

# WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BUDGET COMMITTEE

Location: WLC – Media Room: 7:00 P.M.

## October 10, 2012 FINAL MINUTES

*Members Present: Chair Don Davidson, Leslie Browne, Karen Grybko, Cary Hughes, Ellen Pomer, Mark Whitehill, Fran Bujak (WLC School Board Rep.), Secretary Dawn Tuomala.*

Attendance: School Board Member(s): Harry Dailey, Matt Ballou, Francis Bujak  
And Interim Superintendent Dr. Donald LaPlante, Principal Brian Bagley, Vice Principal Sue Ballou and Director of Guidance Mandy Kovaliv

The Agenda was as follows:

1. Call Budget Committee Meeting to Order – in Media Center
2. September 19, 2012 Minutes Review and Approval
3. Public Comments
4. Brief updates from the Sub-Committees:
  - a. Facilities Sub-Committee – Leslie Browne & Mark Whitehill
  - b. Negotiations Sub-Committee – Cary Hughes & Ellen Pomer
  - c. School Board Rep.
5. WLC Scheduling Format
6. Discussion of Budget Committee Members on the Negotiations Committee Other Business
7. Other Business
8. Adjourn

### 1. Call Budget Committee Meeting to Order – in Media Center

Chairman Davidson called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

### 2. September 19, 2012 Minutes Review and Approval

Perform a global search to change any Jeff to Geoff; Also Page 1 line 22 Change Bull to Bill.

***Motion: To approve the minutes as amended was made by Cary seconded by Leslie, 4 yes 1 abstention; Motion carried.***

### 3. Public Comments – none at this time.

### 4. Discuss updated information/feedback from all the various Sub-Committees:

- a. **Facilities Sub-Committee – Leslie Browne & Mark Whitehill**  
Will Meet next Monday, October 15, 2012.
- b. **Negotiations Sub-Committee – Cary Hughes & Ellen Pomer**  
They haven't met yet.
- c. **School Board Rep.**

The allergy policy was discussed and they now have a policy in place. There was a date set in December to prepare the mechanics behind that. There was a briefing from Seamans on what they could offer in a contract regarding school improvements. The goals for the permanent Superintendent were discussed along with the potential staffing plan. NH school board will be doing the superintendent search.

No actions have been taken yet in regards to the plan. There were concerns raised about having one Principal and about all of the fifth grades going to FRES. Concerns about class

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size led to a discussion regarding the actual room size therefore this needs to be reviewed more thoroughly. The actual class room size needs to be taken into account to satisfy State requirements; they require 30 square feet of space per student in each classroom. Many of FRES classrooms are only about 550 square feet which is below the 900 square feet. There are 44 to 45 students in grades 2 through 5 which would be 22 to 25 classroom size if combined. This year the total of all of the kindergarten classes combined total 50 students which is a significantly higher number of students than anticipated. This would be 25 students per classroom if combined and divided into two first grade classes. They will have to look at all options taking into account all factors that the initial study didn't consider.

At the next School Board meeting they will discuss the Principal reduction. They will need more information before any decisions can be made. They question what are the implications at LCS without a Principal? Then they will look at what the real savings are.

There will be a savings just by combining the schools with all of the same grades at the same school even though this might still result in 3 classrooms for each grade. It could be looked at as a phased step approach. To create a better balance of the number of students within each grade would result in a better learning experience. A larger classroom a FRES might be able to be created by knocking out a wall. Failing to meet the State requirements would result in undesirable effects, such that we could loose state aide or have the state come in to inspect the system. The quality of the school still needs to be maintained by keeping the number of students lower than the maximum 25 students. All of the grades are presently averaging out to 45 students for each grade. The biggest difference between LCS & FRES is that there is on average of only 6 students per grade at LCS and 18 per class in FRES. This can be spread out evenly with 14 in each of 3 classrooms. This could only be accomplished if they are under one roof. Just having the flexibility of the program will increase a potential cost savings to the taxpayers. There should be sessions with the public to have formal discussions about the possibility of the proposed warrant article.

As of October 1<sup>st</sup> there were a total of 651 students in the District. Last year on October 1<sup>st</sup> there were 653 students in the District. FRES had 241 last year, now 221; LCS had 83 now 68; but these numbers reflect the placement of 6<sup>th</sup> grade to WLC which totals 45 students. The Middle school had 96 students now there are 147; In the High School there were 224 now there are 215. Dr. LaPlante will provide the Budget Committee with these written results. He also stated that we are a member of a group the will enable us to get a free update for an enrollment analysis study and also a free SPED Trend analysis study on a yearly basis.

