

**SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**THURSDAY October 17, 2013**  
**FINAL Minutes**

**Present: Michael DeChiara, Dan Hayes, Mare Fox, Emily Bloch, Sean Woodard-McNiff, members; Bob Mahler, Superintendent; Maureen Ryan, Principal; Nancy Birtwell, teacher; Fred VanDerbeck, community. (Bob has list of parents who attended public comment period)**

**A. The meeting was called to order** by Michael at 7:08pm

**B. Executive Session 6:00pm**

To discuss negotiations (to return to public session)

**C. Review of Agenda and Perpetual Calendar**

There were no agenda changes. The committee discussed the upcoming October events on the perpetual calendar.

**D. Warrants and gifts**

Payroll warrant #309 for \$64,434.57, Vendor warrants # 3012 for \$14,605.70 and # 3011 for \$851.36 were signed between school committee meetings. The Food Service warrant was signed for \$1569.46 this evening.

**E. Approval of Minutes**

**DAN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 22, 2013, SEAN SECONDED. FIVE APPROVED.**

**DAN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 19, 2013 AS AMENDED, MARE SECONDED. FIVE APPROVED.**

**F. Public Comments and Announcements**

Michael explained the ground rules for comments and indicated that the school committee is here to listen and gather information. They would not be responding to the comments.

Below is a summary of the comments made by school parents regarding communication and the discontinuance of the salad bar at the elementary school?

- April Woodard McNiff-said she was disenfranchised with the salad bar decision. It was an arbitrary decision and her phone calls were not returned.
- Julie Stepanek-said I am an active volunteer who worked to introduce the salad bar. Communication with the Principal has gotten off to a bad start. Parents were never invited by the administration to discuss the decision. Phone calls and notes were not returned when she wanted to discuss this issue. Laura Leutjen – discussed her concern about the loss of the salad bar. Jane Mudie – expressed concerns about parent volunteers.

- Kristin Lee said she met resistance from the Principal bringing a bearded lizard into the cafeteria. The administration did not send her helpful information on how to handle a bus incident.
- Ashleigh Pyecroft said she is here to support the salad bar. Perhaps there could be a compromise.
- Jamie Campbell Morton said she was surprised the salad bar is gone. There was minimal communication about the salad bar. She also had no opportunity for conversation regarding a child that brought a knife to school. She needed to know it was taken care of appropriately. She also said she misses the Roadtown News that came out weekly. It was a valuable form of communication.
- Caitlin Woods also discussed the issues of a special needs child riding the bus. She said that child requires a one to one aide in the classroom and was riding the bus without supervision. Her son has been assaulted twice, bitten and punched in face. She said safety is paramount and it is not fair to that special needs child. When the first incident occurred she did not hear from the administration. When she called again she said that the administration grilled her about her background. The communication with the administration was not helpful.
- Melissa Campbell Morton said she is concerned with the breakdown of communication. She missed several events like the book fair and apple store because she had no way of knowing when they are being held.
- Paul Jacobs said he is concerned about the number of incidents and that Toni Costa is leaving. Gail is a highly qualified Food Service Director.

Michael concluded the public comment period by saying that the goal is to make our school better. Not sure what the next steps would be but they will be discussing the food operations later on in the evening if parents would like to stay for that discussion. He thanked the parents for coming and said when the school committee figures out how to respond they will send out an email. Dan also thanked the parents for coming and said it was important for the administration to hear what parents had to say.

#### **G. New Business/Discussion Items**

- Update on Food Program operations
- Maureen said if the salad bar is to be installed, hot breakfast would have to go. At the PTO meeting they discussed the salad bar and why it was discontinued (significant waste, hard to keep area clean, and staff to monitor it). There was no resolution. If there was a salad bar there would be less time for home-made breads, etc. The committee said that clearly people feel strongly about the salad bar and they were concerned with the potential loss of parent engagement in school. It is clear that parents do not feel connected to the school and they hoped to find some solution so parents feel connected. They hope to find a compromise such as having a salad bar once a week. The committee said the food is very good now and they do not want to lose Gail, and maintain parent engagement.

