

West Bath School Administrative Unit

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

December 18, 2018 at 6:00 PM at the West Bath School

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

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Patrick Bowdish, William Brewer, Bobbie Brewer, Aggie Demers, David Hennessey, Kristine Poland, and Emily Thompson

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 PM by Keith Hinds.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Executive Session:

Mr. Hinds made a request to enter into executive session pursuant to Title I, Chapter 13, Section 405, 6.A. of the MRSA for the purpose of discussing personnel issues at 6:02 PM. This was seconded by Mr. McDaniel. Vote (5-0).

The board returned from executive session at 6:35 PM.

Comments from the Chair:

No comments

Approve/Amend Minutes of 11/14/18

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to approve the minutes of 11/14/18. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

Adjustments to Agenda:

Mr. Hinds made the following adjustments to the agenda:

1. Cancel item 12.2 as there was no program review due to illness.
2. Add 12.9, an executive session pursuant to Title I, Chapter 13, Section 405, 6.F. of the MRSA for the purpose of discussing information about confidential records

3. Move 12.1, the auditor's report, to just after public comment.

Public Comments:

1. Mr. Hennessey asked if there had been any discussion about having students working with the comprehensive plan. Mrs. Thompson said that there has not yet been discussion, but that she will be speaking about it in her upcoming report.

Auditors Report:

Mr. Hinds introduced Bill Brewer, the town's auditor, to present the audit results. Mr. Brewer thanked the board for meeting with him, which is required by state statute. He said that at the end of the audit he's required to give a letter that summarizes any audit findings. He stated that there weren't any findings. The letter also needs to state whether there were any difficulties in completing the audit. He said that there were no difficulties and that they had no disagreements with Mrs. Thompson and Mrs. Donovan. Mr. Brewer stated that he provided the letter to Mrs. Thompson while the board was in executive session.

Mr. Brewer asked the board to turn to page 7 to see the comparison between the budgeted numbers in 17-18 and the actual expenditures and revenues by major groups. He said that expenses were kept in line with the original approved budget. There was an excess of revenue over expenses by \$184,000 before the \$35,000 transfer to the nutrition program. The budget was underspent by \$473,000. This was made up with the regular instruction line and the special education line. The Maine State on behalf payment is the dollar value that the state put in the teacher requirement account. There is a fund balance of \$499,179.87. Of that, the board applied \$288,000 to the 18-19 budget, leaving \$210,000 as the year end balance calculation. Mr. Brewer reminded the board that they can not have more than 3% of the total budget in the fund balance account for more than 3 years. He said that in the past excess was addressed by setting up a reserve account. He suggested the board think about that again.

He asked the board to turn to page 6 to look at the capital project column (third from left) where there is a fund balance of \$8,219.36. This is from the funds set aside when the town pulled out of RSU1. He suggested that the school board spend the money so the record keeping for that fund can be eliminated. Mrs. Thompson interjected that there is a current project replacing the two-way valve happening that will utilize those funds, as was determined during the last budget cycle. He pointed out the federal and state grants, the designated reserves,

Ms. Brewer stated that the balance of the special revenue can be seen on page 25 and is the transition to proficiency based education. It is a state law that is changing and school departments can choose the path for diplomas they want. The state gave school departments money. Because the law is changing, it should be spent before it is asked to be returned. PEPG is for professional development. The rest of the money is for federal grants that are reimbursement based. Mr. Brewer stated that sometimes boards lose track

of the small numbers within a 3.6 million dollar budget. Ms. Brewer said that whenever she has gone through Mrs. Thompson's paperwork for the federal grants, she has all the requirements of the grants met and her paperwork is clear and organized. Mr. Brewer said that the board can trust that Mrs. Thompson is managing the grant funds correctly.

Ms. Brewer encouraged the board to turn to page 8 to see the lunch program information and the comparison between FY 17 and FY 18. The board should keep in mind that there have been large transfers from the local fund and the nutrition program still operates on a loss. She encouraged the board to keep this in mind when making the next budget, that the level will need to be kept at this level, or increased, as the program can not go in the negative. Mr. Brewer said to "not beat yourself up" because there are more expenditures than revenues, as most school systems operate their nutrition program at a loss. Ms. Brewer said that one high light the program does have is that there is an increase in the subsidy amount from the prior year due to increase in the meals served for free and reduced breakfasts and an increase in total meals served. She pointed out that adults are not buying meals, she assumes because costs are increasing for adult meals, and that this is a trend at all schools they visit. She also pointed out that there was a reduction in expenditures.

