**Windham Elementary School Board Meeting**

**Date: March 16, 2020**

**Present :** Antje Rupert, Beth McDonald, Russ Cumming, Mickey Parker-Jennings, Bill Anton, Laurie Garland, Kord Scott, Carolyn Partridge, Tom & Eileen Widger, Bill Dunkel, Crystal Corriveau, Bob & Cindy Kehoe, Dawn Bower, Rob Packard, Lisa Beshay

**Call to Order: 4:02 pm**

**Opening Comments:**

 Bill Anton spoke briefly about the covid-19 virus and the steps the WCSU is taking to adhere to the Governor’s recommendations for school closings and educational continuity. Schools will be closed until April 6 and proceeding on a dismissal basis. He spoke about warning a school board meeting at the school and with a PA system addressing people outside so as to keep the appropriate social distancing the CDC is suggesting.

As for food provided to the students during the shutdown, there will be three locations for parents to pick up food; they will be Jamaica, New Brook and Townshend schools. Parents will get instructions from Mickey P-J. as to how to sign up and what time the meals will be ready for pickup.

Special Ed services for students will be continued on a case by case standard so no education time is lost. There will be a covid-19 web site launched later this week by the WCSU. There will be updates from the VT. Dept. of Health, the Agency of Education, and the WCSU to keep everyone well-informed as events and circumstances change.

The continuity of learning for students will be achieved by packets of instruction prepared by Mickey P-J. and sent home with the students. Updated packages will be sent as the dismissal condition continues.

**Minutes:**

 The minutes from last week’s meeting will be reviewed at the next board meeting.

**Bills and Pay Orders:** N/A

**Budget:**

 Antje R. discussed a letter she received from the Ad-hoc Committee. In it they reported the events of March11, 2020 when 6 members of the Windham community presented ideas in support of HB 661 and also testified before the Senate Education Committee concerning the Weighting Study. The Ad-hoc Committee also discussed the reimbursement rate for ECSE and its impact on the excess spending formula for towns that experience an unexpected spike in costs. The net result of the letter was a recommendation that the SB consider financing the $63,000 deficit over a three-year period in order to reduce the per-pupil spending below the excess spending limit. It also suggested looking at other line items. In that spirit, she had requested an alternate budget from Laurie G. at the WCSU. Bill A. stated that the town may vote on the dollar amount of the school budget but not on the line items in the budget. It is up to the school board to discern how to spend the monies approved for the school budget by the voters of the town.

Laurie G. prepared two versions of the current school budget. One version spread the deficit over three years and kept the music line item in the budget. A second version removed the music line item and included spreading the deficit over three years. Following a robust discussion covering several topics, the SB moved a $408,591 budget for approval at the next special town meeting.

Motion: Beth M. moved to approve the $408,591 budget and Russ C. 2nd, motion carried.

Motion: Antje R. moved to warn a special School Board informational meeting for April 13, 2020 at 5 pm to follow the regular board meeting at 4 pm at the school to review the proposed school budget, Beth M. 2nd, motion carried.

Motion: Antje R. moved to warn a special school budget meeting for Saturday April 18, 2020 at 10 am to vote on the school budget at the school’s location, Russ C. 2nd, motion carried.

**Members of the Public:**

 Crystal C. spoke to her individual concerns over the proposed budget and its impact on student education hours. Her specific concern was her children were getting 6 hours of age-specific education at Townshend Elementary, and, if implemented, the current budget would cut deeply into the hours of direct instruction they would each receive. She expressed appreciation for the current teaching environment and hoped it would continue into the next school year.

 There was a broad discussion about her concerns by others in the room and several comments about the teaching environment at Townshend Elementary school. Antje R. acknowledged her concerns and replied the SB was acting to the best of its ability.

Bill D. asked if the SB would like the input of the Ad-hoc Committee on evaluating educational cost options going forward. Bill D. noted that it was not the goal to close the school, but rather to answer the question; is there an alternate method of reducing costs and the tax rate while at the same time providing a high quality education for Windham students? Antje R. responded that the information they discover could be of use to the SB and would be appreciated.

Crystal C. inquired as to the teaching qualifications of Sara. Mickey P-J. replied that Sara did not have teaching qualifications and would not be doing any instruction of students.

**Principal’s Report: N/A**

**Superintendents’s: N/A**

**Old Business: N/A**

**New Business:N/A**

**Executive Session:**

 SB went into Executive session at 5:28 pm and came out at 5:45 pm

**Next Meeting:**

 April 13, 2020 at 4 pm followed by a budget information meeting at 5 pm at the school

**Adjourn:**

 5:45 pm

Respectfully submitted

Russ Cumming, WSB Clerk