now, it goes out to 2030. Looking at the future when we have to replace roofs etc., the intent, as she understands it from district meeting was that the \$100,000 was for things we had to replace like the fire panel for example. If we didn't have the funds in our operating budget, this would give us a little bit of wiggle room to have that secondary money that is for that purpose. The intent as she understood it was not necessarily to use it to fund projects that are not on the CIP. The policy that was drafted and the way the CIP was created was the intent that no project could be added within the 3 years of the inception date, it really needed to be on for 3 years, it needed to be in excess of \$20,000. Her understanding of the warrant article was we told taxpayers it was to fund out years as well as an unforeseen need or have to move something up. Ms. Cloutier-Cabral spoke that that ask was about the potential of moving something up. At facilities, we discussed the need for a plow to help get things done, if we don't have the person available right away this allows Mr. Erb to hit that sooner, and the floor scrubber was to save time and labor working on the gym floor for example. That is why those 2 things were on our radar. A question was raised if those items are on the CIP. Ms. LaPlante responded those projects have not come up before. Mr. Allen spoke about when we built the CIP it goes out 25 years and was very transparent to the taxpayers about what was going on however, the issue with the \$100,000 is strictly how you do accounting. Because when we built the CIP, like we found out with the sound system, we don't have everything on there because we have not had a comprehensive CIP in so long. When we run into situations like we had the sewer pipe in the kitchen, anytime things like that happen we have 2 options. We assume we do not have it in the operating budget, which we shouldn't, we either go back to the towns people asking for more funding or we say we will not do this or that we told the taxpayers we would because this unplanned thing came up. When he presented the \$100,000 to the public it was to be used for emergencies, it will be for unanticipated expenses meaning something like the sound system is dead so that we don't have to go back to the towns people or we don't have to say, well we are not going to do the roads this year or the roof because the sewer pipe broke in the kitchen. He does not think it would be prudent to go back to them and say the \$100,000 we will just buy it down this year. He would personally have a hard time supporting that. If we just take the \$100,000 from last year to pay for \$100,000 of planned expenses next year that is not fiscally responsible. Ms. Cloutier-Cabral responded we were not looking to go shopping but is there anything that meets that we want to use that for this year and use it if needed or get it on record to say we don't need it. Chairman Golding agrees a plow or floor scrubber would not fall under that criteria as emergent. Mr. Allen added unless it broke; these are planned expenses that could be in the budget. Chairman Golding voiced these are items that were taken out of the budget. Ms. LaPlante confirms the plow was taken out of the budget and the floor scrubber we are looking to replace the existing one. Within our CIP, this year we replaced a section of the VCT tile at WLC and the goal is to get an upgraded unit to maintain the longevity of that tile. A question was raised if we could use the \$100,000 for a van or something like that, as it is a known issue. Ms. LaPlante responded the use of this capital reserve is very specific. We could create another capital reserve for transportation. Part of the discussion she had with the attorney was regarding the sound equipment and could that be funded as part of the CIP. We are looking at a more comprehensive discussion on what we can use it for. Ms. Cloutier-Cabral reviewed the biggest projects they are looking to do next year are the boiler at LCS, and maintenance such as pavement and crack sealing, we don't have any really big projects. Ms. LaPlante added we do. Within the CIP, we have \$60,000 planned to pave the road up to the school, \$30,000 to paint the outside stucco and metal portion of the WLC roof to prevent deterioration, \$55,000 for the 2nd phase to replace the VCT tiles, \$30,000 to replace the library office, teachers' lounge, carpets and funds to replace the boiler at LCS. We do have some heavy lifts coming up. Ms. Cloutier-Cabral confirmed we were not planning to use the whole \$100,000 when we talked about the plow and floor scrubber, it was just to have a conversation with the Board. Chairman Golding voiced based on the way we presented it he does not feel it is an appropriate use of funds. Ms. LaPlante asked if it was okay if she came back and included the information in her board report on the 17th or does it need to be a standalone agenda item. Chairman asked if that was okay with members and no objection heard. Ms. Cloutier-Cabral noted there was a lot of talk regarding lights and sound, using the \$100,000 was not the goal for that either and it is not on the CIP right now. The bottom line is the committee is comfortable recommending the \$275,000 for the warrant article.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Lavallee and SECONDED by Ms. Foss to accept warrant article #5 and appropriate to the Capital Reserve Fund for Building/Equipment & Roadway in the amount of \$275,000.
Voting: all aye, motion carried.