Mr. Brewer pointed out the student activity account on page 8. He then asked the board if they have questions.

Hearing none, Ms. Brewer said that the board has done really well. Expenditures have remained consistent and the budget has been underspent. This is a good report. Mr. Brewer said that it seems like the school department and the board has this under control.

Mr. Hinds asked if there were questions from the public. There were none. Mr. McDaniel thanked the Brewers and said that he appreciated their effort. Ms. Brewer said that the board might want to consider hiring more office staff, as Mrs. Donovan is doing at least two jobs and at some point she wont be working in the office full time or at all. She said that this is a common thing that she says at all places that she goes so that boards can consider hiring and training new staff.

Mr. Hinds said that the Brewers' comment is noted.

Committee Reports:

1. Policy Committee – Mr. McDaniel said there is a modification to one policy.
2. Technology Committee – No Update
3. Facilities Committee – Mrs. Thompson reported on vacation projects, stating that the 3-way valve will be replaced during the vacation week. Also during vacation week, some electrical work will take place for a water fountain purchased by the 2nd grade and the PTO, and to allow for the refrigerator for the food pantry to be moved to the maintenance hallway. Mrs. Thompson said that shades are going to be installed on classroom doors as part of ongoing security measures, some minor painting will be completed, and floors will be buffed and waxed. Mr. Hinds also said that the town has received a second energy audit, and is waiting on a 3rd report.

4. Finance Committee -
 - a. Payroll Warrants – Mr. Hinds said that payroll warrants were reviewed and signed by Mr. Hinds on 11/27 & 12/11.
 - b. AP Warrants – Mr. Hinds stated that warrants were reviewed and signed by Mr. Hinds, Mrs. Randall & Mrs. Wallace on 11/19 and Mr. Hinds on 12/5 and Mr. McDaniel on 12/6.

Superintendent's Report

1. Financial Report – Mrs. Thompson stated that with 58.3%, 65.94 % of the budget remains. She said that all areas of the budget are tracking appropriately and that she is still monitoring regular tuition and special education costs carefully.
2. District Updates
 - a. Holiday Activities – Mrs. Thompson reported that Mrs. Oullette and the K-3 students and teachers held their winter concert, which was quite sweet. The Community Crew also hosted the Little Elf Shop, allowing students to shop for their loved ones for the holidays for .25¢ per gift. She thanked Mrs. Whitney for organizing this great event.
 - b. West Bath Historical Society – Mrs. Thompson said that she was grateful for the support of the West Bath Historical Society, which raised \$400 at their Christmas Service and Carol Sing and donated it to the school to support the school's new food pantry. Their support and partnerships is greatly appreciated. She also pointed out that in the board packet she had included a portion of the historical society's newsletter, which included photos and information about West Bath's original schools and district. She said she thought the board members would find it interesting.
 - c. West Bath Comprehensive Plan – Mrs. Thompson said she was approached by the town clerk after the planning committee last met, asking if students could be involved in the development of the comprehensive plan. Surveys have been sent out to residents asking for their input on the future of West Bath. Mrs. Thompson said she has asked a group of students to rewriting the survey to make it child-friendly, so it can be distributed to K-12 students. This will allow their input to be collected about the future of their town. Mrs. Thompson said that students are excited to be a part of the planning process!
 - d. Fire Drill – Mrs. Thompson said that there had been an unanticipated fire drill that day, due to a glitch in the alarm system. The positive side of the drill is that students and staff followed drill procedures and knew exactly what to do, which underscores the importance of practicing drills. She thanked the West Bath Fire Department for coming to ensure that our building was safe for students to re-enter.
 - e. Upcoming Events:
 - i. Winter Celebration of Learning – Thursday from 1:45-2:45
 - ii. 4th and 5th Grade Concert, with band & chorus – January 15th @ 5:30

- iii. Winter Kids Winter Games – Mrs. Thompson reported that West Bath School has been selected to be a part of the WinterKids Winter Games. This is an Olympic style challenge for 2 elementary schools per county to participate in for four weeks during the month of January, with the goal of promoting health and wellness.

