

**WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE  
FACILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Monday May 1, 2023  
Florence Rideout Elementary School-Library  
6:00 p.m.**

Videoconferencing: [meet.google.com/oid-ghda-mgy](https://meet.google.com/oid-ghda-mgy)

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**I. CALL TO ORDER** at 6:02 pm. Board members in attendance: Geoffrey Allen (Chair) and Tiffany Cloutier-Cabral. Administrators in attendance: Peter Weaver (online), Kristie LaPlante, and Buddy Erb. Budget Committee members in attendance: Jonathan Vanderhoof and Leslie Browne. Community members in attendance: Fran Bujak. Public in attendance: Tatiana Franko and Mark Chamberlain. Absent: Stephanie Kirsch

**II. APPROVE MEETING MINUTES:** Mr. Erb asked that his name be spelled correctly; Erb, not “Erbb”. Ms. LaPlante asked that “FRES” be included to specify which heating elements she was stating weren’t in the CIP. Motion made by Ms. Cloutier-Cabral to accept minutes as amended. Second by Mr. Allen. Motion carried.

**III. ELECT VICE CHAIR:** Motion made by Mr. Allen to nominate Ms. Cloutier-Cabral as Vice-Chair. Second by Ms. Cloutier-Cabral. Motion carried.

**IV. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN & CRF:** Mr. Allen discussed the sample CIP policies submitted by Mr. Allen and Mr. Bujak. Mr. Vanderhoof asked why individual items were on the CIP. Mr. Allen stated that he would rather hold individual CIP items for a later date but first discuss the formatting of the CIP to increase transparency.

Mr. Vanderhoof asked what he was looking for. Mr. Allen stated he was looking for something that was more transparent with regards to budgeting, fund balances, and maturation dates so the community could clearly understand what the budget looks like. Mr. Vanderhoof responded that if the original document were viewed, the individual cells could be clicked on and the formula would be apparent.

Mr. Allen stated that when viewed, the budget merely looks like it is a passthrough. When asked for clarification by Mr. Vanderhoof, Mr. Allen stated that it appears the money is spent in the same year it is raised, meaning that no money is budgeted and retained for larger future projects, is that because it isn't allowed or we just don't do it? Ms. LaPlante stated that it has been a passthrough recently, but the goal is to move to budgeted funds for larger projects. Mr. Vanderhoof stated that it changed recently. Mr. Allen stated that he finds the current document to be confusing, even though he is experienced in budgeting and CIPs. He thinks it would be easier for the community to follow if it had maturation dates on projects, current project balances, and funds raised for projects. Mr. Vanderhoof said he views both formats to be the same. Mr. Allen stated that the current format doesn't show the budgeted amount and any fund balances for the project. It simply shows the funds needed for that year and then the same amount in appropriation. Rather than budget for the total project, they divided the roof project into 8 sections completed over the course of 8 years. Mr. Allen further explained that this doesn't make sense to him, since it is inefficient and costs the taxpayer more money in the long run. Why not just budget the funds and complete the entire project at once?

Mr. Bujak clarified that the funds weren't available to do the project so it was split up. He said it was done this way because at the time the committee didn't want to deal with multiple warrant articles for multiple projects. He said we may want to review that, since now we may have trouble asking the towns for large sums for these projects. He said past boards chose not to update this. He said they have chosen not to retain money for the district to complete these projects. It instead goes back to the towns. He said the school board and budget committee hasn't properly funded the budget and left items out of the budget that needed to be done. He cited the gym windows as an example. He stated that this has cost the taxpayers money.

Mr. Allen agreed and stated that this is what he's trying to change. He cited rotten siding at school as an example.

Mr. Bujak stated there wasn't a complete list of projects to fund them all accurately.

Mr. Allen asked Ms. LaPlante to explain what she thinks it should look like. Ms. LaPlante said we need to get to a document and funding philosophy that allows us to budget and get caught up. We haven't done that. She said we can have a warrant article at the end of the year to deposit unexpended fund balance directly into the next year's capital reserve fund. Mr. Allen agreed, and clarified that it is money raised and budgeted, not really extra or leftover. It was raised for that specific purpose and carried over. Ms. LaPlante agreed, and clarified using the correct terminology for a district budget.

