

**SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
THURSDAY March 21, 2013
FINAL Minutes**

Present: Clif Read, Emily Bloch, Michael DeChiara, Dan Hayes, Mare Fox came at 7:38: Joan Wickman, Superintendent; Bob Mahler, Principal; Michael Kociela, Union 28 Director of Finance and Operations; Nancy Birtwell, teacher; Karen Czerwonka, Mary Lou Conca, Charlene Galenski, and Fred VanDerbeck community.

A. The meeting was called to order by Clif at 7:09

B. Public Hearing FY14 Budget

Clif opened the public hearing. Budget is the same document that was discussed with Fin Com/Select Board in January.

The Select Board and Fin Com said the school budget fits their requirements and answered all their questions. The committee had no further questions. Clif closed the public hearing portion of the meeting.

C. Warrants

Signed between school committee meetings were Payroll Warrant #319 for \$61,111.31 and Vendor Warrants #3024 for \$6,440.61 and #3025 for \$15,896.25. Food Service Warrant # 100934 was signed this evening for \$1253.23.

D. Review of Agenda The budget vote will be moved forward.

E. Approval of Minutes from February 28, 2013

DAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 28, 2013 AS AMENDED, MICHAEL SECONDED. FOUR APPROVED.

Emily noted that Tanya Shersnow, the mother of two children attending school died this past week. She asked, what does the school committee do in these circumstances? What have they done in the past? Bob said there is a sunshine fund at the school for various donations the staff might want to contribute to. Bob said this is the fourth death over the past 6 years of a member of the school community. Michael Kociela discouraged the use of public funds for any personal purpose, however certainly encouraged individuals on the committee to make individual contributions. School Committee decided to use a portion of their expense account to purchase books for the school library in memory of these parents.

MICHAEL MOVED THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE SPEND \$150 FROM THEIR SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCOUNT TO PURCHASE BOOKS FOR THE SCHOOL LIBRARY IN MEMORY OF THE FOUR DEATHS OF MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY WHO HAVE PASSED AWAY IN RECENT YEARS, DAN SECONDED. FOUR APPROVED.

F. Public Comments and Announcements

The school committee discussed the purpose of holding public meetings sponsored by individual school committee members, who should attend, what message they convey. Whenever there is a quorum of school committee in attendance then rules and regulations pertaining to open meeting law need to be followed. That includes posting of meetings, taking minutes, etc. Joan will seek legal opinion on the following questions:

Can school committee members hold meetings in public places as individuals?

Can school committee members send emails regarding their opinions?

Can materials be withheld from other school committee members that have been discussed at a public meeting?

DAN MOVED AND EMILY SECONDED TO APPROVE THE FY14 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BUDGET TOTALING \$ 1,792,333 EMILY SECOND. FIVE APPROVED.

A. New Business/Discussion Items

- **Approval of Academic Calendar 2013/2014**

DAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE 2013/2014 ACADEMIC CALENDAR AS PRESENTED, EMILY SECONDED. FIVE APPROVED.

- **RSDPB Meeting and Vote on March 9, 2013**

Michael reported that the full committee voted on March 9 to move forward and created three town PreK-6 region. The three towns are Amherst, Pelham and Leverett. Michael reported that the Shutesbury representatives to the RSDPB felt there was not enough visible support from the town residents in Shutesbury to join the other three towns. Those towns would move forward and draft a regional agreement for town meeting votes (Amherst has a town election) in November. Shutesbury representatives voted 2-1 not to participate at this time in the new region. Their vote was based on considerable division in Shutesbury whether to leave Union 28 for the new region.

The Shutesbury committee will remain active on the RSDPB to retain strong lines of communication and to help create a regional agreement that can work for Shutesbury in the future. It was pointed out that the representatives were appointed by the Town Moderator who selected one member of the school committee, Michael DeChiara. The other members are Becky Torres, Town Administrator, and Elaine Puleo Select Board Chair.

Shutesbury representatives met on March 14 to debrief on their vote and discuss the ramifications. They took two votes. The first vote was they now supported Shutesbury participation in the new PreK-6 region. The second vote was to ask the full RSDPB to reconsider their March 9th vote. Both votes passed 2-1. Michael and Becky in the affirmative and Elaine voted no.

A vote by the Shutesbury Committee does not mean the full RSDPB will vote to change its approved position to work towards a 3-town preK-6 region of which Shutesbury is not a participant.

Prior to the next RSDPB meeting on March 20, the Shutesbury committee met and changed their March 14 vote. They voted not to ask the RSDPB to reconsider their March 9th vote and have Shutesbury join the new region. Their hope is that down the road with more concrete information Shutesbury may want to join the region. They felt that the possibility existed that at town meeting in November Shutesbury could vote no, thus killing the opportunity for creating a new elementary school region.

A regionalization public forum is scheduled for April 24 in Shutesbury to discuss what we think, and where we may go from here.

