

West Bath School Administrative Unit

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

October 4, 2017 at 6:30 PM at the West Bath School

Members Present: Dennis Crews, Keith Hinds, Robert McDaniel, Ashleigh Randall, Jordi St. John

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Patrick Bowdish, David Hennessey, Carol Langbehn, George Langbehn, and Emily Thompson

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Keith Hinds.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Comments from the Chair:

None

Approve/Amend Minutes of 9/6/17

Mrs. Randall made a motion to accept the minutes of 9/6/17 as presented. Mr. McDaniel seconded that motion. Vote (5-0).

Adjustments to Agenda:

None

Public Comments:

1. Mr. Hennessey asked how the year has started out for the school? Mr. Hinds said that it had been an excellent start. Mr. Hennessey asked how things have been staff wise, and if staff has settled in? Mrs. Thompson reiterated that it had been a great start. Mr. Hennessey asked about student count and if the numbers are where they were expected to be. Mrs. Thompson responded that they are. She said that the count is down ten students from the last year, but the resident count is the same. The decline is because the school has exited out RSU 1 students. She stated that she does not yet have the 6-12 numbers as they have not been provided at this time through the October 1st enrollment count. Mr. Hennessey said that in June or July there was talk

of tuition students. He asked if having tuition students panned out? Mrs. Thompson said that there are no paying tuition students at this time.

Committee Reports

1. Policy Committee – Mr. Hinds stated that the committee is continuing to revise and update policies as regulations change. He stated that there is a second reading later in the agenda but no new polices coming forward at this meeting.
2. Technology Committee – On behalf of the technology committee, Mrs. Thompson reported that there's a lot going on! There are more machines in student hands. The 3rd set of chrome books has arrived and been issued, bringing the school to 1:1 for 4th and 5th grade. Teacher machines have been refreshed as part of a 4-year rotation. The old machines have been used to refresh the ed-tech machines, and the remainder have been added to the student cart for grades K-3 to use. The school has just received and begun using a small group set of Osmos with K&1, which are kits that make iPads interactive with manipulatives for word work and math. The 3-d printer has arrived, and having printed out just a few sample items, the children are realizing the sky is the limit to what they can create. The business office, which is also on a 4-year rotation, has been upgraded with a new machine, and the prior machine was moved to the kitchen to replace their 10-year old machine. The board had budgeted to begin a projector refresh and at this time the school has ordered and received one. Mr. Bowdish has been in the process of hanging projectors from the ceiling to clean up the wires that are in the way of students and to make the machines more easily accessible. He's continued to add Chromecasts to classrooms, which allows teachers and students to connect remotely to the projectors. Mrs. Franklin's reading room has been outfitted with a television screen rather than a projector given the size of her space, which she is able to use chromecast to connect to, and is already having great success with kids and teachers in regards to projecting and collaboratively building documents on the screen in real time. Mrs. Thompson said that these were just a sample of the tools that have begun to enhance the school in the past month and she gives Mr. Bowdish a great deal of thanks and credit for bringing our school into the 21st Century. She said the school was behind the 8-ball initially and that due to his work technology opportunities are growing by leaps and bounds.
3. Facilities Committee – Mrs. Thompson reported that there were two items that had not yet been taken care of in terms of summer maintenance. The first is the final stage annual roof restoration, which will be taken care of on Friday of this week, so that it is complete before winter comes. Mrs. Thompson reported that she and Mr. Bowdish also met with Cunningham Security earlier in the week to update the plan for the security system, and that should be taken care of in the next couple of weeks.

Mr. Hennessey asked if the school was happy with their lawn care this past summer? Mr. Hinds said that as a neighbor he sees a lot of effort, but the end result is not as good as the school has had in the past. Mrs. Thompson added that he has tried to meet the needs of the school, but the grass is fast growing in the spring and summer and it requires more capacity than he has. Additionally, the cleaning up of all of the trimmings has been an issue. She said that has certainly spent lots of hours trying to make it right.

