

THETFORD TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
Tuesday, April 26, 2016
Thetford Elementary School Library

APPROVED MINUTES

Charlie Buttrey convened the meeting at 6:06 p.m.. The following were present: Julie Acker, Charlie Buttrey, Kristen Downey, Shannon Darrah (arrived 6:14 p.m.), Erin Sterner, School Board; Kevin Petrone, TES Principal; Beth Cobb, OESU Superintendent;

PUBLIC PRESENT: Stuart Rogers, Randall Northrup, Corrette & Associates

AGENDA REVIEW: Agenda approved with amendments.

MINUTES REVIEW: MOTION: (Acker/Sterner) moved/seconded to approve the minutes of the April 5 and April 12, 2016 Board meetings as amended (unanimous approval; Darrah absent; Acker abstained from 4/12/16).

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF ORDERS: MOTION: (Acker/Sterner) moved/seconded to approve accounts payable order # 5282, and payroll warrants # 5278 and 5264 (unanimous approval, Darrah absent). MOTION: (Acker/Buttrey) moved/seconded to approve accounts payable order #5261 (unanimous approval).

PUBLIC COMMENT/CORRESPONDENCE: Buttrey reported the Board received two emails from Ann Swanson. Acker received a comment from a member of the public commending the minutes. Sterner reported the Act 46 survey results are posted on the thetfordschool.org website. Comments had been received about formatting glitches. The results are now formatted correctly. Cobb presented a letter from music teacher, Shannon Aridgides. She is expecting twins on 8/16/16 and will be taking a parental leave for SY 16/17. No action necessary because this is in her contract. Cobb presented a contract for a personal care assistant. Georgianna Boardman, July 2016 to June 2017. \$17.14.hour x 7.33 hours per day for 180 days to total \$22,614.52

Stuart Rogers gave a Rt. 113 construction update. He met with the project manager last week and was told that the direction of the work has changed: originally the work was scheduled to start from West heading East. Due to logistics around to stockpiling supplies for the duration of the project, the work will start East and move West. They will be working on drainage until early June. 8,000 feet of guardrail will be replaced, with barrels placed temporarily. The replaning will happen in mid May. During part of July and August the entire length of Rt. 113 will be gravel. There will be flat tires when the road is gravel. It will be posted as, travel at your own risk. Paving is expected to begin August 4. There will be 50-60 workers on the road at that time.

Lane closures should be expected except between 6:30am and 8:30am, during the last week of school (week of June 6) and Monday, June 13 which is the last day of school. There will be lane closures at the end of the day during that time. There will also be no lane closures the first week of school in late August. Discussion followed regarding an earlier start date at TA.

TA REPORT: Darrah reported the Board elected the first TA trustee from Hanover. Lindsey Klecan has two students at TA. Different perspective. The enrollment is looking slightly above projections. Still very fluid, now ~323 for next year. Then look at a dip in future years. Still actively recruiting. Anxiously watching the sending choice towns related to Act 46. Also looking for opportunities for other choice districts.

Would like to have a joint Board meeting during their May 12th trustee meeting, to hear about their outdoor education initiative and how it could tie into TES.

