

## **West Bath School Administrative Unit**

### Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

September 15, 2021 at 6:00 PM

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

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Patrick Bowdish, David Hennessey, Madelyn Hennessey, Emily Thompson

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

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 PM by Keith Hinds. Attendance was taken. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

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

Mr. Hinds welcomed everyone to the meeting, and welcomed back students and staff to the new year. He commented that it appeared the school was off to a great start to the new year.

#### **Approve/Amend Minutes of 8/18/21**

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

Vote (5-0).

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

Mr. Hinds said that there is one potential adjustment to the agenda, the nomination of a half time special education teacher, pending the outcome of 10.3.1.

#### **Public Comments:**

Mr. Hennessey said he wanted to let the board know that the town is in the process of starting the comprehensive planning committee to revise the comprehensive plan. He asked for one member of the school board to volunteer to be a part of the committee.

#### **Committee Reports:**

1. Policy Committee - No update

2. Facilities Committee - Mrs. Thompson said that the committee had not met in September, as the meeting was scheduled for the first week of school, but would be resuming work in October to begin to organize the development of the facilities plan.

Mr. Hinds commented on how nice the outdoor classroom tents look in the yard and stated they were a great addition.

3. Finance Committee
  - a. Payroll Warrants - Mr. Hinds reported that he had signed payroll on 8/31 and 9/13.
  - b. AP Warrants - Mr. Hinds stated that he signed warrants on 9/1 and 9/14 and Mrs. Randall signed warrants on 9/1 and 9/15.

## **Superintendent's Report**

1. Financial Report
  - a. Mrs. Thompson reported that with 81% of the fiscal year remaining, 87% of the budget remains and lines are tracking as they should be.

Mr. Hennessey asked about the status of the COVID funding. Mrs. Thompson gave an overview of some of the maintenance and facilities projects, equipment and PPE purchases that have taken place with the COVID funding.

2. District Updates
  - a. Opening of School - Mrs. Thompson reported that it's been a smooth transition into the school year, even with many families who are new to West Bath School. She said that it almost feels as though staff and students had never left, as the children and staff quickly settled into routines and their classroom environments. She commented that student count is down 7 as 23 5th graders exited and 16 kindergarten students enrolled, but that class sizes felt just right given the pandemic conditions. She said that it has been nice to return to some of the pre-pandemic practices, such as going to the specialist's classroom, and moving through the hallways. She said they also been able to reinstitute team and teacher committee meetings, and the staff quickly realized how much the job embedded professional conversation and development was missed during the day. She reiterated that it's been a nice start to the year.
  - b. School Nutrition - Mrs. Thompson said that changes in school nutrition have contributed to that nice start. In just the first two weeks of school, the changes that have been made to our menu offerings towards more local food and scratch cooking, has been significant. The kitchen staff is working well together, and Mrs. Thompson said she was pleased with the outcome so far. She said that the numbers of students eating lunch per day has increased from about 50% to 70% so far. She thanked Mrs. Sutfin and Mrs. Labbe for all of their hard work.
  - c. Maine Maritime Fall Plan - Mrs. Thompson reported that she planned on moving forward with having the 5th graders begin the boat building program at the Maine Maritime Museum, using the same mitigation strategies as the prior year.
  - d. Chewonki - Mrs. Thompson said that the school was in the process of reworking the 5th grade Chewonki experience for this year to be day trip based rather than overnight based. She said that while Chewonki is beginning to bring schools back

for overnight experiences, the day trip option felt like a better fit at this time. She said that they are hoping to incorporate one longer day, so the students still have an evening camp fire, dinner, and owl experience, but we will not be doing an overnight. She said she was excited to be able to offer the program to the students, as the school continues to work to regain some of its traditions.

Mrs. Jungbluth asked for clarification with the school nutrition program. She said that she understood that if a school had more than 50% of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch there are other programs that schools could qualify for. She asked how the participation rate was at this time. Mrs. Thompson said that she has received a high volume of paperwork back, and that Mr. Bowdish had set up the online application as well, but that the percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch is below 50%. She said that all of last year's qualifications remain in place until October 1st, but she does not anticipate the school will reach the 50% threshold.

Mrs. Randall said that it was great that there have been so many changes in the school nutrition program in such a short amount of time. She said she would like to see something highlighting the local organizations that the school is sourcing ingredients from over the course of the school year.

## **Old Business**

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

Mrs. Thompson reported that the school is implementing the plan that was presented last month and so far things are running smoothly. She said the staff met that morning during late start to discuss some tweaks, but it's mostly details around logistics, and less about COVID mitigation. She explained that they are watching recess closely, as recess has been expanded to include larger groups of kids being able to play together, but there is still a need to contact trace if there's a case, and the school does not want to put themselves in a position of needing to quarantine large groups of students.

