**Windham Elementary School Board Meeting**

**Date: March 16, 2020**

**Present :** Antje Rupert, Beth McDonald, Russ Cumming, Mickey Parker-Jennings, William 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:**

William Anton spoke briefly about the covid-19 virus and the steps the WCSU is taking to adhere to the Governor’s recommendation’s for school closings and educational continuity. Schools will be closed until April 6th 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 Educations 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. Up dated 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 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 Lauri 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.

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Lauri 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 the $408,591 budget and Russ 2nd, motion carried.

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

Motion: Antje moved a special school budget meeting for Saturday April 18th 2020 at 10 am to vote on the school budget at the schools location, Russ 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 each received. She expressed appreciation for the current teaching environment and hoped it would continue into the next school year.

There was a broad discussion of her concerns by others in the room and several comments about the teaching environment at Townshend Elementary school. Antje acknowledged her concerns and replied the SB was acting to 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 noted 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 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 Sarah. Mickey P-J replied that Sarah 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

**Next Meeting:**

April 13, 2020 at the school

**Adjourn:**

5:45 pm

Respectfully submitted

Russ Cumming, WSB Clerk