

West Bath School Administrative Unit

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

December 16, 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, Kaitlin Goulet & students, & Emily Thompson

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 PM by Keith Hinds.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Comments from the Chair:

Mr. Hinds welcomed the board and the audience and wished everyone a happy and healthy upcoming holiday season.

Approve/Amend Minutes of 11/12/19:

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

Adjustments to Agenda:

Mr. Hinds stated that 12.1.1 and 12.1.2 would be combined into one conversation.

Public Comments:

None

Staff Report:

1. Kaitlin Goulet & 5th Grade Students - Chewonki
Ms. Goulet said that this was her 3rd year attending Chewonki with students and it is always an interesting experience. She mentioned that while the activities are generally the same each year, the group takes to each activity in a different way and she learns about the students in a way that she would not necessarily have learned about them during classroom time. She shared a video of photo highlights from the 5th grade week at Chewonki.

The students each shared about what their most important take away was. Bronwyn said that even though she had known most of the students in her group since kindergarten, they bonded in a way that they hadn't before. Kasey said that this was really her first time camping, especially with adults and she really enjoyed the camp crews and the work that they did. Maeve said that it was fun and she felt that her classmates bonded and were kinder to each other. She liked the high elements and she recommends that next year's class go to Chewonki as well. The students mentioned the challenge they had of cooking on the fire and collecting water. They brought back to school a stronger bond between classmates, flexibility, and compassion for nature. The girls stated that their class is like a family, and being back together for the cookout after spending a day apart in two groups was very exciting. Following the students' presentation, Mr. Hinds said that they always get feedback about how well behaved the 5th grade class is at Chewonki and thanked them for representing the school so well.

Executive Session

Mr. Hinds made a motion at 6:32 PM to enter into an executive session pursuant to Title 1, Chapter 13, Section 405,6,A. of the M.R.S.A. for the purpose of discussing personnel issues. This was seconded by Mrs. Wallace. Vote (5-0).

Return to Regular Session

The board returned to regular session at 7:12.

Committee Reports:

1. Policy Committee – None
2. Technology Committee – None
3. Facilities Committee –

Mrs. Thompson said that the facilities committee met on 11/21 to complete a facilities walkthrough, and the minutes are in the packet. She said that for the most part, the items identified on the walkthrough were cosmetic, which pleased the committee as they recognized that great progress has been made since 2015. The group then discussed updates to the maintenance plan, with the initial priorities being to continue the flooring and shelving projects, adding a unit ventilator, taking care of some exterior scraping and painting, adding sound boards to the 5th grade classroom, and updating ceiling tiles in the kitchen. The maintenance plan will be updated for the January facilities meeting.

The committee also reviewed custodial and maintenance contracts and costs for two neighboring districts, and discussed payment scenarios. The committee decided to move forward with putting together job descriptions and a proposal for the school board to consider. Mrs. Thompson and Ms. Demers will meet to get this work done prior to the next facilities meeting.

Mrs. Thompson relayed that the unit ventilator in 5th grade was installed, however, in the process, some of the old piping let go, which delayed the project by a few days as it was replaced. To get to the piping a built in shelf had to be taken out, and will now need to be replaced.

4. Finance Committee -
 - a. Payroll Warrants – Mr. Hinds said that payroll warrants were reviewed and signed by Mr. Hinds on 11/22 and 12/19.
 - b. AP Warrants – Mr. Hinds stated that AP warrants were reviewed and signed by Mr. Hinds, Mrs. Wallace, and Mrs. Randall on 11/25 and by Mr. Hinds and Mr. McDaniel on 12/12.

