

West Bath School Administrative Unit

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

August 17, 2022 at 6:00 PM

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

Members Absent: None

Others Present: 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 board to the meeting after having had a break in July. She said that papers were available for the school board and selectmen positions and they could be picked up at the town office. She shared with the board that she was not planning to run again. She said that it has been a joy to serve for the last 6 years, but it is time to lighten some things off her plate. She stated she looked forward to engaging with the school in a new and different way.

Approve/Amend Minutes of 6/15/22

Mrs. Randall made a motion to approve the minutes of 6/15/22. Mrs. Whorff seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

Adjustments to Agenda:

None

Public Comments:

None

Committee Reports

1. Policy Committee - Mr. Hinds said that the committee had some policy reviews later on the agenda that the board will review.
2. Facilities Committee - Mrs. Thompson provided an overview of the summer maintenance that had taken place, and explained the movements of particular classroom/work spaces

from one space to another and the rationale behind those moves and benefits to the instructional program.

3. Finance Committee
 - a. Payroll Warrants - Mrs. Randall said that she had signed payroll warrants on 6/20, 6/30, 7/14, 8/1, and 8/15.
 - b. AP Warrants - Mrs. Randall and Mr. Hinds signed the AP warrant on 6/22, 6/30, 7/21, 8/1, 8/15

Superintendent's Report

1. Financial Report - Mrs. Thompson stated that with with 84% of the fiscal year remaining, 91.04% remains. She said that lines were tracking appropriately, but are skewed a bit in terms of percentages because supplies are spent down to be prepared for this time of year. She said that she wanted to point out the supply line is overspent on page 1. She said there were some POs that have encumbrances that have not been closed out, and a few POs that were encumbered in that line that aren't going to stay there. For example - furniture was needed for a new special education classroom set up, and also for the art room because we had been using our cafeteria tables there. The POs were encumbered to that line, but are moving to grants. She said that there was a significant difference between the prices that were budgeted for in January for supplies as compared to prices on July 1. She also explained that services are increasing as well. She gave the example of waste removal, which has increased by more than \$100/month since last year.
2. 20-21 Audit Update - Mrs. Thompson said the 20-21 audit was completed, and Bobbi was able to get the draft to the state by the July 15th deadline, so no subsidy was withheld. She said that the results would be presented at the next meeting, but the paperwork was in this board packet. The most important takeaway is that there are more funds in the unassigned balance than were assigned in the budget process for 21-22. If there are still excess funds after we audit 21-22, those funds can be used to help offset any inflation related increases next year, or add to the school's reserve account, or put towards other projects like the roof.
3. District Updates -
 - a. Summer Stem/Summer Food Service - Mrs. Thompson gave an overview of Summer Stem, stating that Miss Marco and Ms. Goulet were the lead instructors, and they were supported by Mrs. Fuller and the school nurse, Mrs. Samuelson. They had worked with 12 students who were eligible for ESY, and had also opened the program up for a few others by invitation. Their summer expedition was space themed, and finished with a celebration of learning that was open to their families and the public. She said she wanted to let the board know that once again the school had offered free breakfasts, free to students, through the summer food service program, and Mrs. Labbe came each morning to prepare home cooked breakfasts. She explained that while Summer Stem had been budgeted for, she had written a grant last spring for additional federal funds was awarded \$12,000. This allowed for the increase in staffing to the levels that they had this summer, to provide nursing services, and have Mrs. Labbe present to provide meals, and there will be savings to the local budget. She thanked the summer staff for planning and executing the summer program and said that their efforts are appreciated.

- b. Summer ILT Strategic Meetings - Mrs. Thompson said that the staff had two really strong days of strategic planning with the EL school designer at the end of July/early August to review school data, and draft the work plan for the upcoming year. She said she will share the workplan in its final stage after the staff review and adjust it on the professional days, but it's heavily focused on math implementation, and continued execution of the change to the new habits of character that were introduced last spring. She said the school has been piloting a new math program, and this year have all grade levels utilizing this program. The staff is eager to really focus on consistency and teaching math with fidelity K-5, and focus on SEL of our students and wellbeing of our staff through utilizing the new habits of character and enhancing crew practices in classes and schoolwide.
- c. 2022-2023 School Nutrition Program - Mrs. Thompson stated that included in the board packet was a copy of LD 1679 which is the act to address student hunger through expanding access to free school meals. For the last two years, meals have been free to students through a federal waiver. This essentially continues that practice in the same manner. She said that breakfast and lunches are free to students. She will continue to send our reimbursement requests to the state each month. They will reimburse the school up to the cost of a paid lunch. However, the cost of a paid lunch and the cost to make a lunch is not one in the same. So there is still a cost to the district for meals, just not to the families. It looks essentially just like the last two years have. She explained that the one complication is that the school still needs to have families complete the free and reduced lunch form, even though it does not impact their eligibility. The results impact how much we are reimbursed, and it's how we become eligible for other grant funds, like Title I and COVID funding. And, because the school is now operating under a status called provision 2, this means forms are completed this year, and that is our status for the next three years. So this baseline paperwork is critical. She explained that she has the online form up and running on the website, and will send home paper versions in the first day packet.
- d. Open House - Mrs. Thompson announced that there will be a kindergarten open house on 9/1 at 2 PM for the incoming k students, and a k-5 open house for all families on 9/19 at 5 PM. She said she is looking forward to opening our doors and having a traditional, in person open house, the first since 2019.

