

## **West Bath School Administrative Unit**

### Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

February 16, 2022 at 6:00 PM

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**Members Present:** Keith Hinds, Joanne Powers, and Ashleigh Randall

**Members Absent:** Alexandra Jungbluth and Casandra Whorff

**Others Present:** Patrick Bowdish, David Hennessey, 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:**

Mrs. Randall welcomed the public to the meeting, stating it was nice to have people in attendance for the first time in a long time.

#### **Approve/Amend Minutes of 1/26/22**

Mr. Hinds made a motion to approve the minutes of 12/15/21. Ms. Powers seconded the motion. Vote (3-0).

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

Mrs. Randall moved item 10.2 - School Board of Directors Budget Priorities to 9.3b to be sure that there was enough time in the evening for the conversation to take place.

#### **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. He reported the committee has made progress with the list of policies from MSMA, DWM, and MMA.
2. Facilities Committee - Mrs. Thompson reported that the committee had not met the prior week as scheduled to a conflict with her schedule, but that they will meet after school

break. She commented that the last two unit ventilators in the 3-5 wing would be installed during school break.

3. Finance Committee
  - a. Payroll Warrants - Mrs. Randall said that she had signed payroll warrants on 1/31 and 2/14.
  - b. AP Warrants - Mrs. Randall said that she and Mr. Hinds had signed AP warrants on 2/2 and 2/15.
  - 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 reported that the comprehensive planning adhoc committee met to discuss uniform review question. The committee drafted responses, but felt that overall input from the board was needed, and the discussion is later on the agenda.

## **Superintendent's Report**

1. Financial Report -
  - a. Mrs. Thompson reported that with 34% of the fiscal year remaining, 44% of the budget remains. She pointed out a coding error on page 14 under transportation, but said that has since been fixed and all lines are tracking as expected.
2. District Updates -
  - a. WinterKids Winter Games - Mrs. Thompson reported they had concluded 4 weeks of the winter kids winter games last week, with a winter carnival. She wished to thank special guests Chief Jonathan Beane and Deputy chief Nick Randall of the West Bath Fire Dept, Camille Kauffunger of Main Street Bath, and Becky Kolak of KELT for spending the afternoon with the students and helping to lead stations. She said the school entered week 4 in a 3 way tie for 1st, and learned on Monday that they have placed in the top 3. They'll find out after vacation what place that is. She reported that the 1st place school receives \$10,000, 2nd receives \$7,500, and 3rd receives \$5,000, so no matter how it plays out, it's good for the school school and she's excited to then turn around and invest more funding into outdoor activities. She thanked WinterKids for the encouragement to get outside and moving during the coldest time of the year.
  - b. Acts of Kindness and Compassion - Mrs. Thompson said that the school celebrates Valentines Day each year with acts of kindness and compassion. This year K-2 students created water colored hearts and cards for residents of Winship Green. 4th grade students have an ongoing pen pal relationship residents at Sunnybrook and they wrote letters and made cards for them. The 3rd and 5th grade classes collected personal items and toiletries for the Bath Area Food Pantry.
  - c. Mrs. Thompson said she wished to take a minute to publicly thank Midcoast Excavation. A couple of weeks ago there had significant snow, then a series of rain, freezing, and melting. The school's back parking lot was not able to drain with all of the ice, and there were concerns about building flooding. After one phone call to Jeremie Whorff, within minutes there was a front loader at the school to remove the ice and push back the snow so drainage could happen. She thanked them for their ongoing help and support and said she was grateful that this community was filled with people to turn to when there was a need.

## Old Business

### 1. In-Person Instruction Updates

Mrs. Thompson reported that COVID cases appeared to be leveling off. She stated that there had been 6 cases in the month thus far, with 4 in the first week of February and 2 in the second week. She said that there were no active cases at that time. She expressed that schools had been notified that day of upcoming changes, which included:

- a. Families will have access to order at home tests to use prior to coming back to school after vacation.
- b. The SOP is going to be updated so that contact tracing is no longer a requirement for schools. Currently, it is still a requirement for schools who are not following the mandatory masking procedure.
- c. The CDC has said that in the weeks following vacation, they will monitor the case data, and begin to make recommendations for moving to optional masking in schools, based on data, vaccination rates, and case counts.

