

West Bath School Administrative Unit

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

January 11, 2018 at 7:00 PM at the West Bath School

Members Present: Dennis Crews, Keith Hinds, Robert McDaniel, Ashleigh Randall, and Mary Wallace

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Patrick Bowdish, Jay McCreight, David Hennessey, Aggie Demers, and Emily Thompson

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by Keith Hinds.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Comments from the Chair:

Mr. Hinds welcomed the crowd and thanked the board for agreeing to reschedule the meeting. He thanked Steve Bailey for providing a professional development workshop with the board on roles and responsibilities of board members prior to the meeting.

Approve/Amend Minutes of 12/6/17

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to approve the minutes of 12/6/17 as written. Mr. Crews seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

Adjustments to Agenda:

None

Public Comments:

None

Legislative Update:

Jay McCreight attended the meeting to share information she had gathered about ways to support the school's potential need for a generator after being contacted by Mr. McDaniel. She said that she had begun to investigate whether or not the school could be

a shelter. She also stated she had met with CMP about the response time for getting power back on to the school. They said that if the school was a shelter, power would have been turned on sooner. She spoke with the West Bath Fire Chief and learned that the Fire Station's generator had broken and that they hope to have the Fire Station become Red Cross Certified. She said she had met with Sarah Bennett from the Sagadahoc County Emergency Management Agency who had said initially that she had some limited Homeland Security funding, but has since said that it would not cover a generator and the funds were gone. She offered to do some research to find out what other opportunities there were for funding if the school is interested in being a shelter and whether it would remain open or closed during outages. Ms. McCreight said that the Town Administrator will be setting up a meeting soon to discuss options.

Mr. Hinds thanked Ms. McCreight and said that the board has sent a request to the facilities committee to investigate options for a generator. Mr. Hennessey said that the Board of Selectmen have been discussing generators and there may be money for the Fire Department right now, which may allow for funds to be shifted to the school. Mrs. Randall thanked Ms. McCreight for doing this legwork. Mr. McDaniel commented that a lot of action would have to come from what the proposals are looking for. Sagadahoc County would need to request for a proposal, would have to read the specifics, would need to tailor the proposal for the school to meet the grant. He asked if Red Cross certification would prohibit the school from being open full time, but the answer was not known.

Mr. Hinds asked if there were other conversations in Augusta that the board should know about? Ms. McCreight said that she was unsure, as the legislature had only been in session for 2 days. She said that there is discussion about having the public schools be the place for early childhood programming to go. She asked for the board's opinion on the matter. Mr. Hinds said that the board has not taken a formal vote. There is concern about the financial impact, especially as West Bath is a minimum receiver. Ms. McCreight said that she and the Town Administrator and Eloise Vitelli met with the Department of Education last year and there is a proposal in the budget to offer hardship funding. She said that she knows that it has been a big issue. Mr. McDaniel said that the board and its visitors have had discussions about whether or not special education should be a state responsibility. He said that if a special needs student moves into a small town it is a large hit and that it would make more sense if there was state administration of funds. Ms. McCreight said that she worked in schools and she watched as it became more difficult to meet the needs of students as students' needs became more severe. She stated that one of the things that was talked about when she and the Town Administrator met with the Department of Education was regionalization. They suggested that communities not regionalize the whole district, but regionalize special education programs. Ms. McCreight said that Wiscasset had been granted grant funds and the group discussed whether it would make sense for West Bath to join that grant.

Mrs. Thompson said that West Bath students attend RSU1 schools as the schools of guarantee, so if needed, West Bath students have access to those programs already through the withdrawal agreement, so further regionalization efforts do not help in this

particular situation. Ms. McCreight said that regionalization was the Department of Education's best suggestion at the time. She said that other big issues that will impact kids are the passage of the Medicaid Expansion if it is to become law. She said that there is legislation to discuss child hunger, child health care, substance use disorders and those types of things.

Mr. Hinds thanked Ms. McCreight.

