

West Bath School Administrative Unit

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

July 21, 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, and explained that as long as COVID proceeds as expected, this would be the last remote meeting. He thanked the board for making remote meetings work. He thanked the citizens for their patience as the board learned a new platform. He said that in some ways public participation increased as more people were able to watch the live stream and participate that way.

Approve/Amend Minutes of 6/23/21

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

Ms. Powers said that she had a question from reading the minutes. She asked if there were 17 children enrolled if it was decided to divide those students up to make two classrooms, and if so, did that extra staff person come from the 5th grade? Mrs. Thompson said yes, that there are 18 students and when the budget was being prepared they had to make the decision on how to organize a large kindergarten class, without knowing what the distancing requirements were going to be. With two fifth grade classes exiting, there was a teacher who could be allocated to kindergarten. Ms. Powers asked if the small class size will continue, or if the group will be combined at some point? Mrs. Thompson said that she would anticipate that they will be combined as they age based on the class size policy. Mrs. Thompson reiterated that the real unknown at the time of decision making was around distancing requirements. She said that they had 15 students this year in kindergarten, and while the class was very successful, they had some challenges they wouldn't have had if the group was a bit smaller. Ms. Powers asked if the fifth grade teacher will teach kindergarten. Mrs. Thompson responded that that teacher

would stay at the 4/5 level, and a primary grade teacher will be moved to kindergarten for the year.

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 reported that the committee met and reviewed draft policies that are up for first reading later in the agenda.
2. Facilities Committee - Mrs. Thompson said the group had met on 6/23 and 7/6, and the minutes from the meeting were in the board's packet. On 7/6 the committee met primarily for the purpose of going through a building walkthrough, to be sure that new committee members had background on the work that has been done since 2015, an understanding of the current projects, and could see and ask questions about our current ventilation and heating systems. She said the committee took their time, and had detailed conversations.

She said that storage continues to be a topic of conversation. The group looked at the current sheds, and discussed placement of a new structure if it becomes necessary. There was also a fair amount of conversation around continuing with the flooring and shelving projects in our next budget phase. The committee identified that are distinct differences between the rooms that have had the work done and those that have not in terms of their cleanliness and appearance. Finally, they looked at the parking lot, and discussed rather than creating a new flow to parking lot, perhaps a better approach would be to see what can be done to make more parking available within our current configuration. Mrs. Thompson will meet with a local contractor to see what ideas he might have, and then the committee will determine 1) if they want to move forward, and 2) whether we need to put out an RFP.

Mrs. Randall commented that it was nice to do walk-through of the building, after not having been in it in a year and a half. She said that while the last two budget years have been tricky and difficult to navigate she feels that it's really easy to remove facilities projects from the budget and she would like to see them remain in the budget moving forward so the committee does not have to play catch up.

Also will give you the update that I met with our HVAC contractor last Thursday, and again today, to finalize the approved projects and timelines. There are supply issues, as we know, so all projects are going to need to be done in two phases, with most of the in-building work happening in August, and then a return in September.

Premium H2O is also scheduled for the touchless faucet and toilet upgrades, to reduce contact points.

Classrooms are emptied and have been scoured top to bottom - floors are ready to be waxed and polished. All annual summer maintenance and inspections have been scheduled or completed. Things are moving along. But with the supply chain issues, we will just have to be understanding that while the building will be ready to start school in September the areas we are working on improving will be works in progress for those first couple of weeks.

Ms. Powers asked for Mrs. Thompson to expand upon the concerns about the parking lot. She asked if it just needed to be resurfaced, or expanded in size. Mrs. Thompson said that she was preparing to have it relined this summer but that there has been a lot of conversation of the years about how challenging the parking lot is in terms of its size. This year with increased numbers of families dropping students off or picking them up, it's been even more of a challenge, although everyone has been very patient. The committee had conversation about whether they wanted to create a separate entrance or exit from the bus loop to ease traffic and congestion, but that she was feeling hesitant about giving up green space. The committee is discussing whether there are ways to reconfigure how parking is laid out right now to better support traffic flow as a first step, and that would happen before anything bigger is discussed as an option.