Mr. Vanderhoof disagreed and stated that he doesn't understand why people are saying things aren't funded and he thinks the CIP isn't built. He believes that method is less transparent and has zero tax impact. Mr. Allen said he thinks they are saying the same thing. Mr. Vanderhoof said he disagrees and it sounds like I'm just trying to raise money to have extra money at the end of the year to use for things that aren't stated to the taxpayer. Mr. Allen said that isn't the case. We intend to have line items for everything budgeted for, and the funds raised for future projects will be line items stating what the funds are for, how much will be raised each year, and when the funds will be spent.

Mr. Vanderhoof questioned how the warrant article would work. Ms LaPlante explained that the warrant article would be annual and list what each dollar in the warrant article was assigned to. She understands Mr. Vanderhoof's concern, but feels that if we have clearly earmarked line items it will be transparent to the public. Mr. Allen agrees.

Mr. Vanderhoof disagreed and thinks we should just raise the money we need for that year in the year it is spent.

Mr. Bujak said we do have a CIP, we just don't have the intestinal fortitude to follow it. He said this is the first year we've put any money into a maintenance fund. When questioned about the total budget numbers for a specific term, he said paving, roofing, boilers, etc are all large budget

items that should be planned for and we aren't. He stated with just the roof alone, we are 10 years into a 20 year roof with no money budgeted for it.

Mr. Vanderhoof said it sounds like you are advocating for a very large bank account to be sitting there waiting for projects to come due.

Mr. Bujak said all he is advocating for is we do what the taxpayers asked us to do. He said if you look at the CRFs for Wilton and Lyndeborough they are quite large for future projects. We need to get caught up and do what the town and board voted on. He said when and how much they are funded depends on what policy the school board adopts.

Mr. Allen asked for Mr. Weaver's input. Mr. Weaver said it sounds like we are all saying the same thing, but it feels like we are getting stuck and we need to look at the policy.

Mr. Allen said he would like to ask Ms. LaPlante to prepare her version of what she believes the CIP and schedule should look like for the next meeting, if that isn't too much. Ms. LaPlante said she would do that.

Mr. Vanderhoof said what is needed changes every year. He said we just need to have the money when it is due, not a huge bank account.

Mr. Allen said we are discussing different accounting philosophies and he'd really like to see what Ms LaPlante's philosophy is.

Mr. Allen said he feels like we're talking in circles and let's discuss Ms LaPlante's suggestion at the next meeting.

Ms Cloutier-Cabral agreed, and said we just need to be very careful that if we make a change, we let the public know. Mr. Allen said he believes this shift will be for the next budget season since this budget is set. Ms Cloutier-Cabral brought up the boilers as an example, and said if things like that change it needs to be a deliberate notice to the community. Mr. Allen agreed. He stated that without objection, he'd like to move to the policy.

**V. CIP POLICY:** Mr. Bujak stated he used sample policies and created one that fits our district. Mr. Allen stated he's comfortable having Mr. Bujak explain it, then bring it forward for actual discussion at the next meeting. It would show impact on tax rate, CIP funding schedules, board roles and responsibilities, etc. Mr. Vanderhoof wanted to ensure that we discussed the change in tax rate, not the tax rate. There was discussion what the change would show and it was clarified that the operating budget is what is shown, then each warrant article shows its impact.

Mr Allen asked if Ms Browne had any comments. She stated the policy should include 2 budget committee members, not just one.

Mr. Allen asked if anyone had objection to putting this on the agenda for the next meeting, after the committee has had time to review it.

Ms LaPlante asked what the trigger mechanism is for budget funding and how that is managed. Using the municipal CIP as an example, how are the funding amounts and schedule determined? Mr. Chamberlain said that we assumed future cost, then added 3% each year over the span of funding. We look at market costs yearly and adjust accordingly.

Mr. Allen carried the policy discussion to next meeting.

**VI. PUBLIC COMMENT:** Ms Browne asked about the scope of the track project and what the status is. Ms LaPlante stated they are waiting to hear back from the vendor to discuss details. Mr. Chamberlain agreed that the roof project should be budgeted. He stated part of the problem is the board has lacked transparency, which makes the public leery of approving money for projects. He stated that will be an uphill battle to overcome past transgressions so the board needs to be very transparent and make things very understandable to the public.

Mr. Allen asked Ms LaPlante what she thinks about having separate CRFs for larger projects. Ms LaPlante stated she dislikes that idea and it could tie the board's hands if the community votes down a warrant article for a vital facilities need.

Mr. Allen asked Mr. Weaver if he had anything to add, or any community members online.

VII. **ADJOURNMENT:** Ms Cloutier-Cabral motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:14 pm. Mr. Allen seconded. Motion passed.