



Winooski School Board of Trustees
Special Meeting - Board Budget
Wednesday, December 4, 2024, 6:00 pm
WSD Library Learning Commons or via Google Meet
Google Meet Link: meet.google.com/szx-gwkh-ooo

Policy Title 1.0 Ends Statement: All students will graduate from the Winooski School District (WSD) college and career ready at a cost supported by a majority of the Winooski community. WSD students will lead healthy, productive and successful lives and engage with their local and global community.

Attendees: Wilmer Chavarria, Sarah Haven, Nicole Mace, Robert Millar, Isaiah Donaldson, Jacie Barber, Cheyne Racine, Matt Gonzalez, Jordan Matte, Elom Essiba, Chloe Tomlinson, Allyssa Ravelin (Time Keeper).

Virtual Attendees (noted as best as possible): Mikayal Keleman, Mary Carleton, Brian Steinmetz, Kamal Dahal, Andrea Boon, Yam Basnet, Tiffany Demore, Bernie Toth, Sara Poland, Elizabeth Wood, Daviah Lawrence, Andrea Wheeland, Jessica Perrotte, Mary Skwar, Theresa Fox, Kari Bohlen, Rebecca Savage, Sophia Scialdone.

1. Call to Order: 6:02 pm

- a. Robert Millar calls the meeting to order at **6:02 pm**.

2. Agenda Review and Adjustments:

- a. Add an item after 4A(i) for budget buddy feedback
- b. Change item 8a.i from Superintendent Evaluation to Superintendent Contract Discussion.
- c. Robert Millar asks if there are any other adjustments.
 - i. *None provided.*

3. Public Comments:

- a. Robert Millar asks for public comments, not on tonight's agenda.
 - i. *None provided.*

4. Executive Limitations (Policy Section II):

- a. Policy Title: 2.4 Financial Planning and Budgeting
 - i. Robert Millar shares that we have two more meetings left before the board has to decide if it will adopt the budget.

- ii. Wilmer Chavarria appreciates the work that has been done so far and the budget buddies that have committed to do the work. As a reminder, we need to keep our Mission Statement in mind during these discussions. The Board has had 3 budget meetings take place and presented 3 different budget scenarios. We will have our forecasted CLA and yields soon and will be able to share numbers with you earlier than anticipated.
- iii. Presentation/Discussion: FY26 Budget Version II Presentation
 - 1. Wilmer Chavarria notes that the Unusual Retention Rates of Licensed Staff slide was not shared on Monday with the presentation. Attrition is not an issue in Winooski, our teachers stay for a long time, and when we don't have natural attrition, we don't have many options when it comes to reductions.
 - a. To view the presentation- [FY 26 Budget.pdf](#)
 - 2. Wilmer Chavarria shares that the board asked for a budget with a 3-5% increase. The budget increase presented is 4.18%, (\$33,306,812) but still requires a reduction of \$971,134. The 6th slide of the presentation is on staff reduction plans, reshuffling, reassignments, and things that can still be afforded.
 - 3. Isaiah Donaldson- The one time investment from the IT department (\$600K), I am confused where that \$600K is moving/going. In looking at last years and this year's presentations, the math doesn't match.
 - 4. Sarah Haven With the level of funding, we removed the \$600K, but had to add the 2 must haves. It may have been a one time investment, but it was included as part of our budget. It wasn't a line item that voters had to vote on.
 - 5. Nicole Mace appreciates the hard work that went into this and thanks Wilmer. It is hard when you get a recommendation from the board to come back with this scenario. She notes the importance of pointing out the reasons behind these decisions. The District has seen a 10% decrease in enrollment, with that trend continuing in future years. I am hearing from the community that there is a feeling of being taxed out after increases in their property taxes and it is important for the Board to be mindful of that. I want to make sure that any reductions we make will not harm student outcomes and are done with a strategic mindset. We have to prepare for a decrease in our student population over time. It needs to make educational sense.
 - 6. Robert Millar shares he agrees with Nicole's sentiments that this was an important exercise to go through, especially with the information received this week.
 - 7. Mary Carleton asks what considerations were made for admin or central office cuts.
 - 8. Wilmer Chavarria shares that conversations were had, unfortunately, I am not able to share that right now. He points out that not all positions are funded through

the budget and that we are not paying everything with local funds. Everything is on the table, including administration. Wilmer Chavarria shares that many of the virtual attendees are staff and that tomorrow at 3:30 pm he is having a session where they can ask more detailed questions.

