

West Bath School Administrative Unit

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

December 15, 2021 at 6:00 PM

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

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Patrick Bowdish, Emily Thompson

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Mrs. Randall. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Comments from the Chair:

None

Approve/Amend Minutes of 11/17/21

Mr. Hinds made a motion to approve the minutes of 11/17/21. Mrs. Whorff seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

Adjustments to Agenda:

None

Public Comments:

None

Mrs. Randall reminded the public how to submit public comment while watching remotely.

Executive Session

Mrs. Randall made a motion 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 at 6:01 PM. Mr. Hinds seconded that motion. Vote (5-0).

Return to Regular Session

The board returned to regular session at 6:56 PM.

Committee Reports

1. Policy Committee - Mr. Hinds reported that the committee met two weeks prior, and provide an introduction to the new member regarding the process for how policy work is prioritized. The committee has first readings later in the agenda.
2. Facilities Committee - Mrs. Thompson reported that with new membership, the committee schedule had to be revamped, and the group would be meeting in the new year.
3. Finance Committee
 - a. Payroll Warrants - Mrs. Randall said that she had signed payroll warrants on 11/19 and Mr. Hinds had signed on 12/3.
 - b. AP Warrants - Mrs. Randall said that AP warrants were signed by Mr. Hinds, Mrs. Jungbluth, and Mrs. Whorff on 12/8 and by she and Mr. Hinds on 12/15.

Superintendent's Report

1. Financial Report -
 - a. Mrs. Thompson stated that with 50% of the year remaining, 67% of the budget still remains. She said that all lines were tracking appropriately. She reported that she had filed a request with the Department of Education for an extension for the fiscal audit, to allow the auditors more time to complete the process, as they are backlogged due to the pandemic.
2. District Updates -
 - a. Student-Led Conferences - Mrs. Thompson said that SLC had been held, and that the opportunity to connect with students and parents about student growth is an opportunity the school appreciates immensely. She thanked parents for their participation in the process.
 - b. Math Team - Mrs. Fuller has begun meeting with the 4th and 5th grade math team, and they've had their first remote meet. Mrs. Fuller reported that all students scored and placed and she was pleased with their individual progress and achievement with advanced mathematics.
 - c. Baseball grant - Mrs. Houghton, the school's PE teacher, has received an equipment grant from the Fun at Bat program. It included a large box of baseball equipment, access to online programming and curricula, and some text connections to help involve literacy in the curricula. Mrs. Thompson said that she was appreciative that Mrs. H. consistently finds ways to reach out to organizations and obtain equipment.
 - d. Cross Country Skiing - Mrs. Thompson reported that the 4th graders were fitted for cross country skis to use for the winter season. Mrs. Houghton has once again connected with Chuck Manville from Maine Youth Outdoor Sports Opportunities and he will be facilitating weekly cross country ski lesson this winter for West Bath students at no charge.
 - e. WinterKids Winter Games - Mrs. Thompson shared the school would once again be participating in the WinterKids Winter Games from January 17th to February 11th. The set up is slightly different this year, as they opened the activities and games up for every school to encourage involvement, but then created a competitive track for schools to compete in the games. Mrs. Thompson stated that

when West Bath did not apply initially, they reached out to the school and asked for the school's participation. She thanked Mrs. Houghton and Mrs. Cosgrove for taking the lead on this.

- f. Nutrition Guest Speaker - Mrs. Thompson reported that the week prior the 2nd grade class welcomed Lexie Jungbluth to school as a guest speaker, to teach about the amount of sugar in some common beverages. She said it was nice to have an expert re-enter our school walls and work with the students, and she appreciated her time and expertise.
- g. Little Elf Shop - Mrs. Thompson thanked Hannah Whitney, who is bringing the Little Elf Shop back to WBS after a 1 year hiatus. She said that in addition to collecting donations, Mrs. Whitney organized for the gym will be set up by volunteers on Friday afternoon, and classes of students will shop on Monday and Tuesday.

Old Business

1. In-Person Instruction Updates

Mrs. Thompson reported that the school currently we had 0 active cases, 13 recovered cases, 13 cumulative cases, and 0 students/staff in quarantine. She commented that the prior day, 100% of the students were present, in-person, which is rare even prior to the pandemic. She stated that all pools came back negative for the second week in a row.

