

**Washington West Supervisory Union Executive Committee**  
**“OFFICIAL” Meeting Minutes for September 11, 2013**  
**Washington West Central Office**

**WWEC Members Present:** Heidi Spear (Fayston), Deb Hunter (Harwood), Dale Smeltzer (Harwood), Eve Frankel (Waitsfield), Mike Ketchel (Warren), Steve Odefey (Waterbury-Duxbury), and Ben Smith (Waterbury-Duxbury)

**Administrators Present:** Brigid Scheffert, Michelle Baker, Donarae Dawson-Pike

**Others:** Rosemarie White

Eve Frankel called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

**1) Action Items:**

- a) **Approve minutes of June 12, 2013:** Ben Smith moved to approve the minutes of June 12, 2013 as written. Steve Odefey seconded the motion which passed with Heidi Spear, Deb Hunter, Dale Smeltzer, Eve Frankel, Steve Odefey and Ben Smith voting in favor and Mike Ketchel abstaining. Mike Ketchel then asked some clarifying questions about two items in the minutes.
- b) **Amended WWSU Bus Contract-Warren:** Michelle reported on the process followed under the current transportation contract language to bring Warren into the contract. An appendix to the contract has been developed, plus an agreement between WWSU and Warren for them to reimburse the new costs. Warren is selling their buses and will be using First Student's; there will be benefits to all schools because there will be 3 extra buses in the fleet. Mike Ketchel moved to approve the appendix to the transportation contract between WWSU and First Student, and to enter into an agreement between WWSU and Warren. Ben Smith seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

**2) Discussion Items**

- a) **WWSU Financial Report:** Michelle briefly reviewed the report which had been included in the meeting packet. It showed a \$10,814 fund balance, or 1%, from the FY13 budget. She noted some of the savings that contributed to this fund balance. She also noted that in the future a reserve fund might be established to help reduce fluctuation from changes in the fund balance; e.g. this is significantly less than the fund balance the previous year so even without any change in expenditures the assessment to districts will increase.

Brigid provided some relevant finance information from her upcoming Local Report – they have shifted the administrator summer retreat from Stoweflake to Central Office, saving \$2,000; also over the whole WWSU the 40 hires made this year have resulted in a savings of \$275,000 in salaries and benefits which is a sustainable savings that will be realized year after year.

- b) **Questions/Comments on Superintendent State Level Report:** This had been included in the meeting packet. Brigid noted that she has never seen a year where there are so many new things being required of schools. She also reported that her priorities this year will include two key concepts that she will be writing about, including within a blog: (1) she believes in assessment data but feels that NECAP and the world of testing have caused too narrow a definition of our schools – that rather they should be about student interest, motivation and passion which are not assessed by these tests; (2) increasing student voice such as using surveys for students to give to teachers in all grade 7-12 courses that wouldn't be used for evaluation but simply for feedback to teachers from students. Dale suggested that more information for board members regarding the implications of the changes in the new proposed school quality standards will be important. Brigid briefly reviewed her notes on the proposed standards, which included numerous and significant changes. One role to consider might be to provide comment during the rule-making process.
- c) **Removing WWSU Payroll from Board Warrants:** Michelle briefly reviewed the requirements about expenditures, and noted that local boards have authorized these outside of the normal board warrant process for purchases.

**ACTION:** Deb Hunter moved to authorize the WWSU Director of Finance to sign and approve Board Orders with WWSU employee payroll for FY2014 in accordance with the Employee Contracts and Agreements and per the WWSU payroll procedures. Mike Ketchel seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

- d) **Update on Health Care Reform; Where are we?:** Michelle Baker provided a presentation of the situation currently. She will be provided an update at every meeting to keep board members informed as things evolve. VEHI's plans are considered grandfathered plans, so employees can continue to participate until the end of FY15. VEHI had to reorganize itself to stay an entity during transition into the new system, but will likely go away after 2015. Any district with over 50 employees will have to comply by January 2015 which is the next budget year. One of the first steps is to determine which employer entity has more than 50 employees. W-D and Harwood are over 50 for sure, with Warren on the cusp and the other districts probably under. The immediate concern for districts with over 50 employees is that fines and penalties that can be significant (assessed on all employees) if all rules are not complied with for all individuals. There are also affordability requirements that might require the district to pay more of the insurance cost for some support staff employees. Districts with under 50 employees will not be subject to any of these penalties as long as VEHI maintains its grandfathering by keeping the same plan. Michelle will be doing an evaluation of the pros and cons of complying or not and hence paying the penalties, including a likely actuarial analysis. Brigid noted that this is significant extra work for Michelle, and it might be that providing some extra WWSU staff support for her might be essential. Michelle then summarized some possible longer term steps that will need to be taken, including potential ways to offset some costs.
  - e) **Draft of Non-Tuitioning Students Policy Language & Flow Chart:** Brigid provided two handouts – two WWSU model policies she has developed titled “Admission of Non-Resident Tuition Students” and “Admission of Resident Students”; and a “Tuitioning Non-Resident Students – Policy Development Worksheet for Boards”. Goals are for all boards to have a policy, and fully understand their legal liability around the choices they make. **Local boards need to put this on their October agenda to work through.** Brigid went through the worksheet with board members, so that they can help lead the discussions in their local meetings.
  - f) **Plan WWEC Committee Work & Topics for the FY2014:** Brigid noted that this doesn't have to be completed at this meeting; October agenda items are listed on the agenda. Eve suggested that board members take the time to read the reports and come back to share their ideas in October.
  - g) **Presentation & Discussion of FES Board's Interest in Creating Task Force:** Heidi explained the letter which the Fayston Board had drafted and was included in the meeting packet, on two proposed task forces for SU work: (1) coming together to meet needs of students who aren't receiving all the challenges they might need – other programs outside of school; and (2) the challenge of the state funding formula and justifying the budget to voters, including misconceptions about the costs in small schools – looking at legislative reforms to propose. They are looking for a member from each board, plus some community members, to work on these task forces, to be able to accomplish more. **WWEC board members are being asked to take the letter back to their boards to ask about the interest, and come back with a report on the interest to the October meeting.**
  - h) **Update on Superintendent's Op-Ed on Facebook Sexting:** Brigid gave a brief update on the response to this recently published op-ed, and the media interviews she has given. In about two weeks, they will put out information about what is being put in place at Harwood.
- 3) **Other Business** – there was none
  - 4) **Adjournment** – Deb Hunter moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 p.m. Dale Smeltzer seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

*Minutes recorded by Dale Smeltzer*