

West Bath School Administrative Unit

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

April 24, 2019 at 5:30 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, and Emily Thompson

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Keith Hinds.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Adjustments to the Agenda:

None

Public Comments:

None

Old Business

1. Discussion of the Proposed 2019-2020 School Budget

Mrs. Thompson provided an overview of the changes that have been made to the budget since the first reading. Mr. Hinds stated that on Monday the finance committee met with the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Advisory Committee and received no questions, no comments, and no suggestions. He explained that the town is projecting a 1 mill increase, but there are still some questions on their side about revenue sharing and how it will be funded. Mr. Hinds said that the finance committee spent a couple of hours the day before trying to find further places to reduce, but that the budget is lean as is.

He suggested that an additional \$14,554.70 for carryover be added to the budget revenue to reduce the local contribution. Additionally, Mr. Hinds said that the bids that they were waiting on for the sprinkler and stove have come in. The finance committee recommends taking out the hood repair, adjusting for the stove cost, and adding in the change to the sprinkler system, which reduces the maintenance line by \$350.

Mrs. Randall said that she was concerned that the board is trimming so much that the system can't operate, and that overall the board has done an excellent job with what they have been given. She stated that it will also be in the board's favor that this is the last year for the tuition credit, as the change looks so drastic year over year. The fact that it will stabilize will be a good thing. Mrs. Powers asked if the PE/Adventure teacher was still in the budget, to which Mr. Hinds responded that the board would discuss that next.

Mr. Hinds made a motion to increase the carryover from the undesignated fund balance from \$196,179.87 to \$210,734.57. This was seconded by Mr. McDaniel. Vote (5-0).

Mr. Hinds next asked to discuss the facilities changes. He said that the net change is only \$350, but they gain the ability to lower the sprinkler head. Mrs. Wallace asked what the update was on the lighting project. Mr. Hinds explained that that project was not in the school's budget. Mr. McDaniel said it is the town's intention to move forward and have it voted on at town meeting. Mrs. Randall asked about the door locks. Mrs. Thompson said that she has been in communication with the town administrator and the town will allow the school to access the facilities funds, but at this point the project will need to be completed at the close of school. Mrs. Randall said she just wanted to be sure the project was addressed, as it was important. Mrs. Powers asked about the plan for unit ventilators. Mrs. Thompson said that the current plan is to replace one per year, so after this year, there would still be 4 more to replace.

Mrs. Randall made a motion to accept the proposed project amounts as suggested by the finance committee. This was seconded by Mrs. Wallace. Vote (5-0).

Mrs. Thompson commented that in the most recent version of the budget two students had move out of district, and the tuition line had been adjusted down accordingly. However, just the day prior, two new students moved into the district. She said that the finance committee recommends leaving the tuition line where it is, knowing that there's only 1 extra seat at the middle school level but 3 extra seats at the high school level, leaving 4 extra seats in total. Where the middle and high school tuition rates are now almost the same, there is still some cushion, even if one line ends up being over extended. Mr. Hinds said that tuition rates are set in December. He asked the board if they are comfortable leaving it as proposed? Mrs. Powers asked what the history had been, to which Mrs. Thompson said that each year had been slightly different but that budgeting with a 4% increase and 3 extra students per level had worked out each year. She said that with such a large increase at the middle school level this year in tuition rates, she would be surprised to see it again at the same rate. Mr. Hinds said he suggested the board leave tuition as is.

Mr. Hinds said that with these changes the overall budget increase is 3.28% with a 4.08% increase to the local contribution.