She commented that while the CDC never opened an outbreak investigation here, nor declared WBS officially in outbreak status, as of yesterday, the school no longer meet the qualifications for having an outbreak, as there had not had a positive case in more than 2 weeks.

She said that once pools came back negative last week, she was able to lift the more restrictive procedures that she had put in place a few weeks prior. The school resumed having K-2 and 3-5 group recesses outside, have allowed masks to be optional when outside, and allowed for inside distancing to be 3-6 feet rather than 6+ feet (except while eating). Specials have moved back to their classroom spaces, and children are able to move around the building. It's been a relief to return to more normalcy even in an abnormal time. She said she would have the COVID dashboard the board requested up and running in the new year, but that in the meantime she had been providing a weekly update in the Friday family letter.

She reported that the second COVID vaccination clinic had been held the week prior and as of the day of the meeting 52% of students have had at least their 1st dose, and 73% of our students have either been vaccinated or are pool testing.

She stated that schools are expecting an update SOP, or standard operating procedure, from the CDC/DOE during winter break. She opened the floor for questions.

Mrs. Jungbluth said that her understanding that while there are standard operating procedures for COVID, there really aren't any operating procedures right now. She asked for clarification about that. Mrs. Thompson said that she's thinking about two different

things. She explained that last year the state provided a framework of mitigation strategies, and had requirements of all the strategies that schools must use. In addition, there is an SOP that comes from the Maine CDC which is a requirement of all the ways that schools must respond if there is a positive case. She said the response is non negotiable. She explained that what went away this year was the framework from the Department of Education, and that is why it appears there aren't mitigation rules this year, but what has not gone away this year is the response. She said it almost works out backwards, that you have to look at how to respond, and then determine what mitigation measures to put in place to help to minimize the possibility of a case.

Mrs. Powers asked again what new document is coming. Mrs. Thompson said that they will be receiving new standard operating procedures from the CDC for how to respond to a positive case. She said she does not know the contents of them specifically, but it sounds like the changes will be around quarantining rules and how to handle close contacts. She reiterated that this would be changes in how to respond, not necessarily changes in how to mitigate, but the school organizes things to look at what the response looks like and how to best set up to have as few students impacted as possible.

Mr. Hinds said that he continues to be impressed with the caliber of remote learning that West Bath students are provided when they are working remotely. Mrs. Randall said she would like to echo that, and thanked the staff, technology, administrative and nursing support. She said that she appreciated how everyone works together and that parents and students do not feel like they are left on an island. She said she thinks families feel very supported. Mrs. Jungbluth said that she believes this to be true whether or not it's a whole classroom learning remotely or one or two individuals who are remote.

2. Second Reading of Board Policies

a. KLG - Relations with Law Enforcement Authorities

Mr. Hinds said that there were no changes from the first reading. He made a motion to approve the policy. Mrs. Whorff seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

b. KLG-R - Relations with Law Enforcement Authorities (Procedures)

Mr. Hinds said again that there were no changes from the first reading. He made a motion to approve the policy. Mrs. Whorff seconded the motion. Roll call vote (5-0).

3. Discussion of New Board Information Packet

- c. Mrs. Randall said that this was an item that she requested to have put on the agenda. She said that when she had been on the policy committee, she had started drafting a New Board Information Packet to help new board members transition to the board. She had solicited feedback from other members, and wanted to share its status at this point and ask the board members how this process should continue. She said she would be happy to continue with this project, to leave it with the policy committee, or to have it be a group effort, but wanted the board to weigh in.

Mrs. Whorff said it was very helpful. It's overwhelming to come onto the board. Mrs. Jungbluth said she liked seeing accomplishments the board has had so new members know what has been done. She said she felt it should be owned by the

board, not put on the superintendent's plate. Mrs. Randall said her vision would be that it is a living document, and can be added to over time. Mrs. Thompson commented that the process of adding to or editing the document should be discussed as well, as it would be simple to have it on a google doc and just make edits to it as a group, but that would likely cross over the public meeting law rules. Mr. Hinds said that hyperlinking to policies would simplify things. Mrs. Randall said that that may be the best way to avoid electronic meetings is to send things to the policy committee so there was one point of contact.

