

**THETFORD TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Tuesday, November 1, 2016**  
**Oxbow High School**

**APPROVED MINUTES**

Shannon Darrah convened the meeting at 6:04 p.m.. The following were present: Julie Acker, Charlie Buttrey, Shannon Darrah, Kristen Downey, School Board; Kevin Petrone, TES Principal

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** Melanie Elliott, Keith Merrick (OESU)

**AGENDA REVIEW:** Agenda approved with amendments.

**MINUTES REVIEW:** MOTION: (Acker/Downey) moved/seconded to approve the minutes of the October 18, 2016 Board meeting (unanimous approval; Buttrey abstained).

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF ORDERS:** MOTION: (Acker/Buttrey) moved/seconded to approve accounts payable order # 5709 and payroll warrants # 5701- 5706 (unanimous approval).

**PUBLIC COMMENT/CORRESPONDENCE:** Petrone received notification from the Girl Scouts that they are building more bunk houses at Camp Farnsworth. They are not holding a hearing but the Board could submit any objections in writing. Petrone stated that Kendra Waterbury has resigned, effective November 10. The Board expressed their sincere thanks for Waterbury's years of service to TES. Her position has been advertised.

**PRESENTATION BY RIVERBEND TECHNICAL CENTER STUDENTS (Bob St. Pierre):** St. Pierre is meeting with each Board which has schools that send students to Riverbend. He distributed packets of information. He is educating parents and students about non-traditional education options. He acknowledged that one can earn more money by going to a 4 year college, however, where are the jobs and what is the debt? He outlined the hypothetical path of a student earning various health care degrees at VTC, as compared to attending UVM for two years but leaving without a degree. After two years at VTC one can earn an LPN and begin earning an income, and then transfer to UVM. Earning money while finishing school is a good option for families who cannot afford the typical traditional college. There are also dual enrollment classes, which is earning high school and college credits simultaneously while meeting State requirements. Personal Learning Plans (Act 77) offer a more flexible pathway for students to graduate, based more on proficiency as opposed to grades. As part of Act 77, there are two dual enrollment vouchers available in high school, and a third costs \$100. Dual enrollment meets more of a range of learners. There are 27 colleges in Vermont. Thetford currently sends 16 students to Riverbend. Thetford can also send students to Hartford. Riverbend's enrollment has dropped below 200. They have room for 350 students. St. Pierre noted

feedback from educators that students aren't coming to Riverbend because of the cost of sending a student. \$11,500 tuition for full time enrollment. Riverbend is the least expensive tech center in the state. The guidance counselors are the gate keepers. St. Pierre feels Riverbend needs to market their programs directly to parents and students. There are also apprenticeships in Vermont, which is another pathway to education. Buttrey commented this information should be in every guidance counselor's office. St. Pierre stated that students need to know the options for earning a 4 year degree. St. Pierre gave a letter to Petrone regarding outreach to 5th and 6th graders. 7th graders need to develop a PLP, but how does one develop this PLP if one doesn't know the options? The last week of June there will be a camp at Riverbend for 6th -8th graders. A bus comes to TES. Last year 125 students attended. St. Pierre suggested Riverbend as a destination for field trips for science projects, or to host meetings. He welcomes tours.

**PRINCIPAL'S REPORT (Kevin Petrone):** Two new students started this week, and one more will likely start after December break. Enrollment will be 194, as compared with 200 at the end of the last school year. Last Friday Petrone attended a conference in Killington, SHAPE Vermont (Society of Health and Physical Educators). Petrone received an award, the Layperson of the Year, for work and dedication to physical fitness for students and self. Petrone was recommended by TES P.E. teacher, Phil Chaput, who is the president of that association. The staff leadership team decided to begin working on one of their core values this year, which is creating a positive environment: "We foster a school atmosphere that is physically and emotionally safe, where all members are well known, cared for, and inspired to do their best." There are already about 15 staff members interested in joining that committee. They plan to form a climate and culture committee, with the intention of creating a new set of school wide rules and a new behavior and discipline system, which feels out of date. Downey commented that the UVEI interns share weekly "cool things in schools;" one intern shared the TES climate and culture committee. Student council starts next Monday, with one representative from each classroom. November 11 is parent conference day. It is almost the end of the first trimester. Petrone is hoping to share the revised report card, which has been shortened since last year. There were also technical problems that caused teacher information to be deleted. The Veterans Day assembly will be November 14.