Chairman Golding spoke that article #6; SPED capital reserve was brought up during the Budget Committee meeting. He knows we are not looking to fund it this year but there was discussion. Ms. LaPlante confirms the current balance is \$326,000 because of interest we earned over the years. Chairman Golding asked if we should raise that to \$400,000 or \$500,000 due to rising cost. Mr. Pratt confirms the cheapest out of district tuition and transport is about \$80,000, average cost around \$120,000-\$130,000. He was asked for his opinion regarding how much should be in that fund and does he know what other districts our size have. Mr. Pratt does not know about other districts, he knows Concord has \$600,000 in theirs and they went through it in a year, the 2nd part is difficult for him to answer. He was asked if had 3 students move in would we deplete it, he responded yes. There are some parameters where we could hope to do rideshares etc. and not have to pay for transport twice. Chairman Golding asked if members were uncomfortable where it is or should it be raised? No discussion heard to increase it, no objection heard to not include it as a warrant article.

Discussion was had regarding the SRO. Wilton will use our language as a basis for their warrant. Because Wilton is deciding to add this as a warrant article at their town meeting, Chairman Golding feels we probably should add it to ours. Ms. Anzalone asked what if the cost is a little more or less. Ms. LaPlante responds she took the middle of the road cost, if it is higher than that we would have to take it out of the budget, it could be \$8,000 for example. She is looking to get the answer regarding the salary structure. Ms. Anzalone suggest we provide a job description and speak about the position not being just a cop standing outside, there is a lot more involved. There is special training etc. She spoke to an SRO, they are trained to deal with mental health issues almost like a counselor, and the more we share with the public the better. She wants it but wants to be clear to people about what they do. If we do this, we need a good presentation to share with people. Superintendent was asked when he planned to set up parameters for the SRO and when he does, that Ms. Anzalone should be involved. Ms. Anzalone volunteers. Superintendent spoke if the Board votes to support it, he doesn't know if the Board will identify who will present it and who will be the lead/s and part of that team, we want to be clear this is what the role is and the cost and this is the benefit. We want to have 3-5 slides so people can make an informed decision. Ms. LaPlante confirms Wilton did vote to put it on their warrant and once our Board votes to put it on the warrant we can proceed with meeting with them to finalize and discuss looking at that percentage to make sure what is estimated at 75% is what they are looking at and what the MOU will look like. Nothing would be finalized until everyone has voted on it. She hopes the School Board and Wilton will have enough facts to move forward; until we have that, it is our only stumbling block. Discussion was had if anyone had spoken with Lyndeborough and if they felt they would want to be the supporting town and what the cost would be. Ms. LaPlante responded we would have to look into that and how the jurisdiction applies. We are hiring this officer because 2 of our buildings are in the Town of Wilton and if the officer went to Lyndeborough, it would be for community policing and not to enforce any laws within the school. She is sure there would be a community agreement to provide services into Lyndeborough. For the jurisdiction, stuff is why we went through Wilton. We have not discussed what supplemental agreements need to be in place if we were to hire an officer from Lyndeborough. They have been involved and invited to the meetings. She would really need to look into the legalities if we could do that. Mr. Allen spoke that he doesn't view Lyndeborough as an outside agency; we have a school in Lyndeborough as well. Ms. LaPlante hears what he is saying but reiterated we would have to look into that. Nothing had come to them to do that. Mr. Allen voiced, what he is hearing is they would not have jurisdiction in Lyndeborough so the school in Lyndeborough would receive no benefit at all which presents a very different issue to Lyndeborough taxpayers. Ms. LaPlante would need clarification before she could support that because there are mutual agreements in place that they have authority. If the School Board wants, she can certainly look into it to see if we can hire an officer from another town. Mr. Allen noted he didn't like the "other town", we are Lyndeborough we are part of the district. Ms. LaPlante understands what he is saying but she has also worked on the municipal side and knows about police standards and trainings and how the law is applied to officers and oath of officers etc. it is that in mind that she wants to look at if we can hire an officer to come into another community to enforce. Mr. Allen spoke that situation exists anyway because we will be asking an officer to do enforcement in Lyndeborough whether it is a Lyndeborough or Wilton officer unless the Board's plan or administration's plan is to exclude LCS from this resource officer. Chairman Golding noted we did ask the Lyndeborough Police Chief and he did not want to be included. It was noted that it is more about what the Selectman want. Ms. Anzalone voiced she feels it is worth looking into if they can't go to LCS, it is pointless and maybe it would be cheaper to go through Lyndeborough. It is worth looking at. A question was raised if it is voted on does it become a permanent warrant article or is it just for one year. Ms. LaPlante responded it is her understanding the School Board wanted it on the warrant because it is a new position and funding source, she assumes if it passes and the School Board is satisfied, then it would be built into future budgets. She was asked if it would lock us into having that position. Ms. LaPlante responds no. Discussion continued including whether or not to pursue it with Lyndeborough, we need to do that before as it changes the dollar amount and may change the discussion. It would need to go to the Lyndeborough Selectman and see if it would be funded and at how much etc. Ms. Lavalley spoke that there are so many benefits of having and SRO but she is concerned because over the last years, we have had to make adjustments to the operating budget and do we have the financial ability to sustain the position. Mr. Post used to say we have to make sure we are getting the best return for our dollar and that would be the reason she would not support it. She worries about the ongoing cost to the district. Ms. Cloutier-Cabral was under the impression in all these conversations that regardless of the town they would have their mutual aid in all the buildings. The work to go through another Select Board is a lot and we need to hold down our end of the bargain, we said we would support it if Wilton would support it and for us to back pedal on it now, they did the work and now we would say wait we want to try it with Lyndeborough. She thinks we need to move forward on this end and get it started. Both Wilton and Lyndeborough police were in support even though the officer was not in favor of doing it. She thinks going to Lyndeborough is important but wants to