4. Board Goals

The board reviewed the prior year's board goals. She said she felt that it would be wise to have some time to think these through, but asked that if the board decides to table it for another month that the board be prepared to bring items back to the table. Mr. Hinds said that the board needs to think about the staff and the 19-20 months of stress that they have all been put through, as well as families. He said he is concerned about the overall health and wellness of the staff, and the board has a responsibility to take care of the staff. Mrs. Powers said she agreed and that having fewer goals is better, as if there are too many or they are too specific then they don't get accomplished. She said that the pandemic is still with us and it is a goal that should be kept. Mrs. Randall agreed with having fewer is better, and that they should not be so specific that the board is pigeonholed and not be able to operate within it. She said having general goals would be better. She said she would like to think about how within a pandemic they can still foster community. In 20-21 there were so many unknowns but she'd like instead of having the pandemic on the front burner and everything else on the backburner, reverse it, while still keeping the health and wellness of everyone in mind. Mrs. Jungbluth said that she agreed that the pandemic is going to be part of the reality of 22 and 23 and the board needs to think about how to define the school and community with that in mind. Mrs. Powers said that she totally agrees, but the impact has created extra stress on people. She said that it creates extra stress, even though it is become normalized. Mr. Hinds also said that it is divisive, which carries another stress burden. He said he is thankful and appreciative that they do not have some contentious school board meetings. It is more than keeping staff safe, but what are the long-term implications for burnout and retentions, especially with the labor markets being what they are. Mrs. Jungbluth said that the restrictions seem to be easy for the students, but looking at the staff and all of the stress to keep children safe should be the priority. Mrs. Whorff said that the COVID goal could be adapted to be focused on children, staff, and community.

Mrs. Randall asked the board members to be thinking about goal statements, and to have those as items for the next meeting. Mrs. Powers said that with the cost of everything going up so we need to think about the financial impact of the budget.

Mrs. Jungbluth said that she may need to leave to pick up her child. Mrs. Thompson said that the board had policy BE, which actually states that for meetings beginning at 6:30, to have agenda items begin after 8 requires a vote of the board, and given the length of this meeting, it would be appropriate for the board to vote whether or not to continue to move forward with the agenda.

Mrs. Randall said that looking at what was remaining, she would like to make a motion to continue with the items on the agenda. Mrs. Whorff seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

Mr. Hinds made a motion to table board goals until the next meeting. Mrs. Whorff seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

Mrs. Jungbluth left the meeting at 7:35 PM.

New Business

1. First Reading of Board Policies

a. GBGB - Workplace Bullying

Mr. Hinds provided an overview of the policy, stating that this was a new required policy that came out of the last legislative session. He said that verbiage was added to work with the shared superintendent/principal position and the appeals process. It outlines that employees who are part of a collective bargaining unit need to follow that appeals process. He explained that the policy applies to students, parents and community members. Ms. Powers asked for reconsideration of the language of "employees are expected to report". Mrs. Thompson suggested that it be changed to "encouraged to".

2. Personal Items

Retirement of Robin Taylor (effective 6/30/22)

Mrs. Thompson shared the retirement announcement of Robin Taylor, after 36 years of teaching at West Bath School. Mr. Hinds said that he appreciated the letter that she sent, and the words she used to describe her colleagues and experience working at West Bath School. Mrs. Randall gave her sincere appreciation and gratitude to Mrs. Taylor and said she hopes that she enjoys every last bit of retirement.

3. Annual Certification of Superintendent Requirement

Mrs. Randall said she would like to make a motion to add an additional year to the existing superintendent contract, with deep appreciation for steady leadership. Mrs. Whorff seconded the motion. Vote (4-0).

Public Comments

None

Mrs. Randall reminded the public how they can submit public comment.

Set Next Meeting Dates and Locations

1. January 19th at 6 PM - Meeting of the West Bath School Board of Directors

Mrs. Randall shared that she would be traveling and unavailable. Mr. Hinds reported the

same. She said that the meeting could continue provided Mrs. Whorff was comfortable running the meeting and there were enough members present to make a quorum. Mrs. Thompson said she would reach out to Mrs. Jungbluth and ask about her availability.

Adjourn

Mrs. Randall made a motion to adjourn at 7:51 PM. Mr. Hinds seconded the motion. Vote (4-0).

Submitted by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emily Thompson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Emily Thompson