

West Bath School Administrative Unit

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

April 10, 2019 at 6:30 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, Aggie Demers, David Hennessey, and Emily Thompson

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 PM by Keith Hinds.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Comments from the Chair:

No comments

Approve/Amend Minutes of 3/20/19 & 4/1/19:

Mrs. Randall made a motion to approve the minutes of 3/20/19 and 4/1/19. Mr. McDaniel seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

Adjustments to Agenda:

Mr. Hinds stated that item 11 on the agenda would be moved and placed before item 9.

Public Comments:

None

Committee Reports:

1. Policy Committee – No Update
2. Technology Committee – No Update
3. Facilities Committee – Mrs. Thompson said that she is still waiting on the two bids for the budget – the bid for the stove and the bid for lowering the sprinkler system. Because those two bids have not yet come in, the facilities committee did not meet to update their recommendations for the budget.
4. Finance Committee -

- a. Payroll Warrants – Mr. Hinds said that payroll warrants were reviewed and signed by Mr. Hinds on 4/2 and 4/9.
- b. AP Warrants – Mr. Hinds stated that warrants were reviewed and signed by Mr. Hinds and Mr. McDaniel on 3/20 and 4/3.

Superintendent's Report

1. Financial Report – Mrs. Thompson reported that with 25% of the year remaining, 35.08% of the budget remains. She said that with the carryover that has been currently allocated in the 19-20 budget removed, along with the food service transfer, there is 31% of the budget remaining. She commented that individual budget lines continue to track as they should.
2. District Updates
 - a. 5th Grade Boat Shop Open House – Mrs. Thompson said that the 5th Grade students had their open house at the Maine Maritime Museum on 3/28 which was well attended. She provided the board with a write-up from the Times Record about the event, as well as an unanticipated note to Ms. Goulet's class from Senator Collins giving accolades to the 5th grade students for their boat building success.
 - b. 4th Grade Poets – Mrs. Thompson said that she was excited to announce that all of Mrs. Upham's 4th grade students have had poetry accepted to be published in the 2019 Young American Poetry Digest. Poetry was submitted by teachers and selected based on creativity, sensory and figurative language, structure, and poetic techniques. The West Bath Community Crew has committed to purchasing a published book for each of our students and the library. Mrs. Thompson congratulated to the 4th graders and thanked Mrs. Upham and the Community Crew!
 - c. YMCA Aftercare – Mrs. Thompson said that she wanted the board to know that there was a snafu with staffing for the YMCA before and aftercare, and the prior day parents were informed that following vacation there would not be childcare at the school. However, two staff members from the Y have stepped up to help, and Y care will continue as anticipated. Mrs. Thompson said that she wanted the board to be aware in the event they heard otherwise.
3. Upcoming Events – Mrs. Thompson provided the board with a notice of upcoming events:
 - 4/11 – Spring Student Led Conferences
 - 4/11 – Book Fair
 - 4/12 – Bikes for Books, sponsored by the Bath Solar Lodge – Mrs. Thompson explained that students had been reading since February vacation and submitting raffle tickets with book summaries. On the 12th a boy and a girl from each class will have their names drawn to win a bike, which is 18 bikes.
 - 5/3 – Better World Day – A focus on a day of service in our community.

Mrs. Thompson said that the leadership team has organized all of the school's end of year events and dates, hoping that this is the end of the snow days.

Executive Session

Mr. Hinds made a motion to enter into an executive session pursuant to Title I, Chapter 13, Section 405,6,A of the M.R.S.A. for the purpose of discussing personnel issues at 6:39 PM. Mr. McDaniel seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

Return to Public Session:

The board returned to public session at 7:06 PM.

Old Business

1. Second Reading and Approval of the 2019-2020 School Budget

Mr. Hinds said that currently the proposed budget is \$3,824,353.24, an increase of \$121,782.50 or 3.29%. That changes to the local contribution to \$3,289,663.65 or an increase of \$143,377.53 or 4.56%.

Mr. Hinds asked for board comments. Mr. McDaniel said that the board still does not have firm costs on the kitchen, sprinklers, and tiles, and therefore that line item is questionable. Mrs. Thompson said that the board can look at what was proposed and make decision on what is known, or the budget vote can be tabled.