Superintendent's Report

1. Financial Report – Mrs. Thompson said that with 58% of the year remaining, 63% of the budget remains. Mrs. Thompson reported that all lines are appropriately tracking. She identified one posting error that needs to be corrected on page 10 under rents/leases.
2. District Updates -
 - a. National Board Certification - Mrs. Thompson said that she would like to publically congratulate Megan Fuller, West Bath's Librarian/GT teacher for earning National Board Certification! She shared that Ms. Fuller is one of 3,831 new National Board Certified Teachers, and that National Board Certification is recognized as the gold standard in teacher certification.
 - b. Mobil Exxon Math & Science Grant - Mrs. Thompson said that she had learned last week that the school is once again a recipient of \$500 math and science grant from Exxon Mobil. She said the school is grateful for their continued support.
 - c. WinterKids Winter Games - Mrs. Thompson said West Bath is excited to announce that once again it has been invited to participate in the WinterKids Winter Games for the month of January. The other Sagadahoc county school will be Fisher Mitchell. She said that last year West Bath finished in 7th place, earning 18 sleds and 10 sets of snowshoes. She said they are excited to be part of the games again, and would like to thank Mrs. Cosgrove and Mrs. Houghton, our PE teacher, for taking the lead on the games this year.
 - d. Cross Country Skiing Opportunity - Mrs. Thompson stated that Mrs. Cosgrove and Mrs. Houghton have been hard at work putting together the beginnings of health, wellness, and adventure-based programming for students, and have built a substantial amount of community partners in the process. They have connected with Chuck Manville from the Maine Youth Outdoor Sports Program who will be sponsoring cross country skiing on a weekly basis for the month of January for all of our 4th and 5th graders free of charge. They came to the school last week to fit students for skis and boots, and will return in the new year to work with the students weekly. The school is grateful to have this opportunity for the students.
 - e. West Bath Historical Society Christmas Service & Carol Sing - Mrs. Thompson reported that tomorrow night is the Historical Society's Annual Christmas service and carol sing and this year students will be participating, as well as a board member who will be offering a reading. She said that the Historical Society plans to give the offerings back to the school to support the food pantry. She thanked them for their support and asked those present to please mark your calendars for the following night at 7 PM.

- f. West Bath Pre-K - Mrs. Thompson followed up with the board on the status of pre-K for the 20-21 year. She said that when the board last spoke about it, the Children's School House had made the decision to not continue to offer public pre-k next year. Since then, WBS has begun the child find process. The teacher who had once been certified to teach pre-K has recertified. The school has requested a building audit to determine if any alterations to the building need to take place, other than having a fenced in playground area for pre-k students so that a cost analysis can be conducted. At the same time, Mrs. Thompson has met with the YMCA. They are committed to helping the school through this transition, and have assured me that they will cover all 8 of West Bath's paid slots for next year. This gives West Bath the ability to have time to make a concrete plan that is best for the school and best for the community. Mrs. Thompson said that whether the students are at the school or at the Y, she would like to work on expanding the partnership between the two organizations.
- g. Mrs. Randall asked if staffing had stabilized at the Y from the before and afterschool perspective. Mrs. Thompson said that the staff members who made the decision to not run before and afterschool programming are no longer working at the Y, and that the Y is open to reengaging in the conversation. But she recognizes the challenge the Y has with running sites in 4 schools. It means they need to have 8 adults ready to service students, and back-ups when those adults call out. She said that the Y looked at hosting the students in a centralized space, but the Y does not have that space currently, and then transportation costs become a challenge for districts.
- h. Wellness Council - The wellness council had its first official meeting on November 13th. The group spent much of the afternoon working through a building background knowledge workshop to build an understanding of what student wellness is, and to identify the challenges in the current wellness policy that need to be addressed, as determined by the faculty survey. The group focused on the priorities of consistent messaging and school nutrition, and created action statements for 4 of the goal areas within the wellness policy. Since the council meeting, break out groups have been working further in these areas, in preparation for the next meeting. Mrs. Thompson said that the staff has also begun the conversation about what they would like their consistent wellness message to be. Mrs. Randall said that when she first looked at the agenda she was wondering how two hours would be filled with just this conversation, and then two hours into, she wished she had two more hours. Great conversations were happening and she appreciated the variety of people at the table. It was also interesting to see how building background knowledge workshops were run. She said she looks forward to seeing where this work leads the school to.
- i. Book Fair - Mrs. Thompson said that the school recently held a book fair during our student led conferences, sponsored by the Community Crew, and this year they opted to work with Mustard Seed bookstore, rather than with Scholastic. All in all, it was a great success, and it was wonderful to be able to support a local

business. They gave the school back a donation of about \$250 to put towards books for the library as well.

