

West Bath School Administrative Unit

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 6, 2015 at 6:30 PM

Members Present: Dennis Crews, Meagan Hennessey, Keith Hinds, and Robert McDaniel

Members Absent: Jordi St. John

Others Present: Aggie Demers, David Hennessey, Justin Hennessey, Peter Oceretko, Judy Martin, Donna Merry, Emily Thompson, Carl Turner , Steve Winter

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Dennis Crews and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approve/Amend Minutes of April 29, 2015:

Amendments: None

A motion was made to approve minutes as presented by Keith Hinds. Robert McDaniel seconded the motion. Vote - (4-0)

Adjustment to Agenda:

Mrs. Thompson requested that a school choice discussion was added to the new business portion of the agenda.

Public Comment:

David Hennessey asked for a more thorough or definite statement on how more than \$300,000 was missed in the withdrawal process. Mr. Crews explained that the group simply missed it. He said that the group pulled the section for West Bath out of the RSU budget, and then went through the RSU budget and pulled out the shared staff. He stated that there were two areas that were missed. One was the federally funded employees. The other was the shared services for special education, such as administrator, contracted services, and physical therapy. Peter Oceretko stated that the group was provided with schedule A, but \$290,000 worth of employees were not on schedule A. Mr. Hennessey asked if there was a discussion about the number of positions that were in the building during the withdrawal process. It was stated that it was not realized during the withdrawal process that the number of positions that were listed did not add up to the amount of funding in the budget.

Mr. Hennessey asked for a list of the federally funded positions. Mrs. Thompson stated that West Bath School currently has 1 classroom teacher who is funded by Title II, a ½ time Title I literacy teacher, 2 ½ Title I educational technicians, and 2 full time educational technicians funded through Local Entitlement. She explained how federal funds would be distributed to the SAU: Title I is based upon levels of poverty, and Title II is based upon population, and that the funds would not cover the cost of the employees. Additionally, she stated that there are services, such as Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech, and Psychological Services that are required by law due to the needs stated in students' Individual Education Plans that had not been identified in the withdrawal budget.

Mr. Winters commented that pens and pencils do not make up the cost of a school budget. It is personnel cost. He asked that the school board do all that can be done to constrain those costs and ensure that everyone in the budget is necessary.

Judy Martin introduced herself to the board as the vice-president of the PTO. She thanked the board for all of the work that they have put in and stated that she looked forward to working with the board in some capacity. She shared that the PTO has approximately a \$14,000 annual budget that supports school programming.

Kate Nicholson made a public comment via a video, wishing to comment on the possible foreign language position. She stated that she and her family are in the process of moving and are prioritizing different factors to determine in which community purchase a home. She expressed that she wanted to speak up for the hopeful addition of foreign language. The position would help to make West Bath stand out in the surrounding communities. She would like to see Spanish included in that position and encouraged the board to find creative funding opportunities to make that happen.

Committee Reports:

6.1 Policy Committee: The policy committee has 19 policies on the agenda, and approximately 35 in draft form.

6.2 Technology Committee – None

Adjustment to the Agenda:

The agenda was adjusted to allow for the board to discuss the budget before opening up to public forum.

Board Budget Workshop:

Mrs. Thompson provided the board with a list of reductions to consider, which totaled \$53,944.56. The board discussed each proposed area.

A motion was made by Mr. Hinds and seconded by Mr. McDaniel to reduce the music position by ½ day, to keep the position at the 2.5 FTE it is currently at. Vote (4-0)

A motion was made by Mr. McDaniel and seconded by Mr. Hinds to reduce the budget amount of salary increases from 5% to 4%. Vote (4-0)

A motion was made to reduce the amount of food service expenses, due to anticipated revenue by \$10,000 by Mr. Hinds and was seconded by Mr. McDaniel. Vote (4-0)

Mr. McDaniel asked that the board hold off on discussing a proposed reduction in text books until a decision about Chrome Books was made.

Mr. Hinds commented that he did not intend to support the proposed reduction of \$1304.67 in the library book line. No motion was made by the board to address the reduction. This reduction was tabled.

A motion was made by Mr. McDaniel to reduce the proposed special education director contracted amount by \$5,400. This motion was seconded by Mr. Hinds. Vote (4-0)

Mr. Hinds made a motion to reduce the classroom supply line by \$2,500. This motion was seconded by Mr. McDaniel. Vote (4-0).

A motion was made by Mr. McDaniel to decrease the principal's supply lines by \$500. This was seconded by Mr. Crews. Vote (4-0).

