

West Bath School Administrative Unit

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

June 10, 2020 Following the Budget Workshop (Remote Meeting)

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

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Patrick Bowdish, Emily Thompson

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:43 PM by Keith Hinds. A roll call attendance was taken.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Comments from the Chair:

Mr. Hinds said that he was appreciative of the board's willingness to move the meeting to a later start time to accommodate the budget advisory committee. He said he also would like to wish Mr. John McPhail a happy 90th birthday, stating that he is a former teacher and principal of the West Bath School from 1965-1990.

Adjustments to Agenda:

None

Public Comments:

Mr. Hinds said that no comments were received prior to the meeting. Mrs. Thompson said that there is a selectman who was trying to give input at the end of the workshop. She asked for the meeting to be paused for a moment while Mrs. Thompson tried to reach out to her.

While waiting, Ms. Powers commented that Mr. McPhail was her teacher and principal when she was a student at the West Bath School.

Mrs. Randall said that the students would be sad that the board did not sing the official West Bath birthday song.

After pausing, Mr. Hinds suggested the board move on, and if the question comes in we can take it then.

Old Business

1. Discussion of the Proposed School Budget

Mr. Hinds said that they had just met with the budget advisory committee, and the board had also taken action last week. After that action, the board is looking at an increase to the budget of 2.05% with an increase to the local contribution of 0.16%.

Ms. Powers asked if final decisions were made about non-union employees. Mr. Hinds said that he felt that those decisions were made, and if the board feels otherwise, they would need to discuss that in executive session. Mr. McDaniel said that his recollection was that it had been put to rest and moving forward with the the budget as proposed.

Mrs. Randall said that Mrs. Thompson had mentioned in the workshop that she would feel comfortable with increasing the carry forward to make a flat budget. Mrs. Thompson confirmed that. Mrs. Randall said that she would lean towards making that move. Mr. McDaniel said that if something happened that the unanticipated expenditure fund is insufficient, then the board would still have to tap the carry forward. He said the question really is whether to cover that amount, but is it appropriate to add additional funds to cost centers? It is open to discussion.

Mr. Hinds said that there are two items from the workshop that the board should be discussed. The first is are we comfortable with social work at 4 days, and are we comfortable with only 2 extra students in tuition? He said that while he agrees the social work need is going to be there, he stands behind the decision of the board to keep it at 4 days. He also said that while tuition is a change from practice, he is comfortable with that level as he thinks that some students will elect to homeschool next year. He said it's not the approach the board typically takes, and last year the board was only about \$5,000 off in their estimate, but given the circumstances, it makes sense.

Mr. McDaniel said that he was surprised to hear in the workshop that there were 3 additional houses being built. Ms. Powers said that she agreed with Mr. Hinds' thinking. Mrs. Randall said that it would be nice to have a larger buffer for tuition, and having social work increased would be helpful, making those changes now after several weeks of trying to get the budget where it is now would be counter productive fro what the board has been trying to accomplish. Mr. Hinds asked if Mrs. Thompson is still comfortable. She said it is a hard budget, and that the school system is in a place where it can't do everything that it would like to do. She said that she felt that social emotional needs are going to be a big challenge ahead, and there were reasons beyond COVID that she had started the budget with a request for a 5 day position. If we get to the fall and things look different, it might need to be revisited. She said it is only prudent to go in with a flat budget and she does not see another way to do it. Mrs. Randall said that it is also important to point out that while the board has not been able to increase services, it also has not decreased services, and that is important thing to focus on moving forward. As tough as this budget is, the board has held on to positions and that is commendable. Mrs. Wallace also said that she wanted to mention that the teachers and staff are amazing with

social emotional learning and that she feels that they are going to be able to provide a lot of the support that is needed without adding a day of the actual licensed person.

Mr. Hinds made a motion to pull in an additional \$5,128.73 from carry forward to present a 0% budget. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion. Mr. McDaniel said that the economic conditions might be worse next year, and taking the money from the carryover fund is a concern. Roll call vote (4-0-1). Mr. McDaniel abstained from the vote.

New Business

1. Executive Order 56 FY 19/20

Mrs. Thompson gave an overview of what the executive order entails, stating that it gave permission for school board's to not go through the town meeting process, but instead to approve their budget through the public process that the board had been participating in and send their adopted budget to referendum on July 14th. The school board needs to decide if they would like the budget to adopt a budget tonight and go to referendum in July or wait until the town holds a town meeting in August as they are currently planning. The executive order gives that flexibility.

Ms. Powers asked what Mrs. Thompson thought. She said that she felt that the board should operate in unison with the town and go to town meeting together. She said the town is not prepared to move their budget to referendum at this time and operating together as one community feels most important.

Mr. McDaniel said that at town meeting the board can explain the two additional warrant items. He felt that a referendum does not adequately convey the explanations.

Mr. Hinds said that he is in agreement and the board has worked very hard to have the board, budget advisory committee, board of selectmen, school staff, and town staff working together in unison and that they should go to town meeting with the rest of the town departments and not take advantage of the executive order.

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to take the budget to town meeting as opposed to holding a referendum on it. Mr. Hinds seconded the motion. Roll call vote (5-0).

2. Second Reading and Vote of the 20-21 School Budget

Mr. Hinds said that before any action is taken, the original plan was to wait another week. This was put on the agenda in the event the board wanted to take the budget to referendum, as in order to that the board would need to adopt a budget by June 12th. He asked the board if they would like to adopt the budget or table the budget for another week? Mr. McDaniel asked what the likelihood would be that any additional guidance is given from the state in the following week? Mrs. Thompson said that it is not anticipated that the guidance will be given until at least mid-July. Mrs. Thompson said that she is hesitant to move forward on the budget as there is still a selectman who indicated that she has something to say but has not submitted a comment. If the board is not moving the budget to referendum, she would like to table the process and allow for the public

comment to be provided. She said that if the board is at the place where they feel that are ready, she can prepare the warrants for next week and the budget and warrants can be approved at one meeting.

Mr. Hinds made a motion to table the vote of the 20-21 school budget. Mr. McDaniel seconded the motion. Roll call vote (5-0).

Public Comments

1. Mr. Hinds said that he received a public comment that due to financial issues of COVID-19 and the economic impacts, the tax collector is authorized to develop payment plans moving forward, and that would stop the automatic foreclosure process. Mr. Hinds said that the board would help to spread that message. He said that the board should feel proud of a 0% increase budget, but there is still some financial uncertainty and anything that the board can do to support fellow tax payers is a duty that they carry.
2. Mr. Hinds reminded the public how to submit public comments, and referred to the posted procedures.

Set Next Meeting Dates and Locations

1. June 17th - Remote Meeting - School Board of Directors Meeting @ 4:30 PM

Adjourn

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to adjourn at 7:05 PM. Mrs. Randall 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 line extending to the right.

Emily Thompson