

## **West Bath School Administrative Unit**

### Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

January 15, 2020 at 6:30 PM at the West Bath School

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

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Suzanne Andresen, Patrick Bowdish, Aggie Demers, David Hennessey, Madelyn Hennessey, & Emily Thompson

#### **Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Keith Hinds.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

#### **Comments from the Chair:**

None

#### **Approve/Amend Minutes of 12/16/19:**

Mrs. Randall made a motion to approve the minutes off 12/16/19. Mr. McDaniel seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

#### **Adjustments to Agenda:**

None

#### **Public Comments:**

1. Suzanne Andresen introduced herself to the board as a newly elected selectman. She said in that reviewing the warrant she had several concerns about payment processes and delinquent accounts. She said that the Board of Selectmen held an audit workshop on 12/17 with the auditor, Bill Brewer. She stated that they discussed that the financial responsibility of the town lies on the town treasurer, and they discussed transitioning the payment processing to a central location of town hall. She outlined the current payment process and said there had been an delay in the process of the school payments, which concerns her. She said she believed the best course would be to have all checks mailed from town hall and said that was also the recommendation of the town's auditor.

Mr. Hinds asked if there was any further public comment or board comment. Ms. Powers

said she thought that this was being worked on. Mr. Hinds said that at the last meeting of the two committees it was agreed upon that the superintendent and town administrator would meet and put procedures in place and that it was his understanding that this is happening and in process. Mrs. Andresen said that it is not. Mr. Hinds asked Mrs. Thompson to comment. She said that it has been in process, as recently as this past Friday, and that the two meet on a regular basis. She said that the AP process was discussed at their last meeting and the two had agreed that they would continue the cycle as is for a couple more cycles, thinking about any challenges that might come out of transitioning the mailings to the town office instead of the school and then determine if it is more efficient.

Mr. Hinds said that there is a procedure in state law that would allow the school board to run warrants on its on cycle, and those could go directly to the treasurer without having to wait for the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Hennessey asked what the reason is that bills are not being paid in a timely in a manner. Mrs. Thompson said that she disagreed with the statement that bills are not being paid in a timely manner, and that they go into the very next warrant after they are received. She said that bills can not be paid before they are received. She said that it was true there was a warrant that did not get picked up in the last week of December in the business of that final week of the year that was her mistake. Mrs. Andresen said that it makes sense to her that bills get mailed from the town office where there is a lower postal rate and a step could be eliminated.

Mrs. Wallace said that she agrees that it makes sense to have checks mailed out from the town office at a cheaper rate, but that does not solve if there are bills in November that have not been paid. She understands and oversight that just happened but what about the bills that are not paid. Mrs. Thompson said that when bills and invoices are received they go into the next warrant. If documentation is not received, it can not be paid. She said it does happen that invoices arrive after a warrant has been processed and will be late while waiting for the next warrant cycle. In that case, vendors are contacted and notified of the timeline. Mrs. Andresen said she was not comfortable putting her name on the warrant, and the town's reputation is at stake. Mr. Hinds said he would be happy to discuss this topic further with her.

### **Committee Reports:**

1. Policy Committee – Mr. McDaniel said there is a slight modification in the policy IHBGA in the definition of fieldwork.
2. Technology Committee – None
3. Facilities Committee – Mrs. Thompson said that the committee was scheduled to meet last week, but needed to be rescheduled. Therefore, there were not any updates since the last meeting. Mr. Hennessey asked if there were any continued issues with frost heaving and flooding. Mrs. Thompson said that there have not been any further problems since the repair.
4. Finance Committee -
  - a. Payroll Warrants –Mr. Hinds said that he and Mr. McDaniel reviewed and signed the payroll warrant on 12/19 and that he had reviewed and signed a second one on 1/3.

- b. AP Warrants – Mr. Hinds said that he, Mrs. Randall, and Mrs. Wallace had reviewed an AP warrant on 12/19 and that he had reviewed an AP warrant on 1/9 while Mr. McDaniel reviewed it on 1/10.

## **Superintendent's Report**

### 1. Financial Report

- a. Budget Review - Mrs. Thompson said that with 50% of the year remaining, and 57% of the overall budget remains. She said that all lines are tracking appropriately with two exceptions. She pointed out a line on page 2, resource class placement, explaining that the reason there is a 34% remaining was due to realignment of positions. She showed the board that the line of special education administration on page 10 has not been drawn from since August, and while they lines are not going track exactly as expected, the cost center overall is tracking fine. She also noted that there are expenses under salaries regular that are unexpected. The district has high school students between programs, and a student has recently needed to have 1:1 support at the high school. But because there is no longer an out of district cost the funds will offset, they will just be in different lines.
- b. Tuition Report - Mrs. Thompson next provided a tuition rate update. She reminded the board that the budget is planned on hypothetical rates, as the rates are not set by the state until December. She provided the board with a handout that showed budgeted costs, actual costs, and the projected difference between the two.

