

SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, May 19, 2022
FinalMinutes

Present: Lauren Thomas-Paquin, Bethany Rose, Stephen Sullivan, Julie Martel, members; Dan Hayes, Chair; Jackie Mendonsa, Principal; Caitlin Sheridan, Director of Finance & Operations; Public Guests

A. Meeting Called to Order by Dan at 7:00 P.M.

B. Public Hearings:

Dan noted that we met with the MSBA last week, including Jennifer, Town officials, Sen. Jo Comerford, and SSC members. It was helpful to hear an MSBA representative explain the decision-making process in a logical and knowledgeable way. There's only so much money in this pool, and there are many needs for it. Jackie asked if there was some special consideration for small and rural schools, then Jennifer's detailed follow-up really seemed to make a difference in the representative's understanding of our need. He thanked both of them for how they handled the meeting so adeptly.

Community Network for Children Update - Gillian Budine: Gillian introduced herself and updated SSC on CNC, which is primarily funded via DESE, with additional support from local towns and grants. Our purpose is to deliver and promote programs that support healthy development in young children as well as their families. It's challenging because we have so few programs and services in our U#28 towns for young children and families. (We only have 5 care providers in all 5 towns at present, for example.) Our programs are especially important in the COVID era in connecting families to each other and to nature, and we also provide much-needed supplies like diapers. Our budget, just over \$83K, has not changed in 8 years, and is no longer sufficient to support travel and supplies for staff who deliver these programs. The dire lack of child care is a huge stressor on families now, and a huge challenge for our communities. She closed by reading some very positive quotes from CNC participants. Jennifer added a number of pieces of work that Gillian does on a regular basis that she doesn't get paid for, including some Early Childhood work. Jennifer and Jackie praised Gillian's commitment and generosity, and SSC echoed these sentiments. Steve, as a former childcare provider, affirmed the enormous and excellent support they'd received from CNC. Gillian thanked SSC for their support and their time, and said that she and other program coordinators are working on a financial ask from our legislators next year.

C. Review of Agenda and Perpetual Calendar:

Dan noted some additional changes to the next meeting Agenda, including Reorganization of the Committee following Town Meeting.

D. Warrants and Gifts:

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|------|-----------|-------------|
| 322 | 5/2/2022 | \$88,000.54 |
| 3023 | 5/2/2022 | \$16,865.62 |
| 323 | 5/12/2022 | \$85,004.90 |
| 3024 | 5/16/2022 | \$19,082.62 |

E. Approval of Minutes from April 14, 2022:

BETHANY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF APRIL 14, 2022. LAUREN SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL AYE.

F. Unfinished Business / Updates:

1. Capital Projects/Building Process - Discussion:

Steve said the roof over the gym has been replaced! Hopefully, we'll have more information on the piping necessary for the rest of the roof at Town Meeting. Dan asked Jackie about other school needs; she said she gets a lot of comments about how run-down the school is looking right now, but we're holding off on doing some of that work while we wait to see what kind of roof repair / replacement we can arrange. We work hard to make the inside of the school nice (it is!), but we do need to pay attention to this soon, and we definitely need to address the significant problems in our parking lot soon too.

Dan noted he got a call from a neighbor about loud noises at SES; it turned out to be someone mowing the lawn, and another person operating a leaf blower. He just wanted to inform Jackie about this in case she's heard something about it.

G. New Business / Discussion Items:

1. Preparation for Town Meeting:

Dan noted he won't be able to attend Town Meeting this year. Jackie said we have more direction on how we're spending School Choice funds, so we'll be better able to represent that part of our fiscal picture at Town Meeting. Dan requested a discussion of how to use School Choice funds on a future agenda.

2. Fair Share Massachusetts - Discussion and vote on whether or not to endorse:

Dan said he doesn't know much about the specifics of this proposal and expressed support for a more progressive tax code, but also some reservation about similar attempts made in other states that resulted in wealthy residents moving out and reducing revenue overall. He's conflicted about it. Julie said she felt comfortable endorsing this through her union, but not necessarily as a SC member. Jackie said she's pretty certain the SES faculty union is planning to endorse it.

