

## **West Bath School Administrative Unit**

### **Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

March 12, 2025 at 6:00 PM

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**Members Present:** Nathan Briggs, Joanne Powers, Izabela Werner, Casey Whorff, and Bob Weir

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Suzanne Andresen, Patrick Bowdish, Keith Hinds, and Emily Thompson

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

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

#### **Executive Session**

Mrs. Whorff made a motion at 6:01 PM to enter into an executive session pursuant to Title 1, Chapter 13, Section 405,6,F. of the M.R.S.A. for the purpose of discussing confidential records and pursuant to Title 1, Chapter 13, Section 405,6,A. of the M.R.S.A. for the purpose of discussing personnel matters. This was seconded by Mrs. Powers. Vote (5-0).

The board returned to regular session at 6:44 PM.

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

No Comments

#### **Approve/Amend Minutes of 1/15/25**

Mrs. Whorff made a motion to approve the minutes of 1/15/25 as presented. Mr. Weir seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

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

Mrs. Whorff added New business 11.6 personnel item – no action to the agenda.

#### **Public Comments:**

None

## **Committee Reports**

### **1. Finance Committee**

- a. Payroll Warrants – Payroll was signed by Mrs. Whorff on 1/31 and 2/28 and by Mr. Weir on 2/14/25,
- b. AP Warrants – The AP warrants were signed by Mrs. Whorff on 2/4, Mr. Weir on 2/5, Mr. Briggs, Mr. Weir, and Ms. Powers on 2/14, and by Mrs. Whorff 3/3 and Mr. Weir on 3/4.

### **2. Policy Committee**

Mrs. Thompson reported that the policy committee had met the week prior to review the the February MSMA policy development memo regarding AC, ACAA, ACAA-R, ACAB, and ACAB-R. Based on the letter, they've notified school departments that the 2020 Title IX regulations are in effect, and asked for boards to review policies (as some had preemptively updated policies to meet the expected 2024 rules) and asked districts who had to redact those changes. Mrs. Thompson reported the committee had reviewed the current policies, and they are in line with the 2020 law, with the exception of a few of the references. The committee decided to hold off on any further revisions at this time, expecting there to be more coming out of the next legislative session.

She reported that the policy committee reviewed a sample cell phone policy provided by MSMA and tabled that conversation until the next meeting.

## **Superintendent's Report**

1. Financial Report – Mrs. Thompson reported that with 30% of year remaining, 37% of the budget remained. She asked the board to review page 3 of the financial report, under the line of tuition secondary. She stated that this is special education tuition that had not been budgeted for, and is overdrawn. She said that the amount was approximately what they had hoped to recoup from regular tuition savings. She reminded the board that they do have a reserve fund for special education and she's going to inquire how to access it in the event it becomes necessary to get the school department through the year financially. Otherwise, lines are tracking as they should. She said that unfortunately she's not able to identify any funds to carry forward to the next school budget as she'd hoped.
2. District Updates
  - a. School updates – Mrs. Thompson said that they are excited to transition from winter to spring. The school celebrated Read Across America last week with a Chris Van Dusen inspired spirit week. Each day was connected to a different Chris Van Dusen book, as he is the visiting author later in the month! She gave special thanks to community readers who came into read to our classes: Erika Castillo, Jessica Bollinger, Valerie Albert, Leslie Kalisz, Jennifer Harris, and Morgan Vigue!

Mrs. Thompson said that the third trimester has begun, school choice placements are being finalized, kindergarten enrollment has started, pre-k MOUs are in place, and registration has begun.

## **New Business**

### **1. Review of Contract between WBSAU and Casco Bay Cleaning – Action**

Mrs. Thompson shared the contract between WBSAU and Casco Bay Cleaning. She shared that she had been able to negotiate a contract that is \$5,000 less than the current contract.

Mrs. Werner made a motion to approve the contract. Mr. Weir seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

### **2. Review of Contract Between WBSAU and Bath Bus Service, LLC – Action**

Mrs. Thompson shared the contract between WBSAU and Bath Bus Service, LLC. She explained the contract is increasing by \$5,000 over the current year, but will remain flat for 3 years.

Mrs. Whorff made a motion to table the approval of the contract until tuition contracts are finalized. Ms. Powers seconded the motion to table. Vote (5-0).

### **3. Out of State Field Work Request – Action**

Mrs. Thompson shared a request for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade class to travel to and from Boston on May 16<sup>th</sup> via the Downeaster, to participate in the Freedom Trail, a tour of the Old State House, Paul Revere House, and potentially the Old North Church. She said the trip is fully funded through fundraisers.

Mrs. Whorff made a motion to approve the fieldwork request. Mrs. Werner seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

### **4. Calendar Waiver Consideration for the Department of Education - Action**

Mrs. Thompson shared a letter and requested to send it to the Department of Education on the board's behalf, requesting to have the December emergency day waived. Mrs. Whorff made a motion to approve the communication. Mr. Briggs seconded the motion. Vote (5-0). Mrs. Whorff signed the letter.

