

WESTBROOK BOARD OF EDUCATION
Regular Meeting
MINUTES
Tuesday, January 11, 2011

Members Present: Maureen Westbrook, Marti White, Pat Labbadia, Sally Greaves, Joseph Campbell, Lee Bridgewater

Absent: Dee Adorno, Myrn Keryc, Matthew Alaimo

Also Present: Patricia Charles, Superintendent; Robert Hale, Katharine Bishop, Lisa Wilson, Administrators; Lesley Wysocki, Business Manager; Student Representatives; Kelsey Campbell and Megan Lahutko; PTO Rep., Lisa Winch; Technology Specialist, Ben Russell

I. CALL TO ORDER: Mrs. Westbrook, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. in the Westbrook High School library.

II. PLEDGE

III. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT- Kelsy introduced Megan Lahutko, who will join her as a student representatative. Kelsy and Megan reported on activities at the high school including: Dec. 16 Ensemble Concert – Dec. 23 Holiday Assembly – Leadership Conference--Art Club’s project for senior center in town hall -Boys’ and girls’ basketball teams doing well- wrestling team doing very well- Student Council – Winter ball on January 22. Callie Hagemester’s New York City Blanket Project- Bomb threat at high school- Field Knight organized by Cory Thomas, Harlan Thomas and Dom Panico –and a concert rescheduled for Sunday, January 23 at 3:00. Exams start on Tuesday.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT:

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Regular Meeting of December 14, 2010. Moved by Mr. Labbadia and seconded by Lee Bridgewater **Vote unanimous**
- B. Special Meeting of December 22, 2010. Moved by Marti White and seconded by Lee Bridgewater. **Vote unanimous.**

VI. FINANCIAL REPORTS

- A. Payment of bills. Moved by Mrs. White and seconded by Mrs. Bridgewater to pay bills in the amount of \$112,100.60. **Vote unanimous.** Supplemental Bills: Moved by Mr. Labbadia and seconded by Mr. Campbell to pay supplemental bills in the amount of \$34,765.75. **Vote unanimous**
Additional Supplemental bills – Moved by Mrs. White and seconded by Mrs. Greaves to pay supplemental bills in the amount of \$41,560.76. **Vote unanimous.**
- B. Approve of Expenditures: Moved by Mrs. White and seconded by Mrs. Bridgewater to approve expenditures for the period ending January 31, 2011. **Vote unanimous.** Mrs. Wysocki gave an overview of the expenditures. She stated that the cafeteria services account is a concern and she will be meeting with Cindi Good, Food Service Director, to

discuss deficits in that account. Mrs. Wysocki said it may be an issue of cash flow since there were 3 payrolls in December.

- C. **Health Insurance**—Mrs. Wysocki reported on the health insurance status stating that we fell behind for the month of November on actual cost versus claims, but overall, for the period July through November, the Board is still in the black \$22,709.
- D. **Transportation Bid** – Mrs. Wysocki provided an update on the details of the bid contract for bus transportation. The average anticipated amount of \$253,255.20/year is less than this year’s cost. Two companies were present at the bid opening. First Student’s bid came in at a lesser amount than the last contract.
Moved by Mr. Labbadia and seconded by Mrs. Bridgewater to approve the award of the transportation contract to First Student for the 5 year period 9/2011- 6/2016. **Vote unanimous.** The contract will state that no busses will be over ten years old. The Board suggested adding that routes will be posted by August 1.
- E. **Substitute Custodians** - Mrs. Wysocki reported that substitute custodians have been interviewed and will be used to cut down on overtime costs when custodians are absent. The use of overtime for custodians at extra-curricular events is necessary and is rotated among the custodians.
- F. **Financial Software** – Mrs. Wysocki reported about progress moving to the new business software. Training has been rescheduled due to weather. Mrs. Wysocki met with the new town finance director and said that he is interested in looking at Budget Sense and indicated that he would like to attend the BOE training session.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **Out of State Field Trips** – For the Board’s information, the WHS music students will go to the New England Conservatory in Boston to work with nationally acclaimed conductors and attend a concert in Symphony Hall Handel/Haydn Society Orchestra. 80 students and 8 adults will travel by coach bus on March 18.
- B. **2011-2012 Budget** – Dr. Charles presented the budget for the 2011-2012 school year. She stated that this budget reflects many reductions that have already been made. Dr. Charles said that “as your educational leader, however, it is her responsibility to express the needs of the school district as we work together to educate, challenge and inspire Westbrook’s youth.” She said that while she understands that cuts to this proposal are probable; it is important to know the areas in which we must strive to provide critical resources. Her PowerPoint presentation reflected a 4.4% increase. A graph showed the budget by object of which 66% is for salaries, 14% benefits, 8% purchased services, 3.7% Transportation, 2.3% Tuition, 4.5% Supplies, 1.4% Equipment. Dr. Charles indicated the age of 245 computers as being from 6-8 years old. The proposed budget shows an addition of a .5 special education pre-k teacher, reduction of one custodian and technology replacements of computers, printers, and server. Dr. Charles reported on the achievements in 2010-11 include 100% graduation rate, above state averages in reading, writing and math at Daisy, technology integration, favorable class sizes, curriculum revision, etc.

Dr. Charles asked the Board for direction and there was a lengthy discussion. Factoring in federal grant money, the budget could come in at 3.3%, but it was cautioned that the final dollars from federal grants is uncertain. Mrs. White stated that this is what we need to spend and create our budget accordingly – we cannot count on grant money.