Mr. Hennessey asked what updates to the security the school was looking for? Mrs. Thompson responded that this had been discussed at length during the budget season, but that the school has an extremely old panel which means that anytime there is a change in staff the company has to come to work on sight rather than make changes remotely, which incurs a significant cost. Additionally, the upgrade would allow for a dob entry system rather than keys, which would provide better records of who was entering and exiting the building throughout the day. Mrs. Thompson said that with the current system, once the building is unarmed, there is no way of tracking who is coming and going, and if something was to go wrong, there would be no record of who had been in the building. It also will allow for the office to hear when doors are opened. I had said last year that I can only see one exit from the office, and have no way of knowing if a student decided to exit the building. With this system, along with the cameras that have been added over the last couple of years, the school will better be able to monitor the safety of the students throughout the day.

4. Finance Committee

4.1.1. Payroll Warrants - Mr. Hinds reported that he reviewed and signed payroll on September 5th and September 19th.

4.1.2. AP Warrants – Mr. Hinds reported that he and Mr. Crews both reviewed and signed the AP on September 8th and September 22nd.

Superintendent’s Report

1. Financial Report

- a. Mrs. Thompson said that with 75% of the fiscal year remaining, 86.99% of the budget remains. All cost centers in the budget are currently on track. Some of the bigger monthly invoices, such as tuition and transportation have not yet been received and therefore have not been taken into account in this total percentage remaining.
- b. District Audit – Mrs. Thompson said that she spoke with the auditors this week and they have all but completed the audit. They would like to plan to present their findings at the November board meeting, if that is acceptable to the board. Mr. Hinds asked if the finance committee will be able to meet with them ahead of time, as they had done last year? Mrs. Thompson said that she would ask them and arrange for that.

2. District Updates

- a. 5th Grade Chewonki Trip – Mrs. Thompson said that she wished to remind the board that the 5th grade students will be attending Chewonki next week from Tuesday-Friday. In just the second year, with a little more idea of what to expect, parents have had a much easier time pulling together the required equipment. While we’ve offered to help numerous times, we’ve had very few requests of support. Mrs. Thompson reminded the board that the goals for the trip are:
 - i. to participate in citizen scientist work on human ecology and environmental systems;
 - ii. team building;

- iii. developing survival skills, and
- iv. developing estuary/ecology skills.

Mrs. Thompson wished to thank Mr. Schulz and Mrs. Jarvis for going above and beyond in supporting the students in the upcoming week at Chewonki. She reported that the 5th grade teachers and students will be present at the November meeting to update the board on their experience.

- b. West Bath Candidates Night – Mrs. Thompson shared the flier for Candidates’ Night, coming up on October 16th at 6 PM at the town office. There are three candidates for two open seats for the school board.
- c. Flu Clinic – Mrs. Thompson informed the board that the school would be hosting a free flu clinic for staff, students, parents, and the general public on Tuesday, October 10th from 3-5 PM. All are welcome.
- d. Gifted and Talented Application - Mrs. Thompson provided the board with a copy of this year’s application for the Gifted and Talented program, as prepared by Beth Jarvis. She thanked Mrs. Jarvis for preparing the application and for her leadership with the GT program
- e. School Greenhouse – Mrs. Thompson stated that last year Mrs. Jarvis and Mr. Schulz wrote a Senters Grant, and were awarded \$1000 to put towards the creation of a school greenhouse. With support from Lowes Mrs. Jarvis and Mr. Schulz have begun the building process. 5th grade students Cameron and Mackenzie Beal worked with Mr. Schulz after school to build a platform for the greenhouse to rest on, and this past weekend Mr. Sxhulz, Mrs. Jarvis, parent volunteers Deb and Dean Snell began to assemble the structure. The goal of having our own greenhouse is to extend the growing season beyond the summer months, to allow for more student interaction with our school garden.
- f. Nourishing Economies Challenge Pot Grant – Mrs. Thompson said that she would like to inform the board that Mr. Schulz has also received a Nourishing Economioies Challenge Pot Grant, as a result his participation in the Nourishment Ecomonmies Action Summit in New Mexico last spring. As stated in the grant over letter, the funds can be used for spreading innovation which reflect, investigate, or advance the student/school/community learning around regenerative nourishment cycles. She said that she anticipates that these funds will help to support our school garden work.
- g. October Professional Development Day – Mrs. Thompson said that she wished to inform the board that the school has a professional development day coming upon Friday. She said the day will be spent in two parts. The first part of the day will be spent reviewing the math standards and aligning the standards with assessments to ensure that the school is assessing the most important information, all of the standards, and that the assessments measure what they think they do. Once this is done, there will be a focus on the instruction to ensure that students have the opportunity to learn the information that is being assessed. The second half of the day will be used to support deeper learning in either expedition cycles or the literacy modules that teams are working on. Mrs. Thompson reminded the board

