

West Bath School Administrative Unit

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

February 1, 2017 at 6:30 PM at the West Bath School

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

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Patrick Bowdish, Aggie Demers, 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 1/4/17

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to accept the minutes of 1/4/17 as presented. Mr. Crews seconded that motion. Vote (5-0).

Adjustments to Agenda:

None

Public Comments:

None

Committee Reports

1. Policy Committee
 - a. Mr. Hinds told the board that the policy committee has been researching the bad debt policy the auditors had suggested, but the committee has not found any. Requests have been made from the auditors, the town, and the MPA with no luck. The committee will continue to look for a sample policy. He said that the committee is going through the policies to make sure that they are appropriately cross referenced. Mr. McDaniel asked that Policy JL be added to the online index of policies. Mrs. Thompson said that she would add it and said that the index is for internal use and is not policy itself, and corrections could be made outside of a board meeting, as desired.
2. Technology Committee – No Report
3. Facilities Committee
 - a. Mrs. Thompson said that a walk-through of the building that had been snowed out a few weeks ago had taken place that day in preparation for a Facilities Committee meeting the following day. The agenda for the meeting is to review the building

- needs, prioritize them, and make recommendations regarding which needs should have bids collected, and to inform the budget process.
- b. Lead testing – Mrs. Thompson said that in December she was contacted by the Bath Water District, who was notified by the Maine Public Drinking Water Commission that they were providing incentives to have schools have their water tested for lead. The Maine Public Drinking Water Commission was providing up to 10 free samples of water tests for participating school. Mrs. Thompson said that West Bath’s water was tested that morning, and she would be awaiting results.
4. Finance Committee
- a. Mr. Hinds said that payroll warrants were reviewed and signed on January 9th and January 23rd.
 - b. Mr. Hinds said that AP Warrants were reviewed and signed on January 4th and January 19th by Mr. Crews, and January 4th and January 20th by Mr. Hinds.

Superintendent’s Report

1. Financial Report

- a. School Department Budget - Mrs. Thompson said that 42% of the year remaining, the school department has 56.99% budget remaining, and that other than areas in special education, the budget is right on track.
Mr. Hinds asked Mrs. Thompson if the audit expense is going to be an annual expense. Mr. McDaniel asked if it will be less next year, as it wont be the first year? Mrs. Thompson said she would ask for that information from the auditors.
- b. Management Decision Letter – Mrs. Thompson provided the board with a copy of the management decision letter that was sent from the Department of Education as the final step of the audit process. She said that within this letter they noted the responses to the audit findings that were sent by the school department were approved and in compliance and that the Department of Education sustained the audit findings.
- c. Special Town Meeting Update – Mrs. Thompson thanked all who attended the Special Town Meeting, saying that it was well attended. She had set out seating for 60, and had to add a couple dozen more chairs as the meeting was starting. She stated that it was a quick meeting, and after several questions about why more funds were being requested, the residents voted unanimously to approve the funds for special education.
- d. Special Referendum – Mrs. Thompson said that the referendum is scheduled for February 7th.
- e. Governor’s Proposed Budget – Mrs. Thompson told the board that while the town and school department have shifted their budget cycle to be a couple weeks later than last year, school systems have still not received draft EDU 279s to know what subsidy they should expect to see, and what the implications of the Governor’s proposed budget will be on school systems. Mrs. Thompson said that as a minimum receiver, most of the budget changes do not impact West Bath. She outlined that the Governor’s budget 1) eliminates funding for system administration, which is the superintendent, business office, and school board; 2) no longer takes Title IA funds out of state allocations, but increases the recommended teacher to student ratios at the high school level; 3) increases the

ratios of educational technicians to students; 4) changes the funding source for the middle school MLTI program; and 5) increases the amount of funds districts receive back for special education from 30% to 33%. Mrs. Thompson said that as the subsidy we receive is due to what we pay for special education, we will benefit from that change, but that the other budget changes have no impact on West Bath. She said that it was still unknown what the changes to retirement might look like, but reminded the board the auditors had suggested we should increase retirement funds by up to 18%. Mrs. Thompson provided the school board with a letter to the Commissioner from the MSSA to help to keep them informed.

