

West Bath School Administrative Unit

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

December 18, 2024 at 6:00 PM

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

Members Absent: Nathan Briggs

Others Present: Patrick Bowdish and Emily Thompson

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 PM by Mrs. Whorff. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Comments from the Chair:

Mrs. Whorff reminded the board that the school's Celebration of Learning is scheduled for the following day, and encouraged board members to attend.

Approve/Amend Minutes of 11/20/24

Mrs. Werner made a motion to approve the minutes of 11/20/24 as presented. Mr. Weir seconded the motion. Vote (4-0).

Adjustments to Agenda:

None

Public Comments:

None

Executive Session:

Mrs. Whorff made a motion at 6:07 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 matters. This was seconded by Ms. Powers. Vote (4-0).

The board returned to regular session at 6:42 PM.

Committee Reports

1. Finance Committee

- a. Payroll Warrants – Payroll was signed by Mrs. Whorff and Mr. Weir on 12/6.
- b. AP Warrants – The AP warrants were signed by Mrs. Whorff and Mr. Weir on 11/25 and 12/18.

Superintendent's Report

1. Financial Report – Mrs. Thompson reported that with 50% of year remaining, 67.37% of the budget remained. She expressed that including the warrant that was signed prior to the meeting, 63.3% of the budget remained. She said that everything is tracking as expected at this point.

2. District Updates

- a. Safety Concern – Mrs. Thompson said she wished to address the safety concern that took place on Monday so that everyone is on the same page. She explained that during the early morning hours, Sagadahoc County dispatch received third party information that included a threat of violence towards schools. It did not name a particular school, and it came through a National hotline. When the local authorities pinged the number, the call had originated from Bath. While it was considered unlikely it was a credible threat, it was recommended by the Bath PD and Sheriff's Department that school not be held so the situation could be thoroughly investigated and officer resources could be devoted to investigating the situation. It was a late cancellation, which she acknowledge was hard for people, but that said that she felt it was best to follow the guidance of the local safety authorities.

She explained that throughout the day the Bath PD and sheriff's department were actively investigating the situation, and were able to see it to completion, and determine that the threat was not credible and communicated that we should feel comfortable to return to school the following day. Chief Booth expressed that the call did not originate from an RSU1 or a West Bath student, but because it was a situation that involved a juvenile there's not a lot more that can be said.

Mrs. Thompson said that she is deeply appreciative of the local first responders. They are always so responsive to our calls, questions, and requests for assistance, and they are yet another reason that she feels very fortunate to be a part of this community.

- b. Other School Events – Mrs. Thompson reported that since the last meeting, the school had held student-led conferences, two winter concerts, the Little Elf Shop and the Celebration of Learning is scheduled for the following day at 1:45. She stated that the Hour of Code event was postponed due to weather and will be rescheduled for January.
- c. Boston Post Cane Ceremony - The Board of Selectmen invited students to sing carols at the prior day's Boston Post Cane Ceremony, which is a recognition ceremony for the eldest citizen in West Bath. Mrs. Beal and Mrs. Bosso's first grade students performed 3 songs, with the support of the music teacher, Mrs. Ouellette. There was time between the end of the ceremony and the time the bus

could come back to pick the group up, so Chief Beane graciously brought the students into the fire department to see their vehicles and to talk about the tools the firemen and women use to do their job. This connects to their expedition topic for the fall, so being able to access his expertise was greatly appreciated. Mrs. Thompson said she would like to thank the Board of Selectmen for the invitation to sing, and Chief Beane for the tour.

- d. EL National Conference – Mrs. Thompson shared that during the first week December, she had traveled with 5 teachers to Atlanta for the EL National Conference, as the school was being awarded our credential. She thanked Mrs. Cosgrove, Mr. Bowdish, and Mrs. Iverson who kept things running very smoothly in the group’s absence, and recognized that all staff members had to work extra to make sure school went off without a hitch.

She explained that on the first morning of the conference, each school earning it’s credential or it’s recredential was asked to speak about the impact of the process and the growth the school has made over the last 6 years, since the last credential. She shared a snippet of her speech about the school’s continuous improvement process including highlights about the school’s growth in the 3 dimensions of achievement - mastery of knowledge and skills, culture and character, and high-quality work - over the last 6 years. She said:

- We’ve rebuilt our habits of character to ensure it is relevant to and for our current students
- We’ve adopted the EL modules and developed them into expeditions to ensure they are authentic to our community
- We have adopted a new math curriculum which is better aligned with our student-centered delivery of instruction
- We’ve focused on strengthening our staff’s crew culture and have had 100% classroom teacher retention over the last 6 years
- We’ve dug deeply into educating for a better world, building stewardship and service into all expeditions and into multiple parts of our week helping to enhance our students’ and staff’s sense of belonging.
- We’ve continued to focus on the process of feedback and revision towards high quality work - and have had several pieces of work added to the models of excellence.
- We’ve celebrated mastery of knowledge and skills and equity in education - with 95% of our students meeting state proficiency in both reading and math, and with our subgroups performing more than 25 percentage points higher than state average - with 80% of proficiency -
- and we’ve been ranked as one of the top 5 elementary schools in Maine.

She expressed that while that is a lot to be proud of, it’s really just the tip of the iceberg that represents the amazing work of the West Bath students and staff.

Old Business

1. Tuition Agreement Warrant Article

Mrs. Whorff read the warrant article regarding tuition agreement for the board to approve. Mrs. Werner made a motion to approve the article as written. Mr. Weir seconded the motion. Vote (4-0).

New Business

1. Personnel Item – Retirement

Mrs. Thompson shared that Lori Sawyer, 4th grade teacher, is retiring at the end of the school year after 40 years of teaching, 30 years at West Bath School. She read a snippet of Mrs. Sawyer's letter, and share some of her accolades. Mrs. Whorff thanked Mrs. Sawyer for her service on behalf of the board.

2. Annual Certification of Superintendent Requirement

Mrs. Whorff stated that it is the duty of the school board to discuss the duration of the superintendent's contract. She made a motion to add a year to the contract, maintaining a three year contract. Mrs. Werner seconded the motion. Vote (4-0).

3. Board Goals

Mrs. Whorff read last year's board goals. She suggested to the board that they could discuss them or table them until next month.

Ms. Powers commented that she'd been reflecting on RSU1's banning of cellphones and had been thinking about social media. She wondered if the school is contributing to the use of social media by having Facebook pages. She said that she would be interested in looking at screen time versus play time, discussing students' mental health, as well as guidelines for staff using their phone.

Mrs. Whorff made a motion to table this agenda item until the next meeting. Ms. Powers seconded the motion. Vote (4-0).

Public Comments

None

Set Next Meeting Dates and Locations

1. January 2, 2025 – Town Hearing @ 5:30
2. January 15, 2025 - Regular Meeting of the WBSAU School Board of Directors @ 6 PM
3. January 16, 2025 – Special Town Meeting at 5:30

Adjourn

Mrs. Whorff made a motion to adjourn at 7:15 PM. This was seconded Ms.Powers. Vote (4-0).

Submitted by,

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

Emily Thompson