

West Bath School Administrative Unit

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

March 6, 2019 at 6:30 PM at the West Bath School

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

Members Absent: Keith Hinds

Others Present: Patrick Bowdish and Emily Thompson

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 PM by Robert McDaniel.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Adjustment to the Agenda

None

New Business

1. First Reading of the School Budget

Mr. McDaniel stated that the only order of business is the first reading of the budget. He said that he wanted to point out some things the finance committee faced. There are two factors driving how the finance committee looked at the expenses for the next year. The first is the increase in regular tuition, as there are more people and an increase over last year. The second is a change in the tuition credit. The RSU1 students are exiting, so there's \$90,000 of lost revenue. He stated that that is a negative impact of \$200,000 on school expenses. He stated that the finance committee looked at the proposed budget, looked at reasonable expenses, those that are necessary, those that are mandated, and together came up with the budget proposal that the board will review.

Mrs. Thompson commented that a first reading is an initial plan of a budget. She said that the budget is more concrete than it was at this time last year, as it is not a contract negotiation year, but still there are unknowns that will become more clear as the budget process progresses. She said that the goal of a first reading of the school budget is to share a draft that will promote conversations, and that the ongoing conversation should be reflective of the board's goals. The format of the reading will be to go through the budget lines and discuss areas of increase and decrease.

- Salaries-professional – 0.12% increase due to contractual salary increases. This line includes a restructuring of positions with a .4 FTE reduction.
- Salaries-educational technicians – 3.02% increase due to contractual wage increases.
- Health insurance - professional – 13.52% increase based upon contractual language of 91% of prior year
- Health insurance ed techs – 4.50% increase based upon contractual language of 91% of prior year
- Retirement – increased by 4% as recommended by auditors
- Staff Development – decreased by 16.67% as a result of reaching credentialing status and streamlining PD selections
- Tuition Elementary – Public – increase by 28.48% due to increase in middle school enrollment and 7% increase in tuition costs. Budget allows for 3 extra students with a anticipated 4% increase to tuition costs.
- Tuition Elementary – Private – increase by 59.49% based upon number of students who elected school choice and are choosing private school options for middle school
- Supplies instructional – decrease by 8.81% based on decrease of supply requests
- Instructional Equipment – decreased by 56.30% due to eliminating original RSU1 copier contract and decreasing classroom equipment requests
- Tuition Secondary – Public – decrease of 4.82% due to decrease in 9-12 enrollment. Budget allows for 3 extra students and a 4% tuition increase
- Tuition Secondary – Private – decrease of 33.09% due to decrease in 9-12 enrollment.
- Salaries-professional – increase of 3.28% due to contractual wage increases – no change in staffing
- Salaries-ed tech – increase of 1.5% due to contractual wage increases – no change in staffing

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- Salaries – substitutes – decrease of 66.67% as not an anticipated expense
- Health Insurance – professional – decrease of 17.60% due to change of chosen coverage plan by staff
- Health Insurance – ed tech – increase of 2.23% due to contractual obligations
- Tuition Elementary/Secondary – Public & Private – These are the costs of special education programming in RSU1 and out of district when RSU1 is no longer able to provide IEP services. These lines contain just the expenses of current programming. No additional costs have been anticipated.
- Gifted and Talented – increases in salary and benefits based on contract, decreases in staff development, supplies, and dues/fees.

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- Social Work – increases in salary and benefits based on contract
- School Nurse – increase in salary based on contract
- Insurance – reduction of insurance as covered under school insurance
- Supplies-non instructional – increase of 288.78% due to needing to fund an emergency inhaler and epi pen for the school
- Improvement of Instruction – decrease in staff development and travel by 19.61% due to having reached credentialed status and the ability to reduce the EL contract.

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- Library Salaries Professional – increase of 36.80% based on new hire
- Insurance – increase of 4.5% based on contractual obligation for insurance
- Decrease in supplies, books, and other expenses – removed furniture requests
- Technology – salaries – proposed increase of 2.5% on salary lines
- Decrease of staff development and supplies
- Increase of 41.92% of computer lease, as the office computer is up for rotation based on current technology cycle
- Supplies instructional – increase of 109.55% as Chrome books are requested as part of the current technology cycle, replacing the first set 4 years ago. The original set will be moved to the tech cart in the library for the rest of the school to access.