**FY18 1st DRAFT OF BUDGET:** Thompson previously sent a draft budget to Board members, which resulted in a 1% increase. Keith Merrick indicated the increase is likely due to a number of factors. Discussion followed. Health insurance costs are anticipated to go down, but that was kept the same in the draft. The number of Thetford students attending TA will decrease by 11. Vocational education enrollment is projected to increase. Merrick reviewed a few specifics of the draft budget. Managing debt service is up for discussion. The end of FY16 saw a deficit of \$127,000. Buttrey would like to know what would have to be done to have a 0% increase. Darrah wants to see what the budget looks like plugged into a tax worksheet, because sometimes the budget doesn't translate to the tax rate. The State won't publish any numbers needed to estimate tax rate until early December. Buttrey asked about facilities costs, such as the roof on the primary

end of the school. Thompson plans to give the Board a facilities management plan, including a high priority - the phone system. This expense was not added to the draft budget. Petrone listed a few safety measure improvements that are being considered. Darrah stated the budget will be an agenda item at the next meeting for longer discussion, as well as staffing for next year and teacher negotiations.

**ACT 46 UPDATE:** Downey reported the alternative structure group met (Thetford, Tunbridge, Strafford and Sharon). There is no grant funding. The group's action item was to return to their respective boards to discuss self funding a consultant to explore possibilities for the alternative structure group. Each board would contribute ~\$1,200. The other towns are still participating in a 706, and implied they are doing due diligence. Downey did share that TTSD is looking at remaining with OESU. Darrah reported she met with Erik Goodling (Strafford) and Steve Gaglione (Sharon), Jim Masland and Tim Briglin, to discuss legislation changes, such as creation of a stand alone side, or changes to student number requirements for an alternate structure. The three school board chairs felt that since the top choice from each of their respective communities was to explore an alternative structure, they need to go to their Boards to ask for funding for the grant. Downey speculated that Tunbridge, Sharon, and Strafford may feel that TTSD isn't very interested in an alternative structure, but doing due diligence. She feels TTSD does need to explore this option. Darrah stated that while things are going very well with OESU, TTSD has not had opportunity to have anyone help decide if an alternative structure could be formed with Strafford and Sharon. Buttrey stated he disagrees because TTSD has already spoken to every district. Acker asked, what would TTSD gain by hiring a consultant? Downey replied, perhaps a consultant's report, and that the alternative structure has specific data required from each district, which the consultant would compile. Darrah added that TTSD has not studied what it would look like to have an SU with Strafford and Sharon, with or without Tunbridge. Darrah stated that Masland and Briglin have stressed that if there is a structure that TTSD thinks could work and student numbers is an issue, they will pursue changing the legislation. Darrah stressed the voters specified their first preference was for an alternative structure. Acker stated she is skeptical about what is gained by spending the \$1,200. Data, agreed Downey and Darrah. Darrah stated they have no information about the cost of a new SU. Buttrey disagreed. Downey added there may be other questions answered in the process, such as benefits to students. **MOTION:** (Downey/Acker) moved/seconded to allocate up to \$1,200 to self-fund an alternative structure study group with Strafford, Sharon, Tunbridge and Thetford (unanimous approval; Buttrey abstained).

**TEACHER NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE (Buttrey):** Buttrey and Downey met with the teachers once, and they are meeting again on November 16, when each side presents their proposals. At the next Board meeting, the Board needs to spend some time on this. In the meantime, Downey and Buttrey are meeting with Melanie Elliott and Petrone to prepare a draft proposal for the teachers. The State NEA is planning on going after any Board that changes health insurance in a drastic way. Discussions will be in public session. Teachers have an advantage over the Board because they can read what the Board has discussed

thus far because the Board is in public session The proposal the teachers make will be public, but they can caucus privately. The school board can't meet privately - their meetings are always open session. Buttrey will follow-up with the teachers regarding their preferences for recording meeting minutes.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION (Superintendent Evaluation):** MOTION: (Buttrey/Downey) moved/seconded to go into Executive Session at 6:45pm. to discuss Superintendent evaluation. Out of executive session at 6:55 p.m. (\*\*No action taken\*\*).

**EXECUTIVE SESSION (Student Matter):** MOTION: (Buttrey/Acker) moved/seconded to go into Executive Session at 6:56 p.m. to discuss a student matter. Out of executive session at 7:01 p.m. (\*\*No action taken\*\*).

**ADJOURNMENT:** MOTION: (Buttrey/Downey) moved/seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:02 p.m. (unanimous approval).

**FUTURE MEETINGS:**

11/15/16 Thetford Town School District Meeting	6:30 p.m.
11/29/16 Thetford Town School District Meeting	6:30 p.m.

Minutes Prepared By:  
Amy Bosco, Minutes Clerk

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

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Julie Acker, Board Clerk