

## **West Bath School Administrative Unit**

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

June 23, 2021 at 4:00 PM (Remote Meeting)

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

**Members Absent:** Joanne Powers

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

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

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

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

Mr. Hinds thanked the board for the flexibility with meeting time. He told the board that in their packet was a copy of an article from the Bangor Daily News. He explained that he, Mrs. Randall, and Mrs. Thompson, had met with the reporter to highlight some of the challenges of being a minimum receiver community. He said that as discussed at the last meeting, they had also met with Representative McCreight and Senator Vitelli to discuss the budget process and discuss the challenges that West Bath has a minimum receiver, especially in regards to mandates such as tuition rates, minimum teacher pay, and earned paid leave with no additional subsidy. He said it was a good conversation, and he believes they will continue to advocate for West Bath. He said that it is an uphill climb, and there's not a lot of motivation to change the funding formula because it works for most communities, but that the board will continue to speak up and advocate for West Bath and other minimum receivers.

#### **Approve/Amend Minutes of 5/19/21**

Mrs. Randall made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Mrs. Whorff 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.

Mrs. Jungbluth asked if this was the appropriate time for her to discuss items she wished to discuss. Mr. Hinds said she could, but that no action could be taken that is not on the agenda as the public would not be aware that the item was being discussed. She said she just wanted to be sure she understood the protocol. Mr. Hinds said that between meetings if she would like to have items on the agenda, to notify him or Mrs. Thompson to put items on the agenda. Mrs. Thompson also stated that when she sends out the agenda, she reminds board members to let her know if they have any questions or would like any additions or adjustments made to the agenda, and that is also an appropriate time to add items she would like to have discussed.

### **Committee Reports:**

1. Policy Committee - Mr. Hinds reported that the committee paused at the end of the last month, to allow for focus to be on the close of school, and that meetings will resume in July to work through required policies. Mrs. Randall added that the governor has recently signed several bills into law, and the group will need to go through those to ensure that there's no policy changes that will be required.
2. Facilities Committee - Mrs. Thompson said the group had met that day, after a hiatus. They reviewed the most recent work from the past two years, and highlighted the work that was accomplished this school year with COVID funding. They reviewed the last facilities planning document, discussed priorities for the upcoming ventilation work and how to best use COVID funding for that work. They've approved the superintendent's recommendation for work, which will be discussed later in the agenda.

The team set some additional priorities for consideration, revisited the concept of the revolving renovation application process that was discussed just prior to the pandemic, and set meeting times for the rest of the year. The group will reconvene in July for a building walk-through.

The committee also discussed that as the system moves forward into a new fiscal year, they need to be mindful to not remove facilities items from the budget during the budget process, as playing catch up can be more difficulty than maintaining items all along.

3. Finance Committee
  - a. Payroll Warrants - Mr. Hinds reported that he had signed payroll on 5/24, 6/7, and 6/21.
  - b. AP Warrants - Mr. Hinds stated that he and Mrs. Randall signed the AP on 6/2 and 6/16.

### **Superintendent's Report**

1. Financial Report
  - a. Mrs. Thompson reported that with just a few days left of the year remaining, the budget document says there is 10.24% of our budget remaining. With the carryover allocated for the next budget removed, there is 6% of our budget remaining, with still one more AP warrant to go, plus any bills that come in July that get reallocated back to the current year by the auditor. She said that they've worked really hard this spring to make sure that funds that need not be spent, were

not, and expenses that could be billed to grants were billed to grants. This sets the school system up well to have at least the \$150,000 for carry forward for the 22-23 budget to remain consistent as the board had planned. She said that she was pleased with the fiscal management this year.

She noted that in the current document, retirement, unemployment, and social security are consistently overextended. These are areas the board increased in the next fiscal year. She also pointed out that on page 8, technology is overspent due to a health insurance change that was made after the budget was created and a bill for contracted services for the student information system. She said that while this account line is overdrawn the cost center 07 is not and there will not be a need to transfer funds. She also pointed out that on pages 11 and 12 in the office of the principal, the cost center is 1% overspent again due to increases in retirement, unemployment, and social security. She said that while the funds could be reallocated to system administration, this is an area that can easily be covered by the 5% cost center transfer. She said she would report out on the final budget document after the auditors have made their adjustments.

## 2. District Updates

Mrs. Thompson commented that the end of the year brought about a great sense of normalcy.

