

SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, February 16, 2017
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 7:00 P.M.

B. Review of Agenda and Perpetual Calendar

C. Warrants and Gifts:

#3020: \$20,942.49

D. Approval of Minutes from January 19, 2017.

DAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 19, 2017. FRED SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

E. Public Comments and Announcements:

Parents came to request a spot in 5th Grade for their son so that he could join his 1st Grade brother who transferred in this year; their previous school was so toxic an environment that their pediatrician recommended the boys change schools. SES has been wonderful in all respects for their younger son, and they want their older son to be able to experience the same thing.

Jackie went over the current School Choice and classroom size policy; there are no spaces in 5th Grade, and since this is a trial year for School Choice, she does not feel comfortable making an exception to the new policy. She also supports the teachers' position on classroom size. If there is a space that opens in 5th Grade, the parents will be notified immediately. SSC expressed deep sympathy for the parents' position. The parents thanked SSC for the good work being done at SES, and SSC thanked the parents for coming.

Dan requested \$30 to attend the upcoming Summit on Poverty.

FRED MOVED TO EXPEND \$30 FOR DAN TO ATTEND THE SUMMIT ON POVERTY. KATIE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

F. New Business / Discussion Items:

1. Strategic Plan – Vote: Jennifer reviewed the Strategic Plan and requested that SSC approve it.

DAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR SES. FRED SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

2. Stipend Discussion: Jennifer reported that paraprofessionals who have a bachelor's degree in education receive a \$250 stipend, but it's come to light that a paraprofessional who should have received it last year did not. She requested that SSC approve the stipend for last year as well as this year. It seems to be an administrative oversight. SSC needs to set policy for paying the stipend retroactively; what if someone requests 10 years of back pay in the future? There is considerable uncertainty over which paras have been receiving such stipends in this or previous contracts; how much money might we be talking about, and how should this stipend be administered now and in the future? Jennifer noted that legal counsel has said it's illegal to go back into previous-year budgets, but

delivering the current-year stipend wouldn't be a problem. SSC asked Jennifer to look into the history of this stipend.

3. School Choice – Discussion: Covered under Public Hearings. SSC confirmed that they do not have the power to grant School Choice seats; only the Principal can decide how many lots are open per class.

SSC has to vote to open School Choice for next year by June 1.

I. Reports

4. Director of Finance and Operations Report

FY18 Budget Update: Stephen reviewed the current-year budget in relation to FY18 drivers. Next month, we'll have a much better idea of where we are in terms of fuel costs, so it's not worth going over those differences today. Next year, there are some changes that aren't reflected in the versions received by SSC: School Committee advertising has been reduced by \$1500 based on actual usage; the Shutesbury U#28 share went down by about \$10,000 based on enrollment; SPED transportation has been decreased, but Jackie pointed out that a need for those funds could come in at any time and Dan noted that the Town should be made aware of the decrease (it is the most expensive single component of SPED spending and is not covered by Circuit Breaker); Building Maintenance has been increased by \$1000.

Finally, we received an email from the state today stating that a Preschool universal access grant will be cut due to a gradual phase-out culminating in 2020. This cut will have to be made up elsewhere if we are to maintain funding for the Preschool program as is. Jackie said she'd have to review the budget to see what could be done; otherwise, the budget would go up %2.35 to cover the loss. Jackie said that she'd like the Town to have a conversation about publicly funding the Preschool program because the cuts keep coming, but so does the data showing the positive benefits of early childhood education. It is tricky to fund such programs publicly, however. We have a couple of years to talk about it before the funding disappears entirely in 2020. Dan noted that the Town is likely to be more supportive of publicly funding Preschool because they're more aware of its importance, but it would be good to have historical data on this funding to make the case as well.

G. Unfinished Business / Updates: None.

H. Policy Review

First Reading on:

1. BHE – Use of Electronic Messaging by School Committee Members
2. IE – Organization of Instruction
3. IGA – Curriculum Development

Jennifer reviewed minor changes to these policies.

I. Reports

1. Principal's Report

Jackie reported that enrollment is up by 2, and we'll most likely be receiving another student. There might be some incoming Kindergarteners as well. Report cards will go out tomorrow. MCBA activities have been very fun recently, thanks in no small part to the 5th Grade. Pre-K Open House is coming up.

MCAS 2.0 has a lot of changes; nearly all accommodations are at the Principal's discretion, and students are allowed to ask for clarification. There are some other improvements although by and large the test seems to be PARCC in a costume. By 2019, all testing grades are expected to be done by computer. There's a large increase in homework survey responses this year, perhaps because we opened it up to former students and parents of former students. A certified music teacher position will be posted, as well as a certified school nurse position. The roof is leaking over the gym as well as the 5th and 6th Grade classrooms. We sent an email to the Town Building Committee, who is looking into it.

LAUREN MOVED TO ACCEPT THE REQUEST FOR ADMITTING TWO CHILDREN OF STAFF TO SES. FRED SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

2. Superintendent's Report

Jennifer invited anyone from rural communities to attend the Mass Rural Schools Coalition summit on March 7. We have six applicants currently for the Director of Finance and Operations search; the post closes at the end of February.

3. Amherst-Pelham Representative's Report

Steve reported that starting July 1, there will be an in-house lunch program that will cost an additional \$60,000, but hopefully increased quality and utilization will make up for this. Repairs have not started on the gym floor yet; it will cost \$225K to \$250K for the whole job, which will start in July. The budget will be able to cover this. Middle school is going on a field trip to see *Hidden Figures*; the students decided that everyone should go, so even staff and janitors are attending.

(4. Director of Finance and Operations Report – moved up in Agenda.)

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

6. CES Report:

Dan reported that there was a presentation by SPED specialists at CES; they've increased their SPED services because there's a real need around the state.

J. Future Business

- Shutesbury Policy Committee – Thursday, March 16, 2017, 6:30 P.M.
- Shutesbury School Committee – Thursday, March 16, 2017, 7 P.M.
- Budget and Personnel Committee – Monday, March 20, 2017 6:00 P.M. LES
- Union #28 Joint Supervisory – Monday March 20, 2017 7:00 P.M. LES
- Future agenda items – Shutesbury Town Meeting – Saturday, May 6, 2017

K. Adjournment: 8:32

DAN MOVED TO ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS, NOT TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION AFTER. VOICE VOTES ALL AYE.