

SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
THURSDAY January 17, 2013
FINAL Minutes

Present: Clif Read, Emily Bloch, Michael DeChiara, Dan Hayes, Mare Fox, members: Joan Wickman, Superintendent; Bob Mahler, Principal; Michael Kociela, Union 28 Director of Finance and Operations; Al Springer Select Board, Weezie Houle, FinCom; Mike Vinskey, Polly Wagner, Wendy Raskevitz, Tom Harding, Police Chief; Nancy Birtwell, teacher; and Fred VanDerbeck, community.

A. The meeting was called to order by Clif at 7:02

B. Review of Agenda no changes

C. Warrants

Signed between school committee meetings were Payroll Warrant #315 for \$59,072.29 and Vendor Warrant #3020 for \$6,578.71. Food Service warrant 100932 for \$1821.77 was signed this evening.

D. Approval of Minutes

DAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 20, 2012 AS AMENDED, MICHAEL SECONDED. FIVE APPROVED.

E. Public Comments and Announcements Michael Vinsky, stated he was impressed with the committee's newsletter. He said he appreciated the information. Joan said that April 10 was the deadline for submitting a Statement of Interest to the Massachusetts School Building Authority for repair or renovation grants. Committee suggested that the administration work with the town building committee and the town administrator and come back to the committee with information at their next meeting.

F. New Business/Discussion items

- **Head Start Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).** Joan will bring the completed agreement next month. She said the MOU stems from a new regulation that Head Start must follow with LEAs for good communication. Michael suggested she review the termination clause. The purpose is to ensure good communication with LEAs and smooth transitions for students between programs.
- **Legal Counsel Discussion** The committee will discuss this issue later on this evening, however the committee wanted to go on record that they use three sources for legal counsel. Fred Dupere, Gini Tate, and town counsel Donna McNicol. Fred's expertise is in the area of labor law and he is under a retainer, and Gini Tate's expertise is in Special Education.

MICHAEL MOVED THAT THE COMMITTEE ACKNOWLEDGES WE HAVE LEGAL REPRESENTATION FROM THREE SOURCES, FRED DUPERE FOR LABOR ISSUES, GINI TATE FOR SPECIAL ED, AND DONNA MCNICOL FOR MUNICIPAL ISSUES. FRED

DUPERE IS UNDER RETAINER, MARE SECONDED. FOUR APPROVED, MARE VOTED NO.

Michael said he might want to continue the discussion on legal counsel after he mulls it over.

Unfinished Business/Updates

- **Budget Updates** Clif said the School Committee met with Select Board and Finance Committee to review their FY14 budget. Clif felt there was support for the elementary school budget. He said on March 5 there will be follow-up committee meeting at 7:30pm. Michael Kociela was applauded for his clear budget presentation. Mare had a question about who constructs the pre-school budget. She noted there was a significant surplus. Bob stated the main reason for such a large surplus was in case the state did not approve its usual annual grant support. The committee would like to see an annual budget for the pre-school program. Bob told the committee that having a second pre-school classroom will be determined in the spring. Bob said that March/April is a very likely time to have that discussion. The committee will vote to approve a second pre-school classroom after it gets all the enrollment data in the spring. After the budget hearing and the follow up discussions in March the committee should have a sense if there will be two pre-school classrooms for FY14.

Dismissing the pre-school program at 11:30 on Wednesday's has issues for some parents. Bob will talk with the Preschool Coordinator and report back to the committee on possible options.

- **School Safety Measures** Bob reported on the front door status. January 7 the Safety Committee met and discussed locking the front door in light of recent shootings at Newtown, CT. The committee recommended the front door be locked. The committee felt this was a wise change. Bob said the school has been practicing lock down drills. He said the drill went very well. He said he is trying to make this school as safe and secure as possible. He praised the Police and Fire Chief as helpful resources. Bob would like to have the committee vote on the safety committee's request to lock the front door. It would be open at noon for recess, and locked again at 1 and open again at 3.

Finance Committee has granted the school \$10,000 to complete the installment of a sound and light system to alert everyone in the building to a lockdown. A discussion ensued about children with sensory issues and how best to keep them calm. There will be future drills during unexpected times. Clif acknowledge the work of the safety committee, and appreciated their hard work.

