

West Bath School Administrative Unit

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

July 15, 2020 at 4:30 PM (Remote Meeting)

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

Members Absent: Mary Wallace

Others Present: Patrick Bowdish, Emily Thompson

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 PM by Keith Hinds. A roll call attendance was taken.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Comments from the Chair:

Mr. Hinds shared information about how to access public comment before and during the meeting. He said that he wished to acknowledge the uncomfortableness of the unknown. He said that thinking about the plan for the fall is going to be challenging and a difficult decision for not just this board to make, but also for staff, students, parents, and that everyone is in it together. He said the board is going to weigh all the information, all the facts, all the recommendations, and put forth a plan that weighs all info, but keeps our students, staff, safe and healthy.

Approve/Amend the Minutes of June 17, 2020

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to approve the minutes of 6/17/20. Ms. Powers seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote (4-0).

Adjustments to Agenda:

None

Public Comments:

None

Committee Reports:

1. Policy Committee - Mr. McDaniel said that the board had several policies to report out on, along with the mode of reporting out.

2. Technology Committee - Mrs. Thompson said that Mr. Bowdish has been hard at work upgrading the school's wireless capacity, to ensure that it can handle the number of devices that are now in the building. She stated that the chrome book rotation has been ordered for this year as Mr. Bowdish wanted to ensure that these were ordered as soon as possible, as chrome books are actually getting more challenging to find. She said she had also made the decision to use a portion of our ESSERF funds to purchase an extra set of Chromebooks. With this set, this will ensure that there is 1:1 computing for all students, in the event we need to have a portion of our year be held remotely. She commented that while the school had made sure that everyone had a device this spring, the survey showed that it was challenging for families to have multiple students sharing one device, and the school would like to eliminate that hardship for families. She also said this will also allow the school to have less sharing of equipment if we are in person, as everyone can have a device that is assigned to them.
3. Facilities Committee - Mrs. Thompson said that summer work in the building is well underway. Each space is having its regular maintenance and cleaning, would typically happen each summer, and all annual inspections are taking place. As the rooms are being emptied and cleaned, she said she is holding off on moving items back in, to determine room capacities for physical distancing, and to determine whether changes need to be made to the make-ups of classes. Space and class size is obviously a determination of how we can safely open. Mrs. Thompson said that there is limited maintenance for this year - just the unitventilator upgrade, which has been scheduled. She said that a hold-over project from last spring, replacing one of the gym doors, had been completed. She stated she and Mr. Bowdish had met with Siemens this week to discuss ventilation measures in instructional spaces, to ensure that classrooms have adequate ventilation. She said it was determined that classrooms are in good shape ventilation wise, but there are a few work spaces/offices that do not have exhaust or ventilation, and therefore is looking at installations of roof-top exhaust fans for at least some of these spaces so they can be usable for more than one person. She said that the ESSERF funds would be used for that work to be completed.
4. Finance Committee
 - a. Payroll Warrants - signed by Mr. Hinds, Mrs. Wallace, and Mrs. Randall on 6/23, and by Mr. Hinds on 7/6
 - b. AP Warrants - Signed on 6/17 by Mr. Hinds, Mrs. Randall, and Mrs. Wallace Keith, Ashleigh, Mary, on 6/30 by Mr. Hinds, Mrs. Randall and Mrs. Wallace (last fiscal year), on 6/30 by Mr. Hinds and Mrs. Randall and 7/1 by Mrs. Wallace (new fiscal year) and on 7/15 by Mr. Hinds, Mrs. Randall, and Mrs. Wallace

Superintendent's Report

1. Financial Report - Mrs. Thompson said that with 96% of the year remaining, the first fiscal year document shows 98% of the budget remaining.
2. District Updates -
 - a. Summer STEM - Mrs. Thompson said that ESY is operating remotely, led by Mrs. Franklin and supported by Miss Marco, Ms. Goulet, and Meagan Sluter. Instruction is in small groups, tailored to the direct instruction needs of the students. She said that she appreciated everyone's efforts to make ESY

engaging, especially where everyone is tired of being on computer screens. She also thanked Mr. Bowdish for continuing to be on constant call for tech support.

