

## **West Bath School Administrative Unit**

### **Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

October 21, 2020 at 4:30 PM (Remote Meeting)

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

**Members Absent:** Robert McDaniel

**Others Present:** Patrick Bowdish, Emily Thompson

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

The meeting was called to order at 4:33 PM by Keith Hinds. A roll call attendance was taken.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

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

Mr. Hinds commented that there is an upcoming election. He encouraged the public to get out and vote, and said that absentee ballots were available. He stated that there were two school board seats up for election, as well as a board of selectman seat, and state and federal seats. Mr. Hinds commented that this was the last meeting for Mr. McDaniel and Mrs. Wallace and he wished to acknowledge them and thank them for their years of service, stating that their input has been invaluable and they will be missed.

#### **Approve/Amend Minutes of 9/16/20**

Mrs. Randall made a motion to approve the minutes of 9/16/20 as written. Ms. Powers seconded the motion. Roll call vote (4-0).

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

None

#### **Public Comments:**

None

Mr. Hinds reminded the public how to submit public comment during remote meetings.

#### **Committee Reports**

1. Policy Committee - No report
2. Technology Committee - No report

3. Facilities Committee - No report
4. Finance Committee
  - a. Payroll Warrants - Mr. Hinds said that he had signed payroll warrants on 9/28 and 10/9.
  - b. AP Warrants - Mr. Hinds said that AP warrants were signed by he and Mrs. Randall on 9/30 and 10/14.

## **Superintendent's Report**

1. Financial Report -
  - a. Mrs. Thompson said that with with 70% of the year remaining the budget document shows 82% of the budget remaining. She mentioned that while all lines are tracking appropriately, tuition bills had just arrived and there are still have a few lines that need to be adjusted to the CRF grant for reimbursement.
  - b. SY 20 Financial Audit - Mrs. Thompson said that they have been connected with the auditors to make a plan for the fall audit, and noted that everything had been delayed because of pandemic. The auditors have sent the list of materials that they would like to have digitized and prepared for them.
2. District Updates -
  - a. Spirit of America Award - Mrs. Thompson announced that the West Bath School had been awarded the Spirit of America Award for Sagadahoc County for their Better World Day project last May. She read the list of other award winners, and stated that the award is focused on community service.
  - b. CRF Funds - Mrs. Thompson stated that schools were notified that they were granted a second round of CRF funds, and she has applied for funding and been notified that the projects were approved. She said that the challenge with the CRF funds is that they need to be spent on items that are COVID related that were not planned for in the regular budget. All projects must be completed and invoiced by December 30th, which does not allow much time to order items, set up maintenance and get it completed. She said the second challenge is that it does not leave any resources to help schools in the second half of the year, as both the first and second round funds can only be used until December 30th. She said that she wrote the new projects to try to focus on items that had been previously identified as needs. This includes updating the ventilation system in the office, guidance office, and conference room, creating storage options for both indoor and outdoor spaces, purchasing outdoor supplies and materials, and upgrading the sinks in classrooms with touchless faucets. She said the challenge with that one is whether or not a plumber can get the work done in time.

Ms. Powers asked if unit ventilators could be addressed through these funds. Mrs. Thompson said that it probably could have qualified but the supply chain would likely not have allowed it to happen, as there's a 12-14 week turn around to get materials typically. She also said that the unit-ventilators have all been balanced to bring in outside air, and that some of the oldest ventilators are currently bringing in the most air exchange and she would not want to disrupt that.

Mrs. Randall asked if the board could draft a letter to send to legislators to share the challenges that schools are being faced with. If the board speaks out maybe it

becomes a bigger conversation. Mrs. Randall made a motion to draft a letter in relation to the Corona Virus Relief Fund and the time constraints to send to the local legislators. Ms. Powers seconded the motion, but asked if it should be to federal legislators? Mrs. Randall revised her motion to draft a letter to send to appropriate local officials. Ms. Powers seconded the motion. Roll call vote (4-0).

Mrs. Powers said she appreciated that Mrs. Thompson had thought of creative solutions for using the funding, focusing on ways the funds can be impactful for the school.