of the school's goals that were reported out on the prior month to see the alignment between the goals and the professional development time.

Old Business:

1. Second Reading of Board Policies

a. DJ-R – Federal Procurement Manual

Mr. Crews stated that this was reviewed at the last meeting. It is all of the legal requirements for using grant funds with funds that come from the federal government. The only change that he would suggest is that the legal adoption wording that is currently on page 12 be moved to the end of the document, and that a first and second reading date should be added.

Mr. Crews made a motion to accept the policy as amended. Mr. St. John seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

2. Approval of Amount of FY 2017 Carryover Funds to be Designated into Reserve Accounts

Mrs. Thompson said that in the board's warrant wording for the reserve funds, the board identified that they would move up to \$70,000 to a special education reserve fund and up to \$15,000 in a building maintenance reserve fund, pending the outcome of the school's audit. Mrs. Thompson said that by her internal accounting, it appeared that there would be about \$6,000 remaining after moving those reserve funds. She said that she met with the auditor yesterday, and it turns out that if the board moves the full amount of funds, the school district we will start this current budget with -\$21,554.70. Mrs. Thompson said that she was first concerned that her accounting was off. But the auditors confirmed that that was not the case, rather the difference was because of having fewer prepaid expenses in the current years as compared to the prior year, and they needed to realign where items were being billed to. The auditors also said that it is not a problem to start with a negative number, but it does mean that the board would need to capture those funds in carryover this year, which the board knows already is going to be less due to less revenue from RSU1.

Mrs. Thompson said that she would therefore, like the board to consider how much they would like to move into the reserve accounts so she can confirm that amount with the auditors as they finalize the district's paperwork.

Mr. Hinds asked the board if they want to allocate \$70,000 in special education and \$15,000 in building in maintenance, or none, or some? Mr. McDaniel reiterated that if the board moved that amount, then they'd have to debit the school budget by \$21,000 during the year? Mrs. Thompson said that one of her concerns about that in addition to starting in the red is that she knows that there will be less revenue, and therefore carryover, simply because there are fewer RSU1 students.

Mr. Crews said that he was fine with not meeting the original target, because these were intended to be contingency funds. He said that he would prefer to not have to make it up in this budget cycle. Mrs. Randall agreed.

Mr. Hinds asked if there were any questions or comments from the public. Mr. Hennessey said that this would have to be approved at town meeting. Mr. Hinds clarified that it would not, as the warrant that was already approved was approved up to the amounts. Mr. Hennessey said that the town has a maintenance fund and the school would have access to those funds for bigger things. Mr. Hinds asked if there were any other questions from the public.

Mr. Hinds said that his feeling was similar to Mr. Hennessey's and that the school can access the funds the town has put aside in case of emergency, and there is still the school's capital fund at the town, about \$10,000, and he would be willing to forgo the building fund at this point. He said that when the board discussed special education reserve they were not sure what figure would make sense. While the board discussed somewhere between \$50,000-70,000, it could be possible that at \$150,000 expense could occur. Mr. McDaniel commented that we have no control over those types of expenses. Mr. St. John said that he agreed about the maintenance fund and that putting something into special education makes sense.

Mr. McDaniel said that he would like to make a motion that the board eliminate the transfer of maintenance funds. This was seconded by Dennis.