move forward with Wilton. Mr. Allen agreed based on the survey at the very least we have to put forth a warrant and let the community decide if they want an SRO. If we went with this as written and voted on it in the meantime continue if Lyndeborough said they have an officer who would love to do it is it possible to revisit this between now and the next meeting. Just putting forth a warrant doesn't mean we support it, if he does not see a solid plan he may speak against it himself at district meeting. We want to spend good money and utilize the money wisely. He asks if we can revisit it. Ms. LaPlante responded if the School Board supports a warrant to move forward with this position it helps us to figure out either with Wilton or Lyndeborough, there is still time to finalize whom the contract would be with. We have until February 8 or whenever the public hearing is. Discussion continued with some comfortable voting on it as written for purposes of contracting with the town of "blank" with "blank" funding until we figure that out. Ms. Anzalone would support it; she doesn't think Wilton would be upset if we went with Lyndeborough. Those officers are all part time and maybe it would not cost as much. Mr. Allen voiced, go with as written and if it needs amending we can do it down the road. Ms. LaPlante notes the cleanest way is to have a final vote on the language and if there is consensus we can do more work. It is not finalized until we have the cost and host agency. A suggestion was made to do a straw poll. Discussion continued if it is worth exploring with Lyndeborough. Superintendent asked for clarification if the Board is directing them to open the process with Lyndeborough similar to what we did with Wilton, and reaching out to Mr. Boland, Lyndeborough Town Manager and letting Mr. Germain, Town Manager in Wilton know. We would need to get on the Select Board agenda in Lyndeborough and do a presentation to them but would need clear direction from the Board soon. Mr. Lavoie spoke that he feels it would be best to work the way we attacked it and work with Wilton, next year we could explore it with Lyndeborough and decide what we want to do, if we even want to have an SRO. He thinks it would be rushing it to talk to Lyndeborough now.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Lavoie and SECONDED by Ms. Cloutier-Cabral to accept warrant article #7 (School Resource Officer) as written.

Voting: seven ayes; one nay from Mr. Allen, motion carried.