## **Old Business**

### **1. SFSP School Nutrition Waiver**

Mrs. Thompson announced that the federal waiver that was allowing breakfast and lunch to be free for all students had been extended through the end of the school year.

### **2. In-Person Instruction Updates**

Mrs. Thompson stated that she added this to the agenda to make sure there was space for the board to talk about the status of in-person instruction, hear updates, and ask questions if there are any. She said that with school in the 7th week, things have been remarkably well. Students continue to show how resilient they are, and have done a great job following the CDC rules and procedures. She said they've all settled into routines, and a feeling of normalcy has returned. She commented that the nursing staff had been tremendous, and having two nurses sharing the position has allowed for them to have a partner, and to cover for one another when their personal schedules dictate the need. She commented that she could not say enough about the staff, that everyone is taking on so much more to try do this all well. She acknowledged that there are challenges. One challenge is with the required state flow chart which dictates that any student with common COVID symptoms needs to have a follow-up visit with a doctor and COVID testing to return to school. She said that in the first few weeks this was a hard adjustment for the children, families, and the school, particularly with early delays in getting test results. She said that the timeliness of testing results has improved, and for the most part families have been understanding of the regulations.

She said another challenge has been that it is time to find professional time to work with the staff. Because of the need to cohort and stay in small groups, everyone has duties every day, and teachers can't easily be pulled for professional development or other meetings so that cohorts can stay in place. This means that late start Wednesdays is the only professional development time currently, where PD typically is embedded into many parts of the week. She also said that most of our staff are parents too, and they are balancing teaching West Bath student while managing the challenging schedules of their own children, and this has certainly been a stressor for staff members. She concluded by stating that all in all things continue to go very well, and while the staff can not control what happens outside of the school, she is feeling that the school is doing very well to meet the guidelines and keep people safe within the school.

## **New Business**

1. 6-12 Enrollment

Mrs. Thompson shared the enrollment numbers for grades 6-12. The enrollment figures are within 4 of the predicted enrollment from last spring. She reminded the board that the board had budgeted for the exact number of students who were enrolled last spring, assuming there would be an exodus to home schooling this fall. That has not appeared to have happened. She said the extra 4 slots will help to cover whatever the tuition increase ends up being. Mrs. Randall asked when families will be polled in regards to their second trimester instruction choice. Mrs. Thompson said that the survey is in her Friday newsletter for families.

2. Quarter 1 Attendance

By board policy, Mrs. Thompson said that she is required to share student attendance with the board on a quarterly basis. She reminded them about the rules of chronic absenteeism, and gave an overview of the attendance records and any necessary following steps.

3. Calendar Request

Mrs. Thompson asked the board to consider a change in the November school calendar. She said that Thanksgiving week had two half days to allow for student-led conferences. While she is mindful of the impact on families of making calendar changes, she asked the board to consider having those two days be non-student days, to allow for periods of time for remote student-led conferences and parent conversation as face time with parents is limited. She said that she would like to allow for flexibility for those two days to allow staff to take care of their professional needs, and given the federal waiver on student days through December there is currently some flexibility where there's not typically. She said she felt that conferences would not be as valuable to the students, teachers, or parents, if back to back remote meetings were scheduled on top of already having student days.

Ms. Powers said this was a good solution that made a lot of sense, as clearly more time will be needed to accommodate families. Mrs. Wallace said that with West Bath School being in-person 5 days per week, students are really ahead of the game and she agreed that this change would be good for teachers and families. Mr. Hinds said that not having conferences last spring was a challenge, and he supported creating more opportunity for family conversations.

Mr. Hinds made a motion to revise the calendar to remove the two half student days in November to allow for flexibility for student-led conferences. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion. Roll call vote (4-0).

**Public Comments**

None

**Set Next Meeting Dates and Locations**

1. November 18th at 4:30 PM - Remote Meeting of the West Bath School Board of Directors

## Adjourn

Mrs. Wallace made a motion to adjourn at 5:13 PM. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion.  
Roll Call Vote (4-0).

Submitted by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Thompson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Emily Thompson