- j. Summer Reading Program - Mrs. Thompson shared that one of the second grade students was awarded a bicycle from the Maine Department of Education and the Free Masons for her submission of her summer reading log for the summer reading challenge.
 - k. Mrs. Thompson thanked all who attended the winter concert the prior Tuesday and those who shopped at our Christmas Craft Fair last Saturday. She thanked Mrs. Randall for organizing the fair for the school this year. She also thanked Mrs. Hannah Whitney for once again organizing the Little Elf Shop for the students. She said that last Friday the library was transformed into an elf shop and filled with gifts for students to shop for 6 gifts for family members for a quarter each. Mrs. Whitney spends the year collecting gifts and organizing them at her house for this event. It is truly appreciated. Mrs. Wallace said that she really appreciates the event as a parent.
3. Upcoming Events - Mrs. Thompson provided the board with the following winter events:
- a. Winter Celebration of Learning - 12/19 @ 2 PM

Mr. McDaniel asked if there was an updated on the status of the greenhouse. Mrs. Thompson said that there was not, other than what the board already is aware of.

Old Business

1. Review/Revision of Board Policies
 - a. IHBG - Home Schooling
 - b. IHBGA - Home Schooling - Participation in School Programs

Mr. Hinds said that there are two policies to review, and he suggests that they be reviewed in one discussion. He explained that a situation came up with some questions that came up around fieldwork and how fieldwork interacts with the policies and whether a student who is being homeschooled should participate in fieldwork. He said that as a board, he feels they have consistently differentiated between fieldwork and field trips. In this instance the fieldwork was a trip to the library to continue work that was happening in the regular classroom. He said that he felt the policy was clear that if a student is not participating in the classroom activities then fieldwork as an extension would not be an option. He said he was not sure if that was the intent of the board, and the board makeup has changed since this policy was adopted, and he would like the board to discuss it.

Mr. McDaniel said that there are two issues. One is the potential of disruption for students by the presence of a student who is not a member of the class. The other is if it is an extension of the classroom, does the student get the desired outcome by participating in just the fieldwork when teachers have tied it into a specific lesson plan? Mrs. Thompson referred to IHBGA, section 2 number 5 which says that the student should complete all assignments and tests as is required of all

students in the same class. She also said that state law says that students need to attend regularly for that class in order to be a part of that class. She said in the past a student could not elect to take part in boat building if they were not also enrolled in math and science because they were all connected. She said therefore her interpretation of the board's policy is that if a student wanted to take part in the swim program and is attending PE then they would be relevant and it makes sense. But if a student wanted to take part in fieldwork that was an extension of social studies and literacy but was not attending those classes, then it doesn't. She said that she talked with the Department of Education liaison he said that Mrs. Thompson was interpreting the policy correctly. But that she could also choose to let the child attend. While the child might not get the same information from the experience that others are getting out of it, the child would be getting some information. She said that the other side of it is measuring the impact on the rest of the class and the teacher. She said that while she interpreted the policy this way, but if that is not what the board intended, she would want to know that.

Mrs. Randall said that similarly to the conversation held in the past about homeschool and co-curricular activities, it is her opinion that the board not take the case by case approach, and that having a set policy makes things easier. She said she felt that with fieldwork being an extension of the classroom, it is the course that the board should stay with. If it is directly correlated with what is happening in the classroom and the child is not attending the class, then fieldwork would not be an option. Mr. McDaniel said that the board should state it clearly within the policy. Mrs. Wallace asked if it makes a difference if a fee is associated with the fieldwork? If we are doing things that do not have fees associated with them, then it seems that students can come. But if they have fees associated with them, maybe the board says that a student can come, but they have to pay the fee associated with it. Mr. Hinds said from a fiscal management point he understands that, but he would not want a student to not come because there was money associated with it. Mrs. Thompson said that she would first like the board to discuss whether she is interpreting the policy correctly. If she is, is that what the board intended. If she is not, then that needs to be followed up on.

