Minutes for Wednesday, April 8, 2020

2pm, Virtual Meeting

Due to Governor’s Executive Orders on schools and meetings and social distancing due to ongoing health concerns relating to the spread of coronavirus

In attendance: President Meghan Agresto, VP Al Marzetti, Treasurer Bryan Daggett, Secretary Allison Broughton, Susan Taylor, Gerri Adams, Frieda Harris. Teacher-Admin Sylvia Wolff, Teacher Liz Fennimore.

The meeting was called to order at 2:03pm. A quorum was established.

Board action

* + Approve March’s minutes – Susan motioned to approve; Al seconded. All voted in favor.
  + Educational leave applications review – n/a – can learn from anywhere that is “home” now
  + Treasury Application for COVID loan for organizations for whom current economic uncertainty makes the loan necessary to support ongoing operations. [https://covid19relief.sba.gov/](https://covid19relief.sba.gov/#/)

President’s Report

* + WEVS is now operating as a fully virtual school with 100% attendance. We are lucky to have a small school in a small town.
  + **Amazing teachers and parents and students!**
  + Performance review update – Meghan submitted the paragraph to OCS re: the lottery procedure. There has been no response from them yet.
  + CIP update – No meetings planned while WEVS operates virtually.
  + Testing update – No EOGs per state decision. The state will issue guidance regarding grade promotion and BOGs.
  + Bought new chromebooks JUST in time! – Should operating virtually be required in the future, students will be required to use school equipment so that teachers can monitor students’ activity and more easily troubleshoot technology issues.
  + Field trips/kidwind – KidWind may try for a virtual event.

Treasurer’s Report -

* Report from Acadia won’t be available until 4/10, so no update
* Budget template – Key components of draft:
  + Used 41 students which gave us additional revenue for the coming year
  + Due to state budget concerns related to the virus, Acadia gave guidance about projecting lower state funds for education. The suggestion was a 6-7% reduction case. This draft assumed a 10 % reduction in state funds
  + No reduction in county funds per students as it’s built into the worksheet – I think we should anticipate this happening as the county revenues will be hit hard due to the virus.
  + Assumed that donations would stay at the lower level after the tax changes that became effective in 2019
  + Amounts for expenses are of course projections based from previous years and YTD information through February 2020
  + This is a balanced budget, appropriating $10,000 from our bank account to get a surplus. We have the bank funds to remain financially solvent even if expenses exceed revenues for the next fiscal year
* Discussion: Counties could cut school budget by 10% as occupancy and sales tax will be way down. We could potentially lose about $110,000 of county money. Property tax might be up to supplement education. REAP grant funds are included in template. The addition of three students makes a difference because we don’t have an increase in expense. Budget vote will occur in May, prior to receiving actual insurance costs. Building lease is through June of this year but should remain steady.

Curriculum Committee Report—Final two observations were completed, and all teachers have their evaluations. Teacher-Admin Wolff will send Zoom information and schedule for dropping in to observe virtual learning.

Building Committee - none

New Business –

Coronavirus small business loan options: EIDL is $10,000 via a short application that goes straight to the SBA. The form doesn’t require much data, but there are a few parts that are awkward for nonprofits. PPP applications occur through a bank—Towne Bank is only taking applications for current customers. Nonprofits qualify for both loan types. PPP have to be paid back if you reduce your staff levels, but even then they are paid back at 1%. Both programs have caps, so we shouldn’t wait if we’re going to apply. Bryan raised the concern that the loans are meant for businesses and nonprofits that are losing income, which the school is not. Susan pointed out that if the school gets reduced funds from the state or county in the fall, we may need it. Revenue is not changing for the current fiscal year. It may change for the next fiscal year, and these programs won’t be available. Al moved to apply for EIDL; Susan seconded. The motion was approved. Al moved to apply for PPP; Susan seconded. The motion was approved.

Old Business - none

Teacher update

* + Update on transition, what have you learned, what do you need?

Parent support + Teacher-Admin Wolff made the transition to virtual learning possible. Teachers have worked very hard to implement virtual learning, and their efforts have been impressive. Teachers have been teaching parents how to use the online learning tools though students have used many of them before. The students who tend to need the most help from teachers are those who have two parents occupied during class time. The initial virtual learning schedule included too much screen time, so it was modified to 30 minutes per class with the teacher and about 30 minutes of independent work for grades 3-8. Second graders continue to meet daily for ELA and math. K/1 meets daily according to a schedule Marcy worked out for the younger students. Zoom has been a better platform than Google Hangouts. There were some security issues with Zoom; their updated security measures have become defaults.

* + Acadia- The state is still asking for instructional time to be reported, and 6 hours of are being reported. Teachers are interacting with students, giving feedback, and work is being turned in. The state will not hold grading to the same standard. Attendance is not being counted from March 30-May 15. There is a chance the time will have to be made up.
  + Project-based learning: Students were given two weeks to put together some type of how-to video. They were given a choice between two options to complete and were asked to watch and comment positively on some of their classmates’ videos. Results were great. Board members viewed a 3-minute how-to video using sequential language (one of the requirements) to instruct how-to build a lizard habitat. It was adorable and informative.
  + What do parents need?

Lots of direction and communication. Their feedback has been great.

* + Check-ins, Portfolio updates- Waiting for state mandates about how everything will be counted. State still expects a schoolday’s worth of work. There will be no problem documenting that instruction continues. We only lost two school days in the transition; might convert the May teacher workday.
  + EC update from Teacher Fennimore—Currently 4 IEPs total. One is being re-evaluated right now, and another will be re-evaluated after that. Pullout with IEP students continues in virtual school. We may owe some compensatory hours on one IEP. If school is just cancelled, those hours will not be required. EC Aide Allen may be able to pull out students for Big History project or a chat room.
  + Concerns? The unknowns—what will the state require? Will there be makeups? When will this end? The transition was difficult in the beginning but getting better every day. Teachers and students are adjusting to the new format. No one seems to be having a really difficult time. Families have been very communicative regarding their needs. One student didn’t have Internet access, so the school is paying for their hotspot for the rest of the year. Many students log in at pledge time to socialize. Will consider setting up a WEVS recess room for socializing after Spring Break.
  + Instructional Platform (Renzuilli ) update- Teacher-Admin Wolff is talking to three parents about having their students try it out; two are in 5th grade and one in 6th. It could be a rolled out in the virtual or actual classroom and is potentially a great tool for students who are flying through their work.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:41pm.