

WAITSFIELD BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
Meeting Minutes
Monday, November 15, 2010, 6:00 pm
Waitsfield Elementary School

Board Members Present: Elizabeth Cadwell, Wrenn Compère, Helen Kellogg, Scott Kingsbury, and Rob Williams (chair).

WWSU and WES Staff Present: Kaiya Korb, Brigid Scheffert, and Nina Brennan (Nina present from 7:30-8:00). Members of the public present: George Gabaree Jr. and Tanya Wood.

CALL TO ORDER: Rob Williams called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Elizabeth Cadwell moved to accept the minutes from the October 18, 2010 Waitsfield School Board meeting. Scott Kingsbury seconded and the Minutes were unanimously approved.

DISCUSSION:

- Audience and written communication: No topics were raised.

- Budget:
 - General budget, draft 1. Kaiya Korb presented three options. The “Draft 1” budget shows an increase of 1.7% or \$36,177 over this current year. Kaiya noted that to meet the “challenges for change” request being discussed at the state level, we would need to *reduce* the budget by \$48,156.

 - Review budget scenario options. Kaiya Korb reviewed scenarios for altering five key program/service areas and their potential impact on both the budget and the quality of our overall program.

 - Capital improvement plan: Kaiya reviewed key priorities for the upcoming year, with focus on insulation, tile upgrade, and possibly exterior trim replacement.

- Transportation sub-committee report: Kaiya reported that of the \$60,000 spent on transportation annually, approximately \$28,000 of that is reimbursed by the state, leaving \$32,000 paid by WES. Also noted is that our participation in the transportation contract reduces the overall cost of the program for the supervisory union, and our elimination of that line item would increase the cost for our town to support Harwood Union transportation. Kaiya reviewed key reasons why parents do not currently partake of the resource and the changes recently made to address those. We have approximately 40 students who ride the bus in and 45 students home. The school will continue to look for ways to make the bus viable and attractive for more families. It was not considered an option to eliminate transportation services.

- Solar sub-committee report: The committee was formed to enable the school to be proactive rather than reactive to future alternative energy opportunities. At this moment, the committee feels that a fixed panel, adjustable, rack mounted system is the best value. Also, given that municipalities are not eligible for tax credits, the committee considered whether a local business would host and be the fiscal agent for the school's system. However, the first step is to focus on conservation and improve the energy efficiency of the school to better understand our future energy needs. No action on alternative energy is sought right now. Kaiya will draft a summary of our interests in energy conservation/insulation and solicit proposals from businesses.
- French curriculum presentation: Nina Brennan presented a foreign language curriculum overview. She highlighted the value of starting in first grade and having the full continuum to sixth grade. This prepares children well for the intense language experience offered at Harwood. She uses a technique called *total physical response*, which engages the child through games, activities, stories etc. It also assumes a period of listening prior to speaking, in the earlier grade levels. Writing begins in third and fourth grades. Fifth and sixth grades get more rigorous and increase their focus on grammar. The upper unit also has an all-French day once a week, to push them higher and further prepare them for Harwood. The board appreciated the depth and tenor of her presentation and requested that it be made available online to the school community.
- Report out on water system / engagement with town water project: WES was granted an extension of enforcement discretion, from the state Division of Water Resources, in meeting the water system compliance standards in anticipation of the upcoming connection to the Waitsfield municipal water project. The issues of compliance do not affect the safety of our drinking water, and our water is checked daily to ensure that this remains the case. WES has given an initial deposit for the municipal water program. The annual cost to the school of the municipal water supply based on the ERU (estimated residential units) is estimated to be \$18,000. If we chose not to participate, we would need to upgrade our current system by next summer, which is estimated to cost approximately \$40,000. UV and chlorination systems are options for the disinfection system we could use at the school. Estimates for the upgrading work will be sought, and the binding nature of the current agreement will be determined and brought to the following meeting.

ACTION:

- Policy – F20-R Prevention of Harassment of Students (ready for adoption): No changes were made to the policy read last meeting. No questions were raised. Scott Kingsbury made a motion to approve F20-R as written. Helen Kellogg seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.
- Building / Grounds meeting report: Both staff and a small group of community members have identified needs and brainstormed ideas to meet those needs. The next step is to prioritize the list and take that to a professional for framing and estimating the project cost and flow. This plan will then be presented to the Board, PTA and Mad River Rec District. Brigid encouraged a safety audit prior to the finalization of the plan. The board requested that an update of this work be presented at the December board meeting.

- School credit card request: topic removed from the agenda as the need has been met without using a credit card.

REPORTS:

- Financial Report: There is a considerable fund balance as a result of new hires and conservative estimates for oil pricing. Upcoming costs for a FMLA draw down will be offset by some savings from special needs contingencies not used.
- Principal's Report: Kaiya focused her report on the budget, transportation, and water projects, as outlined above. She also noted the success of the ski and skate sale, specifically the way in which the school was cared for, and the extent of the volunteerism by many parents and teachers.
- Superintendent's Report: Brigid spoke of the tenor of Montpelier on the challenge funding and the expectation of each district to comply. There is a focus on Act 153 (from legislative bill H66) and the duties of the supervisory union changing. The laws around WWSU boards' responsibility will change in July 2012 and all need to understand and adapt to those changes. The middle school consolidation working group has created a list of 11 options to be considered. Study monies are being sought to better understand the options created as well as the future of our current structure. The declining population is a factor in our long term thinking as a district, and we are trying to establish the breaking point both from an economic and social peer group standpoints. Wrenn Compère made a motion to seek out the grant to participate in the exploratory study on the pros and cons of consolidations. Scott Kingsbury seconded the motion. It was passed unanimously. Also, there is a new discussion around a national common core curriculum, and how that dovetails into our current structure. Finally, there is a WWSU meeting on December 13th at 6:00 pm in which all district boards will meet and vote on the budget targets and how we will proceed.
- Washington West Representative Report: The WES board needs to study the detailed materials from the executive committee in anticipation of the December 13, 2010 meeting and the decisions therein.

NEXT MEETING:

The following board meeting will be at 5:00 pm on December 13th at Harwood Union High School, prior to the WWSU wide meeting starting at 6:00 pm.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Kellogg
Secretary and Clerk