A motion was made by Mr. Hinds to reduce the amount proposed for technology stipends by \$4,000. This was seconded by Mr. McDaniel. Vote (4-0)

A motion was made by Mr. Hinds to reduce the amount proposed for curriculum stipends by Mr. Hinds. This was seconded by Mr. McDaniel. Vote (4-0)

A motion was made by Mr. McDaniel to reduce the staff development line by \$2,500. This motion received no second and was tabled.

A motion was made by Mr. Hinds to reduce the proposed amount for long-term substitutes by \$3,000. This was seconded by Mr. McDaniel. Vote (4-0)

A motion was made by Mr. Hinds to reduce field trip transportation by \$500 by Mr. Hinds. This was seconded by Ms. Hennessey. Vote (4-0).

A motion was made to reduce the extra curricular line by \$500 by Mr. Hinds. This was seconded by Mr. Crews. The board discussed that even with this reduction, the West Bath students would still be able to participate in the events that they do currently because of the help of PTO. Vote (4-0)

Mr. Crews made a motion to reduce the amount allocated to Chrome Books by \$7,500. Ms. Hennessey seconded the motion. It was clarified during the discussion that the Chrome Books would remain at school, and would not be taken home. Mr. Hinds commented that it was sad that one class set of Chrome Books doubles the access to technology for the school in this day and age. Mr. Hennessey asked from the floor, which was more important, a language teacher or the Chrome Books? Mr. McDaniel commented that he needed to tie his decision making regarding Chrome Books in with his decisions regarding text books and the library books. He stated that he would rather go with the technology than with books, but that he didn't want to get into a situation where we were discussing Chrome Books versus foreign language. He said that he would like to see the Chrome Books in the budget. Vote (2-2) Motion is defeated.

The board revisited the proposed reduction for text books. Mr. Crews made a motion to reduce the supply line by \$1,000 to eliminate the purchase of new text books, given that the Chrome Books would be accessible to students. This was seconded by Mr. Hinds. Vote (4-0)

Mr. Crews also made a motion that the library book line be reduced by \$1,304.67 given the inclusion of the Chrome Books in the budget. This motion was seconded by Mr. McDaniel. Vote (4-0).

Mr. Hinds made a motion that system administration be reduced by \$1,000, eliminating stipends for employees to take board minutes. This was seconded by Mr. Crews. Vote (4-0).

Mr. Hinds made a motion to eliminate the school board stipends of \$3,000 and the associated fees. Mr. Crews seconded that motion. Vote (4-0)

Mr. Oceretko asked from the floor if there was an accounting error in the transportation line. It was determined that Out of District expenses had been included twice, and the budget could be reduced by \$11,280.

Mr. Crews commented that he would like to consider the gifted and talented position as a reduction. He stated that this was an area that was talked about and discovered in the RSU shared budget, but the amount was not included in the final withdrawal budget. Mrs. Thompson explained that she felt she could utilize a current staff member to serve in the capacity of the gifted and talented teacher by reallocating a portion of her week to serve as an ed tech III, rather than an ed tech II, and that by doing so the program would likely be stronger than bringing in a new employee, and would save approximately \$15,000.

The board looked at the different options that were proposed for facilities/maintenance/custodial. Mrs. Thompson clarified that regardless of what option the board chose, they still needed to budget for supplies and materials. Mr. Crews made a motion that the board accept the proposal from

Benchmark to provide maintenance and custodial services during the day, and custodial services in the evening, and to eliminate the purchase of an autoscrubber. Ms. Hennessey seconded the motion. Vote (4-0)

Mr. Crews explained that the prior day we became aware that tuition rates get adjusted in December by the state, and are retroactive to the start of school. Last year's figures rose by 2.28% for 9-12 and 5.88% for K-8. It was suggested that we budget 5 and 7% to cover those increases. Mr. Hinds asked if we could budget half of that? Mr. McDaniel made a motion to budget for tuition increases of 5 and 7%. Mr. Hinds seconded the motion. Vote (4-0)

Mr. Hennessey asked from the floor what the rationale and justification for the foreign language position is. He stated that it seemed like a tough year to sell a new position to the town. Mr. Crews explained that foreign language is actually required by state. It is not tested, and therefore districts shirk the responsibility. He also pointed out that it is a differentiator that would serve as well as compared to our peer schools. It's an attraction.

Mr. Winter commented that we're not looking to attract kids, we just want to serve the ones we have well.

Ms. Martin asked if there would be a gap in programming for children at the middle school level if West Bath had foreign language?

Mr. Crews continued, saying that he had looked at the 2008 budget a lot. It was still a time when West Bath did have foreign language.