Old Business

1. CDC Operational Guidance for K-12 Schools and Early Care and Education Programs to Support In-Person Learning

The Maine DOE has said that schools are directed to follow the guidance of the federal CDC and to respond to COVID cases through the regular communicable diseases policy. Last Thursday the CDC released their new guidance for schools to work with this year. The federal CDC said their goal in their guidance is to promote equity in learning and health. They want students to be in school. Essentially schools are to have a set of infectious disease prevention strategies tied to community levels- including increased ventilation, proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, encouraging vaccinations, staying home when sick, and facilities cleaning.

She said that some big changes are that the distancing recommendation has been removed, as has cohorting, to try to return to as many close to normal practices as possible. She said that routine pooled testing has been discontinued as practice, but can be implemented when and if needed. Instead, families are encouraged to utilize rapid tests.

Mrs. Thompson said that the school will continue to use the health screening questions, as students and staff should not be at school with symptoms - normalizing the concept of staying home when sick. There's no change to the isolation and quarantine time period if someone has COVID. What has changed are the quarantine procedures. If staff or students have been exposed to COVID, they are to mask and test. Students may come to school with a mask for what would have traditionally been the quarantine period, provided they have no symptoms. She said the guidance is very similar to how the last school year was finished, with the focus being on keeping kids in schools.

2. School Choice - Supreme Court Ruling

Mrs. Thompson stated that she wanted to be sure the board was aware of the change in Supreme Court ruling regarding school choice, and said the information was in the board packet. She said, West Bath does not have a high school. Instead, there is a contract with another RSU as a school of guarantee, and the option for students to apply for school choice, where up to 25% of students can be funded for school choice. Prior to this ruling change, to be eligible to receive public tuition funds the school need to be an approved school by the Maine DOE and be non-sectarian. With the Carson v. Makin Supreme Court decision, now sectarian schools can receive public tuition funds.

She explained that this is not a voucher program. Funds are sent directly to other schools - not to families, and there is not a voucher for homeschooling. She said that schools still need to go through the school approval process with the DOE for consideration. Therefore, the only change for West Bath is that if a school is on the school approved list, regardless of his sectarian or non-sectarian status, it can be eligible to receive funds for tuition from West Bath.

She said that she review the board's current policy with the attorney, as she was concerned about the timeline and whether that was complicated by this change in ruling. He said the ruling does not impact the board's timeline and if the board would not typically approve school choice for students for September at this point in the year, this ruling does not change that. His advice was that the only change to our policy needs to be in relation to wording around sectarian/non-sectarian.

3. Before/After-Care

Mrs. Thompson explained to the board that there was once again a challenge in being able to offer before and after-care to families. She explained that the Y needs to have 9 students enrolled in the morning and 9 enrolled in the afternoon to make it worth their while to hire and maintain staff. She said that at that time there were 3 enrolled in the morning, with 4 more interested, and 7 enrolled in the afternoon, with 2 more interested, but that it is hard to encourage families to enroll in care when the Y has already told families there are not enough students. She said she had asked the Y if they would be

willing to host West Bath students at another site, but they said that their sites were too full. She also had asked that as a non-profit if some of those costs could be used to subsidize the lack of students at West Bath, but the Y said no. They did say that they would be willing to enter an MOU with the school to have the school cover the cost between the number of students enrolled and the amount required to run the program, and the willingness of the board to do that was the question Mrs. Thompson was posing.

Mrs. Jungbluth suggested that the school run camps for all students after school, and that could a part-time job to coordinate it, and would enable enrichment for every child. Mrs. Thompson said that prior to the pandemic there were several clubs that took place at school, and she anticipates those will begin again, but that does not replace the need for childcare. Mrs. Randall said that the challenge is that the families who need the childcare really need it, even if there is not a community need, and that she does not know what the solution is. Mr. Hinds asked if the other programs have a waitlist, and could those students come to West Bath? Ms. Powers asked about the requirement of having two adults.

