

## **West Bath School Administrative Unit**

### Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

October 17, 2018 at 6:30 PM at the West Bath School

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

**Members Absent:** Dennis Crews

**Others Present:** Patrick Bowdish, David Hennessey, 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:**

Mr. Hinds told that board that in their packet, a copy of the energy audit that the town committee had done had been included for their review so board members would have the opportunity to look through it.

Mr. Hennessey said that he hoped to have one more audit conducted.

Mr. Hinds commented that at this point the audit is informational.

He also said that it was unfortunate that board member Dennis Crews was not able to come to the meeting this evening, as it is scheduled to be his last meeting. He said that Dennis had been part of the board since its inception, and the withdrawal committee before that. He was instrumental on the finance committee and in contract negotiations and did an excellent job bring the school district forward. He wished to thank Dennis for his service.

#### **Approve/Amend Minutes of 9/19/18**

Mrs. Randall made a motion to approve the minutes of 9/19/18. This motion was seconded by Mr. McDaniel. Vote (4-0).

#### **Adjustments to Agenda:**

Mr. Hinds said that agenda item 10.1 regarding enrollment has been removed, as the secondary data is not complete in the state data base yet.

## **Public Comments:**

None

## **Committee Reports:**

1. Policy Committee – Mr. Hinds said that there are a couple of policy revisions in the packet. The committee met on October 12<sup>th</sup> to continue to hash out school choice.
2. Technology Committee – No Update
3. Facilities Committee – Mrs. Thompson reported that Siemens has completed two of the three summer projects that were still outstanding. The unit ventilator in Mr. Schulz's room has been completed as has the replacement of the hot water supply pumps. The system is back up and fully functional. She said that she is still awaiting replacement of the 3-way valve, but that should be completed shortly. She said she also wished to let the board know that the greenhouse that was purchased through grant funds last year has been assembled by a contractor, and that can be seen in our school gardens. The greenhouse will allow the school to begin to garden with students year-round and enhance and increase the school's programming. Mrs. Thompson reported that the town's facilities committee organized an energy audit to explore ways to make lighting more cost effective and efficient. The first report has arrived, with the overall cost being \$25,000 for the school and \$41,000 overall for the town. She reiterated that the report is in the board's packet and reported that Mr. Hennessey had said that he's waiting for another audit, and then the town will decide what the next steps are.

Mr. Hennessey asked if Mrs. Thompson had found out about conducting asbestos testing in the school's hallway. Mrs. Thompson said that she had not had the opportunity since he had contacted her about it to connect with New Meadows Abatement, but that she would.

4. Finance Committee -
  - a. Payroll Warrants – Mr. Hinds reported that payroll warrants were reviewed and signed by Mr. Hinds on 10/2 and 10/15.
  - b. AP Warrants – Mr. Hinds reported that AP warrants were reviewed and signed by Mr. Hinds and Mr. Crews on 9/19 and 9/27.

## **Superintendent's Report**

1. Financial Report
  - a. Budget Report through September – Mrs. Thompson said that with the first financial quarter complete, there is 75% of the fiscal year remaining and 83.77% of the budget. All budget lines are on track.
  - b. Audit Update – Mrs. Thompson stated that the auditors were near completion. She said she had asked what she could report to the board and was told to say that it was going well and that the office staff has been very cooperative.
2. District Updates
  - a. EL Credentialing – Mrs. Thompson said that she wanted to thank all board members for attending the school's credentialing presentation on Monday, as she

knew it was a lot to ask of board members to take the afternoon away from work to attend a 3-hour presentation, but their attendance meant a lot to her, to the staff, and the EL credentialing panel. She stated that the end result of the afternoon is that West Bath School has been recommended for credentialing. If the CEO approves that recommendation, West Bath will be one of only 35 schools in the nation to have achieved that milestone. Mrs. Thompson said that if you follow news on national school reform, EL Education is the top model for schools, as determined by effectiveness. West Bath is now one of those top 35 schools in the top model across across the country. And, given the feedback of Ron Berger – exemplary in all three dimensions of achievement. It's feeling like quite an accomplishment.