Cobb is working with Bugg to offer professional development to TA through a \$10K/year grant, tying outdoor ed to the sciences.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT (Kevin Petrone): TES is hiring a social worker and a music teacher for next year. Both jobs have been posted. Petrone recalled it was helpful last year when candidates had opportunity to teach during the summer music programs. Petrone hopes candidates will have opportunity to interact with the students in this way again. TES will host art night on May 9 at 6 p.m. Art work will be displayed and the band and orchestra will perform. The last day of school is Monday, June 13 with a half day release at 12:00. The graduation ceremony will begin at 10 am followed by the bridge crossing at approximately 11. Student council will continue with a new group of students. Based on input from the outgoing student council, 1 representative from each classroom will be appointed. They will focus on a recycling project. The SBAC will be taken next week by the 6th grade. Grades 3-6 will take the SBAC at various times through May based on individual classroom schedules. Petrone may schedule the testing around the noise of the Rt. 113 construction. 4th graders will take the science NECAP next week. Petrone attended a school security presentation given by Robert Evans from the VT AOE. While the focus of the talk was how to respond to an active shooter, Evans encouraged focusing on more relevant issues like bus safety or an angry parent. He also suggested installation of an electronic lock, which TES had installed last summer with a camera. An intercom system was suggested. TES's intercom does not work consistently. An alarm system was also suggested. TES does not have an alarm. TES has taken other safety steps, such as placing numbers in the windows (Petrone worked with Chief Evans and TA), and magnetic locks on the classroom doors. Petrone commented that lockdown procedures have changed over recent years. Now it is recommended that each situation is unique and schools need to practice with their staff to practice various scenarios. Staff should be empowered to make decisions quickly, including evacuating the building at any time. Cobb added that Thompson plans to organize a public safety meeting with Evans. OESU plans to look at this topic at leadership meetings. At each meeting a few minutes will be

dedicated to discussion about a specific situation, and then the principals can take the conversation back to staff meetings.

REVIEW OF AUDIT REPORT - Randall Northrup, Corrette and Associates:

Northrup distributed the TTSD Internal Control Report and financial statements dated year end June 30, 2015. There are surpluses in all funds except the general fund, which ended with a \$172,756 deficit. This is not a surprise and is in the process of being resolved. Northrup observed the ongoing issue with the due to and due from borrowings between funds by the SU without Board oversight or approval. Details of examples followed. Northrup recommended this be resolved. Discussion followed. Northrup mentioned the Sunshine Fund with a balance of \$14,000. Petrone disputed this balance, stating there is less than \$100 in this teacher funded fund. Northrup stated this number came from the SU's books, and questions should be directed to the superintendent. Referring to the internal control report, Northrup stated Board financial oversight is recommended. He recommended getting balance sheets from the SU regularly. Northrup also advised against interfund borrowing. Northrup saw evidence of authorized signatures for bank signatories beyond the treasurer. Only the treasurer can sign checks for the school, per state statute. Sterner stated she believes this was resolved. Northrup recommended that the school take an inventory of its capital assets. Northrup stated that Thompson stated OESU will update this list. There is not much risk in this category. The interest earned on funds is not being added back into that fund. Interest should follow the principle. Currently, interest is ending up in the general fund by default. School based income is not included in the general ledger. Any money that is collected should go through the general ledger to prevent fraud. Northrup offered to return to discuss the reports in more detail once Board members have reviewed the reports. Acker asked if the concerns listed as material weaknesses are ordered by priority. Northrup replied, yes, the first on the list (the balance sheet) is the highest risk. The Board should authorize all activities before they are executed by the SU, otherwise it is against state statute and puts TTSD at risk.

Acker stated she may have questions for OESU business manager. Northrup departed. Darrah reminded Board members that Northrup's contract is ending. Cobb stated the contract is going out to bid June 1. Darrah stated the Board needs to decide if a bond is needed to resolve the deficit. In addition to the \$172,756 deficit, there is a deficit for this current fiscal year because of unanticipated TA students.

ACT 46 DISCUSSION: Darrah followed up regarding Rivendell. Acker informed the group that their next meeting was postponed until after end of April. This Thursday was suggested as a meeting date but was never confirmed. Darrah recommended determining next steps and a final plan. Acker will follow up with Rivendell. Buttrey reported that at the last meeting he had updated the Board that Strafford had suggested Strafford, Sharon, Thetford and Tunbridge discuss as alternative structure. Tunbridge was not at that meeting. There was then a meeting in Stockbridge. There was another meeting in Sharon last week and it became clear that Thetford and Strafford want an alternative structure. The majority of the Sharon board wants an alternative structure but the board chair

appeared uncertain about going forward. The five districts are scheduled to meet again on May 11 in Sharon with the goal of each town indicating level of interest in engaging in formal conversations with the other four districts. Buttrey noted and shared dissimilarities with Tunbridge. Tunbridge did not seem eager to join with Thetford. Discussion followed. Stockbridge can only be part of this group if they merge with Sharon because both districts are K-8 choice. Strafford does not want to merge with TTSD and do a side by side with OESU because they want to keep their K-8.

