

West Bath School Administrative Unit

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

February 26, 2020 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, & Emily Thompson

Call to Order:

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Executive Session:

Mr. Hinds made a motion to enter into 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. Mr. McDaniel seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

Return to Regular Session:

The board returned to regular session at 7:20 PM.

Comments from the Chair:

Mr. Hinds reminded the board policy BEBH - public participation at board meetings. He reviewed the guidelines of the adopted policy for the board and public.

Approve/Amend Minutes of 1/15/20:

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to approve the minutes of 1/15/20. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

Adjustments to Agenda:

1. Mr. Hinds made one adjustment to the agenda. He placed it as 12.5 - board relations.

Public Comments:

1. Mr. Hennessey stated that while the town has surplus, it is not a large pot of gold and there needs to be common sense with the use of it so that it is spent wisely, as it will not last long.

Committee Reports:

1. Policy Committee – No update
2. Facilities Committee – Mrs. Thompson said that weather had been impacting the facilities committee meetings, as multiple meetings have been postponed due to snow or ice. The group is scheduled to meet again in the morning to finalize its budget proposal for the board.

She mentioned that she has been in contact with David Webb. When the electricity returns after a power outage, all of the building lights come on and remain on until someone is able to access each switch in the building to turn them off. David Webb said that this was a glitch of being wirelessly controlled that he had not foreseen. He was reaching out to Lithonia, the manufacturer, to determine if there is a solution, as there is not an override function. He suggested that as an alternative he place a main switch in the office to shut everything down, but that would still require someone to go to the building to turn off the lights following an outage.

3. Finance Committee -
 - a. Payroll Warrants – Mr. Hinds stated that the payroll warrants had been signed by him on 1/17, 2/3, and 2/14.
 - b. AP Warrants – Mr. Hinds said he signed AP warrants on 1/23, 2/5, and 2/14 and Mr. McDaniel had done so on 1/23, 2/5, and 2/18.

Superintendent's Report

1. Financial Report

Mrs. Thompson said that with 35% of the year remaining, approximately 45% of the budget still remained. She said that she had no concerns about any of the budgeted lines, as all were tracking as they were supposed to be.

She said that she had received the preliminary subsidy for the next fiscal year and that West Bath is projected to receive approximately \$50,000 more than the prior year.

2. District Updates

- a. WinterKids Winter Games Results - Mrs. Thompson once again mentioned her appreciation for being able to participate in the WinterKids Winter Games. She said that West Bath finished in a 6-way tie for first place. After the tie breaker, the school finished in 5th place, and was notified that they have earned \$1,000. Mrs. Thompson said she was pleased to be able to turn that money right back into a way to support further adventure programming. She thanked Mrs. Houghton and Mrs. Cosgrove for picking up the bulk of the lessons and planning for the winter games, and Mrs. Taylor and Miss Marco for working with them to plan and coordinate the month-long event. She also thanked parent volunteers Aggie Demers, Hannah Whitney, and Maureen Craney for volunteering weekly, Chuck Manville of Maine Youth Outdoor Sports Opportunities for providing weekly cross country ski lessons for 4th and 5th grade students as well as all of the

equipment, and Wendy Jung, David Webb, Aggie Demers, and Hannah Whitney for being experts at the STEM-based winter carnival. Finally, Mrs. Thompson gave thanks to Jeremie Whorff who brought his loader to the school to break up the snow so that students had usable snow for the tie-breaker.