Ms. LaPlante voiced she will inform you of any changes due to the cost structure and will come back for a subsequent vote. We can go forward and discuss the MOU and any of those dynamics. She asked if the Board wanted her to send the email to the attorney to confirm the jurisdictional mutual aid. Chairman Golding confirms and there was no objection heard. Mr. Lavoie voiced you can talk to Lyndeborough and get the discussion going for down the road. Mr. Allen recommends sending them an email; he (Mr. Boland) asked him if he could answer some questions regarding the SRO next week.

Ms. LaPlante voiced there has been discussion but no directive on the WLC Performance Tech Committee. There has not been discussion of putting it in the budget, does the Board want to create a warrant article. Is it something we need to start focusing on? Discussion was had; including it should be a CIP item, as it is almost \$130,000 in total for lights and sound. Mr. Allen voiced he agrees it should be on the CIP. Ms. Cloutier-Cabral noted we talked about it at the committee meeting that it should be on the CIP but it needs to be established and it could not be pulled out for 3 years. It first needs a funding source. Discussion continued including it should be a petition warrant article by the Performance Tech Committee to gauge community support before we start. It was noted it was just one of those things that was not maintained over the years and now we will be stuck with a giant bill. Ms. Anzalone asked if that is our unofficial guidance, we need to let them know and what the deadline is. Ms. LaPlante responded February 6 at 3pm. It was noted they need 25 registered voters from Wilton and Lyndeborough. Ms. LaPlante added whatever they bring needs to be in their own words, we can't provide them any direction, and they need to have concrete information. Chairman Golding asked if anyone has anything to add regarding the budget discussion. None heard. He hopes the Budget Committee will have a number Monday and we can vote on the 17th.

IX. POLICIES

a. 1st Read

i. EBCH-Crisis Prevention and Emergency Response Plans

Ms. Lavalley reviewed this is the 1st reading; policy was last updated in 2010. The committee started working on this several years ago and were delayed because there were so many changes and policies that needed to be consolidated and some withdrawn. We added the reference to EBCH to satisfy the requirement in NH ED law 320-02-b3 that has to do with toxic chemicals and provisions prohibiting employees bringing in their own cleaning products. That is just one example of the many changes, which she can go through if anyone would like to hear them. None heard. She asked for any questions or comments, none heard. This policy will return for a 2nd reading.

ii. EBB-School Safety

Ms. Lavalley reviewed this is the 1st reading. There were changes in relation to some laws that were changed in reference to the last policy discussed. There were a number of changes including the titling of it and having to do with Homeland Security and responding to emergencies. She asked for any questions or comments, none heard. There is also language from our current policy JLI to make it more comprehensive. If this passes, we will bring forth the recommendation to withdraw JLI. She confirms it is a new policy with additional information combined. This policy will return for a 2nd reading.

iii. EBCG-Communicable and Infectious Diseases

Ms. Lavalley reviewed this is the 1st reading. This one policy will replace former identical sample policies JLCCA, IHAMC, and GBGAA. They all address communicable and infectious diseases but really only touch on HIV/AIDS. This new policy is

intended to apply to all communicable diseases. She asked for any questions or comments, none heard. This policy will return for a 2nd reading.

iv. EBCD-Emergency School and District Closings

This is the 1st reading. Our last update was in 2010 and combined 2 different policies in an effort to have fewer but more comprehensive policies. An update was legally required regarding distance education. We also added the section on emergency release. She asked for any questions or comments, none heard. This policy will return for a 2nd reading.

b. 2nd Read

i. KCD-Acceptance of Gifts

Ms. Lavallee reviewed there were no significant changes since the 1st read other than cleaning up some of the draft format on the crowdfunding one.

*A MOTION was made by Ms. Lavallee and SECONDED by Mr. Lavoie to accept policy KCD-Acceptance of Gifts as written.
Voting: all aye, motion carried.*

ii. DFGA-Crowdfunding

Ms. Lavallee reviewed there were no suggestions or significant changes since the 1st read.

*A MOTION was made by Ms. Lavallee and SECONDED by Mr. Lavoie to accept policy DFGA-Crowdfunding as written.
Voting: all aye, motion carried.*

iii. JLCD-Administering Medications to Students

Ms. Lavallee reviewed there were no significant changes since the 1st read.

