

West Bath School Administrative Unit

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

January 26, 2022 at 6:00 PM

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

Members Absent: Joanne Powers

Others Present: Patrick Bowdish, Emily Thompson

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 PM by Mrs. Randall. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Comments from the Chair:

Mrs. Randall welcomed everyone and thanked them for flexibility in rescheduling the meeting. She informed the board that they were in the process of trying to set up a workshop with MSMA before the next board meeting, and to email Mrs. Thompson within the next day about any evenings that could not work for that workshop.

Approve/Amend Minutes of 12/15/21

Mr. Hinds made a motion to approve the minutes of 12/15/21. Mrs. Whorff seconded the motion. Vote (4-0).

Adjustments to Agenda:

Item 7 - Staff Report - was removed from the agenda. It will be added to a future agenda.

Public Comments:

None

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

Committee Reports

1. Policy Committee - Mr. Hinds reported that the committee had met and they have first readings later in the agenda, and February and March meetings scheduled.
2. Facilities Committee - Mrs. Thompson reported The committee met earlier this month for the primary purpose of giving the new member the opportunity to see the building, review past work, and ask questions about building systems.

3. Finance Committee
 - a. Payroll Warrants - Mrs. Randall said that she had signed payroll warrants on 12/17, 1/3, and 1/14.
 - b. AP Warrants - Mrs. Randall said that AP warrants were signed by Mr. Hinds on 1/4 and 1/14 and she had signed them on 1/3 and 1/14.
 - c. Mrs. Randall commented that she had heard feedback from the town office that financial procedures are running smoothly.
4. Comprehensive Planning Committee (Ad-hoc) - Mrs. Randall shared with the board what a comprehensive plan is, and that the school has been requested to meet with the town committee about the education portion of the plan. She said the committee would collect board feedback and then put together a presentation for the the town to update the relevant portion of the plan.

Superintendent's Report

1. Financial Report -
 - a. Mrs. Thompson stated that with 42% of the year remaining, 53% of the budget remains. She said that all lines are tracking appropriately. She pointed out that on page 2 under resource class placement, there are two salary lines with 50% of funds remaining rather than the 42% that would be expected. She explained that savings was due to the restructuring of staffing that happened at the beginning of the year. She also brought attention to electricity and heating oil on page 13. She said the heating oil budget was based on the prior contract, and this year's contract was 50 cents/gallon more than last year, which is a difference of about \$3,300 and cautioned that line may be over extended. She also said that the cost of electricity has increased, and bills are about 3 to 400 dollars more per month than they were previously. She also said the insurance line is overextended, because it was under-budgeted. She said that this cost center may be a place where the 5% transfer may need to be used at the end of the fiscal year.
 - b. Tuition - Mrs. Thompson reported that tuition rates for the current year had been received. She reminded the board that they had budgeted for a 3% increase with the current enrollment. Tuition increased at the 6-8 level by 455.47/student and decreased at the 9-12 level by 747.21/student. She said that based upon the October enrollment, which had already changed some, the district will be over budget by about \$50,000 at 6-8 and under budget by about 39,000 at 9-12.
 - c. Mrs. Thompson commented that all of the 2021 end of year paperwork was filed with the town, W2s and 1099s had been processed and received by the town, and had been sent out earlier the prior the week. She thanked Julia House for the support she's provided as the school's business office has transitioned. She said it has been a positive partnership and she feels that things are moving in a positive direction.
 - d. Mr. Hinds asked if the facilities committee has looked into solar panels, especially as the cost of electricity increases. Mrs. Thompson said that the committee has not discussed it, but has felt that the school's roof would be a perfect place for panels. She said that committee would discuss it.
 - e. Mrs. Jungbluth said that when she looks at the budget report it looks like a lot of numbers and text, and would like to know how she can get a better understanding of what each line means and how the budget works. She said it's hard to ask

questions about a 14 page budget document. Mrs. Thompson said that the budget process will be helpful for her to get to know the lines better, as the board will discuss each line. She asked if the board compares itself to other districts to see how expenditures compare, like Georgetown? Mrs. Thompson said that yes, those comparisons are looked at annually, as it helps the board to see how their expenses compare to other small districts.