- b. Acts of Kindness and Compassion - Mrs. Thompson told the board that as has become tradition, West Bath students and faculty used Valentines Day as a day to focus on kindness and compassion within the school and the greater community. She said:
- kindergarten students made cards and buttons for the sheriff's department and fire department.
 - 1st grade students painted kindness rocks for the school faculty.
 - 2nd graders celebrated the 176th birthday of the Town of West Bath. They traced their hands and cut out 176 hands, made them into a heart on a poster, framed it and presented it to the town administrator as a gift to represent our love for the town on its birthday. Their artist statement read: As second graders at West Bath School we wanted to celebrate the town's 176th birthday. Each member of the school crew traced their hands for a total of 176. Our heart represents how collaboration and being helpful creates a strong community. We hope this gift spreads kindness throughout town and serves as a reminder that it is important to include and help one another.
 - 3rd graders did a pet food drive and made blankets, toys, and treats for cats and dogs. They delivered them to the Bath/Brunswick Veterinarian Clinic and Dog Will.
 - 4th Graders made valentines cards and celebrated with the residents of Winship Green.
 - 5th Graders created spontaneous celebrations for the other classrooms. When classes were out of their rooms at specials, they returned to balloons and kindness challenges to follow up on. The note left for them by the 5th graders reminded them that one act of kindness causes a ripple.
- c. School Safety - Mrs. Thompson reminded the board that at the prior meeting she had said the school faculty was planning to work with the sheriff's department to have ALICE training, an active shooter training. She reported that the training went very well, and gave the school a variety of new options to consider in the emergency plan. She said that faculty has followed up further in a late start meeting, and have tried implementing some of the pieces that were learned to see how they worked in our classroom settings, and have made some minor adjustments to the school's emergency plan.

Mrs. Thompson said that she wished to also inform the board that she had added a playground evacuation plan to the school's procedural manual, and have practiced it with students. She said this was in relation to concerns about foxes in the area. She stated that they have had to evacuate the playground before because of a dog,

and another time because of a fox, and also because of sudden lightening, and the children were able to do so without concern, but having a written and practiced plan in the repertoire felt appropriate.

She let the board know that the Department of Education has now created a school safety and security team, and she is scheduled to meet with them with a group from Sagadahoc County in March.

- d. School Choice - Mrs. Thompson let the board know that the school choice window has closed, and letters to families have gone out with the information required for them to access school choice. She said that the school choice pool is at 20% of next year's 6-12 students.
- e. Teacher of the Year Nomination - Mrs. Thompson announced that 2nd grade teacher Ida Beal has been nominated as teacher of the year.
- f. Storm Days - Mrs. Thompson referred the board to the current school calendar. She said that the district had 2 days in fall that school was closed due to power outages, and 4 days this winter that the school was closed due to snow and ice. She said that currently makes the last day of school June 19th. She said she had met with staff and had identified a variety of ways to make up days and hours in April, May, and June if need be, but that the faculty would like to wait a little longer before making adjustment to the calendar, as there are still many unknowns.

Mrs. Randall mentioned that with two days being due to power outages, it brings her back to facilities conversations regarding the potential need for a generator. She said that she understands that there are some situations that can't be mitigated, but having it seems that the trend is that days with power outages are as much of an issue as snow related closures and perhaps the board should prepare accordingly. Mr. McDaniel said that one of the issues is the power draw, because if the school was going to try to operate on a generator, they would have to heat it as well. He reminded the board that it was a considerable amount.

Mrs. Thompson said that there is no action requested regarding the calendar, she just wanted to keep the board informed. She reminded them that if the calendar was to be adjusted, the process is that staff has to have consensus, there needs to be a meet and consult with the association, and then the board has to approve the change.

- g. Upcoming Events - Mrs. Thompson relayed the following upcoming events:
 - 3/2 - Community Read
 - 3/2 - Ready, Set, Go
 - 3/10 - 5th Grade Math Meet
 - 3/16-4/10 - MEA Math & ELA Assessment
 - 3/23 - Gelato Fiasco Fundraiser
 - 3/26 - 5th Grade Boat Shop Open House @ 11:30 AM

Old Business

1. Budget Pre-Planning Workshop

Mr. Hinds said that the board had participated in the pre-planning budget workshop in January. He wanted to give the board an opportunity to make a comment. Mr. Hinds said he felt that it was advantageous to get the boards together in a room for a collaborative conversation to get everyone on the same page. He wished to thank Madelyn Hennessey for making that event happen.