She said that MSMA has asked schools to stay the course with procedures that are in place until the new recommendations are released. Mrs. Randall commented that the action plan of following the guidance over the last two years has served the community well and she agrees with taking that approach. Ms. Powers commented that it's been nice that the community has been so supportive of mitigation measures, including mask wearing.

### 2. Substitute Compensation

Mrs. Thompson said she has put this on the agenda as a discussion item, but listed it as action in the event the board chose to take action. She stated that it has been a challenge to find and maintain substitute teachers and that West Bath is not alone in this, as the Department of Education had just put out a call for substitutes statewide. She said that as she had been talking with potential substitutes, the issue of West Bath's compensation not being comparable to other districts had come up. She reached out to other communities for a comparison, and provided the board with a compensation chart to reference. She asked the board to discuss whether compensation should be reconsidered. Mrs. Randall asked if she was pulling from other parts of the school when a substitute was not available? Mrs. Thompson said that she was, and that works in emergency situations, but that if she knows she has two teachers out on the same day two weeks out, she needs to have a sub pool to pull from. Mrs. Randall asked if increasing compensation would cause the budget line to be over extended? Mrs. Thompson said that it would not at this point in the year, as so much coverage had happened internally so that people were not being brought into the school during the pandemic. Ms. Powers asked how many subs were currently on the list. Mrs. Thompson said she'd had 3. One she has hired as an ed tech, one just got a full time job, and the other has a part time job. She would like to utilize the common application the state just put forth to create a new pool, but feels compensation should be looked at. Mr. Hinds said you do not want to be the lowest payer within 30 miles, and that is where the compensation rate currently stands. He would recommend that compensation get raised to \$125/day to put them in the middle of the market.

Mr. Hinds made a motion to move substitute pay to \$125/day. Mrs. Randall seconded the

motion. There was no further discussion. Vote (3-0).

### 3. Comprehensive Planning Ad-Hoc Committee

Mrs. Randall gave an overview of the conversation the adhoc committee had had at their last meeting, to give a place for board conversation to begin. She said that she would like to find a way to involve the community in the school more through opportunities like making exterior facilities upgrades so the community can better use the space, or events after school. The group had talked about garden space, rebuilding the green house, creating recreational opportunities like an outdoor barbeque and movie night, and try to create more a community focus on the school so the school is a center of the community for everyone. Mr. Hinds added that the recent sledding event was successful, maybe there could be school sponsored hiking trails, community kickball, or a townwide picnic. He said he felt that the school has the support of the community, but that there's more that can be done to try to open things up to further to the community. Ms. Powers asked who would spearhead all of that work? Mrs. Randall said that the comprehensive plan currently references a town recreation committee, but the board could also make decisions that staff can put time into other opportunities.

The board reviewed the 10 questions that the comprehensive planning committee had provided for consideration. They felt the vision is addressed by the current mission and vision of the school, and outlined that challenges and constraints continue to be resources and time. It is a challenge to get people in place to not just create ideas but carry them out. They also commented that thinking outside of the box for recreational activities, when there are rec centers in the surrounding towns can be a challenge.

In regards to questions about fiscal support, the board felt that they fiscally have everything that they need. The comment was made that West Bath is a supportive community, and while there is always a wish list the school is fiscally responsible and the community is supportive of the needs. Mr. Hinds said he felt it was a good partnership.

The board made a preliminary list of community partners, including the Sheriff's and police departments, the town office and board of selectmen, historical society, Maine Maritime Museum, KELT, the Bath YMCA, and community experts. In regards to what the comprehensive planning committee might not know, Mr. Hinds mentioned that understanding what it means to be a minimum receiver is still a challenge, and understanding what parts of the school budget there's areas where decisions can be made locally versus what is mandated is a challenge. He felt like highlighting community partnerships would be another area that the committee might not be aware of.

Ms. Powers said that she felt that all sounded good, but asked for clarification about how in depth the goals and mission needed to be. Mrs. Randall asked Mr. Hennessey if they were on the right track with their thinking for their upcoming presentation. He said that the goal of this committee is to simplify the town's current plan, as it was not realistic.