2. District Updates -

- a. Bath Area Family YMCA Before and After School Care - Mrs. Thompson expressed her appreciation for the Bath YMCA, who has begun before and after care on site, keeping the commitment they made the prior summer. She said that while the program is not heavily subscribed, she knows it makes a difference for the families who are using it, and she's grateful to the Y for making it happen.
- b. WinterKids Winter Games - Mrs. Thompson announced that the school was once again participating in the WinterKids Winter Games. She said the school had kicked the games off the prior week. In addition to cross country skiing and snowshoeing, 3rd graders went ice skating during their PE class. She said she was surprised to learn that only 2 of the students had tried skating before. She said she had linked the school's Wintergames website to the board agenda for their reference. The school finished the first week tied for second place. She again thanked Mrs. H., Mrs. Cosgrove, Mrs. Taylor, and Miss Marco for their organization and leadership in putting the events of the games together.
- c. School Choice for 22-23 - Mrs. Thompson announced that the school choice application window for 22-23 opened on January 1st, and will run through February 14th. All current school choice families received new applications in the mail, 5th grade parents received a letter, and the information is posted on our website and Facebook page.
- d. Winter testing window - Mrs. Thompson said the school is just completing the midyear assessments with NWEAs and DRAs. Data will be used for updating student goals and restructuring instructional groups.
- e. January PD - Mrs. Thompson announced that the school had had its January Professional Development Day a couple of weeks ago, and created the unveiling plan and crew lessons for our new code of character. Today staff met with their EL school designer during late start to design target trackers for students to monitor their progress towards gaining the skills necessary to demonstrate success of embodying the trait. Next week is the kick-off to unveiling the first trait to the students, and that work will lead into the February acts of kindness and compassion that is how the school celebrates Valentines Day.
- f. Quarter 2 Absence Report - Mrs. Thompson shared the absence report with the board. The board discussed the differences between truancy and chronic absenteeism.

Old Business

1. In-Person Instruction Updates

Mrs. Thompson reported that the school currently had 2 active cases and 26 resolved cases. She said that this equated to 5 cases after the Halloween weekend, 8 cases after Thanksgiving, and 15 cases in the new year. She said that while a case was announced

that day, all pools came back negative.

She said that the new SOP was released during winter break and was updated again on 1/11. Changes were focused on quarantine and contact tracing. She outlined the changes for the board. She said she was keeping the dashboard updated daily, and many schools have moved to communicating by weekly updates rather than sending out announcements for any cases. She said that she'd gotten some feedback that the number of communications that are being sent can feel confusing, and she worries families will miss important information that is being sent due to the amount of individual emails that are being sent about cases. She asked the board, who are on the receiving end of parental communications, to consider moving towards a weekly summary email in addition to maintaining the dashboard. Mrs. Jungbluth said that the variant is moving so fast that it is trying to catch up with a freight train on a bicycle and that with the dashboard and a weekly update she did not feel the individual emails were necessary any longer. She also said she felt the emails for cases within a classroom were no longer necessary, but could understand why Mrs. Thompson may feel obligated to send them. Mrs. Thompson said she would like to still send messages if there is a case in a classroom during the school day, where a student is present and then tests positive at school, as long as it is like useful information. If in a few weeks Dr. Shah indicates that there is no benefit to that communication, she would pull back on that too. The board agreed with the change.

Mrs. Randall said she had been wondering about the general well-being of the staff. Mrs. Thompson said that she felt that the staff as a whole came back from winter break feeling stressed. There were a lot of sudden changes to the SOP, and not a lot of clear science to back up the changes, so people's safety was in question. She said it has been hard to wrap your head around increased cases in the community but a decrease in safety measures. She said the staff remains focused on children and their education and making sure that they get what they need. She added that all the stories that people hear about teachers working around the clock and jumping in to cover one another are all true. West Bath School is filled with an incredible group of people who are there for the right reasons and focused on the needs of the students. Mrs. Randall gave her sincere appreciation to the staff.

2. Second Reading of Board Policies

a. GBGB - Workplace Bullying

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 (4-0).

3. Review Board Policy

b. BE - School Board Meetings

Mr. Hinds shared the amended policy changing the days and times of board meetings on the policy and the timing clauses to read "after 90 minutes" rather than "at 8 PM".

Mr. Hinds made a motion to approve the policy as amended. Mrs. Whorff seconded the motion. Vote (4-0).