*A MOTION was made by Ms. Lavallee and SECONDED by Mr. Lavoie to accept policy JLCD-Administering Medications to Students as written.
Voting: all aye, motion carried.*

c. Withdrawals

i. GBGAA-HIV/AIDS

Ms. Lavallee reports the next 3 policies are all related to the policy we will be adopting EBCG. GBGAA-HIV/AIDS, it is included in the new policy.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Lavallee and SECONDED by Ms. Foss to withdraw policy GBGAA-HIV/AIDS.

Ms. Lavallee AMMENDS her MOTION, SECONDED by Ms. Foss to withdraw policies, GBGAA-HIV/AIDS, JLCCA-HIV/AIDS, IHAMC-HIV/AIDS.
Voting: all aye, motion carried.

ii. JLCCA-HIV/AIDS

See above.

iii. IHAMC-HIV/AIDS

See above.

d. FYI Name Change

i. JLCC-Communicable Diseases to Head Lice/Pediculosis

Ms. Lavallee reported this is an FYI and no vote is needed. It is being recommended to change the name of this policy from Communicable Diseases to Head/Lice Pediculosis because that is what it addresses. She did review the content of the policy because it had not been changed in a while and it is still closely aligned with the NH School Nurses Association recommendations, the American Association of Pediatrics, and the National School Nurses Association because they try to minimize the health risk/detrimental effects of exclusion from school in accordance with state law. RSA 200-39. Just the title will change no other changes.

X. ACTION ITEMS

a. Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting

*A MOTION was made by Ms. Cloutier-Cabral and SECONDED by Ms. Anzalone to approve the minutes of November 12, 2024 as written.
Voting: all aye, motion carried.*

XI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

i. Budget Liaison

In Ms. Alley's absence, Chairman Golding asked the Superintendent and Business Administrator if there was anything that was not discussed tonight. Both replied no.

ii. Policy Committee

Ms. Lavallee reported the committee worked on the facilities policy and it is almost ready to move forward. It should come to the next meeting for the 1st read. We are working on emergency response and safety policies; we finished some tonight and will bring withdrawals in the future. Legislative updates are still being worked on. There are not as many this year as last. They held off on the athletics policy in relation to HB1205, because we are still waiting for clarification from the DOE and NH court system. Instead of going ahead and changing it only to change it again if courts decide differently than legislation we decided to hold off and make updates when final decision is made. There was a spring policy update this year and the majority of the changes had to do with Title IX, which is also related to BG1205. She will go over that again for any additional recommendations that she would bring forth to the committee. The next meeting will be either late December or early January because we had 2 Board meetings in December she thinks we may wait because it is a busy month for everyone on a personal level and since we have many policies coming to the Board, it should not be an issue waiting.

iii. Technology Committee

Chairman Golding reported that there was no quorum therefore no meeting.

iv. Facilities Committee

Ms. Cloutier-Cabral reported the committee met last night, it was productive and we went over the warrant article number and supported that. We discussed the projects that we have been discussing. The b-wing bathrooms are going to be put on hold while they are focusing on the art room. Our facilities staff is stretched super thin with all the things, you can look around and see all that they accomplished plus we are waiting on materials. The things we are looking at for recommendations on the CIP and maintenance tab we have talked about. We discussed unspent funds, how to use them and what is appropriate to use them for and adding a plow to the truck and a floor scrubber. Whether we do that with these funds or not it is something we are looking to do this year, having a plow for own truck would be useful and the scrubber we need to do anyway but having an updated one with better mechanics makes it more efficient and a good thing. We talked extensively about the light and sound project and we are really appreciative for what is going on with that committee and the work they are doing but for it to be on the CIP, it needs funding first and to be on for 3 years. It did bring up questions like who will maintain it, do we need electrical upgrades, would a contractor come with their own electrician etc. The stage is grandfathered in and would not meet code today. If we do these things does it change things and just because it is grandfathered, does it mean we should keep it that way. That is something the committee is working on. The lighting and sound may want to consider these things about electricians, do we need to change the stage etc. We think it would be beneficial to find out what it could cost to bring the stage up to code. Looking at the locker room, we are making some small moves since we reduced the scope. We are looking to get quotes from Castle Builders and Wetherbee has begun to map out the drain lines. They will return to do more of that work. They are mapping them out so we know how deep they are, the condition of the drains and if we need to make any changes and what would those be. We do not have a meeting scheduled because we don't really have anything to look at yet. We are bringing forward the warrant and are waiting on how things play out here and will schedule another meeting if necessary.