- b. YMCA Food Delivery - Mrs. Thompson thanked the Bath Area Family YMCA for adding West Bath School to their mobile bus run. Food will be available at the school on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10 AM.

Old Business

1. Review of Board Policies

a. AC - Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action

Mr. McDaniel gave an overview of the policy, explaining that the changes were due to an update to the law, and changes of what applies to discrimination. Mrs. Thompson said that with the changes to the law, it is going to be necessary to move the role of affirmative action officer from her to another employee, as the decision maker can not also hear appeals. She said that Drummond Woodsum is drafting a new job description and affirmative action plans, she'd like to post a stipend schedule B position to be the school's affirmative action officer. The board could approve those documents, the position could be posted, and then a new officer could be trained.

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to approve the policy as amended. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion. Roll call vote (4-0).

b. ACAA - Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students

Mr. McDaniel explained the policy had been updated to include gender identity. There was no board discussion. Mr. Hinds made a motion to approve the policy as amended. Mr. McDaniel seconded the motion. Roll call vote (4-0).

c. ACAA-R - Student Discrimination and Harassment Complaint Procedures

Mr. McDaniel said this is the procedure for filing informal complaints, and possible remedies that may result. Mr. Hinds said that the changes are definition changes or procedural changes that mirror ACAA. Mr. McDaniel made a motion to approve the amended policy. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion. Roll call vote (4-0).

d. ACAB - Harassment and Sexual Harassment of School Employees

- e. Mr. McDaniel said that the policy expands on the definition to include gender identity and genetic information, and that these changes are carried through the policy to each section. He said that all concerns and complaints should be addressed through ACAB-R. Ms. Powers asked for clarification regarding genetic information. Mr. McDaniel said that genetic information would be related to XX XY, but it could be expanded into genetic predispositions. It would apply to both of these situations. Ms. Powers asked if staff would be educated on these changes. Mrs. Thompson said that it would need to be part of the August training to make sure that staff understand the the changes, the changes to the procedures, and with the board's approval, the change of a new affirmative action officer.

- f.** Mr. McDaniel made a motion to approve the policy as amended. Ms. Powers seconded the motion. Roll call vote (4-0).
- g.** ACAB-R - Employee Discrimination and Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures
- h.** Mr. McDaniel said this policy is the procedures for filing complaints under ACAB. He walked the board through the sections of the policy. Mr. Hinds said that one change is that the policy does clearly state that the appeal to the superintendent is final. There are several policies that the board has created that allows for appeals to the board, but because of the complexity of this policy, and that the affirmative action officer will be trained, the policy committee did not feel that it was appropriate for the appeal to come to the board, where the board might not have that same level of understanding of the law. Mrs. Thompson commented that this policy also states that there is to be an investigator, which will be different from the officer, and from the superintendent. For West Bath, that would likely need to be hired contractor, so there is another level within the appeals process. Ms. Powers asked if the investigator forms an opinion does the investigator give that opinion to the superintendent? Mrs. Thompson said that the opinion goes to the affirmative action officer, and it can rest there, unless it is discipline is needed or in the event there's an appeal.
- i.** Mr. McDaniel made a motion to approve the policy as amended. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion. Roll call vote (4-0).

2. Approval of Positions

Mrs. Thompson said that the board accounted for new positions in the school budget, those of an 80% nurse and 100% educational ed tech II, but had not created those positions, which is the next step.

Mr. Hinds made a motion to approve the creation of 1FTE ed tech II and a .8 FTE school nurse. Mr. McDaniel seconded the motion. Roll call vote (4-0).

3. 20-21 School Budget/Town Vote Discussion

Mrs. Thompson said that through conversations with the town administrator, she learned that the town is not planning on holding a town meeting this summer for the town and school budget after all, as there is concern about drawing a crowd and exceeding the 50 person limit. She said she spoke with Kristine about the challenges that presents for the school, and the town administrator asked her to come to a selectmen's meeting in August to discuss it with them. Mrs. Thompson said that she wanted the board to discuss the options so that she could adequately speak for the board.

