

West Bath School Administrative Unit

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

May 13, 2020 at 4:30 PM (Remote Meeting)

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

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Emily Thompson

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 4:39 PM by Keith Hinds. A verbal roll call attendance was conducted.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Comments from the Chair:

Mr. Hinds reminded the public how public participation and public comment portions of remote meetings would take place, referencing the Public Participation and Public Comment procedures document. He said that there would be two public comment sessions even though the meeting is being held remotely. Public comment can be emailed prior and during the meeting at publiccomment@westbathschool.org.

He commented that it is an interesting time, with information changing by the hour. He said he speaks with the superintendent sometimes multiple times a day trying to keep track of all the information that comes through. He commented that it is overwhelming and will have budgetary impacts. He said there are many unknowns and changing conditions and he asks for everyone's patience as we work through the process. He thanked the superintendent for all the extra effort and hours that she is putting into keeping on top of all of this information.

Approve/Amend Minutes of 4/29/20:

Ms. Randall made a motion to approve the minutes of 4/29/20. Mr. Hinds seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote (4-0-1). Mr. McDaniel abstained.

Adjustments to Agenda:

None

Public Comments:

None

Committee Reports:

1. Policy Committee – Mr. Hinds stated the board would be conducting the second reading of BBBE, but there are no changes to the policy. He said that there would likely be significant work from the policy committee upcoming this summer.

Facilities Committee – Mrs. Thompson said the the committee had spent time this year developing a plan to hire school employees for maintenance and custodial, as there have been discussions in the past about whether or not the school has reached the place where it is more cost effective to hire employees rather than contract out. The committee has consistently noted throughout the process that right now things with our contracted service provider are going well, and there are pros and cons to making this switch. But the committee also felt that if nothing else, this gave created a plan to move towards if at some point things aren't running smoothly.

The group created a job description for the day-time position, and put together an employment package. The proposed package was shared with the board. Mrs. Thompson said that in preparing for the maintenance portion of the school budget first reading, the majority of the committee chose to add this proposal to the first reading of the school budget for consideration.

In terms of pros, the committee has felt that if employees are hired, the employees may be more invested in the school and community and in their work. There was also the idea that in time we'd be able to move other responsibilities to that position, such as mowing and landscaping. The cons are that the school would have to figure out coverage when employees are not available, where right now the company sends a substitute, and therefore it would be more management. Mrs. Thompson reiterated that right now things are working with the current contractor, and the school is happy with the people who are servicing the building and the work that they are doing. She said she simply wanted to give the context before the first reading of the budget.

Mrs. Thompson said that the group also had prioritized the maintenance plan, electing to continue with the rotation of updating one unit ventilator, upgrading flooring and shelving for two classrooms and the guidance office, completing the door project for the cafeteria, which replaces the aging access doors and allows for them to be locked, and to add in the due diligence for the roofing.

Also discussed was integrated pest services. There had been an inquiry about whether or not we should put pest services out to bid. The group discussed IPM in relation to the bid policy and because it is such a small contract and because the school is not dissatisfied with the service, decided it does not need to go out to bid. There was further concern that hiring a different company may lead to a conflict of interest. The committee decided to keep the current contract in place, noting there is not dissatisfaction with the work that they are doing.

Finally, the committee discussed the rules for capital improvement projects and school construction. It is an extensive process, but one that the committee felt would be

worthwhile to begin working through the application process for, even if the only ultimate outcome ended up being informing the maintenance plan. The committee determined that this work would begin when the budget season ended.

Mr. Hinds said that he wanted to state for the record that he had not inquired about IPM services.

2. Finance Committee - Mr. Hinds thanks Mrs. Wallace and Mrs. Randall for stepping to sign warrants. He thanked the school staff and town staff for continuing to keep the business offices running seamlessly during the pandemic. Mr. Hinds said that the finance committee had met twice to review the draft budget, and is scheduled to meet again on Friday. Mr. McDaniel said that the finance committee had met and reviewed the proposed budget and he wanted to point out that the cost of hiring a maintenance person could be an additional \$20,000 to the facilities budget.
 - a. Payroll Warrants – Mr. Hinds stated that he had signed the payroll warrant on 5/6.
 - b. AP Warrants – Mr. Hinds said he signed AP warrants were signed by Mr. Hinds, Mrs. Randall, and Mrs. Wallace on 5/8.

Superintendent's Report

1. Financial Report

Mrs. Thompson said that with 11.5% of the year remaining, 23% of the budget remained. She said that all cost centers were on track. She discussed savings due to building closure, and said the only place that savings are realized is with special education transportation, as no students were transported after March 13th. She said that the district was responsible for continuing to pay all contracts, therefore the budget continues to track as expected.
2. District Updates
 - a. Better World Day - Mrs. Thompson said that on May 1st, the West Bath School joined in with other EL schools across the nation to recognize Better World Day, a day for students to promote kindness in their own community. She said the staff and students put together a video of our students and staff thanking essential employees and first responders for helping to keep us all safe. We sent it to 52 business and organizations on May 1st, choosing to send it directly to them rather than posting it on their Facebook pages, so that we could keep the focus on them, and not on our cute students. In your board packet, I've compiled the responses - that were also shared with children so they can understand the impact they had. She shared sample responses she had received back.
 - b. Books for Students - Mrs. Thompson said that the Mockingbird Bookshop, Mustardseed Bookshop, and Books on the Bus had teamed together to raise to purchase a book for every elementary student in the greater Bath region. She said that she had heard from Terri Schurz, the new owner of the Mockingbird Bookshop that they had raise enough funds to distribute books to all K-2 students. She said she would like to thank the organizations for the books and the gesture.
 - c. Some Good News, Bath, Maine - Mrs. Thompson said she wished to highlight the work of a BMS student, and former West Bath student, Addie Hinds. She has created her own good news broadcast of positive things happening in the region. Mrs. Thompson said that Addie's 4th episode featured the Better World Day

videos, schoolwide crew videos, and the videos that Miss Marco and Miss Goulet were creating on their own. Mrs. Thompson said that while it is nice to get a shout out for the school, she really wished to thank Addie for making a positive difference in our community.

