

**Waitsfield Elementary Board of School Directors  
February 15, 2016 Meeting Minutes  
7:00 PM Waitsfield School Library**

Attending: Barclay Rappeport, Eve Frankel, Helen Kellogg, Christine Sullivan

Staff: Brigid Nease, WWSU Superintendent, Kaiya Korb, WES Principal

Public: Jeremy Gulley

Eve Frankel called the meeting called to order at 7:06 p.m.

**Additions/Edits to the Agenda:** Kaiya Korb requested the addition of executive session for a matter of personnel: contract to the agenda.

**Audience and Written Communication:** Board members expressed appreciation for the letter Christine Sullivan shared in the Valley Reporter.

**Preschool Program Presentation**

Emily von Trapp joined to present about the preschool program at Waitsfield School. She outlined the program philosophy, core curriculum and key elements. The presentation will also be shared on the Waitsfield School website from the preschool page. This information will help to inform the broader community about our program; this communication is of even more importance as we enter into universally funded preschool, in which families will likely be exploring preschool program choice.

**Preparation for Annual School Meeting**

Board members reviewed the warrant, determining who would be prepared to speak to each of the articles. A draft of the presentation for town meeting occurred, with discussion regarding when to open the discussion to school board consolidation. Given that school board consolidation is likely on many people's minds, it was decided to include discussion of this topic within the general school report to address any questions that might color feelings about the budget or the school. Kaiya will revise the presentation and share it back with board members before the meeting.

**Educational Legislation & Political Activity Update**

Brigid offered that just last Friday, new information was shared regarding the yield (state-wide per pupil spending) that will bring additional challenges for budgeting next year. New learning was that we are one of the only group of school districts that don't have significant reserve funds (up to two months of operating expenses). Many districts have tapped into these funds to meet the growth caps established this year, thus, the budgets that are being passed are deceptively low in projecting the real amount of "new money" needed to realize anticipated spending needs. The "yield", or state-wide per pupil spending, does not reflect the carry-over

contributions from these reserve funds. There is a bill in the senate asking for further information about reserves; this information would be used to help determine how to calculate the yield. Brigid also recently had an opportunity to review the 4 tiers of the VEHI health insurance that we anticipate to be available, and mandatory to offer, beginning in 2017-2018. We need to be prepared to have negotiated agreements with these plans in November of 2017.

### **Approve Board Order**

Christine moved to approve warrant voucher # 1114 in the amount of \$6,009.91. Barclay seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Jonathon Goldhammer pre-approved warrant voucher #1107 on February 1, 2016, but given his absence, the board held on approval of this warrant until he is present.

### **Approve January 18, 2016 Meeting Minutes**

Barclay Rappeport moved approval of the January 18, 2016 minutes. Christine seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

### **Confirm Preschool Class Sizes**

Eve moved to set the maximum enrollment for preschool at 12 for the three year old program and 19 for the four year old program, maintaining current enrollment capacity numbers. Helen seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

### **March Meeting Date**

To avoid conflict with the education study circles, slated for Monday nights in March, Eve moved to hold the March meeting of the school board on March 15, 2016; Barclay seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Changing the meeting start time to 6:30 was also approved for March.

**Principal's Report** Kaiya shared that while she has, in the past, reported predominantly on work towards the action plan goals, this year in particular the work of the principal/school has been much larger than the work of the action plan. That said, the WWSU action plan work is also occurring and significant. Recent activity, under the broad goal of improving student engagement and achievement, includes: 1) exploration of a new summer school model that addresses more than intervention services through a robust "brain camp" like model. Kaiya is exploring the opportunity to work with Fayston School to deliver such a program. 2) ongoing work with the Tarrant organization to explore personalization of learning at the 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade, where students are currently working to incorporate the transferrable skills, which are skills that impact work in all content areas, into their personal learning goals. 3) a meeting of the Waitsfield School based Student Support Services team, which occurred during a recent winter sports program session, where data examining the health and efficacy of our instruction and intervention systems was examined. Recommendations include continuing to enhance our intervention system's capacity to provide supports early on and flexibly. On another vein, the school staff continues to explore implementation of proficiency based learning

system, including exploring what reporting out will look like. A recent staff meeting focused on the different grain sizes of classroom –based learning targets, performance indicators and graduation proficiencies. All staff who teach writing recently engaged in writing portfolio scoring calibration, in preparation for cross-school scoring of writing work aligned with Common Core/ Graduation Proficiency expectations as a component of our local assessment system being implemented in WWSU this year.

Continuing the school-based goal of supporting positive climate and social-emotional development of students, a winterfest celebration is planned for this coming Wednesday. This celebration recognizes the ongoing work to positively recognize the social-emotional development of students, including their engagement in their work, responsibility to the community and kindness to one another. Additionally, it provides a great opportunity for students to work in cross-grade groups. This winterfest will be another version of the Compass cup, where students throughout the school have been sorted into teams around the four compass points. The competitive part of the teams is particularly appealing to the older students, although all had fun in the fall compass cup. The unveiling of a gaga pit, a new addition to the playground, will be the culmination of the festival. Gaga ball has been introduced in PE class and has been wildly popular with the students.

Kaiya reported that preparing for implementation of universal preschool has been a recent focus. Within our school, the preschool has worked to compile the presentation shared today as well a handbook on our program. Kaiya has worked with the principals of the other elementary schools in WWSU to compile shared preschool program admission timeline and policy that incorporates universal preschool, looking at how non-resident students can apply for our programs as well as how families who choose not to access school-based programs can access funds.

Finally, Kaiya spoke briefly on the afterschool program, which is currently available to all kindergarten- 6<sup>th</sup> grade students from Waitfield and Fayston schools. She serves on the steering committee for the afterschool program as well as on the board of the parent organization of Open Hearth. This program, which offers very affordable childcare, meeting the needs of many in our communities, has been in place since 2009. A great deal of parent volunteer effort went into establishing the program in Waitfield; it absorbed the Fayston program in the winter of the first year to create a program that had sustainability for both communities. As the afterschool program operates under Open Hearth, which is an independent non-profit, it is rarely discussed at School Board meetings, but is an important resource to our school community and Kaiya is involved in supporting it. Recent discussions amongst other school boards in WWSU have looked at afterschool programming, the possibility of the school running such programming and the importance of having such programming based at one's school.

**Act 46 Study Group Report** The articles of agreement continue to be worked on and are almost complete. At last week's study group meeting, there was significant

discussion of the Warren bond vote and how concerns regarding that vote will impact votes for consolidation on the whole. While they reached a solution to bring the vote forward in all communities, with agreement that all districts are advisable, it is not clear if there is complete commitment to this solution. The School Boards which will bring forth the votes in each of the communities may be of a different composition, due to March re-elections, than those who initially agreed to engage in the study committee process.

**Superintendent's Report** Superintendent Nease shared that the bulk of her work at this time is in supporting the school board consolidation study committee work.

### **Executive Session**

Eve made a motion to move into executive session 9:36 p.m. Christine seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The board came out of executive session at 9:44 p.m.

Eve moved to accept, with sadness, the resignation of Nancy Robinson. Helen seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Kaiya noted that this was Helen's last monthly school board meeting after 6 years serving on the board. She expressed deep gratitude for Helen's patient and thoughtful work.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned by consensus at 9:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Kaiya Korb