

SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
THURSDAY April 16, 2015
FINAL Minutes

Present: Dan Hayes, Mare Fox, Fred Steinberg, Steve Sullivan, members; Sean Woodard-McNiff, chair; Jackie Mendonsa, Principal; Bob Mahler, Superintendent; Public Guests

A. Meeting Called to Order at 7:01 P.M.

B. Review of Agenda and Perpetual Calendar

Dan noted that the calendar had been updated according to last meeting's review. Susie Mosher suggested that an announcement of upcoming vacancies might be a good item to add to the calendar so that potential candidates could submit the requisite paperwork before the nomination period closes. Mare and Dan both expressed support for the idea, but Dan noted the committee should take care not to politicize the process. The committee agreed that simply announcing that positions are open and identifying members that are running again for their seats would be helpful. Bob said it could be as simple as an agenda item in February.

C. Warrants and Gifts

Warrants signed:

#322: \$64,593.61

#4007: \$2,352.63

D. Approval of Minutes from March 19, 2015

No emendations.

DAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 19, 2015. MARE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

E. Public Comments and Announcements: No comments.

F. New Business / Discussion Items

1. Graduation Date / Time

Graduation will be on June 18, 6:30. The kids will speak, Jackie will speak, there will be a performance, and adults will contribute some sort of performance as well. Jackie



will play a special though as-yet undisclosed role in the ceremony. Students are expected to spiff up a bit for the event.

2. Identification of School Choice Seats

There are no seats identified for School Choice this year, due in part to a larger-than-average incoming Preschool class. Fred asked whether the committee needed to vote to participate in School Choice; Bob said yes, the committee votes on participation every year, but the Principal identifies available seats, so it is possible to vote for participation and offer no seats. Jackie continued that while there are no seats this year, demographic trends might shape a very different conversation about School Choice next year.

G. Unfinished Business / Updates: None.

H. Policy Review

- ACAB – Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Hazing & Bullying
- GBA – Equal Employment Opportunity
- GBA – 1 – Harassment Policy
- GCBB – Employment of Principal
- GCF – Professional Staff Hiring
- GCF – Hiring Policy for Shutesbury School-Based Staff
- GCF – 1 – Hiring Procedures Policy
- JB – Equal Educational Opportunities
- JBA – Student-to-Student Harassment

Fred offered several copy edits to these policies. Mare clarified one more substantive point regarding “must” versus “should” in reporting harassment.

DAN MOVED TO APPROVE POLICIES ACAB, GBA, GBA-1, GCBB, GCF, GCF-1, JB, AND JBA. MARE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

I. Reports

1. Principal's Report

No new enrollments, so we're still at 157. The Pre-K/K classroom with 14 students will be taught by Nancy next school year; parents have been notified and are supportive. As for personnel, there are a lot of changes: Parmatma Khalsa is taking over for April in Grade 3 starting 5/18 due to her maternity leave; another para-educator will be interviewed to cover the resultant 5/6 opening. Alana Reynolds will take over for our OT Rachel Vitello, who will be out on maternity leave starting 4/17. Olive Barber has resigned her 5/6 teaching position and an interview committee



is being put together for that opening. Finally, long-term substitutes for Sarah Willis are being considered starting 5/11 (again, maternity leave); Sarah is also requesting that her son attend SES in Pre-K next year, although she is also considering taking a year's leave of absence to spend time with her newborn. Bob noted that this situation would be more complicated if Sarah were to take a leave of absence; if she weren't, her son could attend under the contract.

MARE MOVED TO ACCEPT SARAH WILLIS'S SON GUS INTO THE PRE-K/K CLASS FOR 2015-2016. DAN SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

Jackie reported that there will be a warrant at Town Meeting to replace the troublesome carpets. Also, the washer/dryer that was evidently unrepairable was repaired by a community volunteer, saving the school \$1,200.

