

**SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, March 17, 2016
Final Minutes**

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

A. Meeting Called to Order at 7:03 P.M.

B. Public Hearing – FY17 Budget

Aaron reported that we're at a 1.7% increase; he has been in regular contact with the Fin Com whenever major changes have been made to the budget. There's a need for a new para-educator position next year that might be able to be covered with Circuit Breaker funds. Overall, the school is in a great position regarding the budget, though there remains some uncertainty regarding various grants.

Dan thought it might be helpful to share the Foundation Budget numbers with the public in order to help everyone understand there's a significant base cost just to open the doors; having a per-student cost breakdown as a basis for the funding formula doesn't necessarily cover the true costs in a sustainable way. Jennifer and the committee thanked Jackie and Aaron for their hard work on the budget.

DAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE FY17 BUDGET IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,900,318. FRED SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

C. Review of Agenda and Perpetual Calendar

Dan reviewed upcoming calendar items, including the determination of next year's Academic Calendar. The committee also noted that there are two candidates running for the current empty seat; it's good to have such interest in serving the town and the school in this way. Also, the committee discussed updating the town on recent developments regarding the region through a submission to *Road Town News*.

D. Warrants and Gifts

#5007: \$1,615.08

Dan noted that a legal electronic signature method might be much better for guaranteeing warrants are paid on time. Aaron said that that would be good, provided that there's a document scanning system that would capture all relevant receipts and paperwork; he's frankly shocked that schools still use payroll warrants.

E. Approval of Minutes from February 25, 2016.

DAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY, 2016. FRED SECONDED. UNANIMOUS (ONE ABSTENTION: STEVE).

F. Public Comments and Announcements

Dan said that he attended a meeting about the track/playground update project at SES and advocated for it. He also thanked Jackie for pursuing it; she in turn thanked Jessica Carlson-Belanger for spearheading it so passionately. One question that arose at the meeting was why these expenses couldn't be rolled into the regular school budget, and Jackie expressed appreciation for Dan's articulate and illuminating response. The committee discussed the origins of the playground; SSC parents built it up to code at the time.

G. New Business / Discussion Items:

1. School Choice: Jackie reported on the forum she held for parents of students in the Pre-K/K class; ten families were represented and shared their experience, which has been overwhelmingly positive. They also seemed to favor opening seats for School Choice in order to ensure the stability of the class going forward. Jackie requested that the committee move up the School Choice vote from May to April so that she'll have time to network. She'd also like to allow School Choice student siblings to attend. The committee discussed the process for approving participation in School Choice, including how the number of open seats are determined as well as how they're filled. The real wild card is siblings, which can't be determined ahead of time. Jennifer pointed out that an existing policy does cover the continued enrollment of an SES student whose family moves to another town. The committee agreed to move up the vote to April; it will be advertised in the *Road Town News* to solicit public feedback.

2. Academic Calendar 2016/2017 – Vote: Jackie said there was one negative comment about the one-week December break, but this also allows the school year to end earlier in June, and Dec. 23 will be an early-release day. Katie noted there was also a complaint about Curriculum Day; Jackie responded that May is the preferred time because that's the culmination of their work as a union.

DAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE ACADEMIC CALENDAR 2016/2017. FRED SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

Jackie went on to read a letter from Lauren Schattin, an SES staff member but not a town resident, requesting that her son be enrolled in Kindergarten next year. This is permissible by contract but must be approved by SSC.

DAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE REQUEST. FRED SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

H. Unfinished Business / Updates:

Fred noted that SSC members are invited to serve on two four-town Working Groups starting soon; the meetings will be held at 4 p.m. on Fridays. Dan said that while SSC members are interested in these issues, the timing is simply impossible.

I. Policy Review

Jennifer noted that three policies will be reviewed by the Policy Subcommittee and will come to SSC for discussion and a first vote at the next meeting.

DAN MOVED TO APPROVE JKAA – PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS. FRED SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

J. Reports

1. Principal's Report

Jackie reported that this spring is looking *intense* because of all the exciting activities planned across all grades. We will be losing two students next week because of a family leaving town, and it sounds like others might be going as well. She said that many in the town are concerned about enrollment, and that people are thinking about ways to make Shutesbury more attractive to potential residents. There is no Recreation Committee, for example, and the Selectboard has made it clear that there's no money to pay a stipend for someone to run one.

2. Superintendent's Report

Jennifer reported that Swift River School voted to support both students and parents in opting out of PARCC, and teachers in educating parents about their choices regarding the test. She praised the articulate letter the committee wrote outlining its position and the reasons behind it. Dan applauded administration and SRSC for having the courage to support a grassroots effort like this. Furthermore, Jennifer pointed out that this protest against the amount of standardized testing is coming from a Level 1 school that has been commended by the state for its excellence.

Looking forward, there's a Rural Superintendent's Group that is meeting soon in Franklin County to advocate for different funding measures for small, rural schools. On March 23, another professional collaboration day will be held within U#28, and work has begun with the Leadership Team and the JSC to "re-vision" U#28 in light of the changing situations of its constituent towns going forward. Soon, Jennifer will attend another of her New Superintendent Induction Program sessions.

3. Amherst-Pelham Representative's Report:

Steve reported that offering the proposal for a vote has been postponed for a year, which is unsurprising given the level of changes going on in Amherst at present. There are no answers to the question of what to do with the vacated middle school if and when the Amherst Middle and High Schools will be combined.

4. Director of Finance and Operations Report:

SES FY17 Budget: Aaron reported that things look good right now – this is the time of year when he starts worrying about the substitute teacher line, but those are quite healthy right now. Oil and power lines are also looking quite good. Looking ahead, we'll be within the ballpark of the original budget. Two U#28 schools have put in for Breakfast in the Classroom grants; it will be interested to see where that goes. It's hard to do because of the additional labor involved unless there's high participation; there are a lot of ways it can be done as well. He's met with auditors about the subsidies we provide as well as the revenue we generate. There's a minimum cost that must be borne just to open the cafeteria, and most schools in the region pay livable wages to cafeteria staff, but representatives from DESE think these costs are too high. Steve added that we should look at the substitute teacher rates, which have been stagnant for a long time. Aaron said that depending on where minimum wage heads in this state, the sub rate might fall below it. Jennifer added that issue to the agenda.

5. Union #28 Report – including Budget and Personnel:

Dan reported that JSC enjoyed delicious soup prior to the meeting, which was appreciated. Aaron and Prudy gave an excellent presentation on school funding mechanisms, focused on Chapter 70 and Circuit Breaker funds. It was very concrete and informative. JSC approved the U#28 budget unanimously as well, and it seems that improvements to the U#28 offices will be incorporated into Erving's capital planning. It was a really good meeting; Jennifer emphasized the enjoyment experienced by everyone sharing what's going on at their respective schools. The MCBA Book Party, which was a great success, was also recounted and celebrated at the meeting.

6. CES Report

Dan reported that CES is sending out a survey about the effectiveness of the Executive Director to school committees and Superintendents; this survey is very helpful to the CES Board. CES remains a great resource for communities who can't afford various critical programs like before- and after-school programs.

K. Future Business

- Shutesbury Policy Committee – April 28, 2016 at 6:30 p.m.
- Shutesbury School Committee – April 28, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.
- Budget and Personnel Committee – Wednesday, March 23, 2016 6:00 p.m. Leverett ES
- Union #28 Joint Supervisory – Wednesday, March 23, 2016 7:00 p.m. Leverett ES
- Future agenda items: PARCC Opt-Out

L. 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.

M. Adjournment