

SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, October 22, 2015
Final Minutes

Present: Dan Hayes, Katie Fiander, Fred Steinberg, Steve Sullivan, members; Sean Woodard-McNiff, Chair; Jackie Mendonsa, Principal; Aaron Osborne, Director of Finance and Operations; Jennifer Haggerty, Superintendent; Public Guests

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

B. Review of Agenda and Perpetual Calendar

C. Warrants and Gifts

#5002: \$1,722.46

D. Approval of Minutes from September 17, 2015

SSC offered several emendations to the minutes.

DAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 17, 2015 AS EMENDED. FRED SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

E. Public Comments and Announcements

Dan requested that the committee vote him in as a delegate to attend the Massachusetts Association of School Committees Conference. He noted that there were five resolutions to be discussed and voted on, including statewide school start times, poverty, tying test scores to Chapter 70 funding, and certification bodies like NAEYC.

SEAN MOVED TO NAME DAN THE SSC DELEGATE TO THE MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES CONFERENCE. FRED SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

F. New Business / Discussion Items

1. Snow Removal Plan

Jackie reported that communication with the Town Administrator has been slow regarding the snow removal plan this coming winter. The last she heard was that the town intended to hire a temp person to deal with the snow on late start and snow days. She expressed frustration about reaching the limit of her ability to move a solution forward and would like SSC to help; she does not want to face unplowed lots again this winter. Jennifer offered to call town officials. Steve volunteered that the past week, four people have called inquiring about the job, but the weather-contingent nature of the position means it's hard to find someone who's interested in taking it on. Dan offered to follow up with an email to the Town Administrator as well as the Selectboard; the lack of prompt communication has been an issue across the town, and the Selectboard has taken steps to address how email is handled.

2. Capital Planning - discussion

Fred reported that Jackie reviewed the list of capital planning items from last year; a number of items have been addressed. It seems that a complete overhaul of the aged and much-repaired boiler has been discussed. Jackie said that school floors will be replaced with tiles, which are more cost-effective and sanitary, at the rate of two rooms per year.

This summer saw a number of tech updates as well, including new laptops for teachers and new computers in the lab with an updated operating system. However, some other tech needs, such as a laptop cart, remain.

G. Unfinished Business / Updates

Dan thanked Jackie for following up on the Verizon shed, which has been cleaned and updated with a new lock after a lengthy communication process.

Dan also suggested that SSC share information for the Our Town newsletter; this is an opportunity to promote the school.

Dan finally noted his displeasure that SSC thoughtfully cancelled its originally scheduled meeting in order to accommodate the schedule of the Amherst Superintendent's Listening Tour, only to have the Superintendent not show. Jackie and Steve added that it was clearly a one-way informational meeting promoting consolidation in the schools rather than a "listening tour."

H. Policy Review

1. Second Reading, First Vote on:
IJL – Library Material Selection and Review

DAN MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY IJL – LIBRARY MATERIAL SELECTION AND REVIEW. FRED SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

I. Reports

1. Principal's Report

Jackie reported that the Artist Residence Team chose two artists who specialize in storytelling through dance; they work with children to reflect on and develop their own stories. Jackie also applied for a \$5,000 Cultural Council grant that she has not heard back yet on; it might be well to include monies on the regular budget so that this important work can be supported every year, although she does not have a specific proposal for this now.

She noted that SES students are able to have a wealth of experiences on field trips, a strength of the school, but one that Jackie feels should still be increased in the budget. The teachers have also identified a focus for their Professional Learning Communities. Finally, she reported that the Commissioner of Education has stated he thinks PARCC is a stronger test than MCAS, but that he has heard public complaints about both tests; consequently, he has proposed an "MCAS 2.0" that is aligned with Common Core but is produced entirely within the state, and not by Pearson. Jennifer added that Pearson is now offering PARCC-like questions for sale to include in such state-created tests, and that SSC members, parents, and educators ought to be aware of this.

The school has spent just over \$4,000 for repairs on the hot water compressor, air circulators, boiler ignitions, filters, leaks, and outside light repairs. Also, it seems that it will be necessary to increase a .6 third-grade para position to 1.0. Today there was a lockdown drill that progressed very smoothly; a higher-ranking police officer even commented that this system is the best among the elementary schools in the state.

