

SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, November 17, 2016
Final Minutes

Present: Katie Fiander, Dan Hayes, Lauren Thomas-Paquin, Steve Sullivan, members; Fred Steinberg, Chair; Jackie Mendonsa, Principal; Stephen Cass, 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

SSC members added items to the agenda under New Business.

C. Warrants and Gifts: None.

D. Approval of Minutes from October 20, 2016.

SSC offered one correction to the minutes.

LAUREN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 20, 2016 AS EMENDED. KATIE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

E. Public Comments and Announcements:

Bill Diehl from Collaborative for Educational Services spoke. He praised SES for its art, its mascot, and its wonderful and welcoming atmosphere. He explained CES and its services: it's a collaborative of 36 schools in Hampshire and Franklin Counties originally founded to help meet the special education needs of students in small and rural districts, though its services have expanded considerably in scope over the years to include clinical services, early childhood programs, Mount Tom Academy Alternative Learning Program, Professional Learning Communities, a summer program, educator training, and group purchasing. He then invited questions from SSC. Steve asked about an after-school grant to be administered by CES; Bill explained that CES submitted a grant application for this program on behalf of a number of schools, and Chris Taggart will be supervising it. Dan noted that CES also produces useful research on how state and national trends affect our rural districts; one such study was turned over to our legislators so they could make a stronger case for support, and CES could continue to serve our schools in this way. Bill pointed to the Proud of Western Mass Public Schools Initiative, launched a few months ago, as another example of how CES supports us.

Dan reported that he attended a conference with JSC support; the theme was social-emotional learning, and it appears that Massachusetts is at the forefront nationally for focusing on this aspect of education.

F. New Business / Discussion Items:

1. Water Testing: Jennifer noted there has been some concern lately about water quality across the state. Recent monthly tests at SES showed levels of lead and copper well below the action level. There is also a battery of tests conducted on a multi-year schedule. Massachusetts Clean Water Trust works to ensure that every school is able to test its water by making funds available.

2. Preparation for the Four-Town Meeting: Lauren said that it seems the Fin Com really wants SSC members to be at the Four-Town Meeting regarding the Amherst Regional School District assessment; the town intends to stand its ground on the regional assessment, and moral support from SSC members

would be appreciated. Dan emphasized the importance of turnout in order to vote for the alternative assessment method rather than the less-favorable statutory one. Dan explained how the alternative assessment method is more fair because it better reflects the fiscal situation on the ground in the towns. It appears that the other towns, particularly Leverett, oppose the change that Shutesbury is asking for. Fred Vanderbeck noted that under the statutory assessment, contributions from some of the towns would rise sharply.

G. Unfinished Business / Updates: None.

H. Policy Review

First Reading on:

1. KFR – Community Use of School Facilities
2. KHC – Notice Distribution Policy

Fred noted that a change should be made on KFR to indicate that the benefit should be made to the Shutesbury community, not just SES.

Final Vote On:

1. IMD – School Ceremonies and Observances
2. JFBB – School Choice
3. ADDA – Background Checks
4. ADDA-R – CORI Policy

DAN MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY IMD – SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES. FRED SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

DAN MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY JFBB – SCHOOL CHOICE. LAUREN SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

DAN MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY ADDA – BACKGROUND CHECKS. FRED SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

DAN MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY ADDA-R – CORI POLICY. LAUREN SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

I. Reports

1. Principal's Report

Jackie reported that students are immersed in a cross-curricular unit on hunger; there's a schoolwide project to collect canned goods and money, and plan to march with Monty on his hunger walk. Circus Smirkus is coming in a few weeks, to the delight of the community. School Council has turned into a forum to successfully discuss big changes at SES. Currently the SES community is thinking about homework with a view to revise it and make it more effective. The nurse position has been posted and a music teacher with experience in theater and dance has been hired for the rest of the year. As for capital planning, needs have been prioritized, with the HVAC system and the roof topping the list. Steve commented that the big-ticket items, including the pavement and sidewalk, really need to be taken care of; the other items are much less concerning. Jackie said she'd also like to start swapping out carpet for tile in the classrooms. When she brought these issues to the attention of the Fin Com last year, she didn't get a response because, it seems, she needed to bring more quotes for some of the items. SES applied for a grant to install a doorbell for increased security. Another important upgrade is

to make entrances and exits more accessible. Jackie added a laptop cart to the capital planning list because while we have an awesome computer room, more than one class needs to be working on them at once nowadays. The antediluvian stage curtain in the gymnasium is being replaced as well.