- f. Educational Efficiencies and Opportunities Grant - Mrs. Thompson shared that the Governor had released an RFP for Educational Efficiencies and Opportunities Grants. The state is targeting 3 million dollars aimed at helping to reduce costs and maximize regional efficiencies. Mrs. Thompson said that she attended a joint meeting with administration from Brunswick, Bath, Topsham, and Wiscasset to discuss possible regional projects. First the group discussed an apprenticeship partnership, but that was not viable nor appropriate for our students. The group will look at having a substitute teacher fair to create a common pool of subs, and also is discussing the concept of regional transportation for special education. Mrs. Thompson asked the board if they had any other ideas regarding regionalization to consider. Mr. McDaniel said that it may be a good opportunity to hire a foreign language teacher at the elementary level. Mr. St. John asked if there would be any interest in looking at facilities management regionally. Mrs. Thompson responded that both were good ideas, and would be worth pursuing if there was more time to do so. Mrs. Thompson said that it seemed unwise to put forth a facilities proposal without having the opportunity to think it through thoroughly, but that she would check in with Brunswick about the opportunity for a language teacher.

2. District Updates

- a. Mid-Year Review/Mission & Vision Process – Mrs. Thompson said that next week the school was scheduled for their annual mid-year review as part of the status check on EL school goals. She reminded the board that that at 8:45 the day would be starting with a stake holders focus group to discuss goal attainment and to begin the process for redefining the mission and vision of the school. She invited all board members to attend.
- b. Maine Maritime Museum 5th Grade Open House – Mrs. Thompson provided the board with the invitation to the 5th Grade open house at the Maine Maritime Museum, which was scheduled for Friday, February 17th at 11:30. The open house would allow the students to share their learning experiences and the progress they have made at the boat shop with members of the public. Mrs. Thompson invited all board members to attend.
- c. Within-School & After-School Student “Club” Opportunities – Mrs. Thompson said that at the onset of each budget process, she uses a faculty meeting time to complete a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) Analysis to have the staff focus attention on what is working, and what may need to be revisited through the budget process. When we looked at one of our goals that

came out of this process last year, the staff had noted that they would like to increase the opportunities students have for in-school and after-school activities. Mrs. Thompson said that seeing that statement caused her to pause and reflect, and assemble a list of “clubs” that faculty members are currently offering to students, outside of what they are required contractually to do. Mrs. Thompson read the following list to the board:

- i. Walking/Yoga Lunch Group – Mrs. Jarvis - *To provide students with an opportunity to have movement/yoga during the lunch block to help to aid digestion and promote positive habits*
- ii. Newspaper Club – Mrs. Jarvis - *To explore journalism through student created articles about the life, times, and people of West Bath School.*
- iii. Entrepreneur Club – Mrs. Jarvis - *To encourage creativity and entrepreneurship through the creation and sales of a product that is indigenous to Maine, supports sustainable practices, and funnels resources back into the local community – The non-profit, Real World Scholars provides \$1,000 seed money annually*
- iv. Crew Leadership Team – Mrs. Beal & Miss Marco - *To provide students with the opportunity develop leadership and presentation skills through the creation and facilitation of community building activities for school wide crew*
- v. Battle of the Books – Mrs. Franklin - *To encourage reading and the enjoyment of a wide genre of award-winning, current books through friendly trivia competition*
- vi. Reactors – Mrs. Franklin & Mrs. Bowdish - *To provide enrichment opportunities in literacy, drama, and problem solving through a student developed production of a play*
- vii. Book Club – Mrs. Rosenberg - *To enhance the great culture of reading at WBS through book talks, book discussion, and the creation of book trailers*
- viii. Tech Club – Mrs. Rosenberg & Mr. Bowdish - *To introduce students to non-classroom specific technology that exposes to ISTE standards*
- ix. Garden Club – Mr. Schulz & Ms. Newton - *To expose students to the life cycle and seasonality of caring for a garden & to keep children engaged in the school garden during the non-typical growing season*
- x. Flexible Lunch Groups – Mrs. Cosgrove - *To help to build connections between children and adults in a playful, non-academic setting*
- xi. Dance/Choreography Class – Mrs. White - *To encourage movement in children in fun and creative ways*
- xii. Basketball – Mrs. Wallace - *To provide a communal opportunity to play basketball in a non-competitive environment*

Mrs. Thompson thanked her faculty and staff for once again going above and beyond the call of duty for the West Bath students.

