

West Bath School Administrative Unit

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

November 12, 2019 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, Bobbie Brewer, David Hennessey, & Emily Thompson

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM by Superintendent Emily Thompson.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Nomination and Election of Board Chair

Mrs. Thompson that as this was the first meeting after seating a new board member, it was the timeframe for electing a new chair and vice-chair of the board. Mrs. Thompson asked if there were any nominations for board chair?

Mr. McDaniel made a motion for Mr. Hinds as board chair. Mrs. Randall seconded that motion.

Mrs. Thompson asked if there were any more nominations, and hearing none asked if there was any discussion.

With no discussion, Mrs. Thompson asked for a vote on the motion of as board chair. (Vote 4-0-1).

Nomination and Election of Vice Chair

Mr. Hinds opened nominations for vice chair. Mrs. Randall nominated Mr. McDaniel to serve as vice chair. Mrs. Wallace seconded that nomination. There were no further nominations or discussion.

Vote (4-0-1).

Comments from the Chair:

None

Approve/Amend Minutes of 10/16/19:

Mrs. Randall made a motion to approve the minutes of 10/16/19. Mr. McDaniel seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

Adjustments to Agenda:

Mr. Hinds made two adjustments to the agenda given the weather conditions outside. He moved items 11.1 and 11.2 to just after item 7.

Auditors Report:

Mr. Hinds introduced auditor Bobbie Brewer to review the audit report. Ms. Brewer stated that she did not have many comments as the school department is doing very well. She invited them to turn to page 6 to see the overall standing of the school department. She stated that the fund balance increased by \$26,000. She explained that it was discussed with the finance committee. The department spent less than was budgeted, but it was largely due to changes in special education programs for students and bringing students back to home schools.

She asked board members to turn to page 8 to review food service. She suggested that at some point the net position of \$13,146.48 is going to be used up and the board will want to budget more than the \$35,000 for food service to cover the deficit. That is a normal thing for schools in the midcoast and smaller schools because there is not the population of students to make up the sales to cover the cost of the meals. Meal sales have gone at most school departments.

Returning to page 6, Ms. Brewer reported that special revenue remained even. She explained to the board that what is spent is what is reimbursed. She encouraged Mrs. Thompson to spend the PEPG and transition money. She asked the board if they had any questions. Everything looks really good. The board is doing a good job of budgeting and being aware of the impacts that one student who has special education needs can have on a school's budget.

Mr. Hinds asked the board if they have any questions. Mrs. Wallace asked if there were limits on what the PEPG can be spent on. Ms. Brewer said that the PEPG funds needed to be focused on professional development and the transition funds needed to be focused on standards.

Mr. Hinds asked if there were management deficiencies, whether everything was being managed and handled appropriately from the administrative end? Ms. Brewer responded that there were not. She also stated to the board that they have the oversight and need to make sure their systems are upheld but that they are doing a good job.

Mr. McDaniel said that of the \$525,000 that had been spoken about, really only \$185,000 remains. Ms. Brewer asked the board to flip to page 5 to look at the balance sheet and the general fund column shows that \$339,386.35 to the fiscal year 20 budget. So \$185,000 is unassigned.

Ms. Brewer said that the State of Maine has a requirement of having no more than 3% in excess in the fund balance. Ms. Brewer commented that Mrs. Thompson's goal was to have \$185,000 of fund balance remaining to allow for a stability moving forward. Ms. Brewer said the fund balance is only \$5,000 more than planned, which is good. She said that the board's practice of applying that fund balance to the next year is a good practice, as they are applying a known versus having an estimate. She said that she had had school departments apply the estimate and then have a negative unassigned fund balance, and that having a known amount for carry forward is the best route to go.

Ms. Powers asked if there was a limited amount of time for the PEPG funds to be spent? Ms. Brewer said that she did not think so. Mrs. Thompson asked if it falls into the category that there needs to be Selectmen's approval for? Ms. Brewer said that it does not, the board can spend it like Title funds.

Town of West Bath Audit Workshop:

Mr. Hinds said that as discussed at the last meeting, there will be a joint workshop with the Board of Selectmen, the School Board, the Budget Advisory Committee, and the Investment Committee with the auditors. He said the town also had invited Steve Bailey to help to answer any questions that may come up. This will be on the 19th at 6 PM at the fire station. Mrs. Randall asked if it is a public workshop? Mr. Hinds responded that it was. Mr. Hinds asked Ms. Brewer if she had any advice on how the board should prepare for that meeting, or any further feedback? Mr. Hinds said that he felt that most questions will circle around the \$525,000 and whether the board over budgeted or overspent. The board needs to be prepared as a board to explain how carryover is used, and how the role of \$180,000 was determined, and be open about the process. He said that the board always sits at the last meeting before the budget is voted and wrestles with tuition increases, knowing it does not become a known until December. Mr. McDaniel said that they'll likely look at the fund balance from the last few years and see how much has been applied to the next fiscal year. Ms. Brewer said that a lot of towns and town administrators are always looking at the school departments' budgets because schools are typically the largest portion of the tax commitment. She said, that it is important that there is a fund balance so that the tax commitment levels are not changing every year but that the board should be ready to explain that.