Mr. Hennessey asked how they can vote on a budget until they know what the budget figures are. He asked the board to not vote on the budget this evening. He asked if the board has changed the numbers at all since the board met with the budget committee? Mr. Hinds said that the initial number that was presented was an increase of local contribution of \$171,000. It was reduced to \$165,000, and now it is at \$145,000. Mr. Hennessey said that the calendar put out by the town shows that the Budget Advisory Committee is supposed to make recommendations on the budget on 4/22. Mr. Hinds said that the calendar for the April 22nd is for the board to give their final budget to the town. Mr. Hennessey said that it is hard to give recommendations on a budget that has been voted on. Mr. McDaniel said that the board was set to meet with the Board of Selectmen on April 8th and that conversation was cancelled at the Selectmen's request. Mr. Hennessey said that his final question is whether the board is contemplating any staff changes with a smaller kindergarten? Mr. Hinds said that the current budget does eliminated a 40% contracted position. Mrs. Thompson said that there is a contract that is not part of the budget, but that position itself will need to remain and the reduction will be seen through other restructuring that will happen. Mr. Hinds said that the headcount will be reduced by .4 FTE as well as as a .125 FTE special ed secretary. Mrs. Demers asked if the role is going away. Mr. Hinds said that the role is not going away, it will be filled with existing staff, thus reducing total staff and total wages and expenses. He said that the budget has not been finalized and this will continue to be discussed. Mr. Hennessey said that he felt the public should be able to know who is coming and going, not necessarily by name, but by position.

Mr. Hennessey asked the board to not approve the budget tonight given the unknowns in the maintenance line.

Mr. Hinds asked if the board had any other actionable items.

Mrs. Wallace asked if the board could discuss the proposed changes to PE programming.

Mrs. Thompson said that following up on the school's credentialing, the school had begun the documentation of what the next steps would be to continue to make gains as an EL school. She said that the board had Core Practice 26, promoting courage and adventure, in their packet. Mrs. Thompson said that she would like the board to consider an expansion of the current physical education program.

Mrs. Thompson said that the core practices give the guidance for how to operate a successful school. She said that core practice 26 talks about how adventure can be any physical, artistic, or academic experience that involves risk, challenge, and discovery. She stated that adventure bolsters student engagement and strengthens students' courage. She said that one could read through the core practice and see the clear connection between adventure and PE, but also the adventure to all of the specials – art, music, guidance – as well as to what happens within the regular classrooms. Mrs. Thompson said that promoting courage and adventure as a habit of scholarship moves the school towards its next set of goals.

Mrs. Thompson stated that there is a significant amount of research that connects increased movement to higher cognitive functioning and better academic results. She stated that movement supports positive behavior, increased focus, and supports life long positive habits. Increases students' abilities to self-regulate, play independently, and function as a part of a group. She said that the hope would be that the school can add to its current programming where students are learning movement skills and health-related fitness components per the PE standards and that the school can add in the fitness and adventure activities that students can access for their lifetime. She said that she is picturing activities like kayaking, swimming, biking, hiking, climbing, rowing, snow shoeing, cross country skiing, for example. She said the adventure concept would be that there would be a landmark adventure per grade per trimester. To the extent possible, the adventure would be connected with expedition field work. Over time, students would work to build the skills they needed to be successful on the grade level adventure.

She stated that the other component is thinking about outdoor education. She referred to an article that said that average child spends only 4-7 minutes per day outside in unstructured play, and over 7 hours a day in front of a screen. Mrs. Thompson said that this is reality of children in schools today. They are in front of screens and not spending time outside. She said that researched showed that spending time outdoors creates smarter, happier, more attentive, and less anxious children – builds confidence and promotes creativity and imagination, teaches responsibility, provides different stimulation, promotes movement and develops a sense of wonder, and reduces stress and fatigue. Mrs. Thompson said she felt they had a moral obligation to look at increasing students' opportunities to move and to be outside for more parts of our day. She said she

also sees this connecting with the next phase of the school garden, which also supports the school's farm to school plans as well as goals for increased nutrition. She said that while this would help the school to meet its next set of goals, more importantly it encourages students to be active and to develop life long healthy habits.

In terms of number of days, PE needs to be offered at least two days per week in order to for each class to get 40 minutes per week. Ideally, this increased position would be 4 or 5 days, but even just adding a day would be a step in the right direction.

Mrs. Powers asked if students would still have their current PE programming in addition to this? Mrs. Thompson said that it would change some of the things that they do in PE, but that other areas of the current program would stay in place. The goal would be to provide more opportunities to develop skills towards life long adventures that they can access now. Mrs. Wallace asked, that with this being a 5 day per week position, this would still be a reduction of a 40% position? Mrs. Thompson responded that this was correct.