Mr. Hinds asked if we do not fund the building reserve account, does it go away? Mr. Hennessey said that it does. Mrs. Thompson said that it would just need to be reestablished at the next town meeting. Mr. Hennessey said that it is not a big deal. Mrs. Randall asked if a minimal amount should be added? Mr. Hennessey said that then we would have to track it, account for it. Mr. Hinds said that he felt that if it could not be funded properly that we just let it go.

Vote (5-0).

Mr. Hinds said that brings us to the question of the special education account. Mr. McDaniel asked how much would be available assuming we have a zero balance.

Mrs. Thompson said that \$63,445.30 would be remaining. Mr. St. John said that there is still so much of a moving target if special education students move into the district. Mr. Crews said that this was mostly to cover the expenses of a lower needs child, knowing that if more needs did arise, the board would have to go back to a special town meeting. Mr. McDaniel asked if it was correct that the board could expend up to 5% more of an area if there was a need without going back to the town? Mrs. Thompson said that was true.

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to approve the transfer of the remaining funds into the special education reserve account. Mr. Crews said that he would second that, and then start discussion. He said that he liked round numbers, and would prefer to move \$60,000 then have the remaining amount as an undesignated to buffer a small amount if needed.

Mr. McDaniel said it could be \$60,000 could be more than that, again we have no control of it. He said that he had no problem with making it \$60,000 to keep it round numbers. He revised the motion. Mr. Crews said that the second to the motion remained.

Mr. Hennessey asked when we should receive the audit numbers? Mrs. Thompson said that these are the final audit numbers. Mr. Hennessey said that if these numbers were final then he had no other question. Mrs. Langbehn commented that all that the board can put towards special education is helpful to the taxpayers.

Vote (5-0).

New Business:

1. Personnel Item(s) - Action

a. Resignation of Hannah Goss – 20% School Nurse

Mrs. Thompson said that with great sadness, she needed to announce the resignation of the 20% school nurse, Hannah Goss. Hannah started with the school last year and has been extraordinary. However, she has a new baby, her family has moved, and the logistics do not make it possible for her to continue with us. Mr. Hinds said that he would make a motion to accept her resignation with regret and sincere well wishes. This motion was seconded by Jordi. Vote (5-0).

Mrs. Langbehn asked how the school would replace her. She is only way day a week. Is there anyone who will take her place? Mrs. Thompson said that the position will be posted, she'll accept applications, and go through the interview process. Mrs. Langbehn said that there are so many children on medication today. Mrs. Thompson said that it was a big loss for the school.

2. State Assessment Results

Mrs. Thompson said that this past week, last year's standardized assessment data was made available. She said that for the first time in many years, there is now access to two years of the same type of data, and eventually there will be access provided to allow for disaggregation to happen. This allows for data to be analyzed to determine what standards are being met, and where the school can continue to improve. Mrs. Thompson said that she had assembled the aggregated data for the West Bath School and neighboring schools, as well as the neighboring school departments in reading, math, and science. She said that while it is hard to not look at numbers and immediately feel like there's room to grow, when you look at the proficiency rates in reading, math, and

science in totality, the West Bath School is outperforming all of the neighboring schools and districts. The school's reading proficiency rate was 7.16% points above state average, and in the top 20% of the state, math proficiency was 10.81% points above the state, and in the top 25% of the state, and science scores were 13.93 above state average and in the top 17% of the state. Mrs. Thompson said that she would also like to point that the school once again had 100% participation in assessments, surpassing the state requirement of 95%. There's room to grow, and when the state gives an opportunity to dig into the data they will do so. Mrs. Thompson said that she hopes she'll be able to report out to the board this winter with a disaggregated data set, once the faculty has had some time to work with it.

Mr. McDaniel said that this was positive news. He said he would like to know what factors students have coming into school, as that information is needed before an action plan can be created. He said that he is not sure that the board should be surprised by the data. The most problematic area is math, and if you look at the numbers it is not unique to the school. Maine tends to be lower than other states. He said that he felt the science proficiency reflected Expeditionary Learning, as students are learning in ways they are enthused about, and they are exposed to a large number of learning experiences as a result of EL. They have opportunities to build a boat, discuss why it floats, for example. He said that is a lot harder to find an obvious method to infuse students with the excitement of math, except for recognizing a feeling of achievement. Nothing succeeds more than success. He said that that is where the school's challenges will lie and he looks forward to hearing what the teachers come up with as a solution.