Mr. McDaniel said that the most common question at budget approval time is "what is the mill rate?" It's not about the dollar amount, it's about the mill rate and if the mill rate is going down, there's a lot fewer questions. In closing, Ms. Brewer encouraged the board to contact her with any questions through Mrs. Thompson and stated, "you are doing a good job."

Public Comments:

None

Committee Reports:

1. Policy Committee – None
2. Technology Committee – None
3. Facilities Committee – Mrs. Thompson reported that the facilities committee met on 10/31 and the minutes are in the board packet. Mrs. Thompson said that the committee reviewed the CMP bill and that since the LED lighting has been installed, electricity usage has been consistently lower. While it's not a big savings, it's a savings one can see already on paper. She said that the big question of the facilities committee is whether to continue the cleaning contract with BSC. BSC has been sold to a company in Montreal, and while it is expected that the school won't see any changes, it is something the committee wants to be sure everyone is aware of. She said that last year as the decision was made to continue the contract for two years that we continued to be satisfied with contracting services rather than hiring employees. As the contract has increased, which would be expected as they have their own increases, is the school at the place where it makes more sense to employ staff instead. She said the committee is working on determining that, and putting together a proposal one way or another. The committee also discussed a gym door project that the school's safety committee has been working on, and then also preliminary budget planning. She said the committee will meet again on November 21st for the building walkthrough.
4. Mrs. Thompson said that the school's septic system has been assessed, and while she does not yet have the written report, all indicators at this time are that the septic system is in good working order and there currently no evidence of concern. Mr. McDaniel asked how often the septic tanks are pumped. Mrs. Thompson responded that it is pumped annually.
5. Finance Committee -
 - a. Payroll Warrants – Mr. Hinds said that payroll warrants were reviewed and signed by Mr. Hinds on 10/29 and 11/12.
 - b. AP Warrants – Mr. Hinds stated that AP warrants were reviewed and signed by Mr. Hinds and Mr. McDaniel on 10/24.

Superintendent's Report

1. Financial Report –
 - a. 19-20 Budget Report - Mrs. Thompson said that with 62% of the year remaining, 71% of the budget remains. Items are tracking appropriately, and tuition bills are just starting to arrive for the new school year. She stated that there are no lines of concern in overall report.
2. District Updates
 - a. Veterans Day Celebration - Last Friday the school hosted the 2nd annual Veterans Day Celebration, with approximately 15 veterans in attendance. Mrs. Thompson explained that this was held during the regular Friday schoolwide crew meeting, and was hosted by Mrs. Ouellette. Each class performed patriotic songs for the veterans, thanking them for their service, and then a small reception was held in the library.
 - b. Storm Days - Mrs. Thompson said that there have been struggles with power outages this fall. Because of either road conditions or outages, school has been closed on 10/17 and 11/1. She informed the board that one of the results of the wind on 11/1 was that the greenhouse met its demise. Because it is a temporary

structure it is not believed to be covered by insurance. It was purchased by a grant, and the school is currently looking at other types of structures that could be easily disassembled in the winter, like a hoop house.

- c. Wellness Council - Mrs. Thompson said that the school's wellness committee has met regularly, but they've reached the time to have the wellness council begin meeting as well. She explained that the wellness council serves as an advisory committee in regards to student wellness issues and is responsible for making recommendations related to the wellness policy, wellness goals, administrative or school regulations and practices, or raising awareness of student health issues. The council consists of staff, board members, community advisory members, and staff from Midcoast Hospital. She said the intention is that the council meet quarterly to work through portions of the wellness policy that need to be reviewed, in order to make suggestions to the policy committee and then to the board for policy updates. The immediate goal is to focus on consistent messaging. The wellness council will be meeting on 11/13.
 - d. Safety Drill - Mrs. Thompson said that the school has scheduled a safety drill on 11/15 in coordination with the Sagadahoc County Sheriff's Department and the West Bath Fire Department. Mrs. Thompson explained the current planning and preparation process that takes place with safety drills, and said that the school is planning to conduct ALICE training with the sheriff's department in January, and then will consider further adjusting the drill process.
 - e. 4th & 5th Grade Math Team - Mrs. Thompson said that Mrs. Fuller, the librarian/GT teacher, has reinstated the 4th and 5th grade math team and will be bringing students to 5 math meets beginning next month.
3. Upcoming Events - Mrs. Thompson provided the board with the following winter events:
- a. Harvest Meal - 11/20 @ 11:30 AM
 - b. Student-Led Conferences - 11/25 @ 12:30-7 PM
 - c. West Bath School Christmas Craft Fair & Cafe - 12/7 @ 9 AM-1 PM
 - d. K-5 Winter Concert - 12/10 @ 5:30 PM
 - e. Little Elf Shop - 12/13
 - f. Parents Night Out - 12/13 @ 5-8 PM
 - g. Winter Celebration of Learning - 12/19 @ 2 PM

