

SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
THURSDAY August 22, 2013
FINAL Minutes

Present: Emily Bloch, Michael DeChiara, Dan Hayes came at 7:15, Mare Fox, Sean Woodard-McNiff members: Bob Mahler, Superintendent; Maureen Ryan, Principal; Nancy Birtwell, teacher; Fred VanDerbeck, community.

- A. The meeting was called to order** by Michael at 7:06pm
- B. Review of Agenda** - no changes
- C. Warrants** none

D. Approval of Minutes:

EMILY MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JUNE 17, 2013 AS AMENDED, SEAN SECONDED. FOUR APPROVED

E. Public Comments and Announcements

There were no comments or announcements

F. New Business/Discussion Items

New Superintendent update

The contract for the new superintendent, Bob Mahler was completed. Bob was asked how it is going. He responded that the Central office is great to work with. He reported that he met with all the elementary school principals and that he is looking forward to a good year.

The School Committee also welcomed new principal Maureen Ryan and new committee member Sean Woodard-McNiff.

Family Handbook

The Family Handbook draft was sent to the committee in advance of the meeting for their review. The committee indicated that the handbook was clear. Maureen said she made no major changes; she only made some minor consolidations and edits. The committee decided to remove one statement that read "*all children can board the school bus if all the class members are invited to the child's party.*"

A discussion about fund raising ensued and prompted the committee to consider further review of their authority to accept gifts and school fundraising. It was agreed that these would be considered during the policy discussions.

DAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE FAMILY HANDBOOK, MARE SECONDED. FIVE APPROVED.

Perpetual Calendar

Michael distributed an updated copy of the perpetual calendar which has not be used for several years. The Committee agreed to review it monthly to help guide activities that needed to occur regularly each year.

Lunch system

There was a discussion about the cost of school lunches for adults. Currently the meals cost \$3.00. Maureen asked the Committee what its thoughts were about the prices - should the school increase the fee to help balance the food budget or should this be considered a benefit for staff. There was also discussion about whether adults should pay in advance. After some discussion, the committee decided not to make any changes at this time.

Lunch payment system

The committee asked Bob to look into what a computerized, web-based billing system would look like for SES. It was discussed that an online payment system could allow for school personnel to do their primary jobs more rather than manage paperwork and track payments. There was also discussion about the transaction costs to families for these systems; the current online payment system has a flat rate regardless of the amount provided. Bob will report back to the committee next month.

G. Unfinished Business

Amherst Regional Representative position

After asking if any other members were interested in being the Amherst-Pelham regional representative, Michael volunteered to be the committee's rep if the committee would also appoint an alternate.

SEAN MOVED TO APPOINT MICHAEL TO BE THE AMHERST REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE DUE TO THE FACT THAT NO ONE ELSE ON THE COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERED. FOUR YES ONE ABSTAINED.

MICHAEL NOMINATED SEAN TO BE AN ALTERNATE TO THE AMHERST REGIONAL REP. FIVE APPROVED.

Preschool Research Workgroup:

The Committee suggested that Maureen form a study group to look at two issues related to the preschool that the Committee has been discussing for several months. The two issues are: possible preschool participation in an afterschool program and extending preschool to a 1:00pm release on early release days.

It was agreed that additional research and discussion of these issues would be better in a smaller group. It was requested that this research be presented to the Committee in advance of budget and contract negotiations. Maureen will form a study group that will include Emily, staff, and parents. The committee asked for an update in October.

H. Policy Review

Second Reading, First Vote on:

JRA-R Student Records

Bob handed out the current regulations approved by DESE in 2006 regarding access to student records. He pointed out that the current handbook does not comply with the state law. In accordance with the 2006 regulations which clarify state law, every parent, no matter what his/her marital situation can have access to student's records unless there is a court order that prohibits that access. Michael will draft a new policy for committee that complies with the state statute and includes the DESE clarifications. A first vote was tabled.

DAN MOVED TO TABLE THE FIRST VOTE, EMILY SECONDED. FIVE APPROVED.

Final Vote on:

JRA Students Records

DAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE JRA STUDENT RECORDS POLICY AS AMENDED, MICHAEL SECONDED. FIVE APPROVED.

I. Reports

Principal's Report

Maureen summarized her written report which was distributed to the committee.