XII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public comment section of the agenda was read.

Mr. Jonathan Vanderhoof, Lyndeborough voiced that he is in support of the SRO he think it is a great thing to try at a bare minimum to get someone in here if you can and see how it works out. He thinks it could change the culture in the building. We heard from the Student Support Services Director talking about social, emotional issues being the number one issues they are dealing with here. He thinks that it doesn't take a leap to connect the two things that this could be a resource to help in that area as well and possibly help students who are dealing with those issues. The other thing is he bit his tongue during the meeting, he has really strong political views and it is no secret he is sure where his political views are based on the way he voted when he was on the Board and the way he votes when he is on the Budget Committee. To see board members and school administration step up on a soapbox and tell citizens that the reason their taxes are going up and the reason education funding is struggling it is because you are voting for the wrong people and you are sending the wrong people to those levels. To quote articles of state officials and throw your opinion in about what you think about what those state officials said how they are getting it wrong. He thinks it stepped over the line. Chairman Golding asked that he complain directly to the Superintendent because he is talking about an employee that spoke here this evening. Mr. Vanderhoof replied he would just talk about the Board then. He just does not think it is appropriate, he thinks anybody..., like he said, he wanted to step in and say stuff but he didn't think it was appropriate so he didn't. He thinks as a member of the public you could have saved 15 or 20 minutes whatever it was of that whole rabbit hole you went down and not done that. He would appreciate that it be kept under wraps.

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

XIII. SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Allen congratulated Ms. Bujak, his kids have her and love her, and she is a pillar of the school, well deserved. He appreciates administration, School Board, and Budget Committee; we have difficult discussions and don't always agree but we are able to discuss them, offer opinions and doesn't think that anyone here feels that they cannot offer their opinion and thinks those opinions even when they differ add value to the conversation we have with the district. He appreciates the School Board and Administration for providing that venue for us. He also would appreciate if we could keep the focus on the district.

Mr. Zavgren voiced there is a very strong relationship between state funding for education and property taxes in the town and he thinks that needs to be made very clear. It is like a teeter-totter, one side goes up and the other goes down and vice versa. Regardless of your political point of view if you elect people who cut state funding to public education, property taxes go up and he thinks that needs to be stated very clearly.

Ms. Anzalone congratulated Ms. Bujak, her boys had her, and she is awesome and love her. Ms. White spoke of a suggestion box, assuming nothing inappropriate shows up, she thinks it is a good idea. She saw the play Puffs, it was great and adorable. She echoes what Mr. Vanderhoof said she would appreciate future meetings not getting so political. It crossed the line because it was about who people voted for, there are a lot of reasons inflation goes up and you can't argue that.

Mr. Lavoie voiced that basketball starts this week!

Ms. Lavallee voiced that she loved the student advocating for programs and a suggestion box. She loves to get the report about what they are doing but to get suggestions is fabulous. She agrees with Mr. Allen, she loves that we can discuss things, be very respectful of one another even when we disagree, we have come a long way with the Board. She should have bit her tongue when she said people should be aware of this when they go to the ballot box, she can understand why people feel that it crossed the line but she also feels like providing factual information isn't necessarily political. It becomes political if you say you should do this or you should do that but if we are just providing information, educating people about how and why their taxes are being used to educate students. If you want to make it political, we can make it political. But at the end of the day she knows people on all different places along the spectrum of politics who don't understand and she thinks it is our duty to have people understand that and suppressing that information could be considered political because the agenda is to not to be 100% transparent. She feels that although some people could feel that was very political, her purpose of saying that is not to say you should vote this way or you shouldn't vote this way, it is to provide the information and then the people can decide whatever they want. We as Board members can decide and the public can decide but if there is a lack of understanding it does create a dynamic where if people support the public schools and they want us to stay open and they want us to be funded but at the same time we have retired people in the community who cannot afford their taxes at the local level it does ultimately affect us. That is why she thought it was important because at the end of the day the money that goes into the state education trust fund, which comes from statewide property taxes, business and tobacco taxes, sweepstakes funds, and tobacco settlement funds, money from towns that have more property value, they are collecting more property taxes that goes into that fund and then is distributed. So a town like Lyndeborough, where she know people have lived there their entire life, generations upon generations and then they can't afford their property taxes but at the same time they went to our public schools, they like our public schools, they have a vested interest, they are confused when their property taxes become too much to bear. She does not think it is inappropriate for us to explain it. We should not bias the explanation, we should explain it in an unbiased fashion so people can make their own mind up but she does think it is important, it behooves us to share the information.