Committee Reports

1. Policy Committee – Mr. McDaniel said that the committee received several policies from MSMA that were recommended for updates. Based on those recommendations the committee will need to look at student wellness.
2. Technology Committee – No update
3. Facilities Committee – No update
4. Finance Committee
 - a. Payroll Warrants – Payroll warrants were reviewed by Mr. Hinds on 12/12, 12/22, and 1/6.
 - b. AP Warrants – AP warrants were reviewed by Mr. Hinds on 12/6, 12/22, and 1/8 and by Mr. Crews on 12/6, 12/21, and 1/5.

Superintendent's Report

1. Financial Report
 - a. Mrs. Thompson reported that with 50% of the year remaining, 63.88% of the budget remains.
 - b. Mrs. Thompson made the board aware of three areas of the budget document that did not reflect expenses as it should. The October tuition payment to RSU1 was not paid until January. This means that the tuition-elementary line has been further expended by \$33,563.16, leaving \$311,1000.10 or 68.3% in that line. Additionally, \$37,749.42 more has been paid out of the tuition-secondary line, leaving \$488,623.21 or 75% of the line. Finally, the food service transfer of \$35,000 took place at the beginning of the school year, depleting the Food Service Transfer line. This means that an additional \$106,312.58 should be removed from the bottom line of the budget document, leaving \$2,247.092.41 or 60.1% of the budget remaining. Mrs. Thompson said all budget lines were tracking as they should be.
 - c. Mr. Hinds if the extended cold snap impacted oil funds. Mrs. Thompson said that it had not, as it had been a warm winter otherwise.
2. Tuition Update
 - a. Mrs. Thompson reviewed a tuition rate document that showed the updated tuition rates for West Bath and RSU1. Given the updated tuition rates and number of students attending, the potential savings in the budget is approximated at \$118,023.71. Additionally, with the change in West Bath's state tuition rate, the district can expect an additional \$21,943.80 in revenue. Mrs. Thompson stated

that these figures are based on current enrollment and they will change as enrollment numbers change.

- b. Mrs. Randall asked if it is known why tuition rates are different between each age group. Mrs. Thompson responded that tuition is determined by the cost per student of the prior year, and that running a comprehensive high school is more expensive than running an elementary program.

3. District Updates

- a. Celebration of Learning – Mrs. Thompson said that the school held its Winter Celebration of Learning on December 21st from 3-4 PM. She said that the school had 100% attendance, meaning that every child had at least one loved one present, which she felt was extraordinary and does not typically happen in communities. She said that she would like to take the opportunity to thank the West Bath parents for taking the time out of their work day to come to the Celebration and support the students. She said she would like to also thank the teachers and students for preparing and sharing their hard work, and the school's next Celebration of Learning will be in June. Mrs. Wallace said that she would like to make the recommendation that that school extend the Celebration time beyond one hour so that parents can see multiple children's presentations. Mrs. Thompson commented that if there are parents who have multiple children in the school they are welcome to come during the day during the times that children are practicing as well. She acknowledged that an hour is not enough time to see everyone's presentation, but that it seems to be the amount of time the children have the stamina for. It is a balance and the school will work with families to accommodate them as needed.
- b. Special Education Audit – Mrs. Thompson said that audit was supposed to happen on Wednesday and that the special education director, Sara Helman, had worked diligently and arduously to get the student files from K-12 prepared. However, the auditor from the Department of Education was ill and the audit will need to be rescheduled.
- c. School Choice for 2018-2019 – Mrs. Thompson informed the board that the school choice application window for 2018-2019 had opened. She said that the policy and applications were updated based on the board's discussion at the last meeting and the new state tuition rates. She said that 5th grade students were sent home with application information and materials, all current school choice families received a mailing, and the information was posted on the school website and on the school Facebook page. She said that window would be open until February 14th.
- d. Upcoming Events:
 - i. 4th and 5th Grade Winter – Concert – Mrs. Thompson stated that the 4th and 5th grade winter concert would be held on Thursday, January 18th at 5:30 PM as the original date in December was snowed out.