3. Child Development Services

Mrs. Thompson said that the landscape of education has shifted tremendously in just the past few weeks and much is in flux. She said that one area that the board needs to be aware of is that the state has proposed a new model for delivery of Child Development Services. Currently CDS supports students with disabilities from birth to age 5, and the school system picks those services up from ages 5-21. The state is proposing that the school system begin to take on the services of children ages 3-5 as well, which is a model that does happen in many states. They state the reason for the change is to decrease transitions for students, to provide more frequent and appropriate services, and begin the home/school connection earlier. Mrs. Thompson said that another reason that this is being proposed is because the rising costs of special education services has created a multimillion dollar deficit at CDS. This proposal will be part of the legislative session this winter.

Mrs. Thompson said that while this may be a positive thing, there are some questions that need immediate answers:

- Would this go into effect during the fall of 2018 or 2019?
- What does this mean for special education funding?

- Would the 3-5 year olds have financial allocations to support them?
- What does this mean for districts who are minimum receivers?

She said that in terms of West Bath, the board will also have to think about what this means for the current pre-k program. Would we need to bring pre-k to the school, and would the school system need have enough slots for all who wish to attend? Is there space? Does the school have enough capacity in the staff's schedules to program for the students or would staff need to be increased? Would it be a better option to contract for services in the sites that already have West Bath's pre-k students? What will the cost be to outfit buses to safely transport 3-4 year olds?

Mrs. Thompson said that she puts these questions out there for the board because they are on her mind, and they may need to be a part of this year's budget conversation. The midcoast Superintendents will be meeting with the Commissioner of Education in a couple of weeks to talk primarily about the potential CDS shift.

She said that she has included in the board packet the state announcement, and a Press Herald article that further explains the plan. She said that the article does say that it could take up to three years to fully transition, and that the department is doing an audit to determine what it would cost districts to take this on, and whether it would go through the current funding formula or if money would be managed in a different way. But these are all conversations that the school board needs to be a part of and paying attention to.

Mrs. Randall asked if there is communication between CDS and West Bath currently, and if there is any idea about how many students this could effect in our town? Mrs. Thompson said that the conversation starts when students are registering Pre-K student. Currently when enrolling kids, services that are needed are discussed, but CDS provides those services. Without having pre-k, the school is not aware of CDS students until transition meetings in April or May of the prior year. Mrs. Thompson said that typically there are 3-5 students who come into kindergarten who are receiving CDS services, so West Bath should anticipate anywhere from 6-10 students in the age 3-4 range.

Mr. McDaniel said that he believes that teachers are going to need special credentials. Mrs. Thompson said that was a really important point. The specialists, OT, PT, Speech will be all set to do the job because they are not connected to an age group, but special education teachers are certified K-12, as are regular education teachers. They will need a special pre-K certification. Mrs. Thompson said there are some teachers on staff who have that certification, but that Mr. McDaniel is correct, there would need to be a retraining and work towards certification that would need to take place.

Mrs. Langbehn said that the taxes this year were terribly high. She said that Mrs. Thompson kept saying that "we'd need to fund" and wanted to know if that meant it would need to be funded by taxes? Mrs. Thompson responded that was what it means when it is talked about funding locally.

Mrs. Langbehn said that she was not going to be able to afford to live in West Bath and that she was really depressed. She asked how the state can keep pushing things onto the locals. She said she feels between a rock and a hard place. It is not fair, and how the taxes are formed in West Bath needs to be changed so that everyone can pay a fair price. It shouldn't be few. West Bath is near the water, Harpswell lives near the water. It has to stop. The state has to do something. She asked, Are you pressing? Are you pressing as a school board to tell that them this is not affordable?