Joining the 5/6 team is Ms. Andrea Hermans, a talented and passionate teacher with years of experience working with children in the public schools in eastern Mass. Preparing tasty and nutritious meals as the Food Service Director is Ms. Gail Beauregard, who held this position at SES a few years ago. In October, long-time art teacher B.Z. Reilly will be retiring. We wish her good luck and many thanks for the creative spirit she brought to SES. We are fortunate that EveLynn Goodhind, a Shutesbury resident will be taking over the art teacher position. Joining the After School Program is Mr. Michael Wilkins, who is pursuing his teaching certificate for physical education. Finally and importantly, supporting our students in kindergarten and grade 3 are Lauren Thomas-Paquin and Antti Kaisla. Lauren is a certified teacher, a Shutesbury resident and mother of three SES students; Antti, who was born in Finland and is a certified art teacher.

The committee discussed upcoming capital needs and asked that a list be presented before the budget was developed.

Maureen asked the Committee for guidance regarding public access to wifi at SES. This summer as part of SES' e-rate submission, it was discovered that due to federal requirements regarding firewalls, the school would need to pay \$2,400 to maintain the current public access channel for wifi. There was discussion of pros and con's including the importance to the community, alternatives to accessing the Internet, and the other uses for \$2,400. The committee was reluctant to use the school's funds to maintain wifi given educational needs and public access to the

Internet at the library. Additionally, the Committee considered the police concerns about having people in the school parking lot during the day/night to get an Internet connection.

SEAN MOVED TO NOT USE SCHOOL FUNDS TO PROVIDE PUBLIC WI-FI ACCESS AT THE SCHOOL, MICHAEL SECONDED. FIVE APPROVED.

The committee requested that the mission statement be re- hung in its place of prominence in the Conference Room. There was also a request to Maureen to update the school's website.

Superintendent's Report

In reporting on the School Improvement Plan from last school year, Bob told the committee that the process and plan were side-tracked as a result of the principal search and regionalization discussions – both of which took time from the School Council. Specifically, Bob reported that the Council did not move on the community service piece of the SIP.

Bob provided some initial information about the statewide Teacher evaluation that will be required this year. If done right, he felt it can be really helpful. The Committee will need to approve this in September since it will become part of the teacher contract.

Bob reported that Union #28 hired Deb Gerry to be the part-time Special Education Director since two rounds of searches did not yield any finalists. Bob is looking for second person to hire who can assist Deb.

With the close of the FY13 budget, the school district will be returning \$16,000 to town. This is after some educational investments were made for the school to make up for cuts made during the past few years.

Home School request: Bob presented a Home School Request for the Lester family. He recommended it be accepted.

DAN MOVED TO APPROVE LESTER HOME SCHOOL REQUEST AS SUBMITTED, EMILY SECONDED. FIVE APPROVED

Regional School District Planning Board Report

Michael told the committee the RSDPB met in June, July, and August. It was intended that during the summer the Board would work on developing a regional agreement for a preK-6 region so that it would be available for consideration by the public in the fall. However, in July the Board changed its mind and no longer fully supports the preK-6 model. Discussion is underway about alternative models. From his perspective, Michael is not very optimistic that given this delay and a renewed insistence by some board members for a preK-12 model, that agreement will be reached among members of the Board. He will continue to report on the process. Additionally, the Board agreed to postpone any votes by the towns until spring 2014, effectively moving the start of a new region to fall 2015. The next meeting of the Board is 9/23.

Amherst –Pelham Representative Report

No report since Shutesbury did not have a representative.

Union #28 Report

No report. There have been no meetings.

CES Report

Dan reported that the search is continuing to hire a new executive director for the Collaborative.

J. Future Business

- Shutesbury School Committee September 19, 2013
- Joint Supervisory Next meeting Tuesday September 24 at SES
- Future agenda items, lunch costs, accepting gifts, perpetual calendar

I. Executive Session

MICHAEL MOVED TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS NEGOTIATIONS AND STUDENT NEEDS. THE COMMITTEE WILL NOT RETURN TO OPEN SESSION.

DAN SECOND. HAYES YES, FOX YES, DECHIARA YES, WOODARD-MCNIFF YES, BLOCH YES.

Adjourned 9:48

Respectfully submitted

David C. Dann