Mrs. Randall said that the K-3 concert and the historical society had the concerts the same night. It would have been a good idea to make an announcement at the concert that historical society had one at 7 PM. Mr. Hinds said that he had seen it on Facebook. Mrs. Demers commented from the audience that there was an announcement put out that encouraged parents to plan their week to allow them to attend both events. Mrs. Wallace said that if you are not on Facebook a lot, you could have missed it. Mrs. Thompson said that she and the historical society had conversations in November about dates, and decided that both were doable on the same night given the timing. She said she had posted it on the school's page once she had the brochure, but yes, there's always more that can be done. Mr. Hennessey said that if the board members join the historical society they can get the newsletter for free. Mrs. Thompson said that it is a great newsletter and she would like to find a way for students to contribute to it in the future.

Old Business

1. Review of Board Policies
 - a. IKE – Promotion and Retention of Students

Mr. Hinds said that this policy was based on Maine School Management's policy. Mr. McDaniel added that some items that did not apply to the sample policy were removed, such as high school references. Mr. McDaniel said that it was important to point out that in this policy if acceleration is requested for a student who is leaving this school system, then the criteria for acceleration will fall onto the next school the child attends. He also said that final approval is slightly different than the MSMA policy.

Mrs. Powers said that it was outdated criteria for retention because the focus was on academics. She said that she had been reading that retention should be focused on maturity, and not academics. Mr. McDaniel said that on the second page under acceleration, several criteria for consideration is listed. Mrs. Thompson clarified that the criteria listed is for retention, promotion and acceleration. Mrs. Powers also asked about the listing of the principal in consultation with the child study team should make the final decision. She requested that the parents be included. Mrs. Wallace asked if parents are part of the child study team? Mrs. Thompson responded that they are, and that that can be made more explicit in the policy. She also said that she understands that some special education students can continue their education through age 20. She wonders if it is better for them to have that extra year at the end of their schooling where the emphasis is on job skills rather than at K,1, or 2. She wondered if the policy should state something

about that to help to make people aware. Mrs. Wallace asked if she felt it would be addressed in the criteria that would be considered when considering retention, promotion, and acceleration? She thought that it would be discussed in each individual case. Mrs. Powers asked if it applied to every special education student, or if there was criteria. Mrs. Thompson said that yes, every special education child has the opportunity to go to school through age 20 if they have not met graduation requirements, but if they have met graduation requirements, it is not an option. Mrs. Wallace asked if there should be a bullet that states that students who qualify for special education will have additional criteria considered. Mr. Hinds said that bullet 3 covers that. He suggested adding to the bullet the language: "Including the consideration of continuing education through age 20."

Mrs. Thompson said that another option would be to revisit the policy when the procedures are available. She said that the original board policy did not include language around acceleration, which is what the policy committee was trying to address with this update. She suggested that looking at IKE-R in tandem with IKE may help to clarify Ms. Powers' concern.

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to approve policy IKE as revised with the caveat the board review it when IKE-R is available and make adjustments then if necessary. Mrs. Randall seconded that motion. Vote (5-0).

2. Board Goals

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to discuss board goals, and remove it as a previously tabled agenda item. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion. Vote (5-0). Mr. Hinds explained that in the packet was a draft of the goals with additions that were discussed at the prior meeting. Mrs. Randall said that she liked how the goals were written. Mr. McDaniel asked if there should be goals for continued administrative staff needs based upon retirements? Mrs. Randall asked if that should be a board goal, or if that is too specific? Mr. McDaniel said that he felt it was the board's responsibility that as personnel retire or transfer voluntarily that we are aware of what this means for the school department and take actions to anticipate it and not react to it. Mr. Hinds said that he feels it makes sense to get a general consensus then do board goals. Mrs. Wallace said that this has been a long meeting. We need to do a draft, and continue to work on it some more. Mrs. Powers said that there's also quite a few goals, and maybe they should be reduced so something can be accomplished.

Mr. Hinds asked if the board agrees with what has been crossed out. Mrs. Wallace said yes, but that she did not feel that the board has the time tonight to thoroughly discuss goals. Mrs. Thompson asked if she thought a separate workshop to discuss board goals should be scheduled, to which she responded affirmatively so that the board can really discuss them and think about them in depth.

Mrs. Wallace made a motion to table the goals. Mrs. Powers seconded the motion. Mrs. Randall said that this concerned her because it has been tabled a few times already, but also the board tries to go into the budget process with goals in mind. She said she did not want it to continue to be pushed off. Vote (5-0).

Mr. Hinds said that he suggests that a workshop be scheduled now so that they can be addressed.

