

SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, October 18, 2018
Final Minutes

Present: Katie Fiander, Dan Hayes, Jen Malcolm-Brown, Steve Sullivan, members; Lauren Thomas-Paquin, Chair; Jackie Mendonsa, Principal; Bruce Turner, Director of Finance and Operations; Jennifer Haggerty, Superintendent; Public Guests

A. Meeting Called to Order by Lauren at 6:41 P.M.

B. Public Comments and Announcements: Dan noted he'll be attending the MASC Conference; he's on a CES panel on Wednesday.

C. Review of Agenda and Perpetual Calendar: No changes.

D. Warrants and Gifts:

#3010: \$16,662.80

#3011: \$977.30

E. Director of Finance and Operations Report – FY20 Budget Discussion:

Bruce reported that the main driver this year is salary increases. Overall, the budget increase is 2.29%, while the contractual salary increase is 2.25%. The U#28 budget reflects some of what JSC asked at the last meeting. Jennifer added another significant driver is the loss of grant funding (in particular, Preschool and Kindergarten state support in the form of grants). Jackie noted that SES is at 40% direct-certified reduced lunch (representing people who are already receiving state assistance in other forms); this speaks to the community's demographics as well as its ability to pay for things like school lunch and Preschool. However, Bruce went on to say that we're headed toward the threshold for full state funding of school lunch.

Bruce reviewed the main changes and drivers in the budget. It looks like Shutesbury will be increasing its allocation by approximately 1% due to increased enrollment, but that could change once it gets certified by the state.

Dan asked about physical therapy services from CES; Jackie said CES canceled those services, and we have an occupational therapist we share with Leverett.

Jennifer pointed out that we're increasing the position of Director of Learning Design from .6 to .8 because of an increase in several kinds of duties, including providing services to ELL students, more grant writing, and so on.

Bruce explained lines 43 and 44 as changes in staffing to get the right people in the right places.

Jennifer drew attention to revenue, which has decreased by over \$11,000 (mainly due to the loss of the Early Learning grant). Jackie reported enrollment stands at 129, but there a lot of children coming over the next 3 to 5 years, based on participation in programs for young children at SES and in the community. Class sizes are healthy right now, and almost all our paraeducators are attached to specific needs (IEP plans, etc.). We're hoping that broadband will bring more families into the town.

A Fin Com member in attendance asked what the increase would look like without the loss of the grant. Jackie noted that on a list of the 50 lowest-paying school districts in the state, Shutesbury is #5. Lauren praised Jackie and Jennifer for successfully balancing the ability of the Town to pay with quality of instruction. Jennifer in turn praised SSC for working well as a team to support the school and advocate for

necessary expenses. Dan said we always try to present a lean budget that doesn't factor in extraordinary expenses, and when those arise, the Town has stepped up. The Fin Com member said that it really comes back to the state and how it funds the whole system; Jennifer agreed: the state should start funding a 21st-century education with a 21st-century allocation rather than with rules written in 1993. She reported that Shutesbury didn't qualify for rural aid because its average household income is higher than the state average. Jackie wondered whether people who attended SES as children and still live in town don't realize that there have been dramatic changes in the needs of children attending SES today; for instance, there was a time when no students qualified for free or reduced cost lunch, but that's not the reality today. Jennifer said it was good that Rural Aid passed, but it's just a first step.

Steve asked whether we're supporting Gillian Budine since her salary was getting cut by the state; Jennifer said yes, and pointed out the line in our budget that helps offset that loss. Dan added that there's some money set aside for school committee members to attend conferences; we should keep that, perhaps increase it. Lauren noted that Leverett expressed some concern about this particular line item in the U#28 budget. SSC members and Bruce affirmed the value of attending conferences to school committee work.

KATIE MOVED TO NOMINATE DAN AS DELEGATE TO THE MASC CONFERENCE. STEVE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

Jennifer then discussed invoices we've received for an Out-of-District student, some of which were received in the previous FY, and some this year. For instance, we received an invoice for July/August FY17 only this July, amounting to some \$20,000. She said we can't pay this invoice out of the FY18 budget. Apparently their auditor was going through their paperwork and came across a couple of unpaid invoices. To clear this up requires a motion at a Special Town Meeting to approve payment for a previous FY.

DAN MOVED TO MOVE THIS ISSUE FORWARD FOR A VOTE AT A SPECIAL TOWN MEETING. STEVE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

Dan asked the Fin Com member for any thoughts on the budget; he responded that SSC has done well by staying within the 2.5% cap. The Town will have to just keep watch over spending this year, but the state is bringing in more revenue now, so perhaps we can look forward to increased support there. The Fin Com member praised SSC's communication and conscientiousness. If Chapter 70 funding were coming in the way it should, there would be fewer arguments about school expenditures. He said he'd advocate for this budget to the rest of the Fin Com.

F. Adjournment at 7:27 P.M.

DAN MOVED TO ADJOURN. STEVE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.