2. Before and After School Care

Mrs. Thompson said this was on the agenda because the board had requested that there be follow-up in the winter regarding the needs for before and after care within the school community. She said that it also had come up at the budget pre-planning meeting as a potential concern to consider budgeting for. She said she had surveyed families and the results were in the board packet. She reminded the board that the situation with the Y had been that they needed to have a commitment of at least 12 students per session in order to make the commitment back to the school. With the results received back from families, it appears the school could be close to the commitment for mornings, but not in the afternoons. She said that the struggle she has always had is that it is hard to ask families to commit to a program that she can't promise is going to be there. Mrs. Thompson said that she met with the Y staff and they would like to be able to help and will get back to the school about their ability to help. They said maybe the Y could do a morning program at the school and then the board could bus the students to another site in the afternoon. Y staff said that they had had to close two other sites this year as well as they were unable to keep staff.

Mrs. Thompson asked the board to discuss their level of commitment of having a program regardless, as she needs to be able to prepare a budget. She said she felt it was not fiscally possible to subsidize having 12 students a day in a program to ensure that it was going to be able to happen but she wanted to hear what the board's hopes are in terms of childcare. She said she would also like the board to discuss how she should follow up if the Y does not choose to offer before/after care. Would the board like her to reach out to other agencies or to work with families to find other solutions, like she had this year?

Mrs. Randall said that looking through the list, the incoming 5th grade students make up a large portion of the list. Once that group moves on, is there still a commitment, or will the board just be having this conversation again? Mrs. Wallace said that a couple of schools bus their students to one school. She said that she does not see why West Bath could not join in on that. Mrs. Thompson said that the school that currently does have the program had said no to having our students there. If they are at the Y, that could be an option. She said she had reached out to Bath Bus to find out what the cost would be to have a daily run to the Y. She said her real concern about that is that it would be the last stop for students.

Mrs. Powers said that the option she sees is to have students go to another location. Having a program at the Y would be ideal. Mrs. Wallace said that she does not believe

that there is a population in West Bath that requires before and after care. Mr. Hinds said that these numbers do not support subsidizing a program. If there is a program either at school or satellite it needs to be self-sufficient and parent paid. He does not believe that it makes sense to finance a program within the school budget, as it would not be a wise financial move. Mrs. Wallace said she agrees, but depending on the cost of the bus, the board should look at busing students to a program.

David Hennessey asked if this was an educational conversation or child care? Mrs. Wallace clarified that it was childcare. Mr. Hennessey said that it does not feel like it is a school responsibility to pay for childcare. Mr. Hinds said that in the past it has been paid by user fees, and the school just offered space. Mrs. Wallace asked Mr. Hennessey that as a tax payer, would you have a problem with adding a stop to the bus route to get students to after-care? He said that if it was a reasonable cost, then probably not.

New Business

1. 2020-2021 Pre-K & Kindergarten

Mrs. Thompson said that the board had discussed options of having pre-K onsite next year, or continuing with the YMCA and Head Start, as the Children's Schoolhouse will not be an option. She said that the school had been in the process of looking at both options, knowing that ideally the year to have Pre-K on site would be the 21-22 year because two 5th grades exit out in June of 2021. Mrs. Thompson said that they are bringing in a very large kindergarten class at this time, and she would like to move forward with maintaining 8 pre-K slots for next year at the YMCA, 4 at Head Start, and focus attention on the incoming kindergarten students, while being able to also take a full year to plan for transitioning pre-K into West Bath School in 21-22. She said that the conversations with the Y about this transition have been very supportive, and they are opening to maintaining a partnership of some sort with us even after we bring pre-K into the building. Mr. Hinds asked the board if they had any comments? With no comments, Mrs. Thompson said she would move forward on establishing the MOUs, and reminded the board that Head Start had asked for a fee for next year, which will increase the pre-K line of the budget by \$4,000.

