

West Bath School Administrative Unit

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

February 10, 2021 at 4:30 PM (Remote Meeting)

Members Present: Keith Hinds, Alexandra Jungbluth, Joanne Powers, Ashleigh Randall, and Casandra Whorff

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Patrick Bowdish, Emily Thompson

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 PM by Keith Hinds. Roll call attendance was taken. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Comments from the Chair:

Mr. Hinds welcomed everyone to the meeting. He said that due to it being a lengthy agenda, he would move right into the agenda items and did not have further comments.

Approve/Amend Minutes of 1/20/21

Mrs. Randall made a motion to approve the minutes of 1/20/21. Ms. Powers seconded the motion. Roll call vote (5-0).

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 - Mr. Hinds said that policy committee met on February 5th, and would be presenting a first reading of a policy and a procedure later in the agenda.
2. Facilities Committee - No report
3. Finance Committee
 - a. Payroll Warrants - Mr. Hinds reported that he signed the payroll warrant on 1/29/21.

- b. AP Warrants - Mr. Hinds said that both he and Mrs. Randall signed the AP warrant on 2/3.

Superintendent's Report

1. Financial Report

- a. Mrs. Thompson reported that with 42% of the year remaining, 52% of the budget remained, and all lines are tracking appropriately. She made note of two items. First, she pointed out to the board that the salary lines were tracking at 39%, which is concerning when there is a 42% of the year remaining. However, there are 38% of payrolls remaining, so payroll is on track. She said that in reviewing the lines she realized that an ed tech is being billed to the wrong line. She pointed out to the board where the overage was, and where it should be billed to, and said that would be corrected in the morning by reallocating approximately \$14,000 in salaries, social security, and workers comp.

2. District Updates

- a. 5th Grade Maine Maritime Boat Building - Mrs. Thompson said she wished to let the board know that each 5th grade class has now had a chance to have a morning at the boat shop to re-engage with boat building. She said she was pleased with how well they handled the responsibility and they are excited to be near completion of their stools. She thanked the board for giving them the chance to return. She said she would continue to monitor conditions week by week to ensure the situation is as safe as being at school is.
- b. Exxon Mobil Grant - Mrs. Thompson said that she would once again like to thank New Meadows Market, for awarding the West Bath School this year's Exxon Mobil Grant - a 500 dollar grant to be used in support of math and science. She said she is grateful for their continued support of the school.
- c. 5th Grade Math Meet - Mrs. Thompson reported that the 5th grade mathletes participated in their second virtual math meet at the end of last week. She said she would like to give special recognition to Anderson Brown for placing in 2nd place, for the second meet in a row, with a nearly perfect score.
- d. PreK for Next Year - Mrs. Thompson said she would like to update the board on thoughts about pre-k for next year. She said the intention had been to bring Pre-k into the building next year, and reduce the programs with the community partners. However, as planning for next year begins to get underway, it has become apparent that for now the school needs to plan for the same conditions and safety rules that are in place now. She said, given that, she would like to keep the pre-k programs in place at the Y and Head Start for another year, as their programs are up and running and working. She explained that additionally the incoming kindergarten class is expected to be large and there are already 16 students on the list and it's only February 10th. Mrs. Thompson said that if she needs to separate the class into two groups to allow for 6 foot spacing, she would like to retain that option, which would be lost if PreK was brought into the building. Both the Y and head start have agreed to keep our current programs in place for another year, and MOUs are in process.

Old Business

1. In-Person Instruction Updates

Mrs. Thompson reported that she added this item onto the agenda to continue to give the board a space to discuss concerns or other thoughts around in-person instruction. She said that all continues to go very well, and the school is feeling confident that all of the safety procedures are working well at school. She said that families, students, and faculty continue to do an amazing job outside of school to keep the community healthy.

She said that she had received a question about measuring student loss from not having in-person instruction last spring. Mrs. Thompson said that the school had recently completed their winter testing window with the NWEAs, and now are completing data analysis for new goal setting and eligibility for response to intervention or other services. She said that they aren't using their typical data protocol for identifying students who might be at risk solely, and are in addition breaking up data sets to identify students who might have experienced academic loss from last spring. This is determined by reviewing winter scores from 2020, fall scores from 2020 and winter 2021 scores and identifying students who might experienced academic lost and not have regained the loss. She said that looking through data sets with this additional lens, helps to ensure that any student who needs an extra boost will be noticed for support for RTI rather than those who would qualify for RTI through test scores alone. She said she wanted to let the board know the process they were using for identify student need and supports. Ms. Powers asked a clarifying question about how students would be identified for support. Mrs. Thompson said that while students were tested in the fall for formative information and goal setting, the focus of the fall was less on their test scores and more on the social emotional support that was needed to reenter school during the pandemic. Now, students who show they had loss, and had not yet regained that loss by their winter scores, will be highlighted for potential extra support. Mrs. Randall said she appreciated the update.

Mr. Hinds asked if she had a sense how many schools or districts are able to be in school 5 days per week for full time instruction. Mrs. Thompson said MSMA had just surveyed superintendents that day to find out how many were in person full time, and she will share that information when it comes back out. She said that the schools that are mostly able to be in person full time are in the small communities and at the elementary level.

