

**SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**Thursday, November 19, 2020**  
**Final Minutes**

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

**A. Meeting Called to Order by Dan at 7:04 P.M.**

**B. Public Hearings:**

Susie Mosher, liaison for the Fin Com, reported on her queries into fixing the school roof. There seems to be some progress on that, and the Fin Com wanted a sense of when the FY21-22 budget might start to get worked on, as well as whether SSC was working on a policy for School Choice. Dan responded that the draft of the FY21-22 budget is being presented tonight, but we're not ready to vote on it yet. He explained that there was no new policy on School Choice; SSC votes to open Choice seats at SES each year; we have to let DESE know by June 1, so we usually discuss in April and vote in May. All SES policies are listed on the website, available to the public.

**C. Review of Agenda and Perpetual Calendar:**

Dan noted that the draft budget would be presented tonight.

**D. Warrants and Gifts:**

Payroll

#309. 11-02-2020. \$71,447.67  
#310. 11-16-2020 \$67,382.95  
#311. 11-30-2020. \$71,850.05

Accounts Payable

#3010. 10-19-2020. \$9,141.93 encumbered FY 2020 \$125.00  
#3011. 11-02-2020. \$26,881.71 Cares Act \$3,088.89  
#3012. 11-15-2020 \$5,365.12 Cares Act \$588.97

**E. Approval of Minutes from October 22 and November 2, 2020:**

**JACKIE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 22. JEN SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL AYE. UNANIMOUS.**

**LAUREN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 2, 2020. JEN SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL AYE. UNANIMOUS.**

**F. Unfinished Business / Updates:**

1. 2020 Reopening: Tabled.

## **G. New Business / Discussion Items: None.**

## **H. Reports:**

1. Superintendent's Report: Jennifer reported that U#28 schools are in all phases of their return to in-person learning: EES has phased in K-6, LES has phased in K-2, and SRS plans to return to the hybrid in-person model in January. Gov. Baker has been making recommendations that schools should only be closed as a last resort, when there is evidence of transmission within the school or crossed thresholds in the school's community. None of the U#28 towns come even close to these thresholds. The Commissioner will evaluate each school district that chooses to close on a case-by-case basis through an audit. So far, we've been trying to avoid full days to dispense with the dangers of eating lunch. Central Office has decentralized and staff have been relocated to various U#28 schools; everyone seems settled in and happy. The Commissioner may be updating bus guidance over the next few weeks, and updated quarantine guidelines have been released today. The CDC has pulled back their original recommendations about schools, now saying they can be a site of transmission. Finally, Jennifer sent a note out to staff and families asking them to consider low-risk ways of celebrating the holidays. DESE guidance right now indicates testing when symptoms are indicated, not ahead of time.

2. Director of Finance and Operations: Bruce reported that he's managed to get some cubicle dividers donated to us; we have some spares too. Central Office staff seems happy; he commends all of the office staff for the smooth move to each new location. He has a draft budget of a 1.9% increase to present tonight. The major drivers include instruction (salaries, services) and administration. The U#28 budget went down, but we have more students at SES, so our share is a little higher. He's budgeted a little high for salaries because negotiations aren't finished yet. Jackie noted we've been very careful about our asks, keeping the overall increase under 2%. He also tries to bump the Food Service up a little each year since we subsidize it, although this year it's done fairly well. There are a couple of offsets in this budget: we're assuming level-funded grants and transferring leftover Rural Aid money into next year's budget (since Bruce thinks we won't have it this year). If we don't get Rural Aid this year, Bruce would like SSC to consider covering the gap with School Choice funds. But overall, this budget is a very good place to start: there's a lot of level funding, and no huge cuts.

Dan thanked Bruce and Jackie for their great work on this budget, and also praised U#28 leadership's decision to move Central Office out into the schools. Lauren said that was Jennifer's genius, and we have all the Central Office staff to thank for carrying through with it. Jennifer added that Central Office staff declined raises this year to help ease the pain. Bruce reiterated that the move went very well because of the staff's hard work and preparedness. Jennifer thanked Pam in particular for packing her things up.

