

# **WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BUDGET COMMITTEE**

**Location: Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative School – Media Room: 7:00 P.M.**

## **December 12, 2012 FINAL MEETING MINUTES**

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

Attendance:

School Board Member(s): James Button

Interim Superintendent Dr. Donald LaPlante, Business Administrator Lisa Ambrosio, Principal Brian Bagley

The Agenda was as follows:

1. Call Budget Committee Meeting to Order – in Media Center
2. November 28, 2012 Minutes Review and Approval
3. Public Comments
4. Brief updates from the Subcommittees:
  - a. Facilities Subcommittee – Leslie Browne & Mark Whitehill
  - b. Negotiations Subcommittee – Cary Hughes & Ellen Pomer
  - c. School Board Rep. – Bill Ball
  - d. Superintendent Search Committee – Leslie Browne
5. Review of 2013/2014 Budget
6. Other Business
7. Adjourn

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

Chairman Davidson called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

### **2. November 28, 2012 Minutes Review and Approval**

***Motion: To approve the minutes as written was made by Mr. Whitehill seconded by Ms. Browne, all in favor; Motion carried unanimously.***

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

### **4. Brief updates from the Subcommittees:**

#### **a. Facilities Subcommittee – Leslie Browne & Mark Whitehill**

The Subcommittee talked about what to do with the elementary schools. They need to go to the School Board with a guideline for where they want to be in the next 5 years. They are looking at the steps it would take to get to both elementary schools into one school. At this point the best plan is to rebuild FRES.

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The plans that were previously prepared for the FRES addition will be used as a starting point. Adjustments and updates will be made according to discussions they've had to date. They have a preliminary estimate of about \$8.8 million to do the project. The original plan for the addition was projected to cost \$7.9 million. The proposal upgrades FRES gym portion of the school. The outside walls of the old 1800's main building will remain but the interior will be completely gutted and reworked. The 1930 and 1950 buildings will be demolished, replacing them with the new building. The District wasn't a complete Coop at the time the FRES plans were drawn up so LCS wasn't included in the original concept. They also talked about purchasing property elsewhere but after reviewing the numbers it is apparent that this isn't a viable option. They will provide a comparison between the options.

The School Board will need feedback from the public regarding whether or not they will support the combination of the elementary schools, moving students from one Town to another. Are the Towns ready to support this approach? When LCS received grant money from the State to build the Kindergarten addition, there was a condition that the Kindergarten remains at LCS for 20 years. A waiver can be applied for to be exempt from this requirement so the district wouldn't have to pay that money back to the State.

The Honeywell contract is signed so they will begin with their energy audit very soon. No Budget Warrants will be proposed for this year.

A letter came from LCS Principal about all of the proposed changes going on and discussion of combining the students in one school and one principal for next year. It was phrased that people need to get involved and attend the School Board Meetings. There needs to be filters in place especially since the letter went out before the Subcommittee had even met. When and if the School Board actually makes the decision to head in that direction then nothing would be consolidated until at least 2016. They would reduce staff by using attrition and not by layoffs. There was discussion about using this type of forum.

**b. Negotiations Subcommittee – Cary Hughes & Ellen Pomer**

They have only met briefly after a School Board Meeting to set a date to start the process. On January 2<sup>nd</sup> they will start with the support staff. All participated in the strategy session. If Mr. Hughes wishes to withdraw from being a Budget Representative to the Subcommittee then he can state so to Mr. Davidson, then a new member can be appointed.

**c. School Board Rep. – Fran Bujak**

Mr. Bujak stated that at the last School Board meeting there were 3 financial items addressed. The first deals with the Librarian position which the Board has decided shall be made to a full time position. Mr. Bagley agrees that this is important to do especially in the current environment. The Program has suffered greatly with the loss of the position and it is not what is best for the school. Last year the position was at 1 day a week and this year it has been increased to 2 days a week but it has become very apparent that it is important to go back to full time. Only part of a Media Specialist position checks books, most importantly they collaborate with teachers and help students with their projects. It has been shown that a full time Media Specialist helps to dramatically increase testing scores. Approximately 350 to 400 students regularly access the Library and it is always full. There are 10 to 14 whole classes per week that come in just to use the computers.