- a. Talent Show - She explained that the talent show was held outside, and due to recent changes in the CDC guidelines, allowed for everyone to gather in person schoolwide for the first time since March 2020. She commented that while they were sitting cohorted, they were all together, and she didn't think anyone realized how much they needed that moment of being together until we were able to be. She said the talent show was adorable, and was recorded and posted on the school's Facebook page for families to view. She thanked the students who performed, and Miss Marco and Mrs. Donovan for organizing and hosting.
- b. 5th Grade Boat Launch - Mrs. Thompson explained that the boat launch was not an event that was scheduled to be able to happen, but again once the outside distancing rules changed and students could be within 3 feet of one another outside, it became possible. She said that students and boat shop volunteers worked really hard to get the boats finished, the weather somewhat cooperated, and the 5th graders launched their boats, despite windy conditions. She said that with the wind, rowing was a challenge, but with Mrs. Jarvis' help from a kayak, and Kurt's help from the dock, all students had a chance to get out into a boat and experience it. She thanked Kurt, Mrs. Jarvis, Ms. Goulet, Mrs. Newton for making this year's boat building program a great success, despite the pandemic, and Nick Randall and the West Bath Fire Department for the support with the rescue boat, just in case it was needed.
- c. 5th Grade Step Up - On June 14th, the 5th grade step up day was held, outside, with the full school and families. Mrs. Thompson said that while there were some challenges with set up and the sound system, being able to see families on school grounds for the first time in 15 months was extraordinary and meaningful. She said she would once again like to congratulate West Bath School's 23 5th grade students and their families, and wish them all the best as they move onto their middle school experiences.

- d. Kindergarten Screening - Mrs. Thompson explained that kindergarten screening was held on the 15th and 16th, in person and outside, for incoming kindergarten students. Where in typically years the staff would have met them several times throughout the winter and spring as part of the school's Ready, Set, Go program, this was the first time staff had met most of them. She said that at this time, there are 17 kindergarten students enrolled, and the school is planning on having two smaller sized classes to help to make sure that they are appropriately meeting the needs of this group of students.

Mr. Hinds thanked the staff for pulling together the end of year events.

## **Old Business**

1. In-Person Instruction Updates

Mrs. Thompson said she was incredibly proud that West Bath began the year in person, 5 days a week, and made it through the full school year. This was a result of strong planning and preparation last summer, and the commitment of the staff, students, and community in regards to following protocols and procedures. She expressed her gratitude. She said that the CPT will meet later in the summer to review the newest set of guidance that will be released after June 30th, to start to make the decision making process for the next school year. She explained that as of July 1, with the ending of the state of emergency, the DOE/CDC requirements for in-person instruction become recommendations. The CPT is going to have to have some hard conversations regarding how to move forward for next year, particularly in regards to masking and distancing recommendations. She said that CPT will also need to tackle the concept of pooled testing, and get a sense of whether or not this is something our community would like to participate in. The conversations will begin in mid July once the new guidance is released.

Mrs. Jungbluth asked if pooled testing was a requirement or an option, and if the school participates, would that lift some of the requirements? Mrs. Thompson said that things have changed so much and so frequently this spring that even though the board met three weeks ago and discussed it, the guidance is already different. Three weeks ago it was presented as an option for reducing distancing requirements if 30% of the non-vaccinated school population participated. But now with the end of the state of emergency executive order, all of the requirements become recommendations, and the CPT will need to determine what the best path forward is for the school community. Mrs. Jungbluth asked how pooled testing get paid for and administered. Mrs. Thompson said that the overall program is state funded, which comes from a portion of the federal funds. The school had to commit to an application fee. The students would swab themselves. Then there is a back-up Binax Now process that needs to be followed if there is a positive result. Mrs. Jungbluth asked if the school would still be separated by cohorts, and if there is a positive case if the whole school would need to be shut down. She said that with only 30% of the school participating, it feels risky, when previously the groups were cohorted. Mrs. Thompson said that this is where the change in guidance needs to be discussed and decision made regarding how it looks for West Bath School. She said that the new guidance has not yet been released and so she could not speak to what things would look like in the fall at this time.

## 2. Revision of the Kitchen Assistant Job Description

Mrs. Thompson said that in the board packet they have a copy of the original job description, and can see the areas that are highlighted to show the proposed changes to the job description. She explained that this is a position that needs to be hired for, so she is taking the opportunity to revise the structure of the kitchen, to make this position a kitchen manager position to provide more daily oversight to the kitchen and school cook, and to fulfill some of the paperwork and reporting duties that were previously taking place in her office. She said that the new position was better aligned with the direction and focus of the school, and of the priorities of the wellness committee, such as choice in menus, offering variety and moving away from processed foods and working with farm-to-table options. She walked through the changes to the position.