She said that the board had planned for a 4% increase and 3 additional students. She reminded the board that just as they were finalizing the budget last spring, 2 more students moved into the district, and so they actually ended up with a 4% increase and 4 additional students 6-12 in the budget. The actual increase in tuition was a 5% increase at the elementary level and a 6% increase at the high school level. She said that if student counts remained the same there would be about \$23,000 in the 6-8 tuition lines and approximately \$10,000 in the 9-12 tuition lines.

Mr. Hennessey asked if anyone has approached the state to ask if they could set the rate the year before, so that you could go into the year knowing what your tuition rate was going to be. Mrs. Thompson said that she was not sure, but that tuition rates were set based upon actual expenditures. He said that he understood that but it makes it hard to set a budget. Mrs. Thompson and Mr. Hinds agreed. Mr. Hinds said that it's approximately 1.6 million of the school budget, or about half of the budget, that they have to guess on each year, but that even with guessing, the board was within \$34,000 of the correct figure, assuming every thing stays the same. Mr. McDaniel suggested reaching out to Jay McCreight to talk about this issue along with special education funding. Mr. Hennessey said that two weeks prior there was a public meeting with Jay McCreight and Eloise Vitelli in which special education funding was discussed and it may be worth more discussion with them.

### 2. District Updates

3. Winter Celebration of Learning - Mrs. Thompson said that before vacation the school held the annual winter celebration of learning. She provided an overview of the expeditions and products as well as the highlights of a recent high quality work protocol sharing the areas where the school continues to make progress as well as the next steps in this dimension of achievement.
4. WinterKids Winter Games - Mrs. Thompson shared that for the second year the school is participating in the WinterKids Winter Games. Each week has a different theme - outdoor activity, nutrition, family involvement, and winter carnival. After the first week the school is in a 17 way tie for first place. She said she wished to recognize Mrs. Houghton, and Mrs. Cosgrove for taking on the bulk of the winter games activities, with the support of Miss Marco and Mrs. Taylor. She said that most lessons are being taught in specials, particularly guidance and PE and she appreciated the specialists' flexibility and willingness to adapt their lessons to fit the goals of their content along the goals of WinterKids. She said the students are having a great time, learning new content, and enjoying some of what the Maine winters have to offer along the way.
5. Cross Country Skiing/Snowshoeing - In tandem with WinterKids, Mrs. Cosgrove and Mrs. Houghton had organized some of the beginning of adventure based programming. Along with the support of Aggie Demers, they had connected with Chuck Manville from the Maine Youth Outdoor Sports Opportunities and 4th and 5th grade students have begun 4 weeks (1 lesson per week) of cross country skiing. Chuck Manville has provided all of the gear and the lessons free of charge, and has even permitted students to take the gear home with them during the week. Mrs. Thompson said she was impressed by how quickly the students have learned the skills and how much they are enjoying it. She also said that because snowshoes had been donated by WinterKids last year, the younger students have been snowshoeing once per week as well.
6. School Choice for 2020-2021 - Mrs. Thompson said the window for school choice has opened and will be open until February 14th. Information has been mailed home to all current participants, has been posted on the school's Facebook page, is on the website, and has been provided to all 5th grade families. She said that she has had some communication with the Brunswick Superintendent about school choice because most of the families who elect choice are choosing Brunswick as their option and are contacting him about enrollment prematurely. He asked that Mrs. Thompson help families understand the steps of the process and to wait until they have approval for choice before contacting him. He also asked that she communicate with him once school choice numbers have been approved to provide a preliminary number of students who may choose Brunswick to better help him plan for the number of students West Bath is sending. Mrs. Thompson said that one area that she's confused about with families is that just because they are granted school choice, it does not mean that a school district is required to accept the student. The only schools of guarantee are in RSU1. Mrs. Andresen asked where the district stands in terms of the cap of school choice. Mrs. Thompson said that currently they are right about at the cap, at approximately 77%/23% currently, but the number of slots each year vary depending on the enrollment of students in 6-12. Mrs. Randall asked if when information is sent home, whether it is just the application that is

sent. Mrs. Thompson said that there is a cover letter with the application, explaining the process and the rules. She suggested that in future years, Mrs. Thompson meet with 5th grade families about school choice to help to reduce any confusion. Mrs. Thompson said she could do that, but feels that the information in the letter is clear, but does not address the point that other districts have the right to say no to enrollment. She said that she also wants to be careful to not promote school choice, as West Bath has a commitment to RSU1. She mentioned she was contacted by a school who asked her to hold a school choice fair with their information. She said she felt that was not something she could do, rather she shared the information with families who had already elected school choice and had students in that grade span. Mrs. Andresen asked how the school ensures that families who are in parochial or other environments are getting the information about school choice. Mrs. Thompson said she was happy to hear suggestions about other ways to communicate. The information is on Facebook, on the school website, and in the first couple of years was communicated by the town clerk in her email distribution, and the town shares the school's posts about choice on their own Facebook page. She said she felt that families at this point are aware that school choice is a possibility for 6-12, as she receives applications from families who are outside of the West Bath School network.

