

West Bath School Administrative Unit

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

March 3, 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.

Executive Session:

Mr. Hinds made a motion at 4:32 PM to enter into an executive session pursuant to Title 1, Chapter 13, Section 405,6,A. of the M.R.S.A. for the purpose of discussing personnel issues. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion. Roll call vote (5-0).

Return to Public Session:

The board returned to regular session at 5:08 PM.

Comments from the Chair:

None

Adjustments to Agenda:

None

Public Comments:

None

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

New Business

1. First Reading of the School Budget

Mrs. Thompson provided the first reading of the school budget. She explained that there were some unknowns that she was working with. Both associations are in the process of negotiating their next contracts, and therefore exact salary increases are not known. She also said that the school audit has not yet been completed, and so the undesignated fund balance is an estimate. Additionally, she said that the carryforward from the current year is also an estimate, and as the board moves through the budget process, that may need to be reconsidered.

She explained that the budget really is a status quo budget, and increases represent increases to salary and benefits, but there's no increase to staffing. She mentioned that there are some increases to workers comp, retirement, and unemployment to better align to tracking expenditures in the current budget.

Mrs. Thompson walked through the budget highlighting where there are changes to the budget. She explained that there is a decrease in salaries/professional on page 1, and that decrease is because 1/2 of the instructional strategist has been moved to the resource class placement. She explained that this allows for the position to be eligible for special education reimbursement. In the areas of tuition, she explained that she has currently budgeted for current enrollment, plus 2 extra students at each level, and a 3% increase. On page 4, decreases for the computer leases and supplies instructional are due to a new contract for a 4 year teacher computer lease which is a lower cost, and no need for Chromebook replacements due to recent purchases with COVID funds. The decrease in student assessment is due to a planned reimbursement from the state, as they will be reimbursing districts for grades 3-5 NWEA testing as part of the new state testing model. There were no other significant changes in the budget.

The first reading had a 1.87% increase to the overall budget from the prior year, and a 4.41% increase to the local contribution.

Mr. Hinds said that this year the board is moving from a town meeting to a referendum vote, and therefore the timeframe for the board to work with the budget is smaller, which makes some of the estimates trickier to make. There's a longer period of time to get through to the end of the year. Mr. Hinds asked what the final vote looks like. Mrs. Thompson said that she would have to look back at the rules that were enacted last year due the pandemic. Her understanding is that she pulls out food service, and then it is one vote on the bottom line. She said that they will also need to have a vote on the ballot validation referendum, as this is the third year since that last vote.

Mr. Hinds said that now the process is now that the superintendent has presented a budget, this is the board's budget to work with and adopt. He explained that school budgets are complicated by nature, the format is mandated, and it can be overwhelming.

Ms. Powers asked if staffing would be maintained. Mrs. Thompson responded that the plan maintains all staff. While two 5th grades are being exited, there are 14 confirmed

students in kindergarten, and there's a very large current kindergarten class. Given the physical distancing rules, she said she is hesitant to make staff reductions, and then end up needing two kindergartens or two first grades. Ms. Powers asked if there were increases to those classes if they would need to be broken into two classes because of the physical distancing rules. Mrs. Thompson responded affirmatively, or she would need to look at a hybrid model.

Mr. Hinds asked if PreK needs to be brought in. Mrs. Thompson said that there's not a date. When there was opportunity she wanted to bring them in to be able to create a more cohesive school unit, to have access to specials, and to work with the older children, but it does not make sense right now.

Mrs. Randall said that this budget is reasonable especially for a first pass. She said she also wanted to point out that there was not an increase last year, so it makes this increase look more reasonable.

Mr. Hinds made a motion to increase article 8 by \$4,000 and article 9 by \$2,000 and to request authority to negotiate. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion. Roll call vote (5-0).

Mr. Hinds said that he looked forward to working with the board and the budget advisory committee to work this budget through to completion.

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 10 at 4:30 PM (held remotely) - School Board of Directors Budget Workshop
2. March 10th following the workshop (held remotely) - School Board of Directors Budget Meeting
3. March 11th at 7 PM - Joint Workshop of the Board of Directors/BAC (held remotely) - This workshop may change to 6 PM.
4. March 17th at 4:30 PM (held remotely) - Regular Meeting of the School Board of Directors

Adjourn

Mrs. Randall made a motion to adjourn at 6:06 PM. Ms. Powers seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote (5-0).

Submitted by,



Emily Thompson