Mr. Hinds now turned the board towards staffing. He asked the board to comment on the expansion of PE to include the fitness and adventure proposal that was discussed at the prior meeting. Mrs. Randall said that she felt that for staff morale and consistency for

kids it was important to keep the position in the budget as proposed. Mrs. Powers said she had concerns about certification and not being certified in PE. Mrs. Thompson said that obtaining a conditional certificate in PE, or requesting a waiver if necessary, would not be difficult. Mrs. Powers said that it is a fact that student population is decreasing, and that reality is all over the place. She asked about the class size policy, to which Mrs. Thompson responded with policy language and anticipated class sizes. Mr. Hinds said that one advantage to retaining teachers is that they have a number of years of EL experience. Reducing teachers would cause the school to lose a lot of experience and knowledge. Mr. McDaniel asked what the impact would be on the budget if the board chose not to eliminate a position. Mr. Hinds said that the cover sheet that the board had before them represents not making any further reductions. Mrs. Wallace said that she feels that the budget is not going to go up by keeping a teacher. Mrs. Randall commented that she would like to see the 5-day position replaced in some capacity. Mrs. Powers said that the enrollment numbers do not support keeping a teacher.

Mr. McDaniel made the motion to reduce a classroom teaching position. Mr. Hinds seconded the motion, with regret. Vote (3-1, 1 abstention).

Mr. McDaniel said that most board members are in favor of a teaching position that includes physical education that includes 3 days, if we try to find someone who is certified. Mrs. Wallace said she was not opposed to having a 5 day per week position. Mrs. Powers said that she does not see a 5 day position, but that she would not be opposed to adding a 3rd day and exploring options. Mrs. Randall said that the school does a lot already with Chewonki, boat building, and the outdoor classroom. The concept is already alive and well in the culture of the school.

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to create a 3-day per week position, with a job description to be determined, that would include the PE requirement. Mrs. Powers seconded the motion. Mr. Hinds invited public comment. Mrs. Demers said that these are hard choices but the discussion is good. She felt that the board could not really justify 5 days with the student loss in classroom numbers, and that was unfortunate, but there's tax dollars behind it. Vote (3-1, 1 abstention).

Mr. Hinds requested a recess at 6:42 PM in order to adjust budget figures.

The board re-entered at 7 PM.

Mr. Hinds stated that the budget is now at a 3.08% increase with a 3.85% increase to the local contribution. He asked if there were any further discussions or changes to the budget as proposed?

Mrs. Wallace said that she thought the music position could use more time and the board should consider increasing music. Mrs. Powers said that with one less classroom, maybe that opportunity would already be there next year. Mrs. Wallace said the program is sorely lacking, not due to the quality of the staff, but in terms of time and music benefits the students in so many ways. Mr. McDaniel said that in an ideal world, all of the arts

could be increased. Mrs. Powers asked if programs could be offered after school to which Mr. Hinds responded that there are volunteer after school opportunities.

Mrs. Wallace made a motion to increase the amount of time music is taught from 2.5 to 3 days per week. Mrs. Powers seconded the motion. Mrs. Randall said that she did not disagree with the motion, but with the timing. Mr. McDaniel said that he agreed in principle, but that he would rather wait until the board has time to define the position and define the program, and that it should be part of a concerted program.

Mr. Hinds asked if there was any public comment. Mrs. Demers said that her personnel view is that PE, arts, and music needed to be increased. Mrs. Randall said that she was concerned about the impact on scheduling.

Vote (3-2).

Mr. Hinds reviewed the new coversheet with the board, stating that with the addition of music, the total budget has increased to 3.19% and the local contribution is an increase of 3.98%.

Mr. Hinds asked if there were any other additional changes.

He made a motion to approve the budget as presented. Mr. McDaniel seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

2. Board Communication

Mr. Hinds made a motion to table board communications until the next regular meeting. Mrs. Wallace seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

Set Next Meeting Dates and Locations

1. Wednesday, May 1st at 6:30 PM - Special Meeting of the School Board of Directors – Approve Warrants
2. Wednesday, May 15th at 6:30 PM – Regular Meeting of the School Board of Directors

Adjourn

Mrs. Wallace made a motion to adjourn at 7:30. This was seconded by Mr. McDaniel. Vote (5-0).

Submitted by,



Emily Thompson