9. Wilmer Chavarria also notes that this is a multi-year budget. What we do now, will affect the years to come, as last year's affected this year. We are given a weighted number for our pupils, based on backgrounds and needs. In a moment, a small tweak in their weighted membership for multilingual learners could result in millions of dollars. I hear what the board is saying, I hear what the concerns are, but we need to not rely on the formulas as stated above that drastic changes can happen.
10. Wilmer Chavarria shares the December 1 letter. The yield you see in the blue is not comparable to the yield you see in the green. The number in the blue is multiplied by 0.72 which is a new thing, statewide yield. When the yield goes down, taxes generally go up.
11. Nicole Mace believes the additional formula is to prevent the shock when the CLA comes out.
12. To hear the full presentation regarding the FY26 Budget: [WSD Budget Meeting 12/04/24](#)
13. Robert Millar asks budget buddies for their input
 - a. Chloe Tomlinson- Appreciates the work Wilmer Chavarria puts into the budget. Jordan Matte notes the work that goes into it, and that sometimes hard decisions must be made. The more communication you have with the public is better, so they don't feel neglected.
14. Wilmer Chavarria asks the board to share how they feel about the budget presented today.
15. **Robert Millar asks for a 5-minute break at 7:30 pm.**
16. **Called the meeting back to order at 7:40 pm.**

iv. Discussion: Budget Outreach and Communication

1. Isaiah Donaldson shares about the event on December 14th and encourages others to share as well because it is an important event.
2. Nicole Mace asks if it will be recorded.
3. Isaiah Donaldson- Planning on recording personally, just on the presentation. Using a GoPro then uploading it to the site.
4. Nicole Mace If you record a presentation, show your slides and have audio hooked up. This way they can see and read.
5. Isaiah Donaldson- Yes, that is what we will have
6. Sarah Haven Are you doing a survey again? Are there things you need from us?

7. Nicole Mace shares that we need to get communications to Miriam Greenfield to share with liaisons and get the information out.
8. Isaiah Donaldson shares that they are planning an in-person activity, asking what “buckets” are most important to the community.
9. Robert Millar I think an activity is good, but I want a “gut check” after sharing the positions being cut (for example).
10. Kamal Dahal we want to make sure that we are giving them the choices we had as the board. We don’t have the authority to share more. The last slide is the perfect slide to share with the public, we do owe an explanation to what that means.
11. Nicole Mace Instead of giving people ‘dollars’, give them different colored pieces of paper to help us understand where the participation is coming from during this event.
12. Nicole Mace shares that she would like to bring back some of the slides from last week's presentation, combining the two weeks; Ensuring that we are matching numbers. Now that we have some of the positions, sharing both of them.
13. The board shares that they would like to add the 2.4% increase option.

5. Governance Processes (Policy Section IV):

- a. Policy Title: 4.2 Board Job Description
 - i. Discussion: Setting Priorities for Meeting with Legislators
 1. Robert Millar We set a date, December 18th. Considering the packet from last year, a lot of things are still relevant.

6. Next Agenda:

- a. Robert Millar asks if there is anything for the next agenda.
 - i. Isaiah Donaldson- Give another shout out with more information regarding the December 14th event and add it to the upcoming events with time.

7. Upcoming Events:

- a. 12/11 - WSD Regular School Board Budget Meeting
- b. 12/18 - WSD Special Board Budget meeting

8. Executive Session:

- a. Premature Public Knowledge Finding
 - i. Superintendent Contract Discussion
- b. Robert Millar asks for a motion to enter the executive session.

Nicole Mace Asks for a motion to enter executive session to discuss an employee’s personal contract and we may invite Wilmer to join us at some point in that discussion.

Robert Millar asks for all those who approve.

The motion passes unanimously. The Board enters into executive session @ 8:14 pm

Returning from executive session @ 8:36 pm.

- c. Robert Millar is looking for a motion regarding the item in the Executive Session.
- d. Nicole Mace makes a motion that the Board authorizes the Chair to finalize an agreement with Superintendent Chavarria to renew his contract for a two-year term according to the terms mutually agreed upon.
- e. Robert Millar asks for any discussion.
- f. Nicole Mace appreciates the good work he has done with his first two years within the district.
- g. Robert Millar It has been an honor and a pleasure, I look forward to two more years.
- h. ***Motion Passes Unanimously.***

9. Adjourn:

- a. Robert Millar looks for a motion to adjourn.
- b. ***Motion Passes Unanimously.***
- c. ***Meeting adjourned @ 8:38 pm***