

SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, December 17, 2015
Final Minutes

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

A. Meeting Called to Order at 7:01 P.M.

B. Review of Agenda and Perpetual Calendar

C. Warrants and Gifts

5004: \$1,779.96

Jackie reported there was also a gift for \$4,680 from the Shutesbury Education Foundation, which is dissolving itself and donating its funds to town entities including SES. The funds will be made available to SES community members through a process Jackie and several others will create.

D. Approval of Minutes from November 19, 2015.

**DAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 19, 2015. FRED SECONDED.
UNANIMOUS.**

E. Public Comments and Announcements

Dan reported that the performance last night was phenomenal. He expected more singing, but the dance was very beautiful, creative, and cool. He really appreciated the fact that everything was connected to science and learning. Also, the 6th Graders were remarkably enthusiastic and expressive. Jackie thanked Dan and added that she wanted things to be shaken up, and that interpretive dance certainly did that. Jennifer complimented Jackie's own performance in the show as well.

Dan brought information on upcoming CES meetings to SSC, as well as information regarding audits.

F. New Business / Discussion Items:

1. Custodial Substitutes: Jackie said it was extremely difficult to find substitutes; one custodian was out sick for a month recently. Staff and students pitched in to clean as much as they could. In the end, a substitute was found, but the custodial budget line has taken a hit because of hiring the sub while paying out for sick days. Jackie said it's difficult for custodians because they have to go through a lot in order to work, and the pay isn't all that great. Steve added that it was fun work, however. Dan wondered whether SSC could work with other U28 schools; Jackie said they all struggle with this, and every school has its "go-to" person, but that person only goes to their own town's school. In any case, the sick custodian is back now, and there's an occasional substitute now as well. Jennifer added that with evening custodians, we need to consider work ethic and trust issues as well. Both Jackie and Jennifer gave kudos to the teaching staff who helped out during the gap.

2. Coach Stipends: Jackie would like to take \$1,000 from the professional development line and create two coaching/teacher-leader jobs, catering somewhat to ELA but not focused entirely on it. One position would cover grades 1-3 and the other 4-6. There aren't many leadership opportunities for teachers in a small district, and those that are working in those roles either aren't compensated or aren't

acknowledged for their work. She wants to make this part of PD as a result. Fred asked if this would be open to outside people; Jackie said no – she wants in-house people. She would create the positions and post them, then appoint two applicants. A public guest commented that the money seemed too low; Jackie agreed, but said this is more about creating these opportunities for our talented teachers at SSC. If there aren't those opportunities here, teachers will seek them elsewhere. Dan said it was a wonderful thing, adding that there are many opportunities at CES including mentoring programs that SES might make use of. Jackie acknowledged that and added that doing this at SES is a win-win because the teacher-leaders would share their experiences with their peers through the Professional Learning Communities.

G. Unfinished Business / Updates:

Playground and Track Proposal: Dan inquired about the grant application process for the playground and track. Jackie said that there have been a lot of accidents on the playground; some of it is the usual rough-and-tumble, but the wooden structures are becoming more and more of a safety issue. We want to put a quarter-mile track in the upper field where 100 Mile Club could be held and which town residents could use. We asked for \$25,000 to replace a portion of the playground and monies to build the track; our application has been approved to go forward, and we're trying to get some Community Preservation money to cover the rest. Dan said he thought applying for these grants is a great idea, but might it be a rushed process? Jackie said there was a deadline that was pointed out to them, and they didn't want to lose out on a potential \$30K. A public guest wondered whether excavation was included in the proposal; perhaps the town could do some of that? Jackie said that has been looked at. Jennifer added that moving forward to replace the playground, we could look for partners for more financial support. Public guests asked whether a playground update had been included in the capital planning process; that might be the better route to take. SSC discussed details of the latest playground designs, which are more expensive but safer (the largest cost is installation). Perhaps the playground could be done a chunk at a time as funds are secured. A public guest advised SSC against installing a swinging log (a.k.a. concussion dispenser). Dan noted that we should be thinking about how much maintenance it would require as well. He added that sometimes money is left on the table from grant providers simply because people aren't aware it's there.

H. Policy Review

First Reading on:
JIC – Student Discipline

Jennifer explained that this policy has been updated in response to a statutory change; students suspended from schools have missed out on instruction and fallen behind in academic progress, so the new law ensures that suspended students still have access to the resources they need in order not to fall behind. There's not a lot of wiggle room because of the law. Dan said that CES is looking into creating a virtual school to meet the academic needs of suspended students; it would also serve students with severe allergies, those who are immobilized for whatever reason, etc.

I. Reports

1. Principal's Report

Jackie said that there has been some progress on monitoring our SIP; every single action step is finished or on its way, and the SIP is a living document that is positively changing the way SES operates on these action steps. Jennifer praised Jackie for the school's work on the SIP so far. Dan asked questions about the new math and reading programs; Jackie said part of every Wednesday PD is devoted to helping teachers with the new curricula. Jennifer said she got some good feedback from a staff round table on this process as well. Jackie said part of the reason they switched to the Words

Their Way spelling curriculum was because upper-level students' skills suffered from problems, and this provides an integrated, K-6 approach.