### 4. School Board of Directors Budget Priorities

Mrs. Randall said that the purpose of this agenda item was to create an opportunity for the board to discuss their priorities for building the school budget. Mr. Hinds said while it has been great that the school has been able to do so much capital improvement with

COVID funds, it is time to get back to the facilities plan and continue to make building improvements, such as returning to upgrading flooring and shelving, as he felt the facilities plan has really been downsized over the last few years. He said he would prioritize keeping nursing at 5 days per week. He said he would also like to look at the office and find ways to lighten the load while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

Ms. Powers said that in the past the board has talked about bringing pre-k into the building, but she wonders if there is the space for the program within the building? Mrs. Thompson said that there could be space made if the current kindergarten class is combined into one first grade, but that knowing that she is exiting out two fifth grades in 2023, she is more inclined to wait for that point to bring in pre-k and use the extra space next year for special education, which is currently displacing the teachers' room. That would allow for a staff room to return. Ms. Powers asked about the status of another round of pre-k funding. Mrs. Thompson said that she had heard that there was the potential for another round coming up this summer to plan for the following year, and she'd reach out to the liaison at the DOE to find out. They discussed the pre-k funding and how it could be used. Ms. Powers said that she liked that the system is on a trajectory to make it happen when it most makes sense. She asked if it was yet known what the increase for transportation would be. Mrs. Thompson said that she and Billy had had preliminary discussions, but nothing had yet been determined. Ms. Powers said that with the electrical panel being at it's max, that might be next thing to consider for building upgrades.

Mrs. Randall stated she would like to see board stipends reinstated. She worries that not having stipends deters people from getting involved, and being on the board is a significant time commitment between meetings and committees. She said she would like to see it restored to what was in place pre-pandemic.

5. Second Reading of Board Policies
  - a. EBCF - Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)
  - b. EDBA - Lockout/Tagout
  - c. EDBA-R - Lockout/Tagout Procedures

Mr. Hinds stated that there were no changes in the policies or procedures since the first reading. He made a motion to approve the three as presented. Seconded by Ms. Powers. Vote (3-0).

3. Review Board Policy
  - a. JEA - Compulsory Education

Mr. Hinds shared the review of policy JEA, explaining that most of the changes were due to changes in the law. The new law states that while compulsory education does not begin until a child is age 6, if the parent voluntarily enrolls the student at school when the child is 5, then the law applies and the child needs to attend.

Mr. Hinds made a motion to approve the policy as amended. Ms. Powers

seconded the motion. Vote (3-0).

b. JHB - Truancy

Mr. Hinds shared the view of policy JHB, and like JEA explained that the changes in the policy were due to changes in the law. The new law states that while compulsory education does not begin until a child is age 6, if the parent voluntarily enrolls the student at school when the child is 5, then the law applies and the child needs to attend or truancy rules apply.

Mrs. Randall made a motion to approve the policy as amended. Mr. Hinds seconded the motion. Vote (3-0).

### **New Business**

1. First Reading of Board Policies

a. GBE-R - Personal Protection Plan

Mr. Hinds presented policy GBE-R, and explained that this is the final policy or procedure that came up as part of the MMA audit. The procedure outlines steps to ensure that each job or responsibility has been reviewed for necessary safety equipment and that staff are trained to use that equipment. He explained that mostly applies for the kitchen and the nurse in the West Bath School setting.

### **Public Comments**

Mr. Hennessey asked if there have been any issues with the roof with the snow and ice. Mrs. Thompsons said that there have not been any issues with leaking with the snow and ice. There was drainage coming off the roof, and that may have led to some challenges with flooding around the building, but there did not appear to be any issues with the roof itself with the recent weather.

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

1. Workshop with MSMA - The board determined they would have a workshop with MSMA on 3/2 at 6 PM
2. Budget Workshop - The budget workshop was moved to 3/21.
3. March 16<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM - Regular meeting of the WBSAU School Board of Directors.

### **Adjourn**

Mr. Hinds made a motion to adjourn at 7:15 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