



Winooski School Board of Trustees
Special Meeting - Board Budget
Wednesday, December 20, 2023, 6:00pm
WSD Library Learning Commons or via Zoom
Zoom Login: <https://wsdvt.zoom.us/j/87380690607>

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: Sarah Haven, Robert Millar, Nicole Mace, Isaiah Donaldson, Eli Phillips, Sen. Martine Larocque Gulick, Sen. Taylor Small, Carsen Small, Sen. Phil Baruth, Sen. Tanya Vyhovsky, Matt Gonzalez, Elom Kpessé, Ken White, Allyssa Ravelin (note keeper).

1. Call to Order: 6:02pm

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

2. Agenda Review and Adjustments:

- a. Introductions of school board members, community members and state legislators.
- b. No reviews needed or adjustments shared.**

3. Public Comments:


- a. No public comments**

4. Governance Processes: (Policy Section IV)

- a. Policy Title: 4.2.4 Board Job Description
 - i. Discussion: Meeting with Legislators
 - 1. Robert Millar shares our priorities with an “on our mind” slide. A discussion over the PDF file **■ On our mind - Legislative Priorities.pdf** occurs within the board, community members and legislators. The full discussion can be found by visiting [Winooski School Board Meeting 12/20/2023](#)
 - 2. Nicole Mace shares that since this slide was created, we have had confirmation from the tax department. Because our reassessment process is expected to conclude this spring, we can use a CLA of 100. Winooski's last reassessment was in 2007. Our property assessed values are just lagging behind the sales values.

- b. Recess called at 6:58pm
- c. Meeting called back to order 7:03pm

5. FY25 Budget Work Session:

- a. Presentation/Discussion: F525 Budget Presentation 5
 - i. Nicole Mace - We are here to talk about the school district's budget, which is the total amount of funds that we need to support the operations of the district. Everything from salaries of teachers and support staff to the tables, technology and all needed to keep the building operational. Education spending is a figure that contributes to how our tax rate is determined. Our education spending is the amount of our budget minus certain revenues that offset the total expense. The Role of the Board in this process is to engage the community, hear recommendations from the administration, understand different options relative to investments that are important to make in our budget. Then we adopt a budget to present to the voters of Winooski. They vote in March. We spend time from January until March, getting out into the community to inform folks on why we support the budget and what it will accomplish. The Role of the Resident is to learn about the budget, engage in the process and vote on March 5th.
 - ii. Nicole Mace shares the timeline- and notes that there is one more special meeting, and the board will adopt a budget on January 10th.
 - iii. Robert Millar shares out end statement "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."
 - iv. Sarah Haven shares a warning that ***the budget presentation slides are an estimate on potential impact on next year's tax rates. This is NOT your actual tax amount. The amount you pay in taxes could increase even if the tax rate decreases.***
 - v. Nicole Mace - This is particularly true in a reassessment year where we don't know what the values of our properties will be at the end of the assessment process.
 - vi. Sarah Haven shares the budget options, and the new "actual homestead tax rate AFTER CLA" column. We have also made some adjustments to the total local budget. The numbers are different from the last few times we have shared this. There is only one column that is highlighted now. We no longer have option #3 highlighted. That is because #4 is what the superintendent is proposing that the board moves forward with.
 - vii. Option #4, can be viewed here  5a_Budget Presentation 5 . When reviewing the presentation please note that the equalized homestead tax rate is likely to decrease about 1%, this is just an estimate. The presentation also takes into account the actual homestead tax after the CLA, using 101.

- viii. Nicole Mace- The rate that shows up on the bill, would be 32% lower on scenario #4. Because the CLA is really an attempt to approximate what people should be contributing had their homes been reassessed. We have really been focused on the equalized homestead tax rate. SO what is being shown is that we could go down by a penny.
 - ix. Ken White – It is a 15% increase, but taxes are decreasing. Are they going to hurt us down the road?
 - x. Robert Millar- It shouldn't happen again, it was primarily the federal funds drying up, the ESSER and the funding the Pre-K were the biggest drivers. That is over 3-3.5 million itself.
 - xi. Nicole Mace- It is because of the long term membership weights. We went from 900 to over 2000. The district was able to use their \$1.5m in fund balance last year to cushion the increase because of the debt payment. This is an extreme year, deciding to keep critical positions, funding a capital project, building a Pre-K- we won't see annual increases.
 - xii. Ken White- If the weighted LTM is sustainable over time? Are they at risk?
 - xiii. Robert Millar We are acutely aware. That was at the top of our list for the legislators who joined us this evening was to remind them how valuable that change in weights is to equitably distribute education funds. It is so important to us.
 - xiv. Nicole Mace - Legislatively, I don't think we are at risk of losing. The way we lose long term membership, is we continually see declines in enrollment, it won't be dramatic. We will continue to see a decline in enrollment if we don't focus on family housing. We need to be keeping an eye on staffing and recalibrating as we need to if we don't see our enrollment go up.
 - xv. Sarah Haven Wilmer has talked about openly talking with the union about taking advantage of attrition and keeping an eye on that. The district has a plan with it too. We are very cautious about the increase we have had and how that is going to play a part down the road.
 - xvi. Nicole Mace - I, also, don't want to lose focus on Isaiah's idea of recruiting. We have an opportunity with this gorgeous new facility. Do some more active outreach in communities that tuition students. We may not be able to afford buses up there (referring to the islands), but we have a very unique high school experience, a middle experience that we could market. Strategically, over the years, we have set our tuition rate as the lowest in Chittenden county.
 - xvii. Eli Marriott- I couldn't agree more with this direction.
 - xviii. Carsen Small- It is important with community conversation and being extremely clear that the \$15M is one time.
- b. Discuss: Community Survey Results

- i. Isaiah Donaldson shares some key points from the surveys regarding priorities, concerns or suggestions.
- ii. Nicole Mace shares that what stuck out for her was that she is happy to see others are noticing the improvement of the high school, but hopes that they will continue to look at what college and career ready means, offering additional courses, etc.
- iii. To view results and hear more of this discussion- view the recording of this meeting [Winooski School Board Meeting 12/20/23](#)

6. Next Agenda:

- a. Robert Millar asks if there is anything to add to the next agenda.
 - i. Nothing presented.

7. Upcoming Events:

- a. 1/3/2024 - WSD Board Budget Meeting

8. Adjourn: 7:51pm

- a. Robert Millar entertain a motion to adjourn
- b. Passes unanimously**
- c. Meeting adjourned at 7:51pm**