2. Superintendent's Report

Jennifer reported that PARCC results are in; accountability-level data has been released, and SES is Level 2 because we're not meeting the Progress and Performance target as quickly as we need to. The state ELA percentage of students who meet or exceed expectations is 60, and at SES, it's 69. For Math, the state number is 52 and the SES number 49. Jackie said that the reason SES became a Level 2 school was because our numbers were not improving; they were stagnant. The state isn't just looking at how many kids are proficient; it's looking at how fast the proficient group is growing, so SES just needs to help more kids reach the proficient category. Add to this fact that PARCC is a new system, and we had just gotten used to MCAS. Jackie emphasized that we don't teach a curriculum: our curriculum is the standards, and our teachers know the standards very well.

She went on to report about the last PLC presentation. The topics come from the teachers, which increases their engagement and effectiveness during the process. Also, Jennifer visited SES recently to meet with parents and teachers at a round table; she's like to do another one towards the end of the year.

3. Amherst-Pelham Representative's Report

Steve reported that he has nothing to report. There are two meetings in January, when they'll be updated on the school buildings and consolidation. He did attend the four-town meeting two Saturdays ago, which was very interesting. A presentation on regionalization did not seem to go over very well, though it was very well done; Shutesbury made it very clear that we're not interested in it, but Pelham and Leverett indicated they want Shutesbury to at least vote yes on the first question so that they'll have the opportunity to regionalize. Steve said there was also some discussion of a change to the assessment method. Weezie Houle explained details of the Shutesbury Fin Com's position on the various assessment methods. None of the other three towns want to go back to the statutory method, and numbers are being crunched on other options. SES inquired of Fred VanDerbeck about the sentiment in Pelham on regionalization; he responded that Pelham does indeed want the first vote to go through. Furthermore, Amherst seems to be waiting to see how the assessment discussion is resolved so that they can create a budget.

4. Director of Finance and Operations Report:

Draft FY17 Budget: Aaron reported that everything's running as expected in the budget so far. The custodial line still looks good even after the substitute hire. There are two grant losses that amount to 2.7%: the CPC grant for preschool instruction, which became competitive last year, and the kindergarten grant, which was cut by the governor and reinstated by the legislature, but which will almost certainly be cut again next year. There are some contractual increases as well as more in boiler maintenance, but we'd like to see the boiler go onto the capital expenditures list because it's been such a problem; it's 20+ years old and there are much more efficient modern models. There's also an increase in the line item budget for math curriculum. There are some savings to offset these increases, including a .4 ELL position that was dropped as well as a para-educator position we won't fill. Dan asked about the lack of an artist-in-residence line; Jackie said that she's waiting on that because she has to think about the balance with other items. Dan suggested a line item for an artist in residence, even though it might start at zero.

5. Union #28 Report – including Budget and Personnel: No report.

Next meeting: Wednesday, January 13, 2016 at 6 p.m. Swift River

6. CES Report

Dan encouraged people to attend the next JSC meeting on January 13. He reported that he was fortunate enough to attend a conference with CES. One predominant theme there was “successful schools,” and he felt proud of SES for the way the Principal and teachers engage with students here. Dan thinks success also comes down to organizational structure, which empowers principals and teachers to succeed. It really is what teachers can bring to their students, and he extended his thanks to SES teachers for getting the students excited about learning. We're in a very good spot right now. Social justice and equity is what is permeating through the organization right now; being culturally aware might be the thing that empowers us to address those gaps.

One other thing to note: CES has compiled a lot of information about the impact of charter schools, and this is a good resource for public schools. The research was position-neutral; it just produced data, and a clear position emerged from this data: charter schools have a significant impact on public schools in small counties like Franklin. Lifting the cap on charter schools statewide would certainly affect Franklin County schools. Jennifer added that she and 17 other superintendents drafted and sent a letter to the *Greenfield Recorder* and the *Hampshire Gazette*. Dan reaffirmed that it was great to see an organization like CES helping to support the schools and superintendents in our area.

J. Future Business

- Shutesbury Policy Committee – January 21, 2015 at 6 p.m.
- Shutesbury School Committee – January 21, 2015 at 7 p.m.
- Budget and Personnel Committee – Wednesday, January 13, 2016 at 6 p.m. Swift River
- Union #28 Joint Supervisory – Wednesday, January 13, 2016 at 7 p.m. Swift River
- Future agenda items

K. Executive Session – Legal Matter

DAN MOVED TO ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING A LEGAL MATTER, NOT TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION. FRED SECONDED. ALL VOICE VOTES AYE. UNANIMOUS.

L. Adjournment