Mr. Hennessey said that we shouldn't be talking about adding services when we're already looking at a tax increase in the first year. Mr. Crews stated that we can't compare the cost of running a school to the amount that is really a portion of a larger budget. It's not a valid argument in terms of answer the question, what does it cost to educate the children, and last year's number is all wrapped up in the cost sharing formulas of a larger group, which we've discovered does not include the services that we've already discussed.

Ms. Hennessey commented that research shows that young children learn a language more easily, and that while she was looking at jobs over the past year, many positions required foreign language skills.

Mr. Winter asked if the money be better spent , focused on logical thinking, math, or computer programming as another language. Mr. McDaniel expressed that elementary language won't help if there is a gap in their education at the middle level.

Mr. Crews stated, that there does not seem to be a will from the board to reduce this position at this time and there's more opportunity to talk further about this position.

Mr. Winter asked for more information to be provided regarding heating controls, and for an RFP for the parking lot work to be written.

Mrs. Thompson stated she would provide updated budget figures at the end of the following day for the school board and the Budget Advisory Committee.

Mr. Hinds made a motion to break for 5 minutes. Mr. Crews seconded the motion. Vote (4-0)

The meeting resumed at 8:49 PM.

Old Business:

The board conducted second readings of the following policies:

1. ACAD – Hazing
Motion to approve – Mr. McDaniel, Second – Mr. Crews. Vote – (4,0)
2. BBA – School Board Powers and Responsibilities
Motion to approve – Ms. Hennessey, Second – Mr. McDaniel. Vote (4-0)
3. BCA – Board Member Code of Ethics
Motion to approve – Mr. McDaniel, Second – Ms. Hennessey. Vote (4-0)
4. BEC – Executive Session
Motion to approve – Mr. McDaniel, Second – Mr. Hinds Vote (4-0)
5. BEC-C – Executive Session
Motion to approve – Mr. McDaniel, Second – Mr. Hinds. Vote (4-0)
6. EBCC – Bomb Threats
Motion to approve – Mr. Crews, Second – Mr. McDaniel. Vote (4-0)
7. JLCB – Immunization Requirements
Motion to approve – Ms. McDaniel, Second – Ms. Hennessey. Vote (4-0)
8. JLCC – Communicable Diseases
Motion to approve – Ms. Hennessey, Second – Mr. McDaniel. Vote (4-0)

New Business:

1. Discussion of meeting calendar: This was the last scheduled meeting on the budget calendar for the school board. The board discussed next meetings and agenda items. Agreed upon meeting dates were determined as follows:

1. May 11th at 6 PM for the purpose of adopting the budget and preparing the warrant
2. May 18th at 5:30 PM for Mr. Hinds and Mr. Crews to present the warrant to the Selectmen
3. May 26th at 6 PM for town meeting
4. June 3rd – Hearing at the Fire Department
5. June 8th – Regular June school board meeting at 6 PM, rescheduled from June 3rd

2. School Choice Issues: Mrs. Thompson communicated school choice issues that have arisen since the policy has been enacted. The situations included how to interpret the policy for families whose residency does not begin until June, how to address tuition rates for children who would like to go to schools that are only open for a portion of the year, and how long into the spring to continue to accept school choice applications. Mr. Hinds recommended that Mrs. Thompson discuss the school choice policy and issues with the attorney. This request was supported by the board. The policy committee will reopen the policy for review.

Mr. McDaniel exited the meeting at 9:17 PM.

3. Policies: The board completed first readings of the following policies. Any changes made to the policies are noted.

BCB – Conflict of Interest

BCC – Nepotism

EEAA – Transportation

- Wording in the transportation policy was amended to include language stating that K, 1, and 2 students will not be dropped off at a bus stop unless a parent or designee is present, and students will be brought back to the bus garage or the school without said parent or designee.

The remainder of the policies that were scheduled for first readings were tabled.

Public Comment:

Aggie Demers asked for a copy of the budget, stating that it was difficult to follow the conversations and agree or disagree with the cuts without knowing what the figures are.

Mr. Hinds explained that the cuts that were made were reductions, rather than cuts to programs.

Mr. Crews commented that it may have not been clear that there were funds that were missed during the withdrawal process budget.

Mrs. Thompson asked Mrs. Demers to visit the school tomorrow and pick up a copy of the budget.

Next Meeting Date and Location:

The next meeting is scheduled for 5/11 at 6 PM at the West Bath School for the purpose of adopting a budget and preparing the warrant.

Adjourn:

Mr. Crews made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 PM. Mrs. Hinds seconded the motion. Vote (3-0)

Submitted by,

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

Emily Thompson