Mrs. Thompson said that she had included in your packet some written feedback sent by some panel members and those in the audience following the presentation. She said she wished to share the panelists feedback on the presentation with the board. She stated that Sara Brown, the school designer who works with schools in New England said she 'was struggling to give feedback on the presentation because it was so powerful.' She also added Sara said that West Bath is 'creating the kinds of people who she wants to live next door to.' Mrs. Thompson shared Gretchen Bukowick, the Northeast regional director's words. Gretchen stated that it was the most 'joyful, fun, most informative presentation that she's been to, and that it is clear that the school is focused on not just the outcome, but the journey towards continuous improvement.' She had said she was impressed with how the school uses data and that it was clear that character is at the foundation of all that we do. Ron Berger, who is the chief academic officer said he 'was honored to be here and that it was as clear here as anywhere that there is a common vision for the school, a culture in the school of getting smarter and doing better, and a focus on growth mindset.' He said that all three of the areas of achievement were stellar and that he had a list of ways that he anticipated drawing on West Bath School to support the national network.

Mrs. Thompson said that she looks forward to entering the next phase of our partnership with the EL network, hosting site seminars, supporting schools and teachers, and being part of the national conversation. She said that in the next week to ten days the school will hear the final word, and then will be celebrated at the National Conference in November. She said that when they return from the National Conference, some of the work that will need to take place is getting the word out about what it means to be a student and part of the community at West Bath School.

Mr. McDaniel commented that it was Ron who had said that over the years different school designers have said, 'West Bath School is doing amazing things!' He was also the one who said that there were so many things that the school had not even included in the portfolio that he would like to see shared.

Mrs. Thompson said that because the school had had a partial contract for so long and multiple school designers, West Bath wasn't really on the network's radar. With flagship schools in Portland, the national officers would make it up that far. She said that she does not believe that will be the case any longer. Mrs. Randall said that she was glad to hear something about getting the message out about what EL means. She said that one of the leadership team members said that it would be nice to have a class for parents about what it means to be an EL parent. She said that even as a board member, she still does not know what it all means. It would be a great idea to have a bulletin of what you might hear, or a snapshot of what EL means. Mrs. Thompson said that one of the faculty's flaws is that as a group they are incredibly hard on themselves, and have been really hesitant to say that West Bath is an EL School. That will no longer be an issue. Mr. McDaniel said that he would like to see some good local publicity with interviews, a full page of discussion, about what the process is and what EL means, and what all the work is that has been done.

Mrs. Wallace said that she had observed the work as a parent, has worked here and was part of the staff, and now is a school board member, but never really grasped it all until she saw the presentation and heard what the panel members expressed. She said it was a great presentation to see. Mr. McDaniel commented that he kept glancing over at the EL panel, who were smiling and nodding their heads, expressing their strong approval. Mrs. Wallace agreed that they were very positive. Mrs. Randall asked if there would be a community celebration to which Mrs. Thompson responded that that discussion would be held after the group returns from the national conference, and that it would be a great opportunity to bring the community together. Mrs. Randall said this is a huge deal that needs to be shared and celebrated and shouted from the roof top.

Mr. Hennessey said that the school community knows about this about that the board should find a way to let the taxpayers know what is happening. Mrs. Thompson said that she had invited to the chair of the Board of Selectmen to attend the presentation, but she was unable to.

Mr. McDaniel said that he came away also with a validation of not just the time effort but also the money for Chewonki and boat building. Kids are growing with these programs, and are enthused looking ahead. Mr. Hinds stated that he was completely blown away by what the school has accomplished – where it was, where it is now, the people, the community involvement, and that the board needs to do a better job selling that. This is who the school is and what we the school does. People do not really know how unique their school is. He said that he agreed that there should be some conversations about what it like to be a parent at an EL school, and what it like to be a board, or a town with an EL School. He said he would like to thank the taxpayers for investing in this vision the school has had. It is incredible to see what they have accomplished.

Mrs. Wallace said it was hard to express how important and meaningful it is. We need to find a way to show them, not just tell them. Mr. McDaniel said that the children should be involved in that process.