SSC discussed prospects for fixing the roof, which is beyond critical at this point. The longer we wait, the more expensive it will be to remedy later (because of mold, etc.). Bruce will be in touch with our local representatives when the MSBA process opens again.

3. Principal's Report: Jackie reported that they've sent out the survey to the younger grades to get the parents' decision on what they hope their children to be doing on Dec. 7, which is supposed to be our opening day for K-2. The survey results are less mixed than they were, about 70/30 in favor of hybrid in-person. The number of students requiring bus transportation seems to be low, which is good. We've gotten a lot of great feedback on our Reopening Plan. We decided to livestream teacher instruction in order to

facilitate the hybrid model. We purchased some cameras to make this happen. Teachers will teach both sets of children and the para will help monitor online chat. When there's a work period, both cohorts will share it, and children at the school will bring their devices, so we can still pair children from both cohorts for activities. They included a lot of specific questions and pointers about school expectations for children (symptom checklists, getting flu shots, charging devices and making sure they're making it to school). We're also continuing to work on boiler issues, which we should have had taken care of before, but were taken off the Capital Planning list in the past. She doesn't want to repeat what happened last year, when many people got involved in making decisions at the school about Capital Planning remedies.

4. Amherst-Pelham Representative's Report: Steve reported that RSC approved two girls to play on the Pope Francis co-op hockey team. The regional budget being discussed at the Dec. 5 meeting, if level funded, would actually mean giant cuts. He's on the JLMSC, which ran into an issue with not being an open meeting when it should have been. Finally, distance learning absences have shot up over the same time period as last year, so the region is trying to rectify that. The greatest number of absences overall is in the middle school, which might be the result of children those age being left on their own for the first time as well as having younger siblings to help manage.

5. Union #28 Report, including Budget & Personnel: Lauren reported that JSC discussed many of the same topics as SSC tonight (budget, etc.). Nothing really new to report.

6. CES Report: Dan said the CES met last night; our audit review came out an A+. CES managed to qualify for the PPP loan; hopefully it will be forgiven, as it is supposed to be. We had a great presentation from an organization that provides services to migrant students and their families. It's good to know those services are out there. We looked at our annual report. CES has significant challenges in opening up Mt. Tom Academy; there are a lot of challenges out there, some coming from the state. Bill Diehl is retiring, and last night was his last meeting with the Board. We'll have an Interim Executive Director next who's smart, articulate, compassionate, empathetic, and organized, and we're hoping she'll apply for the permanent Executive Director position, which will be an internal search. He's working on that with HR.

## **I. Policy Review:**

Second Reading, First Vote On:

- IHBHE - Remote Learning
- JLCB - Immunization of Students
- EBC-S - Policy on COVID-Related Issues

SSC offered an emendation to policy IHBHE.

**LAUREN MOVED TO APPROVED POLICY IHBHE - REMOTE LEARNING. JEN SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.**

**LAUREN MOVED TO APPROVED POLICY JLCB - IMMUNIZATION OF STUDENTS. JEN SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.**

**LAUREN MOVED TO APPROVED POLICY EBC-S - POLICY ON COVID-RELATED ISSUES. JEN SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.**

**J. Future Business:**

- Shutesbury Policy Committee – Thursday, December 17, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.
- Shutesbury School Committee – Thursday, December 17, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.
- Union #28 Joint Supervisory Policy Committee – Monday, January 11, 2021 - 6:15 p.m.
- Union #28 Joint Supervisory – Monday, January 11, 2021 - 6:30 p.m.
- Budget and Personnel Committee – TBD
- Future agenda items –

**K. Executive Session to Discuss Strategy With Respect to Collective Bargaining or Litigation:**

**LAUREN MOVED TO ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS STRATEGY WITH RESPECT TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING OR LITIGATION, NOT TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION AFTERWARD. JEN SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL AYE. UNANIMOUS.**

**L. Adjournment:**