She said that her concern is that while the budget is a 0% increase to the voters, the cost centers that make up the budget are significantly different than the budget from last year. Additionally, the board had put in a warrant article to allow for a transfer of more than 5% of a cost center to support another need, if possible, as a way to help with contingency without raising any extra funds, but without a vote, that option is not viable.

She said that there was also a warrant article to allow the board to have flexibility with the reserve account, as a contingency as well, so that the board did not have to raise additional funds. Finally, the school's overall costs are higher even though the budget is flat to the voters, and she would not have authorization to spend those funds to meet the board's budget, and contracts, without a new vote.

Mrs. Thompson said that in normal circumstances a school district can rely on the prior year's budget for 30 days following the failure to pass a budget. As these are not in normal circumstances, LD2167 was created that allows communities to have more time to get a budget passed. But this is repealed in January, so the school district have to go through the process at some point this fall. She said the town is going to create tax commitment in September, so the funds will be available, but the school district just need to make sure that it goes through the correct legal process. Mrs. Thompson explained that the town administrator had said that the town is planning a special town meeting at the end of August to request funds for maintenance on the town office and perhaps the could be permitted to be part of that special meeting. She also said that the town could hold a special town meeting for the school budget when it is determined that the timing is right. Under LD2167 the school budget could go to referendum, either with a special referendum or in November. She asked the board to discuss options and their preference for how to move forward.

Ms. Powers asked if a ballot referendum would be possible in November? Mrs. Thompson said that it is an option under LD 2167. Mr. McDaniel said that there would be an election in November, and if local issues could be added, what would the form look like? Mrs. Thompson said that she would need to draft a new set of warrant articles and the board would need to approve those, and hearings would need to be held. Mrs. Randall said that she knows that the school needs to operate within the current budget, but does the school need to stay within the cost centers as well? Mrs. Thompson said that being early enough in the year, it should not be a problem, but in January, it could be. Ms. Powers asked what the town is doing for their budget process. Mrs. Thompson responded that the town administrator says they can operate under last year's budget. They are only planning to have a special town meeting to approve funds for the town office renovations. Mr. Hinds said that he would like to talk to the selectmen about the challenges that this poses to the the school board, and that the board could find itself in November or January with a budget that does not pass, and the whole process needs to begin again. He said if that is the scenario he'd rather know that now. He commented that the board and town have worked well together through the budget process and he'd like to have a dialogue with them about how to move forward, keeping safety at the forefront.

Mr. McDaniel asked how the town was going to handle the process for running for school board. Mrs. Thompson said she had asked the town administrator about it, and she had indicated they would be following their regular procedures, but that she would check in again. He asked if remote meetings were going to continue. She said that it is a local school board decision. They are permitted to have remote meetings for up to 30 days after

the state of emergency ends. The board can continue to meet remotely, or can choose to move to in person meetings if the group prefers.

New Business

1. Re-Opening of In-Person Instruction

Mrs. Thompson said that she realized that all communities in Maine and across the nation were awaiting the decisions of their local schools about what school will look like in the fall for students and staff. She said the district is awaiting the guidance from the Department of Education, who is taking their lead from the Maine CDC and other sources. Their first step is that they are going to give us the health benchmarks that communities need to meet to be permitted to reopen. And then schools need to have plan that meets the guidance that is still forthcoming from the DOE. She said she has put a tentative meeting on the schedule for August 5th, to hopefully have the board approve the instructional plan and that as schools await the state's guidance, they will continue to work on meeting other aspects of the framework as well so that West Bath has a safe reopening plan ready to go when we the county is given the green light.

2. Families First Coronavirus Response Act

Mrs. Thompson shared the Families First COVID Response Act with the board and explained that there are 6 reasons that an employee can access leave rights under this act:

1. Under quarantine
2. Advised to self quarantine
3. Experiencing symptoms and awaiting a diagnosis
4. Caring for an individual is is ill or in quarantine
5. Caring for a child whose school is closed
6. Or has a substantially-similar health condition.

She said that in addition to Families First, staff members may be eligible for leave under the Maine Family Leave Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, and the district's own negotiated contracts. She said she is going to be sending information to staff about the types of leave that they have the right to access, but wanted to be sure the board was informed first.