- b. October Professional Development Day – Mrs. Thompson said the school had a PD day on October 5<sup>th</sup>, that was supposed to be focused around planning time for deeper learning lessons in math and in expedition cycles. Because the staff is modeling stewardship for the students, the faculty has been building school stewardship into faculty PD time as well. What started out as 2 hours on our morning agenda initially morphed into a full day of all faculty members digging deeply into giving back to our school. The library was totally transformed – the staff removed outdated signs, painted all walls, spackled the wall with the white board, repainted it, replaced the white board, replaced the broken projector, and organized books. Additionally, the tree branches and shrubbery around the building were all trimmed, line up spots were painted, the gardens were put to bed. The gym walls were cleaned, and the teachers’ room wall was painted. The opportunity was used to take care of our common spaces and it was an extremely positive day.
- c. Chewonki – Mrs. Thompson said that she wished to remind the board that the 5<sup>th</sup> graders attended Chewonki the prior week, from Tuesday-Friday. She said it was a week of extremes, with two days in the 80s and another day of rain, but that the students persevered through it all. Mrs. Thompson said that she went to visit them on Thursday, in the rain, and the students were all smiles and enjoying their experience. She said that the Director of Education took her aside to say that West Bath’s 5<sup>th</sup> grade class is consistently like no other that they work with. He said they typically work with about 35 schools with 5<sup>th</sup> graders, and West Bath students consistently are the most kind and caring, able to persevere, demonstrate a growth mindset, and able to reflect and be mindful. Mrs. Thompson told they board they will hear officially from the 5<sup>th</sup> graders about Chewonki at the November meeting.
- d. Gifted & Talented Application – Mrs. Thompson stated that the annual application for Gifted and Talented programming is in the board packet, and that it has been sent to the state and approved. She said she would like to once again thank Beth Jarvis for her work.
- e. School Nutrition Review – Mrs. Thompson said that she would like to notify the board that the school is once again scheduled for its 3-year food service review. The review will take place the week of December 17<sup>th</sup>.

- f. Upcoming Dates – Mrs. Thompson shared the following upcoming dates with the board:
  - i. New Town Administrator Meet & Greet – October 24<sup>th</sup> – at 6 PM at the Fire Station
  - ii. West Bath Candidates Night – 6:30 PM – Fire Station
  - iii. EL National Conference – November 7<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> – Mrs. Franklin & Miss Marco will be presenting about Summer STEM
  - iv. West Bath Harvest Meal – November 14<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 AM

## Old Business

### 1. Review of Board Policies

#### a. JFABA – School Choice Policy

Mr. Hinds said that there are three copies of the policy in the packet, including the original from last month, then followed by the second draft that was based on board consensus, and a third copy that was drafted by the policy committee. He said that what the policy committee is proposing is that the board eliminate the wait list all together. A lot of the conversation focused on the waitlist, and that spiraled into concerns about where the town would have to double pay.

Mr. McDaniel said that it is also the problem that the board us budgeting 3 months before numbers are finalized, so it is a guess what that 25% actually means. All based on past history and what looks good. The downside is that there is the potential to have one or more students who we double pay for. This is what the policy committee is trying to avoid.

Mr. Hinds said that the draft that the policy committee is recommending sets that number and that is the number that we would do the lottery for if need be. It is still a risk, but it sets a number so that is clear to the public. If applications exceed the number available, we go to lottery. If you don't get a spot, unfortunately we have met our cap, please apply next year. It completely eliminates all references to a wait list, clarifies in point 9 that a new resident does not need to wait 12 months to apply, just until the next application window. It also clarifies that the school board as part of the budget process will set the number of slots available by using anticipated enrollment numbers. It still requires that they notify us by August 1<sup>st</sup>?

Mrs. Wallace asked what happens if a slot becomes available? There wont be a waiting list and the board wont do anything about it? Mr. Hinds affirmed that to be the case.

Mrs. Wallace said that she feels that if the board has spots that are available, they should be offering them. Parents look at it as a huge benefit to have school choice. If it becomes that we are offering it with a lottery, and then slots are not

being filled, then it is going to be frustrating to lots of people. If it is in the budget and there are spots available, there should be a waitlist.

Mr. McDaniel said that the committee discussed at some length that school choice is often mentioned on a town basis. That is a flag, as some people coming in think that they have complete school choice. This is one of the things the board needs to firm up so it is clear cut. It is fiscally responsible. We want to provide school choice but do not want to go back to the town for special funding.

Mr. Hinds said that he agreed with Mrs. Wallace in part. If the board determines school choice slots based on 75% threshold, the board is already taking on some risk. If someone does not choose to stay in the district, then the number of slots budgeted for exceeds that percentage. Getting rid of the waitlist reduces that risk. It is a way to mitigate the risk. An alternative could be that the board decides to send 80% to RSU1 and that is how the board buffers the budget.

