

THETFORD TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
Tuesday, March 21, 2017
Thetford Elementary School Library

APPROVED MINUTES

The following were present: Julie Acker, Charlie Buttrey, Shannon Darrah, Kristen Downey (arrived 7:30 p.m.), School Board; Kevin Petrone, TES Principal; Keith Thompson, OESU Assistant Superintendent

PUBLIC PRESENT: Stuart Rogers, Dan Grossman (departed 7:14 pm)

SWEARING IN OF BOARD MEMBERS: (Dan Grossman): Julie Acker. Scott MacPhee will be sworn in at a later date.

Thompson convened the meeting at 7:14 p.m.

BOARD REORGANIZATION: MOTION: (Buttrey/Acker) moved/seconded to nominate Darrah as Board Chair (unanimous approval). Darrah accepted the nomination. **MOTION:** (Buttrey/Acker) moved/seconded to close the nominations (unanimous approval). **MOTION:** (Buttrey/Acker) moved/seconded to nominate Acker, Buttrey and Darrah as OESU representatives (unanimous approval). **MOTION:** (Darrah/Buttrey) moved/seconded to nominate Acker to serve as Clerk (unanimous approval). Acker accepted the nomination. **MOTION:** (Buttrey/Downey) moved/seconded to reappoint Darrah to serve as TA representative (unanimous approval). Darrah accepted the nomination. **MOTION:** (Buttrey/Acker) moved/seconded to nominate Downey as Vice Chair (unanimous approval). Downey accepted the nomination. **MOTION:** (Buttrey/Downey) moved/seconded to nominate MacPhee as the sick bank negotiator (unanimous approval).

AGENDA REVIEW: Agenda approved with amendments.

MINUTES REVIEW: Approval of the minutes of the March 7, 2017 Board postponed to next meeting.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF ORDERS: MOTION: (Acker/Buttrey) moved/seconded to approve accounts payable orders # 5894, 5879, and 5883, and payroll warrant # 5880 (unanimous approval).

PUBLIC COMMENT/CORRESPONDENCE: None

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT (Kevin Petrone): The bookcycle has been in the lobby since literacy week began. \$1.00 for hardcovers and \$0.50 for paperbacks has raised ~\$150 for the library, and will purchase a programmable robot to help students learn about coding. Petrone had a conference call last week with Greg Bagnato (Principal at the Newton School in Strafford) and John Everett (Act 46 consultant) to address Everett's questions regarding the potential creation of a new SU. Barrett Williams (Principal, Sharon Elementary) created an extensive cost spread

sheet. The 5th graders gave impressive project based learning presentations after researching field trip options, which included expenses and feasibility. Presentations were given for parents at night and peers during the day. Parents and students voted and decided to go to the Path of Life Sculpture Garden in Windsor, and then to Mt. Ascutney State Park for an overnight. The class raised money to pay for the trip by selling seeds. The 6th graders' annual basketball game vs the TES staff is being replaced with a trivia night to be held on April 13. Buttrey agreed to be the MC. Petrone has started planning interviews for the 1st/2nd grade combined position for next year. There are many very well qualified applicants. Petrone received 17 applications within two weeks and decided to stop advertising. Interviews will begin next week. Next Petrone will start the search for a music teacher. Petrone is hoping to offer professional development next year focusing on the responsive classroom. This is a social curriculum that lays the groundwork for classroom management. The related book is: "The First Six Weeks of School." Once the foundation is laid, education comes easier. The professional development is expensive. Petrone has gotten half of the funds from a private grant, and is looking into OESU funds for the remainder. The professional development would happen prior to the start of the school year, with two days of training before school starts, and two more days during the year. Petrone distributed the draft TES calendar for school year 17/18. The calendar is slightly different from OESU's because TTSD has 8 professional development days, not 10. School vacations are mostly aligned with the Southern part of the state. Four contingency days for weather are built in for planning purposes. Ski Fridays will tentatively start earlier. Justin Bonnet is taking over from Adam Cole as the ski program coordinator next year. Petrone thanked Cole for his years of volunteer service to this program.

OESU SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH: Darrah stated a new Thetford representative is needed for the search committee. Discussion regarding the meeting schedule followed. Candidates for this one year position have already been narrowed down.