Dan suggested that Jackie should just come forward and put artist residence monies in the budget if she feels that it's that important to the curriculum. Jackie said that we should publicize all the things we

manage to do so well in this school. Nancy Birtwell noted that one teacher made a glossy brochure advertising her class. Sean said that the school is very special, to the point that real estate agents use it as a chief selling point for properties in town. He also complimented the school website.

Dan asked whether SES or U28 administrators would be providing information at the upcoming public hearing on standardized testing in the state; he advocated that this happen.

2. Superintendent's Report

Jennifer reported that this last September, a ballot question on returning MA to its previous educational structure (pre-Common Core) was certified, and there is a drive to collect 65,000 signatures to put the question to a vote next year. The Department of Education also put out a study on testing; it concluded that most testing is district-driven, and that on average students spend 9 days testing. Teachers are looking forward to crafting their PLCs for the year tomorrow at Curriculum Day, led by Susan Dryer-Leon from Antioch College.

Dan asked Jennifer to put her recommendation on standardized testing into writing and present it to state officials.

3. Amherst-Pelham Representative's Report

Steve reported that the Shutesbury forum on regionalization will be on November 18. Leverett held its forum last night; fifty-five people attended. The committee met in executive session prior to the last meeting and agreed to move into negotiations with teachers on their new contract.

Jackie noted that one of the slides in the regionalization presentation was incorrect if not outright misleading. Sean noted he's opposed to regionalization, full stop. Dan said we need to ask questions at the forum because bullet points in the presentation aren't often substantiated with facts; they're just agenda points.

Steve asked SSC's opinion on how he should vote on the proposal; Sean responded that as the representative, he should vote his conscience, but his own recommendation is to vote no on the first question. Dan said he needs to feel more from people in town; how could we get their views? Sean said that people can express their views at the public forum; he added that he hasn't spoken to one person in Shutesbury who favors regionalization, and Kate affirmed that the feeling in town seems to be frustration that the question has been dragged out this long. Sean suggested that SSC emails be provided in Road Town News along with an invitation to send comments to the committee. Jackie responded that it seems people aren't reading the newsletter because they invited readers to respond, and received only 10 responses. SSC considered various ways to reach out to the public on the issue; Jackie does not want to overwhelm parents with flyers going home.

Steve continued to report that in the end, regionalization is more about cost savings than collaboration or curricular improvement.

4. Review of Expenditure Report

Aaron pointed out there are a lot of ups and downs in the salary lines because of shifts in staff Jackie had to carry out; he will meet with her to review everything, but he thinks the school is in great shape for salaries right now. Aaron met with food service staff at all four schools to look at ways they could collaborate and build on their strengths; there are a number of unfunded mandates in the food service, and it can be a challenge to pull together all the necessary information to meet reporting requirements. Tomorrow, he'll meet with the school admins to talk about what they do, and whether there might be some opportunities for collaboration there as well. There are some questions that need to be answered

about admin workloads as well, including finding time to do necessary paperwork, making sure everyone is properly trained for the job, etc.

Dan suggested that Aaron pass on information about redundancies in reporting and similar obstructions to school work to Secretary Paysor, who is currently undertaking a regulatory review.

5. Union #28 Report – including Budget and Personnel

Jennifer reported she will present four draft goals to the committee on the Superintendent Evaluation process.

6. CES Report

Dan reported that CES reorganized; he is now the chair. One major focus of CES is training in social justice and equity, specifically closing the achievement gap. Massachusetts does well on a number of education metrics, but very poorly on the achievement gap. The organization itself will be putting equity into practice internally as well, living it instead of just conducting training in it.

He also reported that CES is collecting data on the impact of charter schools on things like enrollment trends. Jennifer pointed out that as the smallest county in the state short of the islands (in terms of student population), a charter school here impacts us much more strongly than in more populous regions.

At the All Boards meeting, he trumpeted the wonderful things happening at SES.

J. Future Business

Sean said that SSC should think more about how to solicit opinions from the public without necessarily inviting personal narratives, as this is not the place for those (public hearings and forums are more germane to that kind of information).

1. Shutesbury Policy Committee – November 19, 2015 at 6 p.m.
2. Shutesbury School Committee – November 19, 2015 at 7 p.m.
3. Budget and Personnel Committee – TBD
4. Union #28 Joint Supervisory – Thursday, October 29, 2015 at 7 p.m. Shutesbury

K. Adjournment at 8:28 P.M.

DAN MOVED TO ADJOURN. KATE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.