The committee acknowledges that Maureen is in tough spot. The school has a great food service director, and they would hate to lose her. They said parents might be more accepting of change if people had some warning. Clearly communications needs to be a priority and parents want to be heard. The committee said things change, and perhaps the wellness committee could look into this issue.

#### **H. Unfinished Business/Updates**

- Food reporting/payment systems research. Erving Elementary School might be interested in a payment system and that Bob needed to do more research. Bob said he would have more details at the next meeting and will have a proposal with all the necessary information for the next budget cycle.

#### **I. Policy Review**

- First Reading on: JRA-R – Student Records

**DAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE FIRST READING OF JRA-R STUDENT RECORDS, MARE SECONDED. FOUR APPROVED AS AMENDED**

KCDA-PUBLIC Gifts to the School District  
First read no vote taken,

#### **J. Reports**

##### **Principal's Report**

##### **Staff Update**

Retired: As of October 11, 2013: Ms. BZ Reilly - .5 Art Teacher (.4 Art/.1 Para)

Hired: As of October 1, 2013 Ms. Lisa Dewitt – FT Paraprofessional/Special Education

As of October 8, 2013: Ms. EveLynn Goodhind - .4 Art Teacher

As of October 3, 2013: Ms. Elisabeth Talis – .35 ELL Teacher

Anticipated start next week: Long-Term substitute to fill a vacancy for maternity leave in 5/6 H Ms. Elena Ritter

Resigned: As of October 1, 2013- Mr. Antti Kaisla (FT Paraprofessional /Special Education)

Resigned: As of October 25, 2013: Ms. Toni Costa – School Secretary (Full time w/benefits)

Requesting a Leave of Absence: As of November 4, 2013: Mr. Tom Scalzo - .5 Physical Education Teacher

Vacancies have been posted as of October 15, 2013. As is customary, the principal is forming a search committee to help with the hiring process. This information will be posted in The Roadtown News on Friday October 18, 2013.

##### **Student Enrollment**

The total is currently 155. (80 female/ 75 male)

### **Food Service**

The breakfast program maintains approximately 12-15 participants daily. Staff participation is very high and the compliments to the chef are constant and genuine. Gail and Rob report less food waste and more vegetables (salad) being consumed by students. A portion of salad is served as an option with every lunch in addition to a fresh cooked vegetable, and “from scratch” soup or chili. Children are served second helpings (salad included) as requested. For the month of September, Gail reported that the program is holding its own, financially, at this point. The Health Inspector visited on Friday Oct. 11<sup>th</sup> and found all well.

#### **\*Follow-up on the salad bar issue:**

The principal received emails from some parents and students expressing disappointment that the salad bar was not being used this year. One parent requested a return of chocolate milk.

The principal posted a lengthy address regarding the issue in The Roadtown News. In the address, she explained how she realized she needed to look into the matter and gather information. There were many staff members and some parents who provided the principal with information about how the salad bar came to be, how it operated and problems observed. She also consulted with the food service director and her assistant and invited parents to come in and see the food service program in action. A few parents came in to eat lunch with their children and the principal received only positive comments about the meals and the program.

One parent asked to have a meeting with the principal to discuss the salad bar. A meeting was set and some staff, with knowledge of the salad bar history, requested to join the meeting. With the intent to explore the issues surrounding the salad bar, the principal invited the staff to join the meeting with the parent and the food service director. In a follow-up call to the parent, the principal discovered that the parent was very upset about the process of the meeting and informed the principal that she would be taking the issue to the school committee meeting.

### **Building/Maintenance**

Matt Foster ordered a new snow blower and traded in the old snow blower. He had to fix the floor scrubber and is hoping that that this very old piece of equipment will last with this repair. A new scrubber would cost around \$3,000.