- d. Teacher Appreciation Week - Mrs. Thompson thanked the Community Crew, parents, and students for the love the staff received during staff and teacher appreciation week. She said that a great deal of thought and love went into the week and their efforts were appreciated.

Old Business

1. Second Reading of Board Policies
 - a. Second Reading of Policy BBBE - Unexpired Term Fulfillment/Vacancies
Mr. Hinds said that this policy was discussed last week and there were no changes made. Mr. McDaniel commented that the policy follows the law, but did not include the portion about unexcused absences. There were no board comments. Roll call vote (5-0).
2. COVID-19 Updates - Mrs. Thompson shared Priority Notice May 6, 2020 and how that related to the end of year event planning. She explained that the talent show, field day, and 5th grade step up would take place remotely based upon the current guidance.
3. End of Year Reporting - Mrs. Thompson updated the board on the end of year reporting plan for the school. She said that the guidance from the department of education at the onset of remote learning was to provide educational opportunities that kept students involved in learning, and to understand that all families had different circumstances and they should be encouraged to engage as they can to the extent they can. They've provided grading guidance that basically states to do no harm. Instead of sending regular trimester report cards, the staff has created grade level progress reports that list the skills focused on in each content at each grade level during remote learning, a description of how instruction was delivered in each content during building closure, an explanation of what skills and strengths we see in each child in each content, and next steps for instruction. This method still allows for families to get a sense of how their child is progressing in relation to the skills focused on, and a plan to move forward, and it also documents for us the instructional moves that we made at each grade level. She said that end of year progress reports would be mailed out after June 19th.
4. ESY - Mrs. Thompson said that schools are still awaiting ESY guidance from the Department of Education. She stated that the committee that is determining health markers for having in person ESY is meeting tonight, and that she anticipated that by Friday schools will hear what will be allowable. She said that if ESY can not be delivered face to face, West Bath will set up remote option for eligible participants.
5. Fall Reopening/Budgetary Considerations - Mrs. Thompson said that the department of education assured schools that after graduation guidance, and ESY guidance, next they'd begin to put together the guidance for opening of schools in the fall. She said that there are so many unknowns, and those unknowns impact the budget process and how to proceed. She stated that the Board of Selectmen had discussed holding town meeting on July 15th, but now they are looking at a later date to try to allow for more than 50 people to be in attendance. The budget advisory committee wont be meeting in person until June. However, because there is impact on staffing at the school, the town administrator agrees that the school should move forward with the budget process.

Mrs. Thompson said that it is understood that the school will need to start the new fiscal year with the current budget, and then have the new budget passed at town meeting. If that budget does not get passed, the school continues on the current budget and works to go through the process again within 30 days. She said that there are some rumors that subsidy may be curtailed. Tyler Backus at the DOE says that the revenue department will meet in August to discuss recommendations for subsidy, and then those recommendations would have to go to legislation. At the same time, the commissioner says that subsidy is not going to be impacted.

Mrs. Thompson said that at meetings the prior week, there were beginning conversation about potential requirements of opening in the fall. This included conversations about all schools potentially needing a full time nurse and dedicated COVID nursing space, needing to have multiple transportation runs to socially distanced bus runs, considering increased social work and the need for flexible scheduling. These all could have budgetary impacts. The DOE said they are considering adjusting 279s, but that does not support minimum receivers.

Mrs. Thompson said that there's also a lot of talk about CARES acts funds. However, because it is allocated through the Title I funding formula, West Bath will receive only a small amount of funds as compared to other districts.

She said that she spoke with Steve Bailey and the school's attorney about how to possibly plan for all of the scenarios, and ensure staff contracts are not in violation if reductions are made through the budget process or after town meeting. She said that the advice from both is to move forward and present a budget that matches the needs as if you were preparing for school as you know it. She said that there's only so much the board can do to prepare for the unknown of what comes next. She said that Steve Bailey recommended to be thinking about where they can be flexible with funding once the board approves a budget.

Mrs. Thompson said that she and the finance committee wanted to share all of this information so that the board was on the same page prior to first reading.

New Business

1. Approval of Probationary Teachers - Action
 - a. Probationary I to Probationary II
 - i. Laura Houghton - 0.6 FTE Physical Education
 - ii. Melissa Johnson - 1.0 FTE Instructional Strategist
 - iii. Jennifer Mitchell - 0.2 FTE School NurseMr. Hinds made a motion to approve the nominations of probationary I to probationary II employees pending the board's adoption of a budget. Mrs. Randall seconded that motion. Roll call vote (5-0).
 - b. Probationary II to Probationary III
 - i. Megan Fuller - 0.6 FTE Librarian/0.4 FTE Gifted & TalentedMr. Hinds made a motion to approve the nominations of probationary II to

probationary III employees pending the board's adoption of a budget. Mr. McDaniel seconded that motion. Roll call vote (5-0).

Public Comments

None

Set Next Meeting Dates and Locations

1. May 20th - Remote Meeting - First Reading of the School budget to begin at 4:30 PM.

Adjourn

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to adjourn at 5:34 PM. Mrs. Wallace seconded the motion. Roll Call 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