We are watching recess closely, as while we have expanded recess to include larger groups, we know we need to pay attention to contact tracing and want to be sure that we're not opening ourselves up to needing to quarantine large groups of students if there is a case.

She said the school is all set to begin the first round of pooled testing on Monday. Approximately 45% of the school community has signed up at this time, and there are enough people in each classroom cohort to make the testing a viable option. She said that she feels hopeful about this mitigation strategy, as students who are in a pooled testing program do not have to quarantine if they have a school exposure.

Mrs. Jungbluth said that she knew that there was some resistance to mask wearing in the community and asked if there are any restrictions or requirements, or medical prescriptions like shields, and whether that information is shared with families. Mrs. Thompson said that the school plan that families have says that a shield with an apron

can be substituted for a mask provided there is documentation from a medical provider to say that it was medically necessary. Mrs. Jungbluth asked if a student who had glasses that were fogging up would qualify for an exemption? Mrs. Thompson responded that that would not qualify, but that the school would certainly work with the family to help to find a mask for the child that would work more effectively.

## 2. Review of Board Policies

- a. DN - School Properties Disposition - Mrs. Randall gave an overview of policy DN. Mr. Hinds commented that the value threshold in the policy is \$500. Mrs. Randall made a motion to approve the policy as revised. Mrs. Jungbluth seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

## **New Business**

### 1. First Reading of Board Policies

Mrs. Randall provided an overview of the following policies:

- a. BIA - New Board Member Orientation
- b. BIB - Board Member Development Opportunities
- c. BIC - Board Member Freedom of Access Training
- d. IHBAI - Special Education Independent Evaluation
- e. IHBAK - Life-Sustaining Emergency Care
- f. JLCE - First Aid and Emergency Medical Care

Mrs. Powers asked about required trainings, saying that the trainings that she has to do for her school district are different than what her daughter's school does. Mrs. Thompson said that there is a set of required trainings that everyone needs to do, but that schools can certainly add more trainings based on the needs of their population. Mrs. Thompson commented as well that the policy committee discussed that it has been school practice to have some staff members certified in first aid and CPR and that JLCE is a good reminder of how important that is, even though that training is not a requirement. Mrs. Randall said that it's also a good reminder of how important full time nursing is in the school. Mrs. Jungbluth asked what the plan for nursing was going to be post-covid. Mrs. Thompson said that the concept of post-covid sounds lovely, but that she could not picture that situation yet. She commented that the school had made the decision to hire a full time nurse in the budget process prior to the pandemic, and how grateful she was that they had been prepared to move in that direction.

### 2. Personnel Item(s): Action

- a. Resignation - Sheryl Winchester, Special Education Teacher
  - i. Mrs. Thompson shared the resignation of Sheryl Winchester after 7 years of service. She has accepted a teaching position in her home community. Mr. Hinds accepted her resignation and wished her success.
- b. Resignation - Lisa Donovan, Office Manager



Mrs. Randall approved the nomination. It was seconded by Ms. Powers. Vote (5-0).

5. Sharing of MSBA Proposed Resolutions Packet

Mrs. Thompson shared the MSBA proposed resolution packet and explained the purpose of the packet and the process for providing feedback.

6. Appoint Local Delegate to MSBA Annual Delegate Assembly

Mr. Hinds stated that this year's delegate assembly would be held virtually on October 23rd and 9:30 AM. Mrs. Randall said that the board has had a lot of conversations about community involvement, and maybe being a part of these types of activities and networking would be beneficial. She volunteered to attend.

Mr. Hinds made a motion to nominate Mrs. Randall for the delegate assembly. Mrs. Jungbluth seconded the nomination. Vote (5-0).

### **Public Comments**

Mr. Hennessey asked if the school board has thought about how to move forward with the office manager position? Mr. Hinds said the position has been posted and that the position is complex and needs to be replaced. Mr. Hennessey said that his personal opinion was that this would be a good time to separate the role of secretary and financing and simplify the town's accounting process and have the tax collector fill the accounting portion of the role. Ms. Powers asked how the position was posted, as she wondered about how many candidates would have the qualifications that the school department would be seeking. Mrs. Thompson said that it was posted as the position is currently, but like with the special education position, she'd post, and see what skill set the applicants bring to the table. Mr. Hinds said that appreciated what Mr. Hennessey was saying and the position needs to be considered.

There was no emailed public comment.

### **Set Next Meeting Dates and Locations**

1. August 20th at 6 PM - School Board of Directors Meeting at the West Bath School.

### **Adjourn**

Mr. Hinds made a motion to adjourn at 7:01 PM. Ms. Powers seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote (5-0).

Submitted by,



Emily Thompson