Dr. Charles mentioned that the Board should discuss transportation costs to magnet or charter schools. She stated that we are not mandated to pay, but there are requests to do so by parents. She referenced the Board's letter from Mr. and Mrs. Indich.

It was concluded that Dr. Charles would make a list of cuts in order of priority, should the Board find it ultimately necessary to cut the 4.4% and based on the monetary values show what the percentage would be.

Mr. Ehlert spoke to the Board that the Board has done good work over the last few years and should present what the Board believes is needed. He cautioned the Board about budgeting so closely that it would necessitate going back to the town and that it could reduce public confidence (if enough money was not put in the budget). He also suggested the Board look at oil costs, etc. in searching for ways to reduce the budget and consider economies of scale with the town.

A budget workshop is scheduled for **February 16, 2011**.

It was suggested that we look to Anthem for potential savings in benefits, and with the WEA for ways to reduce costs in benefits, furlough or reductions, and in retirement options. Dr. Charles stated that she spoke with the WEA and the full membership voted not to reopen the contract in the fall. Diana Burns, President, will bring back to the WEA membership ideas for discussion again if needed.

VIII. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- A. Enrollment – Dr. Charles reported there were 949 students enrolled as of January 3, 2011. One student left the high school and one student left the middle school. She reported that this is an increase of 5 students from our October 1 enrollment of 944.

*Moved by Mrs. Greaves and seconded by Mrs. White to move the Superintendent's Mid-Year Review to the end of the agenda. **Vote unanimous.***

- B. **Midyear Review** – See. Above.

- C. **China Applications** –Dr. Charles said that Virginia White, Lauren Palermino, Diane Lewis, Cathi Taylor and Eve Barakos have submitted applications to participate in the 2011 Shandong Principal and Teacher Shadowing Project. The trip coincides with our April vacation which helps reduce the need for substitutes. Last year the Board provided \$900 to Nancy Malafronte for this purpose. Previous teachers also received funds to offset the cost of traveling to China. This year we have six teachers requesting to participate. The budget is unable to provide \$900 to each teacher. *Dr. Charles recommended the Board approve \$400 per teacher to support their participation in this professional development opportunity.* Moved by Mr. Labbadia and seconded by Mrs. White to approve disbursements of \$400 to each teacher. **Vote unanimous.** Mr. Campbell suggested that the Board revise the policy for the future to come up with firm amounts allowed for such professional development.

- D. **Interim Principal** – The Board was introduced to Lisa Wilson, interim principal at the middle school. Mrs. Wilson shared her observations of the first week at WMS. She stated that of all the districts she has been a part of, every single administrator in Westbrook has come to her to offer her support and help. In particular, Mr. Hale has

been a huge support. She has met the entire faculty, and gotten to all children the first day. She has met with individual grade level teams. The Board welcomed her.

- E. **Rachel's Challenge** – Dr. Charles encouraged the Board to attend Rachel's Challenge in the WHS library (might move to auditorium). The parent and community presentation is on January 24 at 7:00 PM. The students will have attended a very moving presentation previously. Dr. Charles reported that the program has garnered significant accolades across the state and nation. Westbrook Foundation, WEA, PTSO, Westbrook Ambulance, and the Youth Asset Team all donated money to bring this very special program to our students and community.

IX. OLD BUSINESS:

- A. **Middle School Principal Search** – Dr. Charles reported that flyers have been sent to area districts, colleges, CAS, CAPSS, and various associations. An ad was placed in the Hartford Courant for Sunday, January 9 and online for 1 month for \$865. Information has been placed on the website and CTREAP. Candidates will be questioned as to how they received information regarding the vacancy. Teacher input was solicited on January 3 and a parent meeting has been rescheduled for January 19. Teachers and parents have already indicated their desire to participate in the selection process and it was suggested involving a student from Student Council. Dr. Charles reported that we have already received some applications and there have been inquiries about salary, which she feels should be discussed by the Board of Education so that information can be shared with potential applicants.
- B. **Energy Committee** – Dr. Charles reported that the town energy committee has added a component that includes regionalization of energy resources with area towns. A draft report was issued and should be approved by the BOS on 1-27-11. The Board was asked if they would like a presentation from a representative. It was suggested that it might be more appropriate for LRP committee. Mrs. Wysocki will provide the report and the Board will make a decision after review by the LRP committee.

Superintendent's Goals: Dr. Charles provided the Board with a handout and talked to them about her key areas of progress by this midyear point. Mrs. Westbrook complimented Dr. Charles on her accomplishments.

X. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORT

- A. **Policy** - Nothing to report
- B. **Communications Subcommittee** – No report.
- C. **Long Range Plan** – Mr. Labbadia reported on a recent LRP committee meeting which included discussion about the charter commission and length of terms for board members. Mrs. Westbrook suggested that the Board take a position and talk to the charter commission about that. The committee met with the new town finance director and talked about technology collaboration, facilities and maintenance collaboration, value stream mapping, shared services and capital budget.

XI. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

XII. PERSONNEL

- A. **Professional Appointments** - None
- B. **Non-Certified Appointments/Resignations:** None

C. Superintendent Midyear Evaluation – This item was postponed due to the absence of several BOE members.

XIII. ADJOURN: Moved by Mr. Labbadia and seconded by Mrs. White to adjourn at 10:00 p.m. **Vote unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted,

Myrn Keryc, Board Secretary

Cecilia S. Lester, Board Recording Clerk