Mr. Hinds made a motion, with regret, to not enter into an MOU to subsidize the cost of childcare. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

4. Review of Board Policy
a. Student Wellness

Mr. Hinds gave an overview of the changes to JL. Mrs. Jungbluth said that the recommendations were given from the 5-2-1-0 liaison and are required.

Mrs. Randall made a motion to approve the revised policy. Mr. Hinds seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

New Business

1. Approval of 2022-2023 Transportation Contract

Mrs. Thompson shared the proposed contract, which she said was what was discussed in the budgeting process so is not a surprise. She explained that this contract is an increase over the last contract by \$13,000, but also explained that that prior contract was a 3 year contract.

Mrs. Randall approved the proposed contract. Mrs. Whorff seconded the motion. Mr. Hinds thanked Bath Bus for 7 years of loyal service. Vote (5-0).

Mrs. Thompson said that Billy Reed has let her know that this will be Bath Bus' last year of operating school buses, and therefore there are some decisions to make. She asked the board if they would like her to go out to bid, or begin the process of obtaining our own buses and running our own service. The consensus of the board was to go out to bid, due to supply changes and staffing challenges. Mrs. Whorff said she supported going out to bid, but also beginning the conversation about what it would look like for the district to

run its own buses and see where that leads in the future.

2. Personal Report

- a. Hiring of Kristina Barnett - Special Education Ed Tech - Mrs. Thompson shared that she had hired Kristina Barnett as an ed tech II. She shared her work experience and references.
- b. Notification of Student Teacher - Mrs. Thompson shared that Hallie Gagnon from UMF would be placed as a student teacher in Mrs. Beal's 3rd grade classroom until winter break.

3. Approval of 22-23 Student/Parent Handbook

Mrs. Thompson commented that the handbook had been updated. All of the COVID references were removed, staffing had been updated, and areas where policies have been updated and dictated change, such as in discrimination, wellness, and school nutrition have been updated.

Mr. Hinds made a motion to approve the handbook. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

4. Approval of the Service Agreement between Dr. Hanna and WBSAU

Mrs. Thompson presented the service agreement for the board's consideration. Mrs. Randall asked if the board would want to consider increasing the stipend for her. There was much discussion regarding the board's appreciation for all that Dr. Hanna did to support the school system during the pandemic.

Mr. Hinds approved the service agreement as presented and encouraged the superintendent to discuss future stipend amounts with Dr. Hanna. This motion was seconded by Mrs. Randall. Vote (5-0).

5. Approval of the WBSAU Certification Committee

Mrs. Thompson explained the role of the committee, the faculty voting process, and the need to have the board annual approve the committee's membership. Mrs. Randall approved the committee membership. Ms. Powers seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

6. Overnight Field Trip Request - 5th Grade Chewonki Trip

Mrs. Thompson shared a request for the board to consider to allow the 5th grade students to have an overnight experience for 3 nights, 4 days in October at Chewonki. She said that she had asked the 5th grade teachers if they preferred to stick with the day trip or return to the overnights, and they preferred the overnight trip. Mrs. Randall read a letter from the two 5th grade teachers, Mrs. Jarvis and Ms. Goulet, to share their request with

the board.

Mrs. Randall made a motion to approve the overnight field trip request. Mrs. Whorff seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

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

Mrs. Thompson provided the board with a table of federal fund allocations, grant topics, and plan for how funds will be spent.

8. Sharing of the MSBA Proposed Resolutions Packet

The MSBA proposed resolution packet was shared.

9. Appoint Local Delegate to the MSAB Annual Delegate Assembly

Mrs. Randall said that West Bath had never sent a delegate prior to last year. She attended, thinking that it would help with network, but found that much of the discussion did not apply to West Bath, and was not a good use of time. She said that encouraged the board to read the resolutions, but it would be her recommendation to not appoint a delegate. She made a motion to not appoint a delegate. Mrs. Whorff seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

Mrs. Randall said that they had reached 7:30, and the board needed to vote to decided whether to continue with the agenda, or table the rest of the items. Mrs. Randall made a motion to continue with the agenda. Mr. Hinds seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

Public Comments

None

Executive Session

Mrs. Randall made a motion at 7:30 PM to request 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. Mr. Hinds seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

Return to Regular Session

The board returned to regular session at 8:08 PM.

Set Next Meeting Dates and Locations

1. September 21, 2022 - WBSAU School Board of Directors Meeting @ 6 PM

Adjourn

Mrs. Randall made a motion to adjourn at 8:08 PM. Mr. Hinds seconded the motion.
Vote (5-0).

Submitted by,

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

Emily Thompson