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- Supplies – non instructional – decrease in testing contract
- Legal fees – 12.5% decrease in proposed legal fees
- Office of Superintendent – reduce by 6.42% due to decrease in staff development, rent leases (copier), books, and dues
- Special Services administration – proposed salary increase of 2%
- Salaries regular – decrease of 100% - elimination of .125 FTE position

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- School Administration – down .34% - proposed wage increases of 2.5% for office staff, decreases of rent/leases, printing, and supplies
- Central Services – salaries-managers – proposed 2.5% increase

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- Other expenses – increase of 8.05% for financial software contract and hosting
- Cleaning services – increase of 3.94% due to proposed contract increase
- Repairs/Maintenance – decrease of 8.56% due to reduction of proposed maintenance
- Electricity – increase of 16.67% as electricity costs have increased
- Student transportation – increase of 12.27 – new contract bid – same base price for the next 3 years

The end result of the budget showed a total proposed budget that has a 4.04% increase over the prior year. With a \$32,156.96 increase in state subsidy, an \$90,058.34 decrease in tuition reimbursement, and a \$36,306.35 increase in carry forward, the local contribution is an increase of \$171,149.17 or 5.44% over the prior year.

Mrs. Wallace commented that it was a shame that the town did not come to the reading and that she is impressed that the school board can do what is presented in the budget. Mr. McDaniel said that it's unfortunate to not have a vision of what the town projects are going to be. He said that the school budget looks pretty good, but it's hard to know what the impact on residents would be without knowing the town side of things and what expenses the town will be committing to. He stated that the proposed lighting project would be coming from a fund that is already raised and would not effect the fund base.

Mrs. Randall said that from now until the town meeting it would be wise to discuss what part of the contract the board has control over versus discretionary spending. She also said that there is a misunderstanding that this school budget is for K-5 and that it only covers what is

encompassed in this building. She said that it is important that the board is clear that even though the middle and high schoolers are not in this building, we are financially responsible for them – all of them – Prek, middle/high, and out of district placements. These two points would go a long way in having people understand the budget.

Mr. McDaniel agreed that that is a point for town meeting. The budget is not the school's expenses, it is the town's obligation to pay for the public education of all of West Bath's students. Mrs. Randall commented that it is not all in the board's control and the more information that is shared from these points, the better.

Mr. McDaniel commented that the only point the board has really been clear about is special education costs. Mrs. Randall said that she does not like that point either, as the budget becomes a blame game. She does not like singling out a demographic that the town is responsible for.

Ms. Powers said that when she got her signatures for running, residents were under the assumption that when the town withdrew the school budget would be reduced, and she thinks that is part of the issue. Mrs. Wallace said that over the years the evolution of districts has been back and forth, back and forth. The town wants to have control over the school, and then realizes it is more expensive than residents thought it would be. Mrs. Wallace said that it depends on the objective, as dollars and cents can't be the only objective. She said that the board needs to ask what kind of education can we provide for our students, while being fiscally responsible. Our school is in a better place than we were a few years ago.

Mr. McDaniel said that the settlement has allowed the town to do things at better rates than could have been done otherwise. He said that it hopes that it gives the town a bit of an umbrella, as he can't imagine that the cost of high school will be the same in a few years, yet we need to pay for our students to go there. The settlement funds give a little protection at least. Mrs. Randall said that additionally if the withdrawal had not taken place, West Bath would be one of many voices. This way we're in control of our students' destiny.

Mr. Bowdish said from the floor that if we'd been paying attention to increases we'd have had if the town remained part of RSU1, he thinks we'd find that we're actually saving money.

Mrs. Thompson encouraged the board to study the budget, and to ask questions. Mr. McDaniel said that the board needs to be able to stand behind what we are asking for, and if there are major repairs, they need to be budgeted for.

Public Comment

None

Set Next Meeting Dates and Locations

1. Wednesday, March 13th @ 6:30 PM – West Bath School Board of Directors Budget Workshop

2. Wednesday, March 20th @ 6:30 PM – West Bath School Board of Directors Meeting
3. Tuesday, April 2nd @ Brunswick School Department – Collaborative Board Workshop with MSMA – Time TBD

Adjourn

Mrs. Randall made a motion to adjourn at 7:58 PM. Mrs. Wallace seconded the motion.
Vote (4-0).

Submitted by,

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

Emily Thompson