Ms. Powers asked if there was a differentiation between field trips and fieldwork? Mrs. Thompson said there is not a differentiation in the language of the policy, but there is very much a difference between a field trip and fieldwork. She mentioned that the following day students would be going to Winship Green to visit with the residents and take part in caroling and holiday crafts, and that would be considered a field trip that anyone could take part in. But fieldwork is the opportunity for students to go out in the field to work with real experts to do real work to either conduct the work needed to further their studies or to gain the knowledge of how to do the work of the experts so they can complete their expeditions. It is an essential step in the learning process, rather than just a fun experience that may or may not tie into their learning. Mr. McDaniel asked how

the Boston trip is categorized, to which Mrs. Thompson responded that it is definitely fieldwork as it is organized now, but that there have been years in the past where the trip to Boston was just a visit to the aquarium that was a trip for fun and enjoyment, and that would be a field trip. Mr. McDaniel said the policy should define the difference between fieldwork and field trip and then make a statement about what is allowable and what is not.

Mrs. Randall said that she sees that fieldwork is an extension of the classroom and the board also needs to be mindful of the students in the classroom setting as well. Ms. Powers responded that they needed to be mindful of the teacher as well. Mrs. Wallace asked if that would mean that students would need to be in class all year to be able to go to Boston, for example? Mrs. Thompson said that the policy says that the student should complete all assignments and tests as is required of all students in the same class and state law says that students need to attend regularly for that class in order to be a part of that class. Mr. Hinds said that he felt there was consensus of the board that the policy was interpreted correctly and the policy reflects the board's desire. He said that the policy will be updated to reflect the difference between fieldwork and a field trip.

Mr. Hinds made a motion to table IHBG and IHBGA for revision. Mrs. Randall seconded that motion. Vote (5-0).

2. Town of West Bath Audit Workshop

Mr. Hinds said that the departments met three weeks ago and it was a productive discussion. Mrs. Randall felt that it was encouraging. The board talks about the details of the budget so often that it is hard to understand why others don't understand it. Being at that meeting helped to see others' stance on things and for others to see where our challenges are. It is eye opening and helps to remove some of the barriers. She said she felt it was a great first step in conversations. Mrs. Wallace said she thought it was helpful to have all departments of the town together to better learn about how all of the pieces of the puzzle worked together. Mr. McDaniel said it would be nice if town meeting started with the school budget because by the end of the meeting, almost everyone is gone except for people who already know how the budget works and it would be nice to be able to make these points in public. Mrs. Randall said it was helpful that this was the sole purpose of the meeting, and not just an item on an agenda. She said she would like to see more meetings with that format.

Mrs. Thompson commented that she felt it was productive and she left feeling positive about how it went. She said that she discussed with the Town Administrator the concept of having a quarterly newsletter with all town departments so that communication does not fall entirely on the annual report and town meeting. Mrs. Randall said that this was also helpful because it was outside of budget season and it felt proactive. Mr. Hinds noted for the board the date of the follow up meeting that would be held in January.

3. Board Goals

Mr. Hinds asked the board to review their annual goals and opened the table for discussion. Mrs. Randall said that she wanted to be very careful to not specifically name programs in the goals, but with the discussions about pre-k and adventure based programming that the board has been having, the goals could mention developing additional programming opportunities, or expanding and improvement offerings. Ms. Powers said that she felt the work of the wellness council was just starting and that that goal should continue. Mrs. Thompson agreed, and said that with Department of Education's definition of wellness doesn't even begin to address the social emotional or mental health needs of students and that those areas are critically important to discuss. Mrs. Wallace said that she sees the goals focused on the community and residents, but would like to see something about supporting staff. The board discussed replacing the word "students" in the 3rd bullet with "school community".

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to approve the goals as changed. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

4. 2020-2021 Budget Calendar

Mrs. Thompson said that when the board approved calendar last month, the one question that was lingering was weather the school board could approve the warrant after the Selectmen ratify their budget. It has been determined that the warrant needs to approved before they ratify. Therefore, the schedule had to be moved forward. She reviewed the new proposed calendar.

New Business

1. Annual Certification of Superintendent Requirement

Mr. Hinds said that each year the board needs to renew the certification of the Superintendent. He made a motion to renew the certification and add a year to the contract to keep it a 3-year contract. Mr. McDaniel seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

Public Comments

None

Set Next Meeting Dates and Locations

January 15th at 6:30 PM at the West Bath School

January 21st - Joint BoS/School Board Workshop (Time & Location TBD)

Adjourn

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to adjourn at 8:10 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 flourish extending to the right.

Emily Thompson