Joan said that Union 28 central office will downsize if the district is reduced to 4 towns 3 schools. Among the reductions is a 25% salary reduction for both the superintendent and sped director. She also said the Union will likely have to prepare two budgets, one if Leverett is in the Union and one if they are not. Clif distributed a letter from the Wendell Select Board and Finance Committee which praised Joan, Michael Kociela, and all the central office staff for their efforts and information provided regarding the regionalization initiative of the RSDPB.

B. Unfinished Business/Updates

- FY 14 Budget Vote (discussed earlier)
- Principal Search Process: Joan reported that the search committee interviewed 3 candidates this past Monday, and 3 more would be interviewed next Wednesday. The screening committee felt they had a good range of candidates and look forward to the additional interviews next week. Once the search committee identifies 3 finalists they will be notified. This sets up the next phase of the search process which becomes public. Each candidate will visit the school and participate in a public forum. Joan said the search committee is a very thoughtful group. Joan did not indicate what the search committee's involvement would/might be after the public phase process is completed.
- Combined Meetings with Other U#28 Schools: Mare hoped the committee would hold joint meetings. This would give her an opportunity to visit other schools. Some committee members felt Shutesbury has more in common with Leverett (because of membership in the secondary region). They agreed meeting with Leverett once a year was worthwhile. Going to others schools limits Shutesbury residents from participating in committee meetings and that the school committee meetings are long enough just for issues relating to Shutesbury.

MARE MOVED TO HAVE COMBINED MEETINGS WITH EACH OF THE SCHOOLS IN UNION 28 FOR THE SCHOOL 2013/14 YEAR, DAN SECONDED, CLIF, MICHAEL, AND EMILY VOTED NO, MARE AND DAN VOTED YES. MOTION FAILED 2-3.

- School Safety Measures: Bob announced that the system is now complete. The doors are locked between 9 and 3. The locked doors started Monday 3/11. Bob said that the safety committee will work at doing as much as they can within their \$15,000 budget. It

- Food Program/Breakfast Program: Bob said the food program is running smoothly. He also said he is concerned with the school's ability to hold on to good food service staff. The fact that we have a revolving door is a concern. He would like to create staff stability. The school's wellness policy is where the state is moving toward. Kids like the food and the numbers are steady. Breakfast does not impact classroom activities. With our new generator we could do more fresh food preparation.
- Joan reported to the committee that a recent email from Becky Torres, Town Administrator concerning the roof leak, indicated that after further evaluation the leak is more localized, and they will not submit a MSBA grant.

C. Policy Review

Nothing for committee tonight

D. Reports

Principal's Report

Bob reported that four more children were added to the school enrollment, all from one family. MCAS started testing today. The school received a grant of \$2500 for technology equipment, 2 ipads and a document camera. Bob said the staff's use of tech equipment is well supported and integrated into the school's curriculum.

Bob said the Pre School is looking at 21 children for next year. Under the NAEYC guidelines this would require two classrooms. He asked the committee if they would consider raising tuition from \$25 to \$30/day. The added revenue would bring in about \$12,000. Bob estimated there would be \$50,000 in the pre-school revolving fund at the end of the year. The committee thought it might be helpful to look at the needs of preschool families regarding their after school needs. If we are going to charge more it might be a good time to consider after school options for preschoolers. Bob was asked to bring a recommendation to the committee in April that he and Grace would be comfortable with.

Superintendent's Report.

There were no questions on Joan's reports. Joan will be meeting with Representative Kulick's Office. She suggested the committee email her with any questions and concerns. One of the topics they will discuss will be Charter School funding. Since Massachusetts is a Race to the Top state we will have to increase charter school numbers.

Joan also reported that the summer academy is moving forward, as well as work on educators evaluations. She concluded her report with the announcement that curriculum day last Friday was very good.

Regional School District Planning Board Report previously reported

Amherst-Pelham Representative's Report

Last meeting was cancelled due to a snow day. Budget will be approved at their next meeting. Contracts for teachers, paraprofessionals, and a third group that includes maintenance, bus drivers group are moving forward. The committee will vote on school choice at their next meeting.

Union #28 Report

Strategic Development SubCommittee no meeting

Budget and Personnel report- Six candidates have been selected to form a Sped Director hiring committee.

Joint Supervisory no report their next meeting is May 22.

CES Report Dan reported the committee heard several employee grievances concerning their evaluations. In the future they will not hear employee grievances. They also discussed employee's salaries, reviewed articles of agreements, and discussed the Executive Director's search process. The board will not renew their contract with Dean Vocational school effective in the new school year.

E. Future Business

- Union #28 Joint Supervisory Meeting May 22, 2013, 7:00pm Leverett
- Budget and Personnel TBD
- Shutesbury School Committee April 25, 2013 7:00pm

F. Executive Session none

AT 10:02 DAN MOVED TO ADJOURN, MICHAEL SECONDED. FIVE APPROVED.

**Respectfully submitted
David C. Dann**