Mrs. Andresen asked if once a student is at a particular school if there is a commitment to the student from that school that they are able to finish there. Mrs. Thompson said that there is a commitment from West Bath per policy that once they have a school choice slot they are given preference in future years, but students have to do their part at the school they attend and follow the rules of the schools and attend to their academics, and that other than in in RSU1, there is no guarantee of enrollment. Mrs. Wallace asked if the district knows which students are elsewhere. Mrs. Thompson said that she knows which students in the community are homeschooled, as they need to register with the state and district, and which students are in charter schools and private schools that are required to report back to the public district, but she is not always aware of students who are registered in sectarian schools. Mr. McDaniel asked for clarification around the oversight of 6-12 students. Mrs. Thompson said that as long as they live in West Bath, and are in a publicly funded school, or are registered as homeschooled students, they still fall under the district's responsibility for oversight to some degree. Ms. Powers asked if that oversight was the same for charter school students, to which Mrs. Thompson explained that once students register as charter school students, it is as if they are residents of the town where the charter school is and they are no longer West Bath students, until they they unenroll.

7. Quarter 2 Absence Report - Mrs. Thompson stated that per board policy, she is required to share the attendance report for the quarter with the board, just as she does with the state. She discussed the circumstances that had caused students to be listed as truant or chronically absent, and the follow up that has taken place.
8. January Professional Development Day - Mrs. Thompson provided the board with the

agenda for the upcoming professional development day, thanking the Sagadahoc County Sheriff's Department for coming to spend a portion of the day on ALICE training.

9. Upcoming Events - The Community Crew is hosting a community night at the YMCA on Tuesday 1/21, in conjunction with the winter games.

## **Old Business**

1. Review/Revision of Board Policies
  - a. IHBG - Home Schooling - Mr. Hinds said that there were no changes to IHBG, so there would be no action.
  - b. IHBGA - Home Schooling - Participation in School Programs - Mr. McDaniel provided an overview of the changes that were proposed to IHBGA based upon the board conversation the prior month, highlighting the definition of fieldwork as compared to field trips. Ms. Powers asked if the language of "attending class regularly" is specific enough? Mrs. Thompson said that she sees it as daily attendance that you would expect for anyone. Once they are enrolled, they are required to attend through state law.

Mrs. Hennessey asked if homeschooling students are able to access boat building? Mrs. Thompson said that the change to this policy clarifies that. Students can only attend boat building if they are registered and attending math and science classes as they are intertwined.

Mrs. Randall said that she felt the way the policy was reworded gave enough information to allow the superintendent to make a decision. Mr. McDaniel made a motion to approve the policy as reworded. Mrs. Powers seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

2. Board Goals

Mr. Hinds reread the board goals that were drafted at the prior meeting. He asked if the goals captured the conversation the board had had. Members of the board agreed that they did.

Mr. Hinds made a motion to approve the board's goals. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

## **New Business**

1. Budget Pre-Planning Workshop

Mr. Hinds stated that the Board of Selectmen would be hosting a joint budget-preplanning workshop, and he wished to provide the board with the opportunity to have some pre-discussion regarding some of their thoughts for the future. Mrs. Thompson commented that she had spoken with the Town Administrator, and it was not the intention of the Board of Selectmen that boards come with a full plan, rather members of boards should feel free to come with ideas that are their own and have not

been discussed with a full board. Mrs. Hennessey said that the workshop is not designed to have commitments be made, rather it will be a place to share your wildest dream. She suggested that the community could start thinking about those dreams now, so that they are able to happen in 10 years.

Mr. McDaniel said that there is a facilities plan, but that the the board discusses plans for the school beyond just the building, such as pre-k. Mrs. Randall said that she would like to look at space and how to utilize it more creatively as well as opening up more programming and make specials more prevalent. Mr. McDaniel said that the school should be poised to take advantage of opportunities that come up. Ms. Powers said that there is often talk about after-school opportunities and that staff offer them on their own. She appreciates that, but questions whether it is fair and wonders if the board should discuss that further.

2. Job Description - Mandt Training Coordinator

Mrs. Thompson presented the job description to the board, stating that she was continuing to work through creating job descriptions of positions that are listed in the schedule B portion of the teachers' contract.

Mr. Hinds made a motion to approve the job description. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion. Vote (5-0)

## **Public Comments**

1. Mr. Hennessey asked if the schedule that was shared with him by the town administrator worked for the budget presentation. Mrs. Thompson said that the meeting that was scheduled for the budget committee to attend would be the first reading of the budget, and that the budget committee members were welcome at any of the meetings.

## **Set Next Meeting Dates and Locations**

1. January 21st - Joint BoS/School Board Workshop - 6 PM @ Fire Hall
2. February 12th @ 6:30 PM at the West Bath School

## **Executive Session**

1. Mr. Hinds made a motion to request 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 at 7:42 PM. Mrs. Randall seconded that motion. Vote (5-0).

### **Return to Regular Session**

The board returned to regular session at 8:33 PM.

### **Adjourn**

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to adjourn at 8:34 PM. Mrs. Randall seconded that motion. Vote (5-0).

Submitted by,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Emily Thompson", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Emily Thompson