4. Board Goals

Mrs. Randall presented proposed changes to the board goals. She said that she proposed they strike #2 focused on the fiscal constraints and policy changes at the state level. She said that the rationale was that while fiscal responsibility is a large part of what the board does, she did not want that to be the highlight of the goals, rather an implied understanding of the "overall well-being of the needs of the school and community." She said she also wanted the focus of the goals to be about what can be done for the kids and their experience at school, and not about the money. Mrs. Whorff added that the budget is always on their mind, but focusing on the education should be the priority. Mrs. Randall read an email from Ms. Power who was not able to attend the meeting sharing her thoughts about combining goals and adding pre-k to the school. Mrs. Randall said that she felt that pre-k falls under the goal "encouraging programming opportunities" and did not have to be named specifically. In regards to #2, she said that the board has put a lot of energy into that goal. They've had conversations with representatives at board meetings and in separate meetings, they've had interviews with the news paper and she felt that she would like the board to focus on the things that they can really influence rather than policy change at the state level. Mr. Hinds said he still felt there needed to be a wellness focus and that we're not adding more stress to a very, very stressful time.

In regards to the first goal, Mrs. Jungbluth said that she had trouble with the word, "unwavering". She said if the board is not going to discuss the budget, but then says they are giving unwavering support, then it raises concern about her property taxes and the taxes of her neighbors. She said it felt too open. Mrs. Randall said that she did not read it as a blank check or open wallet, rather than it is unwavering support to support the school through the EL process.

Mrs. Jungbluth circled back to the fiscal responsibility goal. She said she understood and appreciated the logic behind it, but wondered if the community believes that the board is being fiscally responsible if it is not written in the goals. Mrs. Randall said that she sees her responsibility as a board member is definitely to tax payers, but it is really to the students and goals should be made with the educational experience of students in mind. She said that the well-being of the school and community includes the fiscal well-being. Mrs. Jungbluth said that while she agreed with wanting to support the children in every way that a school board can, the board needs to be cognizant of the cost to the taxpayers, and if fiscal responsibility is written into a goal you remain focused on that. She said she has had neighbors approach her and tell her not to raise taxes or they would not vote for her again. Mr. Hinds clarified the role of a board member. Mr. Hinds said that they are all tax payers, and no one wants taxes to go up. What needs to be focused on is financial stewardship more than fiscal responsibility. If the board focuses on the well-being of the school and community, then it takes care of that without saying it specifically.

Mrs. Jungbluth said in regards to the goal focused on the pandemic, that the pandemic is here and she would like to know that it's not being used as an excuse. She said she does not feel that is happening and the kids are having a wonderful experience, but that it is something to consider. Mrs. Randall said that pandemic or not, health and safety of the kids is paramount. The members discussed having more general language regarding health and safety, and incorporating faculty wellness as well.

Mrs. Randall said she would also like to put out the idea of a goal about responsibilities of being a board member and communication, helping us to be a more informed board and knowing roles and responsibilities. Mrs. Jungbluth said that was part of what she was trying to say too about integrating some of the vision of an EL school. Mrs. Randall said that it would be goal about educating themselves about their responsibilities as a board. Mrs. Jungbluth said that she wanted to reinforce adding in wellness and environmental stewardship.

Mrs. Jungbluth left the meeting at 7:43 PM.

Mrs. Randall restated the board goals:

1. Develop policy and explore and encourage programming opportunities or expansion with the needs and well-being of our EL school and community in mind.
2. Integrate evidenced-based health and safety recommendations from the DOE, Maine CDC, and local health officials while providing an optimal educational experience for our students and ensuring the wellness of our staff.
3. Hold ourselves and each other to the same standards as we hold our students and staff.

Mr. Hinds made a motion to approve the goals as stated. Mrs. Whorff seconded the motion. Vote (3-0).

Mrs. Randall said that based on policy BE, there needs to be a decision of the board whether or not additional agenda items can be brought to the table after 90 minutes. Mr. Hinds said that he felt the agenda items were quick, and that they board could move through them. He made a motion to continue. Mrs. Whorff seconded the motion. Vote (3-0).

New Business

1. First Reading of Board Policies
 - a. EBCF - Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)
Mr. Hinds gave an overview of the policy.
 - b. EBDA - Lockout/Tagout
Mr. Hinds gave an overview of the policy.
 - c. EBDA-R - Lockout/Tagout Procedures
Mr. Hinds gave an overview of the policy.
2. Budget Calendar
Mrs. Randall shared the budget calendar with the board. Mr. Hinds made a motion to approve the calendar. Mrs. Whorff seconded the calendar. Vote (3-0).

Public Comments

None

Set Next Meeting Dates and Locations

1. February 16th at 6 PM
2. Mrs. Randall reminded the board that she would like to have a workshop scheduled with MSMA before 2/16, and to please email the superintendent any conflicting dates.

Adjourn

Mr. Hinds made a motion to adjourn at 7:54 PM. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion.
Vote (3-0).

Submitted by,

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

Emily Thompson