Mrs. Jungbluth asked if the position was a structural change in regards to the organization of the kitchen, meaning instead of hiring a kitchen assistant, she would be looking for someone who has more experience and is able to manage the kitchen? Mrs. Thompson said management and supervision of the cook, as it is hard for her to be in the kitchen through the day to oversee the kitchen. Mrs. Jungbluth said that she noticed that there are changes to the school cook position. She asked if there was an opening there. Mrs. Thompson said that there is not an opening, she restructured the position to work in tandem with the kitchen manager, to make the kitchen operations more inline with the goals of the school. Mrs. Jungbluth said that she thought it looked really great. She questioned the use of high-quality as a descriptor because that seems subjective. She said her main question was about the change in structure but that has been answered. Mrs. Thompson reiterated that the prior set up did not have a clear decision making process, so these changes also make that more clear. Mrs. Jungbluth asked if she hoped that the candidate would come in with menu planning? Mrs. Thompson said that the goal would be to have freshly made foods rather than processed foods, and will be working towards farm-to-table. If she is not able to hire someone with that experience, they will hire someone with the ability to learn those requirements. She said that the Department of Education has strong resources for supporting food service. She said that during the pandemic she attended weekly meetings of every department because she covers them all currently, and that school nutrition was the most well-organized of all of the Departments. She said getting the right person on board is the priority, and if they do not have all the skills then they will be set up with training to learn them. Mrs. Jungbluth asked when she would need to have this position on board. Mrs. Thompson explained that the posting currently runs through July 2nd. If they do not find the right candidate initially, they'll repost. She said that she'd like to have someone hired by mid-August. She said that this sounds like a great goal and something the school could be proud of if all of the goals are implemented.

Mrs. Randall said that she appreciated the wellness focus. It is another example of how the school as a community is moving in that direction. She said she also appreciated how it is taking some of the management positions off of Mrs. Thompson's responsibilities because as has been seen over the past year the small things that have been added are accumulating so anything that can be shifted she would support.

Mrs. Randall made a motion to approve the job description as presented. Mrs. Hinds seconded the motion. Roll call vote (4-0).

### 3. Revision of School Cook Job Description

Mrs. Thompson said that she had brought this job description forward because the changes to the kitchen structure and the evolution of the kitchen manager position necessitated changes to the school cook role. She said that this position is not vacant, and that she has already discussed the potential changes with the person in that role. She highlighted some of the changes in regards to wellness and a focus on daily scratch changes, along with hierarchical changes, a plan for left-over food, and a focus on innovative ways to encourage participation. Mrs. Thompson stated that again they would be running the program through the Summer Food Service waiver, so reimbursement is based on the number of students participating. She said that they would obviously like to be putting forward meals that encourage as many students as possible to eat on a daily basis.

Mrs. Jungbluth asked if Mrs. Thompson was familiar with [healthyschoolrecipes.com](http://healthyschoolrecipes.com). Mrs. Thompson said that she was. Mrs. Jungbluth said that this all sounds great and that she would be happy to help if needed. Some of the things that she's learned is that if there is more marketing done for families, like posting a recipe within the newsletter so that children who like it can make it at home and families can see that the school is not just reheating cheese sauce. This could be a way to engage parents and encourage participation.

Mrs. Randall made a motion to approve the job description as presented. Mrs. Hinds seconded it. Roll call vote (4-0).

## **New Business**

### 1. Facilities/ESSER Funding Preliminary Plan

Mrs. Thompson shared the document that the facilities plan had approved that morning, outlining the priorities for ventilation projects including COVID funds. These included 2 unit ventilators, an ERV unit, a gym fan replacement, an office ERV controller, and touchless faucets and toilet upgrades. She explained each project, why it was determined to be a priority, and discussed the plan for funding. Mrs. Thompson said that after these projects, she projected that she would still have about 69,000 that could be allocated to facilities projects if they fit into COVID requirements, but that the group was not ready to identify those projects at this time.