Mr. Hinds responded that yes, the board is but it is something that the board can do better. He said that the board agrees with her and that he highly encourages her to reach out to the state rep and to continue to do so. Mr. St. John responded that the board members are all homeowners as well.

Mrs. Langbehn asked what the town can do to redistribute taxes so that everyone pays something fair? She said she is paying \$6,000 and someone in town pays \$1,000 and that taxes can't be determined by where you live. Mr. Hinds said that the school board has zero authority over taxes and he recommends she talk to the selectmen. Mr. McDaniel said that there is a process for appealing your assessment, a form to fill out at the town hall to make an appeal. Mrs. Langbehn said that she is paying the same rate as a neighbor who has a house she can live in year round. Mr. McDaniel said that tax records can be accessed online at the town website under the assessor. Mr. Hinds said that he was going to bring the conversation back to the topic, as while this is a conversation that is worth time and attention, it is not on the board's agenda, and it is the duty of the Selectmen to discuss taxes, and they are much better educated on the topic. The school board is not experts in that area and he does not want the school board to give misinformation.

Mr. Hennessey said that if Mrs. Thompson was going to be at a meeting in a few weeks with someone from the state, perhaps she could pass on citizen concerns at that time. Mr. Hinds said that he was sure that she would.

Mrs. Thompson added that Mrs. Langbehn's concerns are exactly why she wanted to bring the issue to the board's attention so early in the process. It does not mean that transitioning CDS services to the public school is bad idea, but schools need time to plan for a fiscally responsible transition, and need to be part of the conversation. This is what she says she hears Mrs. Langbehn asking for, to be sure that residents' voices are heard.

4. Comprehensive Needs Assessment and SAU Consolidated Plan

Mrs. Thompson reported that new to the plate this month as well is the ESSA (Every Child Succeeds Act) Comprehensive Needs Assessment and SAU Consolidated Plan. This is required to be returned to the state by July 1. She said that she has provided the board with a blank template to give them an idea of what this complex needs assessment entails. On page 3 a list of stake holders who are required to be part of the process is listed. She asked the board to please review this document over the next month. At the December meeting she will be asking for a board representative to be part of this committee.

Mr. Hinds commented that the survey is extensive. Mrs. Thompson agreed, and said that also surprising is that it is required by every district, not just those who accept the federal funds. Mr. Hinds said that for the public it is a 17 page document of extensive data collection.

She said that she does anticipate that West Bath will only be completing the data for the years that they have been an independent school district, as the data prior to 2015 is not available to the district, but that she will confirm this with the state department.

5. Discussion regarding West Bath's participation in SMLCs

Mrs. Thompson said that one of the outcomes of the last legislative process was the concept of organizing School Management and Leadership Centers (SMLCs) to support consolidation and regionalization of school districts. Mrs. Thompson said that she provided the board in advance information regarding what they were, but that the goal of the state is to have 10 centers created to allow districts the option to opt in or not. There are financial incentives to encourage participation through start-up funds, and by less of a decrease in system administration costs.

Mrs. Thompson said that some of the details she had provided ahead of time included that the purpose of the SMLCs is to generate cost savings. Unlike prior consolidation efforts, this is not mandate. There are not penalties, but there are financial incentives to participate. She said that the SMLC is a fully functioning legal entity. It can hire superintendents but can not be a school administrative unit and can not be held responsible for delivering a Free and Appropriate Public Education. They have no power of taxation. The SMLCs do need to have an elected or appointed director. They must carry a balanced budget, but can take on debt and carry reserve funds. Membership may include municipal school units, a regional school unit, a community school district, and a school established on tribal lands. A municipality can also join as an associate member of an SMLC. Withdrawal from an SMLC can only happen if the school that is withdrawing will experience a cost savings, and all other districts in the SMLC experience a cost savings as a result of the withdrawal.

She stated that there are many things are not yet clear:

- If they SMLC hires teachers, do employment laws apply?
- If an SMLC hires a superintendent, does that supersede the function of a school board?
- Are employees of the SMLC covered by Maine PERS or social security?