### **Professional Development & Staff Training**

- All staff has completed the required trainings (Confidentiality, Special Education, Harassment, Bullying, Mandated Reporting, etc.) as of October 15, 2013.
- Staff received a Crisis Response training facilitated by state troopers and local police personnel on October 16, 2013. Our Lockdown Drill is scheduled for October 22, 2013 at 10:00.
- October 25, 2013 is Curriculum Day. Staff will have an option to participate professional development in the following:

### **Superintendent’s Report**

- 1) Update from Franklin County Superintendent’s Meeting

- There was a great deal of discussion about the implementation of the new Educator Evaluation System. All feel that it is going well and is creating deeper links between teachers and administrators as this allows for a greater degree of communication and discourse about the art and science of teaching. There is the on-going debate about the use of electronic recording devices during observations and the impact of the loss of attention on the part of the evaluator to the teacher and the classroom work.
- On September 30<sup>th</sup> every school had to submit a pilot plan for implementing District Determined Measures (DDM's). These plans are open to change throughout the year, but a final version is expected by the end of June. At Shutesbury we will utilize existing assessments (BAS, DIBELS) and look to create an assessment that can be linked to the math program. Administration will work closely with teachers to develop a list of assessments that are consistent with our curriculum and can give us a picture of student growth. The DDM's are part of the overall Educator Evaluation System and are used to rate teacher effectiveness, but are not part of a teacher's summative evaluation.
- Lots of laughs and stories from the experienced superintendents and lots of questions from the new superintendents regarding the issue of school cancellations and delays due to inclement weather.

2) Other ongoing topics of importance to Union 28:

Government shutdown – will not impact SES in the short run – Title I funds have arrived (10-25% of the total) and should carry the school through the current crisis. The shutdown may impact the October Federal reimbursement for the school lunch program—there is no guarantee for retroactive reimbursement but past history signals that there should be no problem in eventually seeing those funds.

October 25<sup>th</sup> is the all district curriculum day, to be hosted at Leverett Elementary School. Paul Bocko is working to recruit both Union 28 teachers and outside trainers to create a rich day of training and professional development. The offerings are linked to the overall Union 28 goals.

On the same day we have developed a county-wide program for nurses with trainers coming from the Boston Children's Hospital. At the November meeting I will give you a complete list of Union 28 staff that lead the workshops and helped organize the trainings.

**Regional School District Planning Board**

Michael said they met last week. Shutesbury group was not inspired by the discussion. They were expecting information would be needed for each model. Michael said that the timeline has been pushed back for a vote by towns at Spring 2014 Town Meeting and there is no model yet. There is not a lot of agreement now and the process is confusing. Not sure of next meeting.

**Amherst-Pelham Representative's Report**

They met two weeks ago. Amherst has a twin city in Japan, a formal relationship of 25 years. There were presentations regarding their twin city. Not a lot of policy discussion. Next meeting will be about superintendent goals.

### **Union #28 Report**

No report on Budget and Personnel subcommittee

One issue coming up is to determine if there will be a superintendent search. They will be discussing that in the upcoming months.

### **CES Report**

Dan is on the hiring committee for new Executive Director, no meeting between school committee meetings.

### **K. Future Business**

- Budget and Personnel-next meeting October 22, 6:00pm Central Office
- Joint Supervisory-next meeting November 5, 7:00pm Swift River School
- Regional Meeting-next meeting November 5, 7:00pm ARMS
- Shutesbury School Committee-November 21, 2013
- Future agenda items hiring process for school secretary, food operations.

### **L. Executive Session**

**EMILY, MICHAEL MOVED TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE TO DISCUSS SPECIAL EDUCATION OF STUDENTS, MARE SECONDED. THE COMMITTEE WILL NOT RETURN TO OPEN SESSION. HAYES YES, BLOCH YES, WOODARD-MCNIFF YES, DECHIARA YES, FOX YES.**

**Adjournment 9:20**

**Respectfully submitted  
David C. Dann**