- d. School Law Advisory – Mrs. Thompson stated that she had provided a School Law Advisory about how schools deal with unpaid student meals to help to guide the policy discussion regarding school lunches later in the agenda.

Mr. McDaniel said that he would like to have an official update regarding assessment data. He said from what he has seen, based upon newspaper articles and results that are trickling in that he would assume there is an underachiever section of students. He would like to know what contributes to the data at the school and what steps could be taken for that segment of students to lift the whole curve. Mrs. Thompson said that she appreciated that comment, and would love have this discussion with the board. She said that

unfortunately item analysis for the state tests that were taken last March is still not available to schools and until it is she can only speak holistically, not specifically. Mr. McDaniel said that it is important to see the whole picture and he would like to have the board have that conversation when the data is available. Mrs. Thompson thanked him for bringing the topic to forefront.

Old Business:

1. Review/Revision of Board Policies

Mr. Hinds said that the policy committee is currently reviewing policies to add cross references. The only changes to the policies are the cross references that are bolded.

Mr. Hinds said that he would like to make a motion to approve all of the listed policies as a block. Mr. St. John seconded that motion. Vote (5-0).

- a. AD – Educational Philosophy/Mission
- b. ADA – School District Goals and Objectives
- c. ADAA – School System Commitment to Standards for Ethical and Responsible Behavior
- d. ADC – Tobacco Use and Possession
- e. ADC-R – Tobacco Use and Possession Procedures
- f. ADF – School District Commitment to Learning Results
- g. BBBA – Board Member Qualifications
- h. BCA – Board Member Code of Ethics
- i. GBJAA – Confidentiality in the Hiring Process
- j. GBJAA-E – Confidentiality in the Hiring Process-Form
- k. GCFB-R – Recruiting and Hiring Administrative Staff-Procedures

New Business:

1. Recording WBSAU School Board of Directors Meetings

Mr. Hinds said that one of the comments from a member of the public at the Board of Selectmen's Meeting the week before was meetings are not recorded like they are in neighboring communities. She would like to see the meetings live on television, and replayed throughout the week. Mr. Hinds said that the school board meetings do not draw a large crowd, but that the board loves the crowd they have. He said he would like to have the board move in the direction of having meetings streamed either live, or recorded and posted online so people can see the work the board is doing.

Mr. St. John asked if the comment was addressed to the School Board or to the Board of Selectmen? Mr. Hinds said that his sense was it towards the Board of Selectmen, as the member of the public had asked for the Administrative Review Committee to convene and discuss it.

Mr. Bowdish commented from the audience that it is easy technology. The meetings could be recorded and posted online immediately afterwards. Mr. Crews asked is if people would look at YouTube to find the meetings? Mr. Hinds said that public access would be the preferred choice. Mrs. Randall said that while the comment was

not directed at the school board, it would be great to get out ahead of it. It would go a long way in the eyes of the public if the the board was proactive and took care of recording meetings. Mr. McDaniel said that we would need to review our policies about media before moving forward. He also asked what would be more useful to folks, streaming it live, or capturing it and putting it on the school website? Mr. St. John said that it sounds like everyone is on board. He asked if Live Streamed videos were also archived. Mr. Bowdish said that he would check that out. Mr. Crews agreed with Mr. McDaniel and said that the board would need to make sure all media policies are in place.

Mr. McDaniel said that it we should check on logistics and report back next month for a motion.

2. School Board of Directors Budget Priorities – Discussion

Mr. Hinds said that he wanted to give the board an opportunity to discuss priorities for the budget, but also wanted to go back to the board goals. He said that he was not sure how the board felt about fully funded school lunch, and whether that was something we wanted to phase in, or to do it in another year if it is not feasible this year?

Mrs. Randall said that she wanted to know about the cost of a text alert option for school cancellations. She wanted to know what the financial implications of that would be. Mr. McDaniel asked what we do now in the event schools needs to be closed. Mrs. Thompson said that internally she uses a phone chain to let staff know. But it is listed on channels WCSH6, WMTW8, and WGME13, on the tv, their websites, and affiliated radio stations. Mrs. Thompson said she also puts it on the school's Facebook page, and as an alert on the school's website. Mr. St. John said he would like to say that he could this for free, develop an alert notification system, but there would likely be a cost to it.