Mrs. Thompson said that she provided information on cost sharing and those are explicitly written on page 17. She also said that the notes include some of the lessons that were learned from prior consolidation efforts. Mrs. Thompson said that there are two years before administration changes, and that is not a political statement, it's just as fact. The legislature can and does change its mind in response to political pressure and in response to having different people at the table. Knowing that this is a commitment that can not be undone, forever is a long time. As it is written now, entering an SMLC is a

permanent decision. Mrs. Thompson said that perhaps what is most important is that school reorganization can become a time-consuming distraction from an SAU's primary educational mission.

The timeline is such that if the school systems is to embark in joining an SMLC, an application process needs to be completed by December, to inform the new year's budget process. Knowing this is incredibly time consuming and will be the focus of the administration's work, Mrs. Thompson said she felt she needed to know if this is work the board would like her to engage in. She said that she had reached out to neighboring districts and right now there are no formation on the horizon.

Mr. McDaniel commented that joining is voluntary, but getting out is nearly impossible.

Mr. Hinds asked the board if it was their wish to direct the superintendent to explore forming an SMLC, or not?

Mr. McDaniel said that his initial feeling was no, and that even if there is an obvious benefit, there are too many uncertainties and unanswered questions. It seems premature. Mrs. Randall said that she feels like the town has spent a lot of time and effort unraveling from another direction, and it would be a backwards direction for the school. Mr. Crews said that given the district's recent history he feels shy about trailblazing with something that is not fully established with how the state wants to implement it, especially when it looks like it is a one-way door. He said he is open to continuously reevaluating as more details are provided, but with the information that is currently being provided, there's not enough information to make an informed decision.

Mr. Hinds asked if there were any members of the public who wished to comment. Mr. Hennessey said that he is surprised that the school committee has the authority to commit the town, not just the school, to this project, as it doesn't commit just the school it commits the town as a whole. It doesn't seem like the right way to do it. Mr. Hinds responded that what the board is trying to determine was whether or not they want to explore, create, and apply for an SMLC.

Mr. Langbehn asked if there was a cost to joining. Mr. Hinds responded that that is up in the air, because it depends on how the SMLC is formed and what agreements are made, just like in any collaboration. He said that his interpretation is that it is very specific to each SMLC and that each are formed with its own set of guidelines. Mr. Hinds said that each SMLC has to hire a director, and then the state will reimburse districts for up to 55% of the salary, but at least 45% of the salary would need to come from the local communities. Mr. Crews continued, saying that each community has to approve the entrance into the SMLC through voting. He recalled that when West Bath entered the RSU, each community had a vote that was binding on whether you were joining or not. With SMLCs it is unclear how that will work. From a briefing that the board received, it says that organizing units will establish a process of voting approval, so each SMLC will have a separate set of rules regarding voting. Mrs. Thompson added that it was clarified by the attorney that while it says that it is the members of the interlocal agreements who

vote, it does not say it is members of the community. It could just be the members of the school board who are voting. It depends on how you craft the interlocal agreement. Mr. Crews said that the cost sharing is open to interpretation by each SMLC. But that he would expect that it was a similar cost sharing as the RSU. With what is known today, he felt it is impossible to say that it is a good financial decision to aggressively seek this out. As things become clearer, as some start to form and it is clear what the operating goals are it might be good, but we can revisit that when we know more. Mr. McDaniel said that it could be the same situation as when the town was in with RSU1. West Bath could be this little bitty tail on this big dog and still have no real decision making ability. Mr. Crews commented that if an SMLC forms and West Bath can have a deal of paying for just contracted services for what is used, maybe that is a great deal. This gives the school district an opportunity to withdraw by not using services and not being charged. But that information is just not available. Mr. Crews stated that he advised that West Bath not be trailblazers at this time. Mrs. Randall also said that she found it interesting that the legal opinion was that if saving money was the only incentive to forming an SMLC, to be cautious. She said that that statement summed it up for her.

Mrs. Randal made a motion that West Bath not pursue being part of an SMLC at this time. This was seconded by Mr. McDaniel. Vote (5-0).