### **5. WLC Scheduling:**

Principal Brian Bagley, Mandy Kovaliv, Director of Guidance & Sue Ballou, Assistant Principal came to give answers to our list of questions. Principal Bagley will gladly answer any of the Budget Committee's questions at any time.

- 1. What is the State graduation credit law?** The state requires 20 credits but WLC holds a higher standard by requiring completion of 24 credits. Those credits shall be spread out between English (4), math (3), science (3), social studies (3), Art, Music, Industrial Arts or Family Consumer Science (1.5), PE (1.5), Computer (0.5) and Health (0.5) along with 6 electives and 1 credit for senior project which was a very positive addition to our school system. The students are also required to serve 24 hours of community service.

By end of each year the students need to accumulate a total of 6 credits to be on schedule to graduate. Last year the drop out was zero students and 80% of the students went on to

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4 year program. There are new performance measures to measure a schools performance. The new State standards roll together test scores, dropout rate, college etc. When comparing WLC high school with others in State only 4 other schools, Hanover Lebanon & Oyster River and 1 other had a higher level then WLC had. This high school has turned out a quality student.

2. **How are elective classes chosen to complete 6 credits of electives?** The Department heads meet with their teachers and discuss classes they want to or can run as electives along with the list of regular classes, honors or AP courses. Then the students choose their top 4 electives they want or need. The highest number of checks marks for a class determines which ones are run. The Final Step is to go into arena scheduling which is when you find out that only 2 students have signed up for the class.

Everyone gets involved in the process as it is a difficult process to schedule for everyone's needs. Since a Social Studies teacher has been removed, this has affected the electives. Other factors that affect the scheduling would be a high failure rate in a class requiring many students to take the class a second time. The number of classes offered is dictated by the number of periods and how to fill in all of the holes. The Modified Block Scheduling has worked out the best, especially for the at risk students. Monday, Tuesday and Friday are regular days. The Long Block days are Wednesdays and Thursdays which means that they get a break from each class one day a week.

3. The Class size limit has a maximum of 25 students but AP, honors and electives are often below the minimum size of 5. If there is less than the 5 students then they have to decide to continue or to eliminate the class. Success at WLC is connected to the student teacher ratio. At WLC the students are names, not numbers, versus at some of the larger schools where the students, especially at risk students, are not as well-known and can get lost within the system.

Presently there are 8 to 11 students going to Milford Technology and Mascenic schools. They are taking a wide range of classes ranging from business, machining and marketing. Students go to Mascenic for automotive and firefighter. At this time we are falling short of the quota on the number of students that Milford would take. The State has been withdrawing the funding for transportation making things more difficult and expensive.

4. Curriculum for grades 6 to 12 belong to performance plus; teachers map classes to the state standards creating diary maps.
5. The Seer period is like a study hall but it is used in a way that the teachers can help those in need. Students can search out the teacher when they need help. Additionally it provides a time for the different clubs to meet and community members to come in. Also during this time, the Guidance can meet with the students about PSAT exams, SAT exams and colleges, etc. without having them being taken out of their regular classes. The Seer Period is at the end of the day and at the same time everyday. Every teacher is available all at the same time to help all of the students, and it works out great. Since it is at end of the day, the kids going to a game can be released early especially if they have to travel long distances. Last year 6 seniors might not have graduated if they couldn't have gotten the help they needed during the Seer time. All 6 students graduated but if they were in another school district they would have fallen through the cracks and not graduated.

### **6. Discussion of Budget Committee Members on the Negotiations Committee**

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The Budget Committee members can participate on the Negotiations Committee up until negotiations begin, if they are closed hearings. Negotiations can be in the open if agreed upon by both parties. The upcoming negotiations this year will be with the support staff. At this point in time they haven't indicated that they wish to negotiate a new contract. Around the State, Open Negotiations are permissible but no one has ever done it in the open. Open negotiations would significantly alter the ground rules. The School Board and Teacher Union usually have a ground rule that says there will be no release of any of the particulars during the bargaining session to the Public but only to their constituent bodies.

