

WAITSFIELD BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 20, 2011, 6:30 p.m.
Waitsfield Elementary School

Board Members Present: Eve Frankel, Rob Williams, Helen Kellogg, Scott Kingsbury, Todd White

WWSU and WES Staff Present: Kaiya Korb, Beth McGeorge, Emily Church

Members of the Public Present: Deb Loomis, Christine Sullivan, Sheila Fiaschetti, Stephanie Cramer, Erin Koch, Jean Goldhammer.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm.

Minutes: Eve Frankel made a motion to approve the minutes from November 29, 2011. Scott Kingsbury seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Helen Kellogg abstained as she was not present at that meeting.

ACTION:

Budget: Kaiya reviewed budget options with respect to kindergarten and fund balance management. WES carried a \$71K fund balance from 2010-2011. If we moved that balance to the maintenance reserve, we would then see that as part of our budget, driving up our expenditures. Likewise, returning those funds to the tax payers would create a spike and fall in the tax community, providing tax relief for only one year and a subsequent increase in following years. Kaiya noted that our equalized pupils number is down, resulting in less revenues coming in and also impacting taxes. The early childhood education committee previously recommended full time kindergarten for a variety of reasons including capacity to provide a variety and depth of learning experiences in the school day, continuity of experiences and instruction for children, and early intervention opportunities. Audience members expressed opinions on both pros and cons of a full time kindergarten program. Christine Sullivan noted that the class size would impact the quality of the program; Kaiya assured that while there isn't a "magic number", 19 students is a high number in the primary grades and has merited additional adult support in the classroom. We are not anticipating numbers this high in the future. Kaiya noted the \$30K received from the JOBS bill provides one-time revenue that will help off-set expenses for next year. Todd White reiterated that at the last meeting, the consensus from the board was that going to full time is the right thing to do and the decision to be made is simply when, this year or next. He asked the community for feedback on the contrary viewpoint. Stephanie Cramer noted how difficult the academics were for her daughter last year, and that she still needs a transition and study/play balance. She is also concerned about the afterschool program's capacity to meet the needs of the kindergarten children; by moving to a full-day program, we can anticipate that the number of kindergarten students enrolled in afterschool would increase. Sheila Fiaschetti noted that last years' kindergarten experience was a good fit for her daughter and she is not concerned about the academic load being too much in a full day program; she noted that all kids are different. Kaiya observed that a longer day would mean additional opportunities for science and exploratory group and project work, as well as a lessening of the rigor/speed in the day experienced in a half-day program. Eve was contacted by a few people, several of whom wanted to keep part time kindergarten. She attributes the desire for the part-time program to the preference for choice; with less school required time, families have more flexibility to structure the experience for a child. It was recognized that not all families have the resources to be able to carefully structure the afternoon

experiences for their children. Beth McGeorge advocates for full day kindergarten, speaking to the benefit of fewer transitions, greater continuity, and the need for longer periods of play and self regulation building. Erin Koch spoke to the need to build academic stamina given the increase in academic rigor of the common core. Jean Goldhammer confirmed the need for time to teach the social skills and problem solving for children in the early years.

Kaiya reviewed the Capital Improvement needs projected for the next few years, identifying that some are more urgent or necessary than others:

- 1) cabinet heater in the kitchen to be replaced
- 2) the balance of lighting improvements identified in last spring's lighting refurbishment plan
- 3) the ongoing tile replacements in 3 remaining classrooms
- 5) new carpet in at least one classroom
- 6) sinks & cabinets in the older wing of the building (insufficient storage and deteriorating sinks/cabinets)
- 7) library/gym painting
- 8) insulation on north wing of the building (to address issues identified in January 2010 Building Assessment)
- 9) Kitchen refrigerator and stove need to be replaced. The PTA is considering replacing the kitchen stove.