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NEASC accreditation requires a special report that is due on Jan 2<sup>nd</sup>. To date they haven't been informed about the reduction of the Librarian position. We will probably be put on warning status without a full time Librarian. A requirement is that School resources are integrated into the curriculum, providing materials and staffed to be responsive to the students' needs. This will be one standard that we aren't going to be able to meet. By increasing this position back to full time the impact to the budget will be an increase of \$42,202 which includes all of the benefits. Presently, others are giving up their plan periods to cover the library for the other 3 days, but they aren't certified to be in there. A Librarian or Media Specialist are one in the same. Today they are not only trained in the Library but also in electronics. They teach whole classes how to find information on the web and then how to weed it out and tell if the information is good, what is real and what is not. They didn't realize the depth of the position and that now it will now become a major problem with accreditation.

The second issue is the Principal's position that will net a decrease of \$71,971 to the budget. Negotiations for a head teacher at LCS will reduce this number further. There were discussions in the fall but the School Board did not take an official vote on the issue. They decided that only 5 to 9 people shouldn't be the ones to decide this and that there should be an official ballot for the voters to make the decision. The only decision the School Board made was to have the Superintendent to develop a budget that would reflect having only one elementary principal. It was pointed out that the taxpayers approved the budget last year which was without the principal position. The School Board decided to keep the position this year by funding this position from other areas within the budget. They have some concern to let the voters speak on this especially since in the past they voted to be in place.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> issue discussed was in regards to the work that needs to be done on FRES with who and how to pay for it. They talked about whether or not they should look at creating a Capital Reserve account for each elementary school from the unexpended funds for either building construction or renovation. They discussed the split being 70/30 for each Town.

**d. Superintendent Search Committee – Leslie Browne**

No updates, no meetings since they were able to do all discussions by online interviews. There are 2 applicants so far. Next meeting will be sometime in January.

**5. Review of 2013/2014 Budget**

The current Budget Committee budget is V2. The Librarian position won't go in until the Budget Committee votes on it. So at present the School Board Budget is different than the Budget Committee's budget. The Principal will be a separate warrant article so it will be on it's own with a dollar amount associated with it.

There is not an anticipated time table yet for the raises that are not included within this budget. There should be as much information included in the budget before a vote is taken. Insurance should be a matter of law. There will be another joint meeting to discuss all of these matters. It works well when we have worked together. Need to get the health insurance numbers and the School Board needs to take up the raises before a final budget number can be determined.

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Information was given at the last meeting about affordable health care, so they need to know where the Budget Committee is leaning. Presently the insurance is about \$90K and if they offer similar to the teachers than it would be \$250K. If we were to avoid the insurance and pay the penalties to Washington then we aren't really getting anything for our money. Then the \$3,000 would just go into the general fund that supports the exchange. They are polling the employees with a majority presently being covered by a spouse so the insurance might not be that bad. If everyone took the insurance and they all had families then it would be about \$548K.

Numbers to start considering factoring in would be \$100,000 for the insurance, \$42,200 for the Librarian, and \$72,000 for the Principal. So the bottom line that we need to consider is already over \$200,000 additional without even considering another \$30,000 to \$40,000 for the raises. It will be unknown until the School Board decides to vote on whether or not to support it. We haven't taken a position yet on these additional expenses, they won't be added until a vote has been taken.

Mr. Button stated that historically in Lyndeborough the Principal position was decided at School District Meeting. It only makes sense that the people make a plea to keep or not to keep. It was pointed out that they are contradicting themselves with having the Principal position on a warrant but just including the Librarian position within the budget with no input. This is an unintended consequence of an action. Assume the Budget Committee won't support this and the School Board does then the 2 bodies will vote on it separately and have different budgets.

## **6. Other Business**

In regards to the high cost per pupil numbers, Dr. LaPlante stated that the State imposes the levels of staffing and teaching so the smaller School Districts suffer the financial consequences trying to meet the State requirements.

It was decided to have another Budget Committee meeting on January 9, 2013 at 7 PM and not on January 2, 2013. There will be a Joint meeting on January 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM. The Public Hearing is February 7, 2013 with a snow date of February 8, 2013. There might be some more insurance information by then. The Budget Committee is committed to having the final number 2 weeks before the Public Hearing. After that the next meeting will be on January 23, 2013 to set our final target number. The School Board will meet on January 22, 2013 and then there will be another Joint Meeting on January 29, 2013. The meeting on January 9, 2013 will be the most important.

## **7. Adjourn**

The next meeting will be on January 9th, 2013 at 7:00 PM, location Media Center. A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Mr. Roemer and seconded by Ms. Browne; all in favor. The School Budget Committee was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Tuomala, Secretary