Mrs. Powers said that originally that when this was proposed she thought it was a wonderful idea, for all of the reasons that just were given. But when she looks at the total budget and the deferred maintenance that she wondered if it was a "want" instead of a "need". She said she struggles when the board keeps hearing how closely the budget is tracking and when Mrs. Thompson was talking about it she felt it was a great idea and she agreed with everything that was said, but she is concerned now when looking at the full budget. She said she liked the idea, but maybe not full time. Mrs. Wallace said that because the board is not adding staffing and is still reducing workforce, it makes her more willing to talk about it and think about what we really want for our school. Mr. McDaniel said that the board is talking about restructuring academic duties to enhance certain outcomes and activities in the school, but still reducing the manpower. Mrs. Wallace agreed that it would be reducing staff numbers, but adding so much to the school.

Mrs. Powers asked if the person needs training and certification? Mrs. Thompson said that it depends on how it is structured and who is hired. If it is structured as a full time physical education position, then certification or conditional certification for PE would need to be considered. Mrs. Wallace asked how Mrs. Thompson planned to determine exactly what this position would be, and how everyone would be able to give input? Mrs. Thompson said that she's provided the concept. Her hope would be that the board could give some guidance or take a straw poll to determine the number of days that they would support, and then she would work with the full staff to plan for the priorities of the position to meet the needs of the school and students. Mrs. Randall said that as an EL school this is a tremendous opportunity for West Bath, and the more that we can promote life long habits and love for adventure while also meeting requirements and making it our own, is a tremendous opportunity. She said she fully supported this concept. Mr. McDaniel said that it's as question of how to develop a program, distribute it among grades, make it sustainable, be fiscally responsible and reduce outside contracts, and be more cohesive. Mrs. Wallace said that she fully supported the position with an

understanding that it's a position that is structured with input. She said that it is important to hear input from staff and parents. Mrs. Randall said that that is the beauty of being a small school and EL school and having this in our control. If something is not working, we can adapt, and anything that we can do to promote the lifelong skills we should do.

Mrs. Wallace made a motion to table the budget. Mr. McDaniel seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

Mr. Hennessey asked that once the numbers are set and before the board votes on the budget to please share the information with the Budget Advisory Committee.

2. Discussion of April 2nd Regional School Board Meeting

Mr. Hinds said that he attended the regional school board meeting in Brunswick on April 2nd, along with Mrs. Randall and Mrs. Powers. Mrs. Randall said that she felt the conversations were valuable for their districts, but not relatable to ours. She said it was nice to get in a room and hear how other boards are functioning, but she was not sure that the topics pertain to West Bath.

Mrs. Powers suggested that maybe board members could take turns going. Mr. Hinds said that he like the idea of future meetings being focused on a different audience.

New Business

1. Approval of the 2019-2020 School Calendar

Mrs. Thompson reviewed the proposed calendar with the board. She said that it has been developed with the input of the staff, approved by the association, and is similar to RSU1's calendar with just two changes. Mr. McDaniel made a motion to approve the 2019-2020 calendar. Mrs. Wallace seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

2. Remote School Days

Mrs. Thompson said that remote school days are now being promoted for boards to approve at a rate of 1 remote day in advance. She read the conditions for approval to the board and reviewed the questions that the staff had regarding the pilot. She said that there is a 3 sentence application to allow for districts to apply to consider remote school days. Mrs. Wallace made a motion to allow Mrs. Thompson to apply to the state for remote school day consideration. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

3. Meeting Extension

Mr. Hinds said that per board policy the board needed to consider extending the meeting past 8 PM. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

4. Out-of-State Field Work Request – Summer STEM request to Visit New England Aquarium

Mrs. Thompson summarized the proposal made by Mrs. Franklin to allow Summer Stem students to visit the New England Aquarium. Mr. Hinds made a motion to approve the field work request. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

5. Board Communication – Discussion

Mrs. Wallace made a motion to table the board communication agenda item. Mr. McDaniel seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

Set Next Meeting Dates and Locations

1. Monday, April 22nd @ 5:30 PM – Board of Selectmen’s Meeting
2. Wednesday, April 24th @ 5:30 Special School Board Meeting
3. Wednesday, May 1st at 5:30 PM - Special Meeting of the School Board of Directors – Approve Warrants
4. Wednesday, May 15th at 6:30 PM – Regular Meeting of the School Board of Directors

Adjourn

Mr. Hinds made a motion at 8:14 PM to adjourn. Mrs. Wallace seconded the 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