2. Board Goals

Mr. Hinds read the current draft of the board goals. He asked the board if it incorporated the thoughts that were discussed in the prior month. Ms. Powers asked for background information on the final goal. Mr. Hinds said that it was a goal that the board had in a past, and the policy committee did not get a sense from the board that it should be removed. The bullet points below it were removed as they were too specific. Ms. Powers said she liked the others and they encapsulated the board's conversation. Mrs. Jungbluth asked about the emergency management goal in the prior year, and wondered why that was removed. Mr. Hinds said that has been ongoing and felt that it was accomplished, and tested by being able to be open 5 days per week this year. It will continue to be a focus of the superintendent, but does not need to be a board goal. Ms. Powers said that the board had also talked about the CARES funds, and wondered if something should be considered in the goals about using those funds. Mrs. Thompson said rather than being specific to CARES funds, maybe there should be something about utilizing grant funds to support the work of the school. She said that when she looks at number 4 about the

wellbeing of the school, she reads that as the fiscal wellbeing as well. Mrs. Thompson said that she plans to meet with the facilities committee to go through the projects needed for the building and determine what can be accomplished with the grant funds. Ms. Powers said that she was fine with the interpretation of the wellbeing including the fiscal well being.

Mrs. Randall made a motion to approve the board goals. Mrs. Whorff seconded the motion. Roll call vote (5-0).

3. Budget Calendar

Mr. Hinds shared the budget calendar with the board. He made a motion to approve the calendar. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion. Roll call vote (5-0).

New Business

1. Personal Items

a. Resignation of Wendy Morton - Food Service Assistant (15 hours per week)

Mrs. Thompson shared the resignation of Wendy Morton effective at the end of the school year. Mr. Hinds accepted her resignation, and wished her well in retirement.

2. Grant Authority to Negotiation Committee to Negotiate Collective Bargaining Agreements

Mr. Hinds said that the time has come for negotiating contracts, and he would like to seek the authority to have the negotiation committee begin that process and negotiate on the board's behalf. Mrs. Randall made a motion, and Mrs. Whorff seconded the motion. Roll call vote (5-0).

3. First Reading of Board Policies

a. First Reading of Policy GBP - Earned Paid Leave

b. First Reading of Procedure GBP-R - Earned Paid Leave Procedure

Mrs. Randall summarized the policy and procedure, saying that complying with the new law went into effect on January 1, and this policy and procedure would be in place for those who are not members of a bargaining unit. The board members asked questions about how the policy and procedures would work for those who are members of a bargaining unit, and it was explained that those decisions would need to be made through the contract negotiation process.

4. School Board of Directors Budget Priorities Discussion

Mr. Hinds asked if the board had priorities that they would like to discuss. Mrs. Randall said that she wanted to just say that last year the board entered the budget season in the midst of the initial wave where there was a lot of confusion about how to proceed. The board was able to create a flat budget. She said the board creates a budget based on need, not on wants, and she does not want to be too conservative or make too many cuts because that was the approach last year. Mrs. Jungbluth asked if there were priorities that were put on hold last year. Mr. Hinds responded that all capital improvement projects had been put on hold, and the board did not take a stipend. Mrs. Randall mentioned that the board had wanted to increase some positions, but did not consider those. Mrs. Thompson explained the board looked at every line carefully, and zeroed it out where possible, and

that they dipped into the fund balance to try to zero things out, which will impact the amount available for this year. Mrs. Randall said that it is really time to look at the school's parking lot. Mr. Hinds said each year the board starts by looking at what is needed, and trying to build a responsible budget that is supportive of our educational goals but understanding the impact it puts on the tax payers. He said he wanted to continue that practice, but he wants to also make sure that the school can continue to offer 5 days per week of in person instruction, and that the school has the resources it needs to be able to do so. He said it has been a challenging time for everyone, but especially for children. Ms. Powers said she agreed with Mr. Hinds. She said she did not want to put things on the back burner for too long as it ends up being more costly in the long run, but the board also needs to consider what the financial outlook might be for the town, as the pandemic has likely impacted people more than the board even realizes, and a balance needs to be found.

Mrs. Thompson shared the priorities of the school staff for the budget season, explaining that their hopes for the school include maintaining small class size and staff, continuing with our EL credentialing and curriculum, further enhancing adventure based programming, and focusing on the safety and COVID upgrades that are necessary for the facility. Mrs. Thompson said that at this point they need to plan for status quo for physical distancing.

Ms. Powers asked if there was a need for technology, or extra programming this summer? Mrs. Thompson said that there is a technology plan that the school follows for upgrades on a cycle. She said she would be meeting with Mr. Bowdish to see if the purchases made for COVID instruction alter the technology schedule at all. He is also working with staff to identify software purchases for the next year, and determine what software is yielding the most success. She said that Summer STEM will be offered again, likely remotely, for summer programming. She said she had not considered after school programming, but it could be discussed. She said that one hesitancy she has with after-school programming is not wanting to work against the cohorting that they do all day long.

Mrs. Randall asked if the timeline for the next round of funding matches up with the budget process. Mrs. Thompson said that all they board should work with are the knowns. If something more comes to the district, then that is an added benefit. Mr. Hinds said that originally the funds could not be used for replacing items, just supplementing. He asked if the rules were the same. Mrs. Thompson said they are, and that the focus should be on what is needed for being able to support the school due to COVID, and also what has long-term benefits for the school.

Public Comments

There were no public comments. Mr. Hinds reminded the public the procedures for making a public comment.

Set Next Meeting Dates and Locations

1. March 3 at 4:30 PM (held remotely) - Special Meeting of the School Board of Directors - First Reading of the school budget

Executive Session

Mr. Hinds made a motion at 5:24 PM to enter into an executive session pursuant to Title 1, Chapter 13, Section 405,6,D. of the M.R.S.A. for the purpose of labor contract discussions between a public employer and its negotiators. Mrs. Randall seconded that motion. Roll call vote (5-0).

Return to Public Session

The board returned to public session at 6:05 PM.

Adjourn

Mrs. Randall made a motion to adjourn at 6:05 PM. Mrs. Whorff 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