Students reported that PARCC was surprisingly shorter than anticipated, and teachers confirmed that there seemed to be enough time for students to complete the test. There were no meltdowns and parents brought in special treats for everyone, but the tests were challenging and draining. Staff are considering getting the testing done all in one week next year in order to reduce the psychological drag on students of a lengthy testing period.

Survey responses trickling in; Jackie's goal is for 70 responses, and parents are reminded of the survey through all conceivable channels, digital and analog. Bob noted that he thought the most successful format for the survey in the past was setting up a machine in the school where parents could sit down and take care of it during other school events like student conferences and the Spaghetti Supper. The committee agreed that the *Road Town News* is a good primary vehicle for soliciting survey responses. The committee noted an aesthetic flaw (due to browser formatting) in the online version of the newsletter that might be off-putting to readers.

Dan thanked the Technology Director Debbie for assistance in locating resources for a concerned parent on the Union 28 website; the school site was updated so that these resources were more visible and easy to access.

2. Superintendent's Report

Bob emailed his report ahead of time, and noted that the executive session tonight would cover more. We are now involved in the Excellence in Teaching Program in the Pioneer Valley; each school district can nominate one teacher, and the nomination will rotate through each of the U28 schools.

3. Regional School District Planning Board Report



No report; the proposal will be brought forth again next school year.

4. Amherst-Pelham Representative's Report

Steve reported that there was a regional school discussion on March 24. One of the Amherst representatives brought up the point that there seemed to be no educational value in regionalizing, and the committee agreed. Bob confirmed this; there's nothing new for the kids in the plan. Steve went on to say that at the April 28 meeting, the financial piece of the proposal will be discussed. The numbers the proposal was based on are from 2013, so it's unclear how new numbers will change the apparent value of the proposal. Steve added that the committee authorized the Principal to start looking at moving the 7th and 8th grades into the high school, and possibly adding more voc-tech programs at the school. Dan said this move could be seen as an opportunity; middle-schoolers could be exposed to positive extracurricular activities or curricula, for example. Steve said the committee will create two task forces, one to look at combining the schools and the other to review the vocational programs. Dan noted that there's also talk of moving the elementary schools into the middle school because some of those schools are in bad shape. Dan wondered aloud why we should consider regionalization when Amherst's schools seem to be in such disrepair. He added that the athletic fields were in pretty bad shape, and this seems to reflect the larger culture of the town.

5. Review of Expenditure Report

Bob said the one thing they're keeping an eye on is power; electricity costs have risen significantly. Changing suppliers will help, but there's still a large deficit being projected for this line item. On the other side, we might be getting Extraordinary Relief funds coming in for SPED students; these dollars will have to be spent by the end of the school year.

6. Union #28 Report – including Budget and Personnel

Dan said there will be a special meeting regarding the Director of Finance position on April 30 at 7 p.m.; he invited committee members to attend. Salary negotiations for the new Superintendent have been completed and a contract signed. She will be attending this meeting. Bob added he will be meeting with her next Tuesday to begin the transition.

7. CES Report

Dan said that Damon Douglas is in hospice; there was a spelling bee held in his honor. Regular issues such as student rates were discussed at the last meeting. They are also in the process of evaluating the Executive Director. Dan praised the culture of



the Collaborative, which is always focused on how they can help schools and school districts.

J. Future Business

1. Shutesbury School Committee – May 21, 2015
2. Budget and Personnel Committee – Wednesday, May 20, 2015 6 P.M. SRS
3. Union #28 Joint Supervisory – Wednesday, May 20, 2015 7 P.M. SRS
4. Reorganization / Shutesbury School Committee Meeting: June 11, 2015 7 P.M.
5. Future agenda items: Policy

K. Executive Session

DAN MOVED TO ADJOURN AND ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS, NOT TO REENTER PUBLIC SESSION. FRED SECONDED. ROLL CALL ALL AYES. (MARE NOT PRESENT TO VOTE.)