SCHOOL DAYS DISCUSSION: There are 177 student instructional days on the TES calendar. The teachers' contract specifies 177 days. 175 days are required by the state. Because of the snow days this winter, the last day of school is currently scheduled for Wednesday, June 21. Concerns have been raised by parents about this late date. One proposal is to eliminate the two extra days, scheduling the last day for Monday, June 19. The teachers proposed an idea to have an instructional day on a Saturday, perhaps offering a project based learning fair. The Board expressed concerns about access to all kids. How would students get to school? Would TTSD run buses? The Board suggested changing the already scheduled April 14 conference day to a half instructional day. This was not popular with teachers. The Board also offered 176 days, reducing teachers' salary by 1/177. The teachers said no. Discussion followed. Darrah wants to keep the option open for eliminating two days. It is possible we could get more snow. TA's last day is June 9. Buttrey asked again about using April 14 as an instructional day. Petrone responded that many teachers want to keep that as a parent conference day. Petrone added that half a professional day would then need to be added to the calendar. Rogers asked, is there a legal issue regarding what student attendance qualifies as a day of school? Petrone responded that Vermont law states the "majority" (51%) must be in attendance. Darrah stated she wants to do the right thing for families. Thompson recalled having school on a Saturday when he was teaching. Petrone has been in schools where time has been added to the end of several days to make up the time. A school day is 6.5 hours. In this instance, 13 days would need to be extended

to make up two days. Petrone wondered if there could be busing issues between the TA bus run and a later release for TES. Discussion followed. Darrah stated she is not opposed to the Saturday option but is concerned about getting the kids to school. Downey asked Petrone if the teachers have a preference between going until June 21 or having an alternative plan. Petrone stated the teachers thought if students are already coming back on a Monday, two more days would be acceptable. The last day could be moved back to Friday, June 16 if the two extra days are eliminated and a Saturday is added. By Vermont law, as long as students are given lunch it counts as an instructional day. Teachers would still be paid for the two days. Thompson asked if this would be setting precedent contractually. Buttrey agreed, this is a concern. It will add cost if TTSD runs buses on a Saturday. Petrone will discuss with the teachers and report back to the Board.

PRE-SCHOOL DISCUSSION: Every few years Buttrey suggests relooking at the feasibility of in-house preschool. There is room in the building now. Buttrey proposed creating a study committee made up of one Board member (Buttrey volunteered), teachers, and preK teachers, to discuss options, costs and benefits of in-house preschool. Acker agreed and volunteered to be on the committee. She expressed concern about potential impacts on the local daycares. She suggested relooking at the last study conducted when pre-K was first implemented. Buttrey may put a post on the listserv asking for committee members. Downey recommended including teachers with birth to 3 certification. All Board members agreed Buttrey should lead this committee. Thompson reminded Board members that Newbury and Bradford each run an in house pre-K. Financials are available from those schools. **MOTION:** (Buttrey/Acker) moved/seconded to create a committee with community members, teachers, Board members and daycare providers to investigate preschool options (not make recommendations) and report back to the Board (unanimous approval).

ACT 46 DISCUSSION: On March 13 Acker attended an Act 46 meeting with Blue Mountain, Bradford, Newbury and Oxbow. Acker reported the study committee seemed to be stuck: There is not a lot of desire to move forward, except they need to move forward because there are no other options. It was questioned if Thetford plans to join their discussions. There is pressure for Thetford to join as its own district to improve student numbers and financials for the SU, which would make the merger more appealing to their voters. There is fear among the public that Blue Mountain High School could close. Discussion followed. The next meeting is April 24 at Oxbow where they are going to look at the draft articles of agreement and the financials. Cobb plans to present financials with Thetford, or Waits River, or both, attached to that SU. The Senate education committee has made draft changes on the rules for an alternative structure. These changes include the scenario of three merged districts and another district attached as a side. Thetford would be that side. The study group did not see that as a fair option. Discussion followed. Downey reported the alternative structure group with Strafford, Sharon and Tunbridge and possibly Chelsea (voting on April 11) is meeting on April 6. The group won't meet again for a couple more weeks when he the consultant will have information about financials. The group seems to want the financials first.

OTHER BUSINESS: Rogers will attend on April 18 to discuss the pedestrian walkway. He may also have information about the trailhead.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (Student Matter): MOTION: (Buttrey/Downey) moved/seconded to go into Executive Session at 8:41 p.m. to discuss a student matter. Out of executive session at 8:45 p.m. (No action taken).

EXECUTIVE SESSION (Teacher Negotiation Strategy): MOTION: (Buttrey/Downey) moved/seconded to go into Executive Session at 8:46 p.m. to discuss teacher negotiation strategy, the premature dissemination of which may place the Board at a substantial disadvantage. Out of executive session at 8:58 p.m. (No action taken).

ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: (Buttrey/Acker) moved/seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:59 p.m. (unanimous approval).

FUTURE MEETINGS:

4/4/17	Superintendent Search	6:30 p.m.
4/5/17	OESU Meeting/Thetford Town School District Meeting – Oxbow	6:00 p.m.
4/18/17	Thetford Town School District Meeting	6:30 p.m.

Minutes Prepared By:
Amy Bosco, Minutes Clerk

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Julie Acker, Board Clerk