Mr. Hinds asked if the board wanted to explore school lunch this budget cycle? Mr. Crews said that he would like to get a cost for it. Mrs. Thompson said that school lunch is about \$70,000. Mr. Hinds asked if the school department goes fully funded, whether they could still collect subsidy? Mrs. Thompson said yes, which is approximately \$24,000 per year.

Mr. McDaniel said that he would like to see the impact of the pilot programs, and wants to know what it would cost to continue. Mr. Crews said that we would need to identify a source for supplies. Mr. McDaniel asked if it is going to end in three years, is it financially feasible and sane? Mr. Crews commented that we want to be sure that we are not getting pushback on the school budget on whims. He commented that the board has good will from the town right now and would like that to continue.

Mr. Hinds asked the members of the public if they had any thoughts to add to the conversation. Mr. Bowdish commented that there is still an option to auction of one of the boats and put the funds back towards the program.

Mrs. Randall asked whether the school system has every asked General Dynamics for a donation? Mrs. Thompson said that would certainly worth pursuing. Mrs. Randall said that she would follow up.

Mr. Crews asked if the board wants to consider having Before and After School Care opportunities? He said that at the beginning of the year the Y decided that enrollment wasn't high enough. There was an outcry and they made a different decision, but it was stressful for the the parents who use it. Mrs. Randall said that the program is quite costly. Mr. McDaniel said that in Brunswick students get transported to the Y. Mr. Crews asked if the Y program decides not to use the site, if we want to consider a plan b? Mr. Hinds asked, do we just find another contractor, or do we do it in house? Mrs. Thompson said she would reach out to Mrs. Murphy at the Y to see at what point we can get a commitment for next year. Then we will know. She commented that it may not be the board's desire to run a program, or it may be, but let's get the information first.

3. First Reading of Board Policies – The board completed first readings of the policies listed below. Any discussed changes are noted.
 - a. DFF – Student Activities Fund
Add a cross reference to DIE
 - b. DI – Fiscal Accounting and Reporting
 - c. EFA – Student Meal Accounts
Mr. Hinds questioned the wording around up to 5 meals. Mrs. Thompson said that she had mixed feelings about this policy, as it is not the child's fault that a school lunch bill has not been paid for. Mrs. Randall suggested that the policy not specify an amount, rather just when the letter gets sent. Mr. McDaniel said that the School Law article suggested that the school send home the free and reduced lunch form and encourage the families to apply for free and reduced lunch. Mrs. Thompson responded that that is currently the practice. Mr. Hinds asked how the policy can be reworded to give more discretion to the superintendent? Mrs. Randall asked if the policy could be tabled until figures for lunch are brought forth. Mr. Crews suggested that we rephrase the wording regarding parent notification. Mrs. Thompson asked the board to consider if the policy is approved, not putting it in place until the fall. Mr. St. John stated that the board should have a policy that is written around what works. Mr. McDaniel said that the policy should be tabled for another month. Mrs. Randall asked how much we have in unpaid balances. Mrs. Thompson said that it varied, but there are really only one or two families that it can be difficult to collect from. Mr. Crews said that the policy should be tabled until the budget is determined. Mr. Hinds said that the policy would go back to the policy committee.
 - d. JJE – Student Fund-Raising Activities
Mr. McDaniel reminded the board that student fund-raising activities needed to comply with chapter 51, EFE, and JL. Mrs. Randall asked about the PTO at the fire

department? Mrs. Thompson said that food that does not meet the criteria of the wellness policy needs to not be for consumption on school grounds. Mr. Crews said that the policy does not cover the PTO. Mr. Hinds suggested that a point 10 be added.

Public Comments

None

Next Meeting Dates and Locations

1. Wednesday, March 1st at 6:30 PM – West Bath School Administrative Unit Board of Directors Meeting
2. Special Referendum – Tuesday, February 8th at the Fire House
3. Board Members were provided with a copy of the budget calendar.

Adjourn

Keith made a motion to adjourn at 8:06. 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