Old Business

- 1. School Calendar/Storm Days

Mrs. Thompson said that this agenda item is to take the final action on the proposed calendar changes that would make up days from the October outage. She said that the faculty did not have their professional development day on January 2nd, rather that was a student day, as the faculty would prefer to have a professional development day on a Saturday rather than asking families to send students on a Saturday. Mrs. Thompson said that the faculty would like to have their professional development day on Saturday, January 27th.

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to approve the calendar change. Mr. Hinds seconded the motion with great appreciation to the staff. Mrs. Wallace asked if there had been any more discussion about Late Start Wednesdays? Mrs. Thompson said that she had discussed Late Start Wednesdays with Dr. Manuel and their plan is to wait until April to see how many storm days they use and if they need to make up days they would eliminate the June late starts, which would be challenging for West Bath due to end of year expedition and Celebration of Learning needs. She said she had looked into whether or not they could have a school day without offering transportation, and that is not something they are able to do so for now late starts appear to be off the table as an option as buses are not available for West Bath if RSU1 has a late start. Mrs. Thompson said that the school has made up two full days, and the last day of school is currently at June 19th. In March the school system will be able to apply for a waiver. She said that even if there are a few more storm days, she could not imagine that school would go beyond June 22nd, and there are still opportunities later in the year to think about ways to make up days, if needed.

Vote (5-0).

2. Child Development Services

Mrs. Thompson said that she feels it is important to continue to bring Child Development Services back to the table to keep the board updated on. She said that last month she had let the board know that the committee's final meeting was scheduled and they were tasked to make recommendations for legislation. Mrs. Thompson said that that day schools had received the CDS Committee Recommendations for review. She provided the board with a copy of the recommendations and highlighted the recommendations for funding, facilities, staffing, and regionalization. She said that she did talk with Roy Fowler, the state director of CDS, that day to ask about timeframes for the transition to take place. He said that any transition timelines would be written into legislation so therefore it is an unknown.

Mrs. Randall asked where West Bath does not have an in house pre-k, is it the requirement of the organizations that West Bath contracts with to provide pre-K? Do they have an obligation to accept students and provide services? Mrs. Thompson said that they do not necessarily have an obligation, but everything could change depending on how the legislation is written. She said that West Bath students who do attend West Bath

pre-k and do require CDS services get their CDS services at their pre-k location. Mrs. Thompson reiterated that that West Bath does not have universal pre-k currently, so those answers will come out of whatever is written into legislation.

4. SMLC Update

Mrs. Thompson stated that board members received a recent update regarding the SMLCs from MSMA the prior week. She explained that it said that the Department of Education had approved 19 Regional Service Centers. The memo also explained that the legislative plan was to offer two types of financial incentives for districts who took part in an SMLC. The first was that districts would receive a portion (to be determined) of \$46 per student to put towards administration. The legislation said that even minimum receivers may get around 30%, which does mean that there's approximately \$1,794 that will not be coming to West Bath to fund administration. However, the other financial incentive of 138 per pupil for districts who agreed to be part of an SMLC is not going to happen. Mrs. Thompson said that in looking at the 19 programs that were approved there are two that West Bath could have possibly connected to, but neither meet programmatic needs. She said that given the lack of financial incentive for joining, no strong connection to needs, the amount of time needed for planning which takes away from focus on education, she feels that the board's decision to wait this process out for a while was a sound decision.

Mrs. Thompson said that she will continue to keep informed about what is happening with regionalization so the board can continue to discuss if and when West Bath wants to get involved.