New Business

1. Chronic Absenteeism Report

Mrs. Thompson said that based on the policy decision last month, the board will now receive a chronic absenteeism report at the end of each trimester. She provided the first report that showed that two students were listed as chronically absent. Both of the absences were due to family vacations. Per board policy, no further action is required other than parent notification and continued monitoring.

2. Personnel Items

a. Resignation of Katharine Brown – 60% librarian

Mrs. Thompson said that the board could find the resignation of the 60% librarian in their packet, which states that she is resigning based on personal obstacles that have arisen since the start of the school year. Mrs. Wallace made a motion to accept the resignation. Mr. McDaniel seconded it. Vote (5-0).

Mrs. Randall asked what the plan for the library will be moving forward. Mrs. Thompson said that the position has been posted as a 60% position, and what happens next will be determined by the applications that are received. She did say that it has been challenging to fill this position, as there are not a lot of students graduating with a master's degree in library sciences, which is what schools are required to have. She said that she did notice that when posting the position there are several postings for districts looking for librarian oversight for libraries run by educational technicians. While this is the model West Bath was trying to move away from, all options will need to be considered so that a sustainable library program can be developed. Mrs. Wallace said it is hard to maintain a librarian who is not full time. Mr. McDaniel asked if there's a librarian at Patten Free that could fill this position? Mrs. Thompson said it's been discussed in the past. Mrs. Powers asked if other small schools in the area have full time librarians? Mrs. Thompson said that in the immediate area they do, and others share multiple schools. Mrs. Randall asked if the board should think about exploring a full time librarian? Mr. Hinds said that that is a conversation for the budget cycle. Mrs. Wallace suggested that it could be a 60% library position and a 40% something else. Mrs. Thompson responded that she's actually had a

candidate ask about that in the past. Mrs. Randall said that she understood it would be a larger expense, but it seems to be disruptive to continue to replace the position. Mrs. Thompson commented that it has been incredibly challenging to try to build a program with the regular turnover.

3. Substitute Pay

Mrs. Thompson explained that in 2016, Maine voted to increase 2018 minimum wage to \$11 an hour. Currently substitute pay is \$75 per day, which would not meet this increase. In January 2020 the rate will be raised again to \$12 an hour. Mrs. Thompson asked the board to consider increasing substitute teacher pay to \$85 per day beginning January 1st to keep the school department in compliance through 2020, keep rates competitive with neighboring districts, and help to attract more substitutes of high quality.

Mrs. Wallace made a motion to increase substitute pay to \$85 a day beginning January 1st. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion. She said she would like to raise it to \$85 and see what the budget looks like from there. Vote (5-0).

4. Snow Packs/Storm Days

Mrs. Thompson reported that last year following the power outages, she had contacted the state about guidance around using storm kits/blizzard bags when there are snow days, and was told that state currently does not support the concept, but they were reviewing it. This fall another district announced they were using storm kits, which prompted a couple of board members to ask separately about the concept. Last week the state issued guidance, which she chose to include in the board packet so all members have the same information. She said that simply put, storm kits/blizzard bags are not yet an approved option for snow day makeup. She explained that the guidance from the state says that a school needs to have its 175 days and 5 storm days in the calendar. Moving forward a district can build in storm packs into snow days after 5 days, provided it meets all of the guidelines listed on the second page of the memo. Then, a school can apply for a waiver to potentially have storm days above 5 days waived. All of this has to be approved with through the calendar approval process in the spring prior to the school year.

5. 18-19 Budget Calendar

Mr. Hinds presented the budget calendar for the upcoming budget cycle to the board.

6. Annual Certification of Superintendent Requirement

Mr. Hinds made a motion to complete the annual certification of superintendent requirement making the adjustments as previously discussed. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

Public Comment

1. Mrs. Demers commented that she was excited to hear about the WinterKids Wintergames, and that they sounded fun!

Executive Session:

Mr. Hinds made a request to enter into executive session pursuant to Title I, Chapter 13, Section 405, 6.F. of the MRSA for the purpose of discussing confidential records at 7:47 PM. This was seconded by Mrs. Randall. Vote (5-0).

The board returned to regular session at 8:06 PM.

Set Next Meeting Dates and Locations

1. January 16th at 6 PM for Board Workshop regarding board goals.
2. January 16th at 6:30 PM – Regular meeting of the WBSAU School Board of Directors
3. January 22nd – Regional School Board Meeting in Brunswick (Time/Location TBD)

Adjourn

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to adjourn at 8:09 PM. This was seconded by Mrs. Randall. Vote (5-0).

Submitted by,



Emily Thompson