Mr. Hinds said that everyone will appreciate the changes to the gym ventilation. Mrs. Jungbluth asked for clarification about funding, noting that the paperwork identified \$103,000 for current projects, and another 70,000 for project projects? She asked if that was right. Mrs. Thompson said that once known costs are removed, she estimated that she had about \$70,000 remaining in COVID funds that could be applied to facilities projects. She explained that the committee has a long list of projects, and today they worked on moving things around and reprioritizing projects and identifying what could qualify as COVID paid projects and to recreate a multi-year plan. But at this time, they were not ready to identify how to spend the remaining funds, and this will remain a work in progress once the group identifies the next set of priorities. Mr. Hinds said that a number of items that are on the priority list have been priorities for many years, and they just haven't had the funding to make it happen. Mrs. Jungbluth asked if most would be

paid through ESSER funds or COVID funds. Mrs. Thompson said that all the projects would be paid through COVID funding and that there would be no taxpayer cost. She explained that ESSER funds are COVID funds, there are just several different grant names to each of the forms of COVID funding. Mrs. Jungbluth asked if there was a risk that the funds would not arrive, and if it was possible by year 3 that funds would not be available. Mrs. Thompson said that these funds funnel like they would for ESEA funds. An application is created, it is approved, funds are spent, and then reimbursement is requested. If the application is approved, and the funds are being spent as written in the application, the funds will be reimbursed. She also explained that the funds are available to be spent for 3 years, and the outline of how she has split it into year 1, year 2, year 3 is to help to ensure that other unexpected costs can be covered in these three years, as this will likely be the last set of funds provided to schools.

Mr. Hinds made a motion to approve the preliminary ESSER funding plan as presented. It was seconded by Mrs. Whorff. Roll call vote (4-0).

2. Confirmation of Audit Services

Mr. Hinds said that his partner has recently accepted a job working with the auditors, and while her role will not have any overlap with the school system, in line with board policy BCB he will not participate in this conversation and abstain from voting, and asked Mrs. Randall to facilitate this agenda item. He said that while he did not feel there is a conflict of interest, it could appear that there is and he does not want to muddy those waters so will step away from this conversation.

Mrs. Randall said that this agenda item is annual maintenance item to say that we will contract an auditor to complete the school system's audit. She said that this firm has completed the district's audit since the formation of the SAU and they also conduct the audit for the town. This agenda item says that we will continue to contract with this auditor for this year as well.

There was no discussion.

Mrs. Jungbluth made a motion to confirm the audit services. Mrs. Whorff seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion. Roll call vote (3-0, 1 abstention).

3. Request to Provide Authority to the Superintendent to Transfer up to 5% of Funds Within the 2020-2021 School Budget

Mrs. Thompson said that the board's current warrant allows for more than 5%, but that the law allows for up to 5% to be moved without town meeting approval if that was not in the warrant. She said that school budgets have cost centers, and you can not overexpend a cost center. She said you could have lines overdrawn within a cost center, such as the technology line that she pointed out earlier, but that funds should remain within the cost center to cover those lines. She explained that this request allows for up to 5% of a cost center to be used to cover a cost center that is over expended, such as is the case with the school administration cost center which is overexpended by 1%. Mr. Hinds clarified, the board is not spending anything more, it is just an administrative accounting adjustment so that it balances. Mrs. Jungbluth asked that if the board is over by 1% why is 5% being

moved. Mrs. Thompson said that the authority is to transfer up to 5% but that only the amount that is needed will be transferred during the audit process. She explained that 1% of the cost center is about \$2,000.

Mrs. Whorff made a motion to approve the request to provide authority to the superintendent to transfer up to 5% of funds within the 2020-2021 school budget. Mr. Hinds seconded that motion. Roll call vote (4-0).

#### 4. Set 2021-2022 Board Meeting Dates and Times

Mr. Hinds walked through the proposed calendar for monthly meetings, stating that July's meeting would be remote at 4:30, and then beginning in August the board would be returning to in-person meetings. He suggested that in-person meetings be held at 6 PM rather than 6:30. He asked the board if there were any conflicts. Mrs. Jungbluth asked if the February meeting conflicted with February break, and Mrs. Thompson confirmed that it does not. Mrs. Jungbluth said she had added the meetings to Google calendar so that she could plan ahead.

Mr. Hinds made a motion to approve as presented. Mrs. Whorff seconded the motion. Roll call vote (4-0).

### **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. July 21st at 4:30 PM - School Board of Directors Meeting (held remotely)

### **Adjourn**

Mr. Hinds made a motion to adjourn at 4:59 PM. Mrs. Whorff seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote (4-0).

Submitted by,



Emily Thompson