3. Updated Forms

Mrs. Thompson explained that she had provided the board with a notice of rights, which be given to the staff, that highlights the portions that are relevant to COVID. It includes both the Federal and Maine leave laws, but differentiated between the two. Also in the packet is the designation notice, which is the paperwork trail for what staff is eligible for, or the notification that more information is needed to process their request. She said that she will be sending this out with a letter inviting staff to let her know of their plans for fall. They do not have to disclose medical information at this time and she is not allowed to ask them for it, but she is permitted to invite them to tell her. The association has also done the same.

4. Results of Parent Survey

Mrs. Thompson said she had enclosed the survey results from parents, and provided the board with all of the information. She shared the following information:

- remote learning - albeit was emergency learning, in the spring was hard. While slightly more families reported a positive experience with remote learning, 27% said their child had a hard time
- 40% of our students worked 90 minutes per day, 30% worked 90-120 minutes per day, and 28% worked for more than 2 hours per day. This was in line with the national guidance the school followed
- 54% of families said that were worried or very worried about their child's social emotional well being during remote learning
- 38% of families said it was more stressful for them to oversee than they would have expected.
- Parents indicated what changes they would like to see to remote learning, and the top three wishes were for there to be more interaction between students and teachers, more time for students to work together (remotely) and more off-screen activities. Families also gave a long list of items that worked well for them.
- In regards to the fall, 81% said that they plan to have their children return to school if it opens, and 19% were unsure, as there needs to be more information.
- Families gave information about what type of schedule might work for them - about a 1/3 prefers every other day, about a 1/3 likes am/pm arrangements, 20% can make any of work, and 12% can't work with any of the scenarios.
- Families identified their challenges - they can't be at home, they need technology, or they have multiple children and it is hard to support them - among others.
- It was clear that families most preferred the concept of returning to in person instruction, followed by a hybrid model, and the third choice would be remote learning.
- In regards to what safety measures families felt were most essential -
 - a. Having a central entry way and careful tracking of comings and goings
 - b. Providing PPE to students if their families are not able to provide it
 - c. having health screenings regularly throughout the day
 - d. masks being worn, and
 - e. physical distancing.

Mr. Hinds asked the board if they had any hopes to share on a high level about the fall. Ms. Powers said that they have to wait for guidelines. It is hard to make any decisions without that information. Mr. McDaniel said that he hoped that everyone can return to school full time and the faculty can support that. He said that more and more health care officials are saying that at the K-12 level, the concerns of mental health, psychological health, and the lack of physical activity and exercise are more concerning than COVID-19. Mr. Hinds said that he was conflicted, as he has views as a parent, a board member, and an employer, but is confident at the end that the board will do what is safe for staff, students and the community.

5. First Reading of Board Policies

- a. First Reading of GBN-R2 - Maine Family Medical Leave Administration Procedure

Mr. McDaniel walked the board through the first reading of GBN-R2. There were no questions or comments.

6. Adjustment to Job Title/Job Description

Mrs. Thompson introduced the request of an adjustment to the job title and job description, asking to change the position from a technology support specialist to a technology director to be more in line with what the role truly is. She said that there would be no other changes to the role. Mr. McDaniel said that he agreed this was more in line with the responsibilities that have been required. Mr. Hinds made a motion to adopt the changes. Mr. McDaniel seconded the motion. Roll call vote (4-0).

7. Annual Discussion of the Plan of Expenditures of Federal Funds

Mrs. Thompson provided the board with a overview summary sheet of the plan for expenditures of Federal Funds for this upcoming school year. She also discussed the plan for the CARES Act funds. The board had no questions or concerns.

Public Comments

None

Set Next Meeting Dates and Locations

1. June 10th - Remote Workshop - School Board of Directors & Budget Advisory Committee Workshop @ 6:00 PM
2. August 5th - Remote Meeting - 4:30 PM (tentative)
3. June 19th - Remote Meeting - School Board of Directors Meeting @ 4:30 PM

Adjourn

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to adjourn at 5:50 PM. Mr. Hinds seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote (5-0).

Submitted by,



Emily Thompson