H. Reports:

1. Superintendent's Report:

Jennifer reported that we've gone through the hiring process for our .6 Coordinator of Curriculum and Instruction and are welcoming our new Coordinator in July. She'll be housed at LES. We did some planning today for our summer activities. There are many items to discuss moving forward. Erving and Leverett have had their Town Meetings; Shutesbury, Wendell, and New Salem are having theirs coming up in June. She'll be participating in some webinars with Caitlin on aspects of finance and reporting. She presented her Self-Assessment and progress on her Goals to JSC last Monday.

2. Director of Finance and Operations:

Caitlin reported that she just got back from the MASBO conference, which had some really good sessions on procurement, food service, nutrition, equity, and so on. We're preparing for an audit that happens on a 3-year cycle, and Town Meeting is this Saturday, but we'll start to think about FY24 after that. Budget season kind of never ends, and she's getting a much better sense of how these processes work. Jackie thanked Caitlin for being such a breath of fresh air; she's grateful Caitlin is working with us now.

3. Principal's Report:

Jackie reported that we're winding up - there's a lot of energy with the children, and we're grateful to be together in person. Teaching little kids remotely is really tricky. We have some staffing movement going on, including some new hires. She described the hiring process for finding a new teacher, including a teaching demonstration / model lesson, which is very thorough and time consuming. She thanked everyone who worked on this process to bring well-qualified, exciting new staff to SES.

She's asking for some funds from School Choice to take some corrective action in our Food Service due to a state audit. In particular, we need nutrient analysis software that helps us keep track of the nutritional profiles of our food for different-aged students. This will require an additional expense in the hundreds of dollars per year for a subscription. Caitlin noted we might have some excess in our cash. Jackie wants the OK from SSC to use School Choice funds this year for the software if she needs to. Jennifer said we'll build it into the regular budget after that. Jackie also said that we have the least Food Service staff of any U#28 school, and we're trying to be creative about how to use union staff to take care of some of the work. Jennifer noted we've been talking about increasing efficiencies across U#28 by using staff we already have to do some things like the Food Service paperwork. We also might be able to bundle costs together and pay less overall if we bought software at the Union rather than the individual school level. Caitlin added there's a lot we can do to increase efficiencies in our Food Services and support our Directors.

JULIE MOVED TO APPROVE USING SCHOOL CHOICE FUNDS IN THE SUM OF APPROXIMATELY \$1600 TO PAY FOR NUTRIENT ANALYSIS SOFTWARE FOR THIS UPCOMING ACADEMIC YEAR. LAUREN SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL AYE.

Jackie continued by saying we're wrapping up MCAS and will be in the home stretch after that.

Dan asked about the issue with children altering their clothing after they come to school. Jackie said that some parents are upset that this is going on with their children, but we've addressed this in a general way with the community and things seem to be settled now.

4. Amherst-Pelham Representative's Report:

Steve reported that the RSC has only met once for some housekeeping. Several Towns have approved their portion of the funds to repair / replace the athletic track, and fundraising for the rest of the amount can begin in earnest.

5. Union #28 Report, including Budget & Personnel:

Lauren reported that we've taken the first vote to adopt the 5-year rolling average formula for U#28 contributions to the Union, and we heard Jennifer's reporting regarding her evaluation for this year. Caitlin said that in September, she's going to give a short training on how to read the Expenditure Report.

6. CES Report:

Dan reported that there hasn't been a meeting recently, but we've had some challenges getting picketed by teachers from across the state in support of our virtual school teachers' contract. We've successfully worked with the state to approve the improvements to the contract we've just signed with our teachers' union, so that's a great step forward for everyone.

I. Policy Review:

First Reading On:

AC – Non-Discrimination Policy Including Harassment and Retaliation
ACAB – Sexual Harrassment
JICK – Harrassment of Students

Jennifer noted we're pausing the Policy Subcommittee until September due to reorganization.

J. Future Business:

- Shutesbury Policy Committee – Thursday, June 16, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.
- Shutesbury School Committee – Thursday, June 16, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.
- Union #28 Joint Supervisory – September 2022 - 6:30 p.m.
- Budget and Personnel Committee – October 2022
- Future agenda items –

Jennifer and Jackie offered a joint THANK YOU to Lauren for all of her support over the years, both on SSC and JSC (including as Chair). It's been a pleasure and an honor to serve beside her. Lauren said she loves our little school and has loved serving on these committees. Dan echoed these sentiments and gratitude. We'll all miss you. SSC offered good luck wishes to Julie in the upcoming Town election as well.

K. Adjournment at 8:09