Mr. Hinds said that it would be wise to add that if the SAU is approached by another district that the superintendent share that with the board and have the board discuss it at that time.

6. Discussion regarding West Bath's participation in EMBRACE grants

Mrs. Thompson reminded the board that last winter the state put forward grants to encourage regionalization, and that West Bath applied with Brunswick and other districts for a special education transportation project that was not funded. New funds have just been announced, mostly to cover the start-up costs of SMLCs, but also to encourage additional smaller scale regionalization efforts. Mrs. Thompson reported that she has reached out to Brunswick to see if they'd like to reconsider our proposal, but have yet to hear back. She asked the board to again comment on whether they would like her to continue to pursue some of these funds, and if members have any identified areas of need that these funds might fulfill.

Mr. Crews said that this is the kind of thing that he likes looking at, increasing efficiency without nearly as much risk as the SMLC has, and he liked the idea of continuing to explore options. Mr. McDaniel said that the board has identified all of their priorities, and if others are on board, that would be great.

Mr. Hennessey asked if the funds would pay for a year of something, and then the town would need to pick it up? The state would give you seed money essentially and the town would have a cost going down the road. Mr. Hinds said that he approval criteria is that the school would need to show that the district would have ongoing savings. Mr. Crews

said that like with special education transportation, it would be less for us because we would be sharing the cost with other districts. Mr. Hennessey asked if right now the school is paying for special education cost. Mr. Crews said it is a cost every year. He asked if it could be shared with Brunswick right now? Mrs. Thompson said that was the intent of the grant. Mr. Hennessey asked if it could be done right now without the grant? Mrs. Thompson said that there is not the capacity currently to share transportation, as the grant was requesting more vehicles and drivers for vehicles, but that the ongoing implications of that were that there would need to be funds for vehicles to be maintained, and spaces for the vehicles to be maintained, and funds to pay for drivers so it ended up not saving funds. Mr. Hennessey asked if the board has explored ride sharing? Mrs. Thompson said that that is done right now, and the coordination is done by Bath Bus. When students have the same out of district placement they pick students up along the way and the costs are split.

Mrs. Randall made a motion to direct to the superintendent to continue to explore participation in EMBRACE grants, if opportunities are presented. This was seconded by Mr. McDaniel. Vote (5-0).

7. Board Goals

Mr. Hinds said that he wanted to look at the board goals as the board enters into the budget season, and provide the superintendent and the district as a whole with a direction as the budget is formulated.

Mr. Hinds read the current board goals:

- a. Provide unwavering support to ensure WBS becomes a fully accredited EL School
- b. Evaluate the success of the new 5th grade programs and determine the level of support for the coming year
- c. Consistently advocate for the needs of the WBSAU through the development of positive partnerships with all town departments
- d. Develop policy and encourage opportunities with the needs of our students in mind
 - i. Explore the financial feasibility of a fully-funded school lunch program
 - ii. Before and after-care opportunities
 - iii. Review the success of recent pilot programs and determine the level of support for them within the upcoming budget cycle

Mr. Hinds said that board goals are not an action item today, but he wanted board members to be thinking about them now with the intent of brainstorming goals at the next meeting so the budget process can start in December. Mr. Hinds also said that in the packet there were other goals. Mrs. Thompson said that the included the school's goals in the packets, which teacher team goals, individual goals, and her goals derive from.

Public Comments

Mrs. Langbehn thanked the board for the work they do, and for handling the pressure they get from the state. She is happy to see that the board is trying to regionalize in some form, because it is apparent that the state wants districts to be regionalized. If schools are not, they are punished because land values are too high and the tax payers take the burden.

Set Next Meeting Dates and Locations

1. Wednesday, November 1st at 6:30 PM – West Bath School Administrative Unit Board of Directors Meeting
2. Mr. Hinds encouraged the board members to attend Candidates' Night.

Adjourn

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to adjourn at 7:57 PM. Mr. St. John seconded that motion. Vote (5-0).

Submitted by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Thompson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Emily Thompson