Ms. Powers asked if the playground had been a part of the facilities tour. Mrs. Thompson said it had not been, but they should add it. Mr. Hinds asked if the walkthrough brought about anything new that hasn't been discussed over the years. Mrs. Randall said that there was continued talk about storage, and making a new storage plan, and overall maintenance of outdoor spaces, but that mostly the walk reinforced where the focus of the committee has been and how important it is to stay on track. Mrs. Whorff said that it was really helpful for her to walk through the building as a new member of the committee and see the work that has been done, but also to better be able to understand all that is being talked about for upcoming work. She said that there are items that really do need to be addressed. Mrs. Randall added that the committee felt it would be valuable for all board members to take part in the walk through. Mrs. Whorff said that potentially inviting other town committee members to participate would be useful.

3. Finance Committee

- a. Payroll Warrants - Mr. Hinds reported that he had signed payroll on 7/2 and 7/19.
- b. AP Warrants - Mr. Hinds stated that he and Mrs. Randall signed the AP on 6/28 (20-21), 6/30 (21-22) and Mr. Hinds signed on 7/12 and Mrs. Randall on 7/14.

Superintendent's Report

1. Financial Report

- a. Mrs. Thompson stated that there is a new budget document in the board packet, and with 96% of the year remaining, 96.4% of the budget remains. She said there are instances where there are charges that will be moved back to the prior fiscal year by the auditors (such as in tuition) and that there's a holding place on page 6

in the stipends/curriculum line that will be moved to COVID funding or special education lines. There was nothing further to report.

2. District Updates

- a. ESY - Mrs. Thompson reported that they were in the 3rd of 4 weeks of ESY, this year being run by Kelsey Marco and Kaitlin Goulet, with the support of nurse Stacey Samuelson. She said it's a small, focused group this summer focusing on their individual skill improvement in math and reading. She said each time she had seen the children and staff, they are smiling, focused, and happy. She shared her appreciation for Miss Marco and Ms. Goulet for stepping up to reorganize and lead ESY this summer, Stacey Samuelson for handling the COVID protocols on a daily basis, and working with skills groups, and Patrick Bowdish for ongoing tech support each day.
- b. Summer Food Service Program - Mrs. Thompson stated that she realized she had overlooked informing the board that they had continued their food service program into the summer, so that students at ESY were able to access free breakfast while at school. She said that the program is open to any child ages 2-17.
- c. Quarter 4 Attendance - Mrs. Thompson shared the attendance report with the board, reporting on chronic absenteeism and truancy. She said that the overall average daily attendance for the year was 96.5%, which she was pleased with, especially given the circumstances.

Mrs. Jungbluth asked how many students were at ESY. Mrs. Thompson said that there are approximately 10 students. She asked if the Bath Y was providing the food this summer. Mrs. Thompson explained that the school provides it. Last year when the summer program ended the Y picked up the route, but that she has not heard that will happen this year.

Old Business

1. In-Person Instruction Updates

Mrs. Thompson said she knows people are eager to know what things will look like in the fall. The school has continued with the rules that were in place in the spring for ESY, including masks 3/foot distancing inside the building and on transportation, no masks/distancing when outside. She said that while she has been eager to begin planning for the fall, the guidance changed so frequently in those last few weeks, that she was really hesitant to pull the planning team together to use old information knowing the guidance was going to change.

She reported that last Thursday the state released it's guidance for the fall, which is included in the board packet for your information and stated that essentially, their guidance at this time is that they are going to follow the federal CDC guidance, and that guidance closely aligns with how we ended the last school year.

She reported that the Maine DOE highlighted that students are still required to mask when on school buses per US CDC order. They still strongly recommend masks and distancing when inside for unvaccinated populations. Schools are encouraged to monitor

the local health benchmarks to make determinations for our community and to use a multi layered approach of masking, distancing, screening, hand hygiene, staying home when sick, and following cleaning, disinfecting, ventilation protocols.

Mrs. Thompson expressed that that weekend the American Academy of Pediatrics also released their guidance and said that all people ages 2 and up should be masked while in schools this fall. She said, given that, it is highly likely that the federal CDC guidance will shift again. The planning team will dig into all of the documents, meet with the school pediatrician, connect with families, and set the preliminary plan for fall. She said that she had sent out a survey to families asking about their interest in participating in pooled testing. If WBS does have pooled testing in place, that may mean that the school can be more relaxed on other recommendations. This preliminary work will all be completed in the next three weeks.