Mr. Hennessey asked if Mrs. Thompson had asked the state to add West Bath to list of schools that need school construction? Mrs. Thompson said that it is on the facilities committee agenda.

2. Job Description - Summer STEM Lead Teacher

Mrs. Thompson said that one of her goals for this year had been to work towards having all that happens in school be documented on paper, and this has included creating job descriptions for schedule B positions that are stipended in the contract. She said with negotiations being only a year away, she feels this is important. Mrs. Thompson gave an overview of the proposed job description.

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

3. RSU1 Later School Start Time Committee Meetings

Mrs. Thompson said she had been contacted by RSU1 earlier in the week to let her know that this committee exists. She said that the purpose of this committee is to look at the start time of the schools and determine if start times need to be altered. The committee is looking at having the middle and high school start earlier, and the elementary school start later. The reason this matters to West Bath is if RSU1 changed the time of the middle and high school, the 6-8 students would need to be bussed at the same time as West Bath currently busses the K-5 students, and there are not enough busses to go around. Mrs. Thompson said that she wanted to be sure the board knew that these conversations are just starting to take place, and would be potentially in place for the 22-23 school year, and could impact West Bath. She said that RSU1 was looking at having elementary schools start around 7:50 and run until about 2:00. Mrs. Thompson said that Mrs. Powers is on the committee for RSU1 and invited her to speak more about the intention of the committee.

Mrs. Powers said that they had spent a lot of time looking at the research and did not find any that did not support it. The committee felt that if it improved the mental health of one child then it matters. She said that there are a lot of obstacles, and they are trying to take one obstacle at a time. She said that it was an issue that was brought to the school board by parents. She said she was skeptical at first, but the research supports it.

Mr. Hinds said that the thing that the board would need to keep in mind if RSU1 chooses to do this, it has significant impact on this district as well, with teacher contracts & bussing issues. The bigger legal issue is whether a neighboring district can force this upon us? He said that he was not opposed, he is just thinking about the issues. Mrs. Wallace asked if a member of West Bath should be on that committee? Mrs. Thompson said that Katie Joseph was open to having her attend, and also felt that Mrs. Powers would be able to keep West Bath informed. Mrs. Wallace said that if that was the decision they make, it would be in West Bath's best interest to be part of the process. Mrs. Powers said that if do not choose to change, West Bath would have to purchase more busses. Mrs. Randall asked if they are looking to push back all start times or just the higher levels? Mrs. Powers said that hadn't been finalized, because it is also a bussing issue in Bath, and there is a conflict with BIW traffic. Mr. Hinds said that it would be interesting to see the impact on before and after care. Mrs. Thompson said that this was new information on Monday, and that she gave faculty a heads up during the late start meeting, as it certainly has impacts on them as well.

4. 18-19 MEA Data

Mrs. Thompson shared data to show that the school was eligible for increased federal funding to supplement instruction or professional development. She said she had updated the Comprehensive Needs Assessment to identify school goals where supplemental funds could help to assist the work of the school.

5. Board Relations

Mr. Hinds said that it appears there is growing tension or miscommunication involving town boards. Mr. McDaniel said he supposed that it is due to not understanding the

obligations of the town/school board under statute. He said that he would like to see another meeting with the two boards. Board members agreed that a collaborative meeting would be helpful.

Mr. Hinds made a motion to request that the superintendent to collaborate with the town administrator to schedule a joint workshop with the boards and impacted parties. Mr. McDaniel seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

Public Comments

None

Set Next Meeting Dates and Locations

1. March 17th - MMA Training - Mr. Hinds reminded the board that if members would like to attend to reach out to Mrs. Thompson to get registered.
2. March 18th @ 6:30 PM at the West Bath School - First Reading of the School Budget

Adjourn

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to adjourn at 8:26 PM. 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 line extending to the right.

Emily Thompson