### **5. First Reading of the 2025-2026 School Budget – Action**

Mrs. Thompson stated that she was presenting a zero-based budget, as she believes in only asking for what is needed based on the current reality, not on hypothetical situations. She expressed that there was some challenges with this budget, explaining that like last year, the budget is so tight that there's little/if any funds to carry forward, and there are expenses that are outside of the district's control.

She said that she felt positive about the starting point for this budget proposals, but there's work to do to make sure it meets both the needs of the school and of the

community. She explained that she out updated all of the retirement, workers comp, unemployment, and added in paid family medical leave expenses. Those will show as increases universally as the expenses are realigned with the budgeted amounts.

She explained that she would read through the budget and highlight where there are changes. She said that there were some challenges with direct comparisons, as the budget lines from the current year were voted on prior to negotiations ending, so percentage increases aren't accurate in the document and generally appear higher than they are from year 1 to year 2.

Mrs. Thompson provided the board with a coversheet and proposed budget, and walked them through the line items of the first reading. The budget included the following:

- 01 - Regular Instruction - \$1,100,283.05/increase of \$75,109.45 or 7.33%
- 02 - Regular Instruction Tuition - \$1,725,577.81/increase of \$27,436.50 or 1.62%
- 03 - Special Education Instruction - \$813,107.29/increase of \$21,214.80 or 2.68%
- 04 - Special Education Tuition - \$113,293.84/ increase of \$85,293.84 or 304.62%
- 05 - Other Instruction - \$4,500/no change
- 07 - Student & Staff Support - \$362,782.94/increase of \$33,829.17 or 10.28%
- 08 - System Administration - \$103,293.59/decrease of \$6,987.16 or -6.34%
- 09 - School Administration - \$200,366.22/decrease of \$16,781.42 or -7.73%%
- 10 - Transportation - \$195,634.96/increase of \$15,009.96 or 8.31%
- 11 - Operation/Maintenance - \$237,736.00/increase of \$4,896.00 or 2.10%
- 13 - Food Service - \$50,000/no change

This creates a total proposed budget of \$4,906,575.70/increase of \$239,021.14 or 5.12%

The proposed revenue includes:

- State Subsidy - \$334,773.60
- Carry forward - \$0

The local contribution is \$4,571,802.10/increase of \$227.590.13 or 5.24%

Mrs. Whorff encouraged board members to reflect upon what they have heard and to reach out to the superintendent with questions before the next meeting.

Mrs. Whorff made a motion at 7:31 PM to ask the board to continue with the agenda as set. Mrs. Powers seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

## **6. Personnel Item – Retirement – Report**

Mrs. Thompson shared the news of the retirement of Cathleen Jamison, effective at the end of the school year. She shared positive impacts that Mrs. Jamison has made during her time at West Bath. Mrs. Whorff shared appreciation on behalf of the board and wished Mrs. Jamison well in retirement.

## Public Comments

1. Mrs. Andresen asked about the cost per student for K-5, stating that when she looks at the cost of the facility, administration, and maintenance. Mrs. Thompson said that she would pull the current numbers provided by the state and send them to her. Mrs. Andresen said that they Board of Selectmen are hearing about the town's increase to Sagadahoc County, and that worries them. She also said that as everyone's hearing rumblings about federal funds she encourages the school board to talk about how to accommodate a lack of funding. She stated that she's concerned about staff raises with COLA being under 3% and asked the board to make raises based on COLA so that rates are consistent because it is hard to justify larger increases when the residents paying the taxes are only getting COLA increases.

Mr. Weir made a comment about West Bath being a minimum receiver, and Mr. Hinds explained from the audience how it is determined that a community is a minimum receiver. Mrs. Andresen commented that the premise of taxation is to be fair and equitable. She also commented that there might be better opportunities for contracts, such as lawn mowing, if the town and school collaborate on contracts. She also asked about whether the board would be considering grant applications when going out to bid for the roof.

There were no further public comments.

## Set Next Meeting Dates and Locations

1. March 19, 2025 - School Board Budget Workshop/Joint Workshop w/ Budget Advisory Committee/Special Meeting @ 6:00 PM
2. March 26, 2025 - School Board Budget Workshop/Special Meeting @ 6:00 PM (tentative)
3. April 2, 2025 - School Board Budget Workshop/Special Meeting @ 6:00 PM (tentative)
4. April 9, 2025 – Regular School Board Meeting - Second Reading of the School Budget & Vote @ 6:00 PM
5. April 16, 2025 – Special School Board Budget Meeting - Approve Warrant @ 3:00 PM

## Adjourn

Mrs. Whorff made a motion to adjourn at 7:53 PM. This was seconded by Mr. Briggs. Vote (5-0).

Submitted by,



Emily Thompson