All together, without insulation, our costs would be over \$100K. We anticipate carrying over \$6K from this year. Budget options presented involve moving ½ of the 2010-2011 fund balance (approximately \$35K) or the full balance (\$71K) to the capital improvement fund. For the past two years, no "new" money has been included in the budget for the capital improvement fund, only the fund balance generated from the previous year.

Discussion: Helen Kellogg inquired as to how we address the budget % increase spike created if we move the full fund balance back into the budget. The group discussed the benefit of using one-time revenues this year for the cost of the capital improvement plan. Eve Frankel recommended waiting on the full time kindergarten program until we have more community and parental support, as well as to give staff the time to plan for and build the program. Helen Kellogg spoke to the need to provide full day coverage for those not able to invest in the private enrichment programs and that the full day will create more breathing room for play and balance in the curricular planning. Todd White supported the full day scenario noting that afterschool can be addressed to meet the needs of a likely larger kindergarten population. He also supports using the resources to maintain our facility. Rob Williams suggested we wait a year on full day kindergarten and moving only half of the fund balance to the capital improvement fund. The following years' staffing rearrangement, the need for community support for full day, and the overall budget constraints drive his decision. Kaiya cautioned that if the decision was a matter of funding, this year presents an opportunity to move to full day kindergarten with an impact of less than 1% increase. We have many special one-time revenue funds this year, such as the JOBS funds, and while we are anticipating a decrease in staffing in the following year's budget, there are also unknowns in looking ahead more than a year. Rough estimates show that even with reducing a staff person in the following year, we may not be able to achieve a budget reductions matching what we have in place this year. Helen Kellogg made a motion to pass a budget that includes all of the elements listed in the third option, presented here as \$2,169,090, which includes giving back 50% of our fund balance to the town and includes full day kindergarten, recognizing that the dollar amount may change with the finalization of the

WWSU budget. Todd White seconded and the matter was unanimously approved.

REPORTS

Financials: Report provided. Kaiya noted that our projected fund balance of approximately \$9K will likely be even greater.

Principal: The onset of the ski/ride will make time for professional development work with staff, focused on the common core and writing. The playground is ready to go for installation, thanks to PTA, MRV Rec District, and Arra funds. The lighting upgrades are in place.

Washington West Representative: Eve reported on the need for the systems administrator role. She finds the investment imperative. There will be a meeting at 5:30 at Harwood to review the district budget.

DISCUSSION

Audience and Written Communication: Reviewed above.

Start of School Day: the WES board is supporting exploration to consider whether our day starts later and whether we would be conjoined with Harwood busing. The topic to be raised again at the January 2012 executive committee meeting.

WES school board goals and community connection: The January 26th newsletter will focus on the budget and process, with call out of the kindergarten decision. The board decided to rotate going to PTA meetings to ensure connectivity. The board will keep looking for a permanent videographer.

WWSU Policy Packet #2:

The first 7 policies will be reviewed at this meeting. Kaiya approved D1: Personnel recruitment but noted that D2-R: Professional Development should not universally be tied to student performance metrics listed in the action plan. D3: Staffing and Job descriptions looks fine. D4: Educator Supervision and D8-R: alcohol and drug free workplace look fine. D 10: Public Complaints about Personnel reads negatively of the public. Kaiya notes the more fair language in our current policy and recommends we stick with that. D12-R: Harassment of Employees and D13 R Health Insurance both read well.

Note: Eve Frankel spoke to her pride in representing WES in the Executive Committee due to the health of our relationship and collaboration.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:57, Scott Kingsbury made a motion to move into executive session on a student matter. Eve Frankel seconded and the group moved into executive session. The board came out of executive session at 9:07. No action was needed.

At 9:08 Eve Frankel made a motion to go back into executive session on a board matter. Rob Williams seconded and the board went into executive session. The board came out of executive session at 9:10. No

action was taken.

Adjournment Meeting adjourned at 9:11 pm. The next board meeting will be held on January 16th at 6:30 pm at WES.

Respectfully,
Helen Kellogg
Secretary and Clerk