New Business

1. Communication from Brunswick School Department

Mrs. Thompson said that she had provided the board with a letter she had received from the Brunswick School Department which was a result of the meeting they held that was in the newspaper that the West Bath board had discussed at their last meeting. She stated that the Brunswick Superintendent has invited neighboring school districts to talk about ways to regionalize and collaborate in projects at a small scale, or to talk about forming an AOS or an RSU. Mrs. Thompson said that she is always looking for ways to partner with neighbors and to run the system more effectively and efficiently, if the board wishes, she would meet with Brunswick to hear what ideas they have and have these initial conversations. She said that the conversations would not be making decisions that obligate the school, school system, or town to do anything further, rather they just open up the lines of communication.

Mr. Crews said that she would need to make it clear that West Bath can not contractually form with any other RSU due to the withdrawal process, so the school system is at least 7 years away from doing some of the things that are suggested in the letter.

Mr. Hinds made a motion to authorize the superintendent to engage in communication and exploration. Mr. McDaniel seconded the motion. Vote (5-0). Mr. Hinds told the board that he also received a copy of the letter.

2. Special Education Posting

Mrs. Thompson said that she wanted to make the board aware of an atypical situation. She said that West Bath has a student who will be transitioning from an out of district placement and into Morse High School and the student requires an educational technician for support. She said that initially Morse was planning on posting the position and hiring the staff and the student would start in the new year. She said that on Saturday she received an email that RSU1 would like West Bath to post the position and hire the staff for this position. Mrs. Thompson said it is strange to hire a West Bath staff member to work in a school that is not part of the district, and that she is still working on what the right thing to do morally and legally, and making sure that everyone is covered by liability. She said that right now her first responsibility is to the student so she has posted the position to ensure that the child can come to school, and that they will need to continue to work out whether this sets a precedence or what the practices will be for West Bath students at the schools of guarantee. RSU1 has asked this of other districts as well, so it is not different for West Bath, it's just a different practice from before.

Mr. McDaniel asked who would be funding the position. Mrs. Thompson said that West Bath is required to fund the position whether RSU1 had hired it or whether West Bath had hired it. He asked if this was a budget expense that was expected? Mrs. Thompson said that the position is not budgeted, but the student is budgeted for so the expense is covered, and the position will end at the end of the school year.

Mrs. Wallace said that when she worked at Morse as an ed tech there were ed techs who were employed by union 47 at Morse. Mrs. Thompson said that she appreciated hearing that because it is a new situation for her, and one that the new district has not experienced yet.

Mr. Hinds clarified that at this point the position is being posted but that questions are still being asked. Mrs. Randall asked if this was specific to special education, or if Morse needed another English teacher would West Bath be asked to pay for that? Mrs. Thompson said that it was specific to special education, a 1:1 situation, although she feels that it needs to be discussed whether or not this could be applied more broadly than a 1:1.

Mr. Hennessey asked if this was a current student. Mrs. Thompson said that it was. He asked if the student was being educated at that time. Mrs. Thompson responded that this was a change of program and that she could not say more than that.

Public Comments

1. Mr. Hennessey said that item 13 on the agenda is executive session for contracts. He asked whether there was an executive session that night? Mr. Hinds answered affirmatively. Mr. Hennessey asked whose contract was being negotiated. Mr. Hinds responded that there are multiple contracts that expire at the end of this year. Mr. Hennessey said that he thought that headway was made last summer and fall with contracts. Mr. Hinds responded that the board has not begun the formal negotiating process yet.
2. Ms. McCreight thanked the board for inviting her to attend. She asked that the members let her know what they need from her and with legislation that the board is talking about, to let her know what the board is looking for. She said that legislation is dense and it is helpful to know what people want to have happen.

Executive Session

Mr. Hinds made a motion to enter executive session at 7:54 PM pursuant to Title 1, Chapter 13, Section 405,6,D of the M.R.S.A. for the purpose of preparation for contract negotiations. Mr. Hinds seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

Return to Regular Session

The board returned to regular session at 8:12 PM.

Set Next Meeting Dates and Locations

1. Wednesday, February 7th at 6:30 PM – West Bath School Administrative Unit Board of Directors Meeting

Adjourn

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to adjourn at 8:12 PM. Mrs. Wallace seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

Submitted by,



Emily Thompson