It has always been hard to get to the temporary agreement (TA). We could try to get the Teachers Union to agree that the School Board constituent was the public. This way there could be a periodic release of information to speed up the process and clean up negotiations. What you don't want to do is to spend 4 months just laying out the ground rules before getting to the negotiations itself. If accomplish, then the Negotiations Committee could share and then get the thoughts of School Board and Budget Committee.

Since the School Board are the ones charged with the negotiations, Mr. Davidson asked Mr. Bujak to bring the role of Budget Committee in regards to contract negotiations up at the next School Board meeting. As a starting point, what would the School Board think it is and what would they be willing to consider going forward and more importantly what would be the release of information. Legal advice could be obtained for this question.

Mr. Bujak asked legally how could the Budget Committee be separated from the rest of the public and what would we do with the information. If the Budget Committee becomes involved then the School Board Negotiation Committee could potentially be negotiating with 2 different entities, the Teachers Union and the Budget Committee at the same time. The Budget Committee can't even come up with a decision now, it would be even more difficult under a timeline to come up with a decision within one meeting. The School Board would need to know our goals before going into the negotiations.

During the last negotiations there were a number of Public Forums held prior to negotiations asking the Towns what they felt was important to them. It was identified that they wanted to compensate those that had more degrees etc. That was one of reasons the negotiations went the way they did because this was information that had been gathered beforehand.

Prior to the next three year teacher contract negotiations, there will probably be similar information gathering sessions trying to ascertain a true representation of the community's requirements and the Budget Committee would also be involved in the gathering process. The School Board will probably sit down with the Budget Committee in a Joint meeting prior to negotiations specifically for input regarding the contract.

Mr. Davidson stated that there are huge financial implications in the contracts and it is volatile, it is always changing throughout the process. There are guidelines going in but during the process there is a whole lot of give and take. One concern for the Budget Committee during the last negotiations was that there was such a short period of time leaving little opportunity to digest the end result prior to having to make an assessment as to whether or not to accept or not accept the contract and then to take it to the floor. If we had been involved in the process and kept up to date, this might have helped. It is hard to make an educated assessment in a short period of time. The question is, what is allowed by the law, or is it cut and dry or are there any other options. It is understood that the School Board will take the input gathered in the beginning and go off to negotiate in good faith. The goal is to try to be better informed this time around.

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Mr. Bujak stated that last time the negotiations were begun under a different board configuration, but that from start to finish, they did exactly what you would want them to do. The exception being that the newly formed Budget Committee didn't know exactly what was happening. From the start there were three or four must have required goals, at the top of the list was a not to exceed amount for the total compensation of this contract. In the end, the focus was on the wage lines but during the negotiations the focus was on the entire behind the scenes numbers that comprise the whole not to exceed number. Every single item in the negotiations had a dollar number behind that item associated with it, all of these numbers needed to be incorporated within the total amount.

Prior to the Support Staff negotiations there should be a meeting between the Negotiations Committee and the Budget Committee so that we can submit our input to the group. A copy of the contract is on the SAU website under [Human Resources](#). We should all read through the existing contract so that we know what was involved, what the current compensation is and then we can build from that. Compare us with similar sized school districts what are their benefits etc. Recommend that we do research pending what happens with union then we will schedule a discussion.

## **7. Other Business**

Dr. LaPlante attended the Law conference today, he stated that there will not be any building aid funding for any building project approved prior to June 2013. There will be a strict timeline and process to be followed; if we move forward, then our filing would be some time in September, 2014. The Building aid will be distributed on need; based on the application submitted; aid will not automatically be received. Many different areas will be reviewed at including a **full** set of architectural drawings done prior to any aid given. The legislature appropriated 50 million dollars for building aid. The State has a backlog of \$340,000,000 in previous projects. Each year they will be making partial payments of \$44.3 million to the previous projects out of the \$50,000,000 resulting in an anticipate backlog until the year 2028 before they will be caught up. They will reserve only about \$6 million in aid for new projects supplying only 30 to 60% of the projects total costs based upon the scored application system. They will give 80% of the money up front and the remaining 20% at the end so that the Town's will be bonding for less money, not the total amount as they do now. The kindergarten class has a 20 year commitment to stay in LCS.

Future Meetings will target November 7<sup>th</sup> as a joint meeting for a presentation of the first draft of the budget. If this is not possible then it can be backed up to November 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup>.

## **8. Adjourn**

The next meeting will be announced. A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Mark and seconded by Leslie; all in favor. The School Budget Committee was adjourned at 8:48 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Tuomala, Secretary