New Business

1. Town of West Bath Comprehensive Plan - Mr. Hinds said that the town is in the process of updating their comprehensive plan. Within that, there are a few sections that deal with education in particular. The Town Administrator has asked that the board begin to make updates to those sections, and therefore he suggests that a subcommittee be formed to take the lead on that and report back to the board. There is time, as the town is considering town meeting 2021 or 2022 for approval. He asked if any board members would be interested in being on that subcommittee.

Mrs. Thompson said that one of the things that excites her about the comprehensive plan process is that idea of really thinking about a 10-year plan. It would allow the board to

create goals that then are stepping stones to their long-term plan, like is done for facilities. Mrs. Wallace said that she thinks the reason for the long delay is that the town would like that to happen in all departments across the town as well, and there is plenty of time to review the plan. Mrs. Thompson said that her thought is that it makes sense to form a subcommittee to do this work, as this is likely not work that can happen in the business portion of a regular board meeting. The board discussed the role of a comprehensive plan for a town, the purpose of the updating the plan, and what work a sub-committee of the board would need to do.

Mr. Hinds made a motion to form a sub committee to update the educational portions of the plan. Mr. McDaniel seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

2. Board Standing Committee Assignments - The board updated the standing committee assignments to include the following assignments:
 - Facilities Committee - Ashleigh Randall & Mary Wallace
 - Finance Committee - Keith Hinds & Robert McDaniel
 - Technology Committee - Mary Wallace & Joanne Powers
 - Policy Committee - Keith Hinds & Robert McDaniel
 - Negotiations Committee - Keith Hinds & Joanne Powers
 - Wellness Council - Ashleigh Randall & Joanne Powers
 - Comprehensive Planning Committee - Keith Hinds & Ashleigh Randall

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to approve the standing committees as amended. This was seconded by Mrs. Randall. Vote (5-0).

3. 2020-2021 Budget Calendar - Mrs. Thompson said that she met with the Town Administrator regarding the budget process for the upcoming year, and a thought she has around the process is that this year the calendar will run based on a schedule that is set for the Budget Advisory Committee. On her schedule, the committee would come to the March 18th regular board meeting to hear the first reading of the school budget. With that information, she and Mr. Hinds had worked through the calendar to draft when other budget meetings for the school department would be held. She said the one thing she was not positive about at that was listed on the schedule was the April 13th date, as she is unsure if the full warrants need to be provided by the 13th. If so, the full schedule may need to be shifted up by a week. Mr. Hinds asked if there were any conflicts on the schedule that were known at this time. Mr. McDaniel said that the finance committee would need to meet a week or two prior to the March 18th date. Mrs. Randall said that she appreciated the condensed list.

Mr. Hinds made a motion to approve the calendar. Mr. McDaniel seconded the list. Vote (5-0).

4. Board Goals - Mr. Hinds said that there are concerns about travel given weather conditions, and asked if this should be tabled? Mrs. Randall made a motion to table and come prepared in December. Mr. McDaniel seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

Public Comments

1. Mr. Hennessey asked if tuition rates had been set. Mrs. Thompson responded that tuition rates get set in December and then they are retroactive to the start of the year. Mr. Hennessey asked if Mrs. Thompson had any idea what they would be. She said that she doesn't at this point but that they generally increase by 3-5%, sometimes more, and usually after a large increase in one year the increase is smaller the following year. She expects she'll hear by mid-December. Mrs. Randall clarified that those tuition rates are for the current school year, to which Mrs. Thompson answered affirmatively. Mr. Hinds said that the board budgeted for a 3% increase plus two additional students.

Set Next Meeting Dates and Locations

1. December 16th at 6:00 PM at the West Bath School

Adjourn

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to adjourn at 6:49 PM. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

Submitted by,

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

Emily Thompson