

**SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**Thursday, April 26, 2018**  
**Final Minutes**

**Present: Katie Fiander, Lauren Thomas-Paquin, Dan Hayes, members; Fred Steinberg, Chair; Jackie Mendonsa, Principal; Bruce Turner, Director of Finance and Operations; Jennifer Haggerty, Superintendent; Public Guests**

**A. Meeting Called to Order by Fred at 7:00 P.M.**

**B. Public Comments and Announcements:**

a. School Budget/Finance Graph Discussion and Update: At Dan's invitation, Jeff Lacy came to share the results of his historical research into several data points related to the school. He pointed out that in 2003, the school's enrollment hovered around 180, while today it's in the 120s, a startling reduction. Using data provided by Bruce, he produced a graph comparing staffing, enrollment, and budget over the past 15 years or so. The budget line tracks inflation very well, but neither budget nor staffing seem to be dependent on enrollment, which is trending consistently downward. This doesn't seem a sustainable trend.

Dan said declining enrollment is certainly the problem, and it's happening in rural school districts all across the state. Thanks in part to the Rural Schools Initiative, there's some movement starting at the state level to address this, perhaps through so-called Sparsity Aid, perhaps through other means, but the problem is starting to be recognized by our legislators. We're not out of line in terms of our budget, either; we've been level funding the school for years. SSC members pointed out that the staffing data does not represent full-time staff (there are many half-time or less positions), and our budget has been increasing in part due to a loss of state grants and in part due to providing mandated SPED services and support. In addition, we've just had an Out-of-District placement to the tune of \$40,000+. OOD placements are unpredictable and often expensive, but also mandatory when students can't get what they need at SES. We never get reimbursement for transportation, and the other OOD monies are only partially reimbursed. SSC members also explained the bargained salary increases as well as the extant pay gap between U#28 school employees and those in surrounding districts. It's vital that we continue to press the issue of increasing rural funding with our legislators.

Dan thanked Jeff for bringing these issues to our attention; many of them we're well aware of and have been grappling with for quite some time. The solution here isn't cuts, however; the legislation has to change in order for public education to be less of a burden on small towns. That might actually happen during this budgetary session. SSC always welcomes questions and concerns.

b. Other Public Hearings: A member of the PTO reported that the Spaghetti Dinner starts at 6 P.M. on May 11, and the PTO is doing a big raffle with diverse prizes. Then there's a Mother's Day Pancake Breakfast organized by Shutesbury dads. Further down the road, June 21, we'll be having a fundraiser at Quarters.

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

**D. Warrants and Gifts:**

#3024: \$27,966.65  
#3025: \$15,999.45  
#3026: \$32,668.08  
#3027: \$1.58

**E. Approval of Minutes from March 15, 2018.**

**DAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 15, 2018. LAUREN SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.**

**F. Unfinished Business / Updates:**

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

1. Superintendent Evaluation: Lauren informed SSC about the evaluation process and Dan shared the forms we'll use for it. She noted that "Proficient," which doesn't sound that stellar, is actually excellent. They both encouraged SSC members to participate in the evaluation, since there have been some problems in the past with getting enough committee members to provide substantial feedback.

2. School Committee Meeting Schedule – Vote:

**DAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE NEW SCHEDULE OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS. LAUREN SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.**

Jennifer said meetings will still be on the third Thursday of the month; there will just be fewer of them (October, December, and May have been removed).

3. Identification of School Choice Seats: Jennifer said we typically identify if there are open seats at this time of year so we can participate in the School Choice program. Jackie confirmed that there are seats open in Grades 1 and 3, and Kindergarten is still unclear.

**H. Reports:**

1. Director of Finance and Operations Report: Bruce reported that he met with some Town officials and SSC members to discuss the budget; we're all set with it. The meeting was a really good one. As for the roof, we haven't heard anything one way or another yet.

2. Principal's Report: Jackie reported that the last day of school is June 25. She's super proud and very grateful to the reenergized PTO. The STEM night was fabulous, and our time-honored Spaghetti Dinner is coming up soon. We're continuing to try out Mystery Science, and we'll be testing another system out next year. School Field Trips are coming up soon as well. We have 34 or so students participating in our Drama Club, performing an adaptation of *The Jungle Book* by one of our students. The roof leaks in random places, expanding throughout the school; we've had tiles fall out of the ceiling. The Building Committee has looked at it, but nothing has been decided about it yet. Our 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade teacher is moving into the Reading Specialist teacher, so we've posted her old position and have 62 applicants so far. We also have a 5<sup>th</sup> Grade position to cover maternity leave. Enrollment is up to 125.

3. Superintendent's Report: Jennifer reported that we're all preparing for Town Meetings now. The new MCAS accountability indicators are coming out; they're looking at raising the performance of each school's worst-performing students. DESE is looking at ESL students achieving fluency in six years, with targets along the way. Mandated reporting for all this is increasing as well, and misreporting can affect our school Level. Hiring for the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and Coordinator of Student Services positions is underway.

4. Amherst-Pelham Representative's Report: Steve reported that they discussed how far away from schools the new marijuana dispensaries need to be; only the high school requires attention in this regard. The Town has changed this distance to a 500-foot buffer. The ARHS drama teacher is

receiving an award from the Town after coming back from a sabbatical. An attempt to drop Franklin Tech and go exclusively with Smith Voc failed because several dozen people showed up to voice their disagreement. Other citizens have also voiced their displeasure with the search process for the ARMS Principal. Some parents have indicated their support for the current Interim Principal, but the process has been criticized by many.

5. Union #28 Report – including Budget and Personnel: None.

6. CES Report: None.

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

First Reading on:

DB – Annual Budget  
DBC – Budget Deadlines and Schedules  
DBD – Budget Planning  
EB – Accident Safety Program  
ECA – Buildings and Ground Security  
EFC – Free and Reduced Price Food Services

Final Vote on:

DGA – Authorized Signatures

**DAN MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY DGA – AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES. LAUREN SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.**

#### **J. Future Business**

SSC discussed various aspects of the SES budget in relation to support at Town Meeting. They agreed that generally there's a lot of support for SES in town, but they need to be prepared to explain details.

- Shutesbury Policy Committee – Thursday, May 17, 2018, 6:30 p.m.
- Shutesbury School Committee – Thursday, May 17, 2018, 7:00 p.m.
- Budget and Personnel Committee – Monday, May 21, 2018, 6:30 p.m. Shutesbury
- Union #28 Joint Supervisory – Monday, May 21, 2018, 7:00 p.m. Shutesbury
- Shutesbury Town Meeting – Saturday, May 5, 2018 9:00 a.m.
- Future agenda items –

#### **K. Adjournment at 8:30 P.M.**