Mrs. Randall asked if historically we've had to tell people no? Mrs. Thompson said that right now the district is up against the cap, and that next year is likely the first year it will become an issue. But she said that since May 1 through the start of the school year, there have been 12 additional requests to access school choice, which prompted the policy review. Mrs. Randall said, that in addition to it being a financial risk, there's a logistical risk. Mrs. Wallace said this would be the most simple way, but maybe not the right way. There may be families who apply just in case and then change their mind, and then we have slots that could be used by families who really want them, and then can't. She said she really feels like there needs to be a waitlist.

Mr. Hennessey asked if there is a date that parents have to say yes? Mr. Hinds said that there is an application date and a date for parents to confirm. Mr. Hennessey asked if the school's website says that there's limited school choice? Mrs. Thompson affirmed that. Mr. Hinds said that the community needs to do a better job of stating that we are a community that has limited school choice, not open school choice. He said it is theoretically possible, there are years where there are no school choice slots available.

Mrs. Randall said that she understands the purpose of the waiting list, and the intention of the waiting list, but it goes back to that there is an obligation to RSU1 in regards to a designated amount of slots, so that designation between school choice and limited school choice is important, as it is not a guarantee.

Mrs. Wallace said that the board came up with wording last month about whether or not a slot was financially available. Mrs. Thompson said that policy wording was in the packet as well. Mrs. Randall said that that slots still need to be determined before.

Mr. Bowdish called out from the audience, maybe the families need to have more intent, more commitment to school choice before applying. Mrs. Wallace said yes, that as it is now they can say they want the slot, and then later say they don't want it, and then other families are disappointed. Mr. Bowdish said that if you wait until August 1<sup>st</sup>, some families can't take it. Mrs. Randall said that the application process opens up every year, so if you do not get a slot you can apply the following year, it is not a permanent no.

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to ratify the school choice policy that the policy committee developed which sets deadlines for applications and school slots by school board. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion.

Mrs. Thompson said that it would be a worthy thing to look at the application itself, as having some conversations with the schools of choice prior to applying would make sense. Mr. Hinds said it was no coincidence that this policy is the most revised policy the board has. Mrs. Wallace said that she does not want to approve this policy until the application changes are in place. Mr. McDaniel said that the board has not said they would change the application process, just that it would be reviewed. It is more important to change then policy and then look at the implementation.

Vote (3-1)

## **New Business**

1. 2018-2019 Enrollment – Removed from Agenda
2. Board Goals

Mr. Hinds said that each year the board tweaks its goals. Goals should drive the budget process. There were not a lot of adjustments last year. He suggested that the board review goals now and come back to the next meeting with thoughts about new goals.

Mr. McDaniel said that the first goal needs to be updated. What kind of on-going support would this mean moving forward? Mrs. Wallace said that these are great goals for the past, and she looks forward to having new goals. Mrs. Randall said she would like to see something about what it means to be a parent, community & board in West Bath, opening up lines of communication. She said she would love to hear what students think, and what being at West Bath School means to them. Mr. McDaniel said that the school should identify town meeting types of opportunities. Mr. Hennessey said that a program like that should be done at the school by itself, and that he would not do it a town meeting.

Mr. Hinds said that he would like to make a motion to table this conversation until the next meeting, and that board members should come prepared for discussion. This was seconded by Mr. McDaniel. Vote (4-0).

## **Public Comments**



1. Mr. Hennessey asked if it would be possible to have the school's audit done closer to the first month of the year. If there are any changes that need to be made, it would be better to know that sooner in the year. He wondered if the board can work with the town office to have it completed sooner in the year? Mr. Hinds responded that the delays in the audit are not the fault of the school and that the school is prepared to be audited in the summer. Mr. Hennessey asked for the board to make a date for July 21<sup>st</sup> so that the work can happen sooner. Mr. Hinds said that the board is on the same page.

### **Set Next Meeting Dates and Locations**

1. November 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM at the West Bath School - Mrs. Thompson noted that this is one of the meetings that is on the second Wednesday of the month due to Thanksgiving.

### **Adjourn**

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to adjourn at 7:27 PM. Mrs. Randall seconded that motion. Vote (4-0).

Submitted by,

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

Emily Thompson