Dan reported on a student panel he attended where kids were able to share their experiences of poverty and the stigma of poverty; we often don't think about how we can combat this stigma so that more students will take advantage of reduced-cost and free offerings.

SSC discussed the process for soliciting bids on capital planning projects.

2. Superintendent's Report

Jennifer reported that the first U#28 Professional Collaboration Day happened October 21 at EES; the day was dedicated to universal design in learning. PLCs continued, now looking at how to infuse universal design into their practice. The new state science standards have come out; this spring will be a combination of old and new standards in the assessment. The Leadership Team has been working on the U#28 Strategic Plan; the union-wide piece is already done. Jennifer continues to work with the Massachusetts Rural School District Superintendents group on rural issues; she distributed a resolution supporting rural schools that the group drafted. Jennifer noted the growing body of research that shows smaller rural schools outperforming larger schools.

3. Amherst-Pelham Representative's Report

Steve reported that he's on the Fields Center Working Group. RSC won't be responding to Open Meeting complaints through lawyers from here on out, as it's an unnecessary expense. He's also on the committee that will choose the company to conduct a national search for the permanent Superintendent position. The new chair is Eric Nakajima of Amherst, former head of the MBI. He definitely knows how to run a meeting professionally. Mike Morris is the Interim Superintendent. Taxpayers rejected an override measure at Town Meeting to pay for one proposed plan for the Amherst regional schools. Steve added that new water fountains with water bottle fillers, as well as internal filters, are being installed in ARHS. The quality of the food service seems to remain an issue at ARMS and ARHS.

4. Director of Finance and Operations Report

Stephen reported that there's very little variance in the budget. He completed an audit of salaries, which make up 75% of the total budget; there are only small variances there as well. Things look good right now – there's nothing to be concerned about. There's \$10,000 in School Choice funds as a backup as well. SSC thanked Stephen and welcomed him to Shutesbury.

5. Union #28 Report – including Budget and Personnel

Dan reported that JSC failed to convene this week due to a lack of a quorum. He pointed to the Executive Committee at CES as a model to allow vital business to still be conducted in the absence of a quorum; perhaps JSC could adopt something similar? Before taking that step, however, the individual school committees need to try to increase/ensure their attendance. SSC members expressed their desire to attend JSC but pointed to the comparatively unpredictable scheduling as a challenge.

6. CES Report: None.

J. Presentation from Shutesbury Broadband Committee

Asha Strazzero-Wild from the Shutesbury Broadband Committee presented. The current MBI estimate for when the network will be up is 2018; the cost estimate remains around \$1.7 million, with a likely subscriber cost of around \$75. She summarized the history of WiredWest as an organization intended to help smaller towns band together and increase their purchasing power. The Last Mile project hit some bumps in 2015 and early 2016 due to the change in MA government and the subsequent statewide pause in building projects. Shutesbury is currently one of the first five towns to have pole surveys underway soon. The Project Manager appointed to work with Shutesbury is excellent; he's been meeting with the Broadband Committees of Shutesbury and several other towns in order to maximize the efficiency of a semi-regional design. So far, working with MBI this year has been very productive. It's possible to build the network on our own without MBI, but that would be more expensive and we'd have to hire full-time staff to oversee the project; the Broadband Committee doesn't think this is the best option for this reason. Asha summarized the committee's efforts to be collaborative with neighboring towns, including learning as much from Leverett about their experience as possible. SSC thanked Asha and the Broadband Committee for their dedicated service.

K. Future Business

- Shutesbury Policy Committee – Thursday, December 15, 2016, 6:30 P.M.
- Shutesbury School Committee – Thursday, December 15, 2016, 7 P.M.
- Budget and Personnel Committee – November 10, 2016 5:45 P.M. LES
- Union #28 Joint Supervisory – November 10, 2016 5:45 P.M. LES
- Future agenda items

K. Adjournment: 9:21

FRED MOVED TO ADJOURN. DAN SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.