MARE MOVED THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE SAFETY COMMITTEE TO LOCK THE SCHOOL DURING SCHOOL HOURS, DAN SECONDED. FIVE APPROVED.

- **Food Program/Breakfast Program.** Bob said 10-15 kids have breakfast each day. Bob said it seems to be working as well for teachers. He does not think it will be a black hole financially. Extra work yes, but he said it seems to work for kids, teachers, and school.

The fact that Dennise and Kristen volunteer at breakfast has really helped. School Committee wants to thank staff for making this work.

- Principal Contract. Bob has announced he will retire at the end of the school year. Everyone thanked Bob for his hard work and great job during his tenure as principal the past seven years. The committee would like to begin hiring sooner than later.

MARE MOVED THE ADMINISTRATION SEEK LEGAL COUNSEL TO HELP WRITE THE LANGUAGE FOR THE HIRING EMPLOYMENT AD FOR THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL FOR ONE YEAR, MICHAEL SECONDED. FIVE APPROVED

Committee reviewed the hiring process policy for the principal. Joan will review the policy and the committee will discuss the policy more in February.

- RSDPB Discussion: Michael reported that at their recent meeting the board recommended a vote be taken on March 9. There would be 12 votes, one for each committee member. The vote would be to determine whether or not to go ahead with investigation of regionalization and which model would be adopted. Depending on that vote would determine when and if there would be special town meetings. The Board vote does not trump any town vote. Michael said that if the board recommends to move forward he would recommend that the school committee take a vote to withdraw from Union 28 contingent on town vote in November.

February 2 at 1-3 there will be a meeting with the consultants to share their reports. This meeting will take place at the middle school. All four towns will hold individual forums prior to a vote of the Board to move forward. Shutesbury Public Forum will be 2/27 at 6:30 at the school gym. This will be an ideal time for the public to ask questions on findings and to discuss the broader issues. On March 9 at 9am the Board will vote whether to proceed or not, and if it votes to proceed which model will it endorse.

G. Policy Review

Final Vote on: BDD: School Committee-Superintendent Relationship
GBK: Staff Complaints and Grievances

DAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE BDD: SCHOOL COMMITTEE-SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP, MICHAEL SECONDED. FIVE APPROVED

DAN MOVED TO APPROVED GBK: STAFF COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES, MICHAEL SECONDED. FIVE APPROVED

Discussion on Social network Policy This topic was tabled.

H. Reports

Principal's Report

- Asked committee if there were any questions on his report. There were none.

Superintendent's Report

- Joan reported she met with Matt regarding the DEP findings that pertain to SES's water system. She said that Matt Foster and a hired water system consultant are addressing the issues that were found.
- The committee had no questions on her Shutesbury report or Union 28 report.
- Joan handed out Governor Patrick's press release for renewed investment in education.
- Joan handed out legislative updates on various topics and issues.

Regional School District Planning Board Report

Michael said he had nothing additional to report.

Amherst-Pelham Representative's Report

- Michael reported the committee's FY14 budget discussion highlights. He said the budget is going up 3.5%. There are some significant budget cuts. Shutesbury assessment is 4.07% increase from FY13. He will get more specific info in February.
- Al reported that at the all 4 towns meeting each town said what they could afford for FY14 budget increases.

Union #28 Report no report

CES Report

- Dan reported that the FY14 COLA would use the same formula with some minor adjustments.
- Screening Committee is being formed for hiring the new Executive Director. Joan Schuman, will be retiring after 20 plus years
- Dan said there have been marginal improvements and there is still a long way to go at Dean Tech.

I. Future Business

- Union#28 Joint Supervisory Meeting January 29, 2013 7:00pm EES
- Budget and Personnel Committee January 29, 2013 6:00pm EES
- Shutesbury School Committee February 28, 2013

J. Executive Session

AT 10:48 DAN MOVED TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF LEGAL MATTERS, COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, AND APPROVAL OF CURRENT EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES, MICHAEL SECONDED. THE COMMITTEE WILL NOT RETURN TO OPEN SESSION. ROLL CALL VOTE, DECHIARA AYE, READ AYE, HAYES AYE, BLOCH AYE, FOX AYE.

**Respectfully submitted
David C. Dann**