Mr. Allen voiced, we have to share it all, and the state requires us to provide all those things. Ms. Lavallee responded it is not just the budgeting that affects how the property taxes go up it is also from a policy committee perspective that is what she is going over. They make it mandatory that we provide a program; we have to fund that program so it is not just the dollar amount that they vote on in Concord that affects us. They voted for example, SPED, they voted in that it is now mandatory that we do dyslexia testing on students and she thinks it is a fabulous thing we are doing that. It had bipartisan support. She thinks it's great but at the end of the day that can affect our SPED budget because we can potentially identify more students, which can raise that. It is a balancing act and like she said, she apologizes for saying people should be aware of this when they go into the voting booth because that did cross the line but she does think it is important for people to understand how public education is funded because she knows a lot of people that really support public education, they grew up in public education, they want to see us have a successful school in our town but they don't understand the dynamics regarding funding.

Ms. Cloutier-Cabral congratulated Ms. Bujak, who teaches 7th and 8th grade which is a unique time in growth and development and she is uniquely able to see the rewards than most. She has been here a long time and has been impactful. She could see changes in her kids when she had them. She really loves what she does and it shows. She is so grateful for her. Ms. Cloutier-Cabral informed the group she will not be running for office again and want people to come out, become interested, and learn what it is to be on the Board. She has learned so much and have been very lucky to work with and get to know so many people, and all the people in this room have changed her life and how she experienced things. She encourages people to run and looks forward to cheering you on!

Ms. Foss voiced that she thinks it is important for people to understand that when their taxes go up it is not always because of what is happening in this room. Sometimes we have to follow the law and when it comes down from Concord, it drastically

affects what we can do. She is appreciative that some of the members took the time to state that, it is in the minutes and next time there is any comments about how high our budget is, it would probably be a good idea if they went in and read some of these minutes. She thinks it is hard to understand how what happens in Concord affects the bottom line down here. But she thinks people need to know it, it's part of education, if the wordsmithing on the fly is not always comfortable, she thinks it's a small price to pay for people to be educated about why the taxes go up. She thanked Ms. LaPlante; she thought she did a really great job tonight. She is very appreciative to Ms. LaPlante when she has questions about how things are said publically either through a newspaper article or something that is put out on a public radio station that she is not rude about it and didn't come out and ask for somebody's resignation. You didn't come in and say you were going to get 1000 people to come in to get a resignation and drop it on someone's lap. She thinks that is one of the rudest things she has ever seen happen. She thinks she did a good job being objective and agreed with her 100%, she thinks it is very complicated when you look at these SPED costs. Thank you very much.

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

i. Review the Nonpublic Minutes

A MOTION was made by Ms. Anzalone and SECONDED by Mr. Allen to enter Non-Public Session to review the non-public minutes, RSA 91-A: 3 II (A) (C) at 9:49pm.

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

RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

The Board entered public session at 9:54pm.

A MOTION was made to seal the non-public session minutes RSA 91-A: 3 II (A) (C) by Mr. Lavoie and SECONDED by Mr. Allen.

Voting: all aye, motion carried.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by Ms. Anzalone and SECONDED by Mr. Zavgren to adjourn the Board meeting at 9:54pm.

Voting: all aye, motion carried.

*Respectfully submitted,
Kristina Fowler*