Buttrey then met with Hartland. Three of five Hartland board members were present. Hartland is in a 706 study group with Windsor, West Windsor and Brownsville. They will not give up choice. Windsor is not going to give up a K-12. Therefore Buttrey speculated whether Hartland and Windsor will continue discussions. Thetford and Hartland have geographical discontinuity, but share philosophical and cultural similarities. Buttrey is in favor of continuing discussions with Hartland. Hartland, Sharon, Strafford and Thetford students attend TSA and TA. Tunbridge currently sends two kids to TA. If an alternative structure with a K-6 or K-8 SU is created with these Hartland, Strafford, Sharon and Thetford, Hartland gets to keep choice. Each district would have their own board, but each board would have representatives on the SU Board. Acker suggested meeting with the Strafford board to get a sense of how their Board operates, what are the compromises, how can the two districts can help each other to leverage one another's positions with Act 46 options. The two boards could discuss how to advance the two districts' mutual interests and how to make an alternative structure work. Discussion followed. If Hartland is not interested in an alternative structure, there will not be enough students with just Strafford, Sharon and Thetford (1,100 students are required). Darrah suggested that as many members of the TTSD board attend the May 11 meeting. Buttrey clarified that the Thetford, Sharon, Strafford, Norwich study group is over. Downey would like the Board to keep an open mind about potential partners. It was noted that Tunbridge is not as far along in the Act 46 process and may need more time.

Plan: meet with the Strafford board as a warned meeting before May 10, and decide about the path forward at the next TTSD meeting on May 10 at OESU. Buttrey will contact the Strafford board chair to schedule a meeting.

DISCUSS BOARD WORK PLAN FOR YEAR, MAP OUT MEETING SCHEDULE AND PRIORITIES: Postponed to May 10.

OTHER BUSINESS: Darrah has received one letter of interest from Scott McPhee for the Board opening. Acker suggested advertising the position in the May Town newsletter. Darrah would like to interview candidates at the May 24 meeting. Acker will follow up with the newsletter and will post the position again on the listserv.

Acker discussed the school board page on the TES website. The survey results, meeting minutes, presentation materials about Act 46 have all been posted and she suggested reminding the public about the webpage. The Listserv, Town Newsletter and the TES

Newsletter are good places to post this reminder. Acker will work with the TES librarian to make the tab more obvious as a quick link on the home page.

REPORT ON NEW VEHI insurance plans: Buttrey attended a VSBA seminar on the new plans, in summary this will cost us less money. There are 4 plans they are going to offer. Buttrey referred to a table outlining cost structures. Cobb reported that OESU has had experience with these new plans, two schools have chosen the gold option through VT health connect. Everyone now seems very happy with the plans despite initially not wanting to go in.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (Teacher negotiations): MOTION: (Buttrey/Acker) moved/seconded to go into Executive Session at 7:59 p.m. to discuss teacher negotiations. Out of executive session at 8:20 p.m. No action taken.

ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: (Sterner/Downey) moved/seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 p.m. (unanimous approval).

FUTURE MEETINGS:

5/10/16	OESU Board Meeting (Oxbow)	6:00 p.m.
5/10/16	Thetford Town School District Meeting (Oxbow)	7:15 p.m.
5/24/16	Thetford Town School District Meeting	7:00 p.m.

Minutes Prepared By:
Amy Bosco, Minutes Clerk

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Julie Acker, Board Clerk