

## **West Bath School Administrative Unit**

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

March 18, 2026 @ 6 PM

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**Members Present:** Nathan Briggs, Kayla Hughes, Joanne Powers, Robert Weir, Casey Whorff

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Patrick Bowdish, Bobbi Brewer (remotely), Keith Hinds, Emily Thompson

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

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

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

There were no comments.

#### **Approve/Amend Minutes of 1/21/26:**

Mrs. Whorff made a motion to approve the minutes of 1/21/26. Mr. Weir seconded the motion. (Vote 4-0).

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

Mrs. Whorff made a motion to make an adjustment to the agenda and move item 9.1 Auditors Report to 5.1. Mrs. Hughes seconded the motion. Vote (4-0).

There were no further adjustments to the agenda.

Mr. Briggs entered the meeting.

Auditors Report: Bobbi Brewer presented the auditor's report from FY 23. She said the budget was under expended by \$134,208. She recommended the board increase the amount in the general fund for school nutrition, commenting that that is a normal need for a small school. She said that budgetary categories were underspent, and there is a positive fund balance. She said that federal and states grants were spent, and there's an unassigned amount of \$27,512.14. She cautioned the board to not do anything with those funds, as they likely no longer exist, as it would have been used for FY24.

She said that the school system did receive a management letter, as most school systems in this fiscal year, for posting errors and reimbursement schedules for the federal covid funds. She said that everything is caught up and accurate.

## **Public Comment**

None

## **Committee Reports:**

1. Policy Committee: Mrs. Thompson said that the policy committee had met the week prior and had worked on draft policies for expenses and reimbursements, inventories, and cash receipts. She said that while these are not required policies for the state and Department of Education, they were recommended for schools who receive federal funds at a recent Local Entitlement audit. Mrs. Thompson said the policies are ready for first reading, but will be held until after the budget process is concluded. She also reminded the board that they will still need to complete the second reading of the naloxone policy following the budget process.
2. Finance Committee:
  - a. Payroll warrants were signed by Mrs. Whorff on 1/29, 2/13, 2/27, and 3/12.
  - b. AP warrants were signed by Mr. Weir and Mrs. Whorff on 2/4, 2/13, 3/4, and 3/18.

## **Superintendents' Report**

1. Financial Report – Mrs. Thompson reported that with 23% of the year remaining, 34% of the budget remains. When known expenses are removed, for example, the current AP, a special education tuition bill that is expected, and school nutrition funds, 29.8% of the budget remains, tracking about a 6% remainder. Other than the maintenance line that has been talked about at each meeting, all lines are tracking as expected.
2. District Updates:
  - a. Mrs. Thompson said that in February they were still very much in winter mode, and took a spontaneous trip to the golf course for sledding as a school community. The adventure classes were cross country skiing and skating, but as the trimester has ended and the calendar has turned to March, the school has also transitioned from winter to spring.

Mrs. Thompson commented that school choice placements have been finalized, PreK Mous are in place, and registration is in full swing. Kindergarten registration has taken place and the school has reinstitute Ready, Set, Go for incoming students and families, and have held the first event. Students are out on fieldwork and final expeditions have begun, bringing with them a lot of excitement around learning.

The Community crew hosted their Gelato Fiasco night the prior night, with staff scooping ice cream for visitors.

The school celebrated Read Across America two weeks ago with a Lynn Plourde inspired spirit week. Each day was connected with a different Lynn Plourde book, preparing students for her author visit, scheduled for tomorrow.

## **New Business**

1. Out of State Field Trip Request - Mrs. Thompson shared a request for the 5th grade class to travel to and from Boston on May 8th via the Downeaster, to participate in the Freedom Trail, a tour of the Old State, House, the Old North Church and visit Paul Revere's house and Copp's Hill Burial ground. She said the trip is fully funded through fundraisers. Mrs. Whorff made a motion to approve this trip. Mr. Briggs seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).
2. First Reading of the 2026-2027 School Budget

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 said that like any budget, there are potential challenges - and sometimes those challenges work themselves out as the budget drafts progress and more information is gathered. She gave an example that there is a large kindergarten class coming in. There are 18 students pre-registered. While there is the chance that two might not come, there also is the chance that more may enroll. Based on what is known now, she said she is budgeting for one class, but will need to be realistic about the possibility of needing to add a second kindergarten class.

Another potential challenge is that this budget eliminates two educational technician positions that are in the current budget. She said she wanted to be clear that this does not change the current staffing levels. There was a retirement at the end of last school year and a resignation in August, and she chose not to fill either position. Based on what is expected for student needs' next year, those positions are not needed s have been removed. But she said it worried her to not have a place to go to if there's a need, such as supporting a large kindergarten class.

She said she had not yet applied any carry forward. Without having completed the last two audits, which will happen this spring, she is hesitant to utilize any money in case the past fund balance is less than anticipated.

Otherwise, this is a good starting point for our conversation, but there's work to do to make sure it meets both the needs of the school and of the community. She said that she had updated all of the retirement, workers comp, unemployment, and family medical leave expenses. Those will show as increases universally as the expenses are realigned with the budgeted amounts.

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 - \$1,136,816.26/increase of \$34,033.21 or 3.09%
- 02 - Regular Instruction Tuition - \$1,743,646.48/increase of \$18,068.67 or 1.05%
- 03 - Special Education Instruction - \$908,026.97/increase of \$118,318.08 or 14.98%
- 04 - Special Education Tuition - \$201,926.92/ increase of \$88,633.08 or 78.23%
- 05 - Other Instruction - \$4,500/no change
- 07 - Student & Staff Support - \$377,911.84/increase of \$15,129.06 or 4.17%
- 08 - System Administration - \$107,985.90/increase of \$3,379.44 or 3.23%
- 09 - School Administration - \$212,547.88/increase of \$7,712.84 or 3.77%
- 10 - Transportation - \$195,634.96/ no change
- 11 - Operation/Maintenance - \$253,150.00/increase of \$15,414.00 or 6.48%
- 13 - Food Service - \$50,000/no change

This creates a total proposed budget of \$5,192,147.11/increase of \$300,688.38 or 6.16%

The proposed revenue includes:

- State Subsidy - \$437,560.00
- Carry forward - \$0

The local contribution is \$4,754,587.11/increase of \$197,901.98 or 4.34%

The board asked questions about special education and special education tuition.

### **Public Comments**

1. Mr. Hinds commented that there's a history of long term support of the school from the community, and this budget is reasonable. He said that he was not sure if there was room to tighten up, as the county budget is high. He said the school has done a great job, and the budget was not extravagant.

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

1. March 25, 2026 - School Board Budget Workshop/Joint Workshop w/ Budget Advisory Committee/Special Meeting @ 6:00 PM – The board added a workshop prior to the joint workshop to begin at 5 PM.
2. April 1, 2026 – School Board Budget Workshop/Special Meeting @ 6 PM
3. April 6, 2026 – Special Meeting of the School Board - Second Reading of the School Budget & Vote @ 6:00 PM
4. April 15, 2026 – Regular School Board Meeting - Approve Warrant @ 6:00 PM
5. April 27, 2026 – Public Information Session @ 6 PM at the Fire Hall
6. May 4, 2026 – Town Meeting @ 6 PM at the West Bath School

### **Executive Session**

1. Mrs. Whorff made a motion at 7:46 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. Mrs. Hughes seconded the motion. Vote (5-0).

The board returned to regular session at 8:13 PM.

### **Adjourn**

Mrs. Whorff made a motion to adjourn at 8:13 PM. Mr. Briggs 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