Mrs. Thompson said that she wanted to make sure that board members saw that on July 29th at 8 AM, superintendents, school nurses, and school board members were invited to attend a webinar with Dr. Shah to discuss the recommendations.

Mr. Hinds reminded the board that when the group meets in August in person, they will need to be masked regardless of vaccination status, as the board had not yet removed that mitigation strategy.

Mrs. Jungbluth asked if the Bath School District had released any of their preliminary plans on masking at this time. Mrs. Thompson responded that they had made a statement regarding their summer programming, but where it is not her district, she could not predict what their plan would be for the fall. Mrs. Randall asked when the planning committee would be convened? Mrs. Thompson responded that they have received a packet similar to the board, and would begin meeting next week.

New Business

1. First Reading of Board Policies

a. First Reading of BED

Mrs. Randall explained that the committee had met after a long list of policy guidance had been released. She said that several of the policies did not apply to the district, and most were already in place, but that there were a few that needed board attention in response to legislative change. She explained that the need for BED coincides with the end of the state of emergency, and outlines the reason for remote attendance, rules for prior notification by the board, and describes the public comment process. Mrs. Jungbluth said that a member of the public asked if the meetings will continue to be live streamed once they return to in-person meetings? Mr. Hinds said that was discussed in policy committee a bit, and thought it should be discussed by the board, and it would depend on what technology the board has available to it. The way the policy is written it would only allow remote public participation if there's a member of the board participating remotely. Mrs. Thompson clarified that that does not apply to live streaming, only if they wanted to give public comment remotely. Mrs. Randall

said that prior to COVID the meetings were recorded and posted online within 24-48 hours, and that would continue if there was not a livestream option. Mrs. Jungbluth asked Mr. Hinds to elaborate on his statement about increased participation, as she was not seeing public comments. Mr. Hinds said that there's increased views on the recording. Where there used to be 4-5 views, now it is doubled or tripled. He said that there is value in livestreaming if the technology is there to support it. Mrs. Randall said that she is interested to see if more people come in person because they have had the opportunity to see what a board meeting looks like remotely first.

Mr. Hinds said that if there were no more comments on policy BED, it would come back in August for a second reading.

b. First Reading of BG

Mrs. Randall explained that this policy included a generic explanation that defines how policies relate to a school board.

c. First Reading of BG-R

Mrs. Randall said that she refers to this policy as the life cycle of a policy, outlining the process from drafting to approval by the board.

d. First Reading of ILA

Mrs. Randall said that the policy states that the board will have a student assessment system in place, which is.

e. First Reading of JIC

Mrs. Randall explained that this outlines the expectations for how students will conduct themselves. She said that a lot of this information is already in the handbook, and not unfamiliar.

f. First Reading of JK

Mrs. Randall explained that this defines and outlines what disciplinary procedures would look like and are aligned with operations. Mr. Hinds said again that it contains language from the handbook, it has just been moved to the policy. Ms. Powers commented that she felt some of the language is archaic and negative, and wondered how the policy committee felt about that. Mr. Hinds said that the that the committee had tried to shift some of the wording, but that some of it is required. Mrs. Thompson said she agreed, and that is why this policy hadn't come forth as part of the initial batch of required policies, but that to the extent possible, the committee had tried to shift the language so it focused less on discipline and more on reteaching. She said she did not feel that the title could be changed, as it is a required policy, but when they look at the code of conduct policy they will likely notice that that language has also been shifted to focus on code of character. Mrs. Randall commented that the committee did make changes to language to shift away from words such as obedience and compliance to try to instead capture the essence of West Bath School. She said the committee worked within the parameters they were given.

2. Annual Discussion of the Plan of Expenditures for Federal Funds

Mrs. Thompson provided the board with an outline of her plan for usage of Federal Funds.

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. August 18th at 6 PM - School Board of Directors Meeting at the West Bath School. Mr. Hinds reminded board members and viewers that in person participants will be required to wear a mask regardless of vaccination status, and asked for Mrs. Thompson to be sure that was written on the next agenda.

Adjourn

Mr. Hinds made a motion to adjourn at 5:28 PM. Mrs. Jungbluth 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 line extending to the right.

Emily Thompson