

THETFORD TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
Tuesday, May 2, 2017
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, Scott MacPhee, School Board; Kevin Petrone, TES Principal; Keith Thompson, OESU Assistant Superintendent (departed 6:41 p.m.); Beth Cobb, OESU Superintendent (arrived 6:40 p.m.)

PUBLIC PRESENT: Melanie Elliott (arrived 6:36 p.m.)

AGENDA REVIEW: Agenda approved.

MINUTES REVIEW: MOTION: (Acker/Buttrey) moved/seconded to approve the minutes of the April 18, 2017 Board meeting (unanimous approval; Downey abstained).

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF ORDERS: MOTION: (Acker/Buttrey) moved/seconded to approve accounts payable order # 5947 and payroll warrant # 5945 (unanimous approval).

PUBLIC COMMENT/CORRESPONDENCE: Thompson received a letter of resignation from Brittany Bemis, who is a special education para-educator (and the director of TASP). She will not be returning to TES for the SY17/18 school year because she is moving out of the area. Petrone added this will be a big loss to the school. The Board thanked Bemis and wished her the best. Petrone presented a maternity leave letter of intent from Sarah Atherton. She will be absent from the beginning of the next school year through the holiday break. Buttrey has been corresponding with our State representatives regarding the Governor's initiative on health insurance for teachers. Buttrey expressed that he likes the idea of a State-wide agreement and suggested that the Vermont School Board Association does the negotiating. Representative Masland liked that idea and planned to present it as an amendment to the pending legislation. Darrah reported a TA student will attend the next meeting to make a tuition request related to dual enrollment. There is some precedence for the request. The student has phoned Darrah to discuss in advance. Contracts were presented for para-educators, Katherine Hatch and Gail Maxwell, and Darla Sterett.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT (Kevin Petrone): Staff appreciation week included breakfast and lunches from the PTO, and homemade gifts and notes from the students. This rejuvenated the staff as they approach the end of the year. The two maternity leave positions have been posted on School Spring: Jacqueline Porter's K/1 class, and Sarah Atherton's 3rd grade class (Atherton is moving to third grade next year because there will be a single 4th grade class with 17 students). Music teacher Christiana Whittington is not returning next year, as it was a one year position. There are many applicants for her position.

During the student support team meetings, teachers have been discussing classroom placements for next year. Next year is tricky in the primary grades as TES moves to multi-age classrooms.

There will be three sections of 1/2 multi-age classrooms, with an average class size of 14. There are several 2nd graders moving into TES over the summer. As the year is coming to an end, Petrone has been meeting with teachers to discuss their annual goals in the context of the teacher growth model. Some teachers are independently assessing/self-guided; others receive more guidance from Petrone. Petrone has received positive feedback from teachers. During his brief classroom observations, Petrone checks in with students about what they are learning. More frequent but shorter observations are much better than two longer observations.

Teachers are preparing for the school-wide project based learning exhibition which will be held during the school day on June 2. TES is not holding the annual arts night. On June 2 there will be a music performance, and classrooms will have projects on display. The community will be invited. SBAC's have started in third grade, and will continue throughout May and June in grades 3 through 6. Students have been doing "Track My Progress", which gets them used to online testing. Bradford also uses this program.

FINANCIALS REPORT: TTSD has a new audit firm. Darrah would like to meet with them. Thompson distributed financial sheets. He highlighted certain revenues, for example, the expected revenue from the solar array is \$11,598. ~\$7,000 is owed to the town because of overpayment of taxes. Expenditures include pre-K tuition, secondary education tuition, special education, transportation, and technical center education. There is a \$127,000 deficit. Thompson is hopeful this will be worked through. Thompson has been working with town treasurer, Jill Graff, anticipating a TTSD cash flow issue. TTSD will have to borrow this year by taking a bridge loan until July 1, followed by a tax anticipation note to carry payroll through the summer. Once the first state check is received in September, the loan will be paid back immediately. Graff handles the cash flow for the school. Thompson suggested TTSD consider having its own school treasurer. For the other OESU districts, school treasurers come into OESU and have conversations with accountants to get ahead of certain things. Banks will only talk to the treasurer, not other OESU representatives. Thompson suggested Graff come to a meeting to review what she does. Graff does not get paid by TTSD. Thompson suggested a quarterly visit by the treasurer to the Board. Graff is elected by the Town. Acker pointed out the Board could appoint a treasurer. This deserves further discussion at a future meeting.

ACT 46 DISCUSSION - WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?: Acker recounted that during the last meeting, the 706 study committee (Blue Mountain, Oxbow, Bradford, Newbury) voted to end that study committee. The draft articles of agreement were not even discussed. The Blue Mountain Board had decided after the March meeting that the proposed plan did not meet Blue Mountain's goals or the goals of Act 46. Now Blue Mountain can discuss other options with other districts, like Danville and Peacham. This leaves all the districts free agents with no plan. Cobb suggested to Darrah to resume talking with Rivendell. Acker stated that discussion did not get the consideration it should have.

The group Downey has been working with (Sharon, Tunbridge, Strafford) has reviewed the financials prepared by the study consultant. The group concluded it does not make financial sense to create a new SU, so no further conversations are happening about any other potential benefits. The financials have been questioned by some, however. Downey herself has no direct evidence that the numbers have been inflated. The study group still exists, but there is no clear

path forward. Cobb added she received a study grant proposal from this group. Downey speculated the group's consultant may be pursuing State funding for the work that has already happened, even though the districts are paying the consultant themselves. Discussion followed.

Darrah met with Tom Candon, Chair of the Norwich School Board, Representative Tim Briglin, and TA Board President, Cameron Cudhea. Darrah had already made it clear that it was not an option for TA to become a public school. All options would be considered. Candon and Darrah planned to report back to their respective Boards. Darrah stated she suggested including Strafford because their K-8/designation structure is like Thetford's K-6/designation structure. Most of their students go to TA or HHS. The group decided it did not make sense to contact Sharon at this time because of the complexity that a K-8/choice governance structure would bring to the conversation. Darrah asked the TTSD Board, do they want conversations to continue with Norwich? Board members agreed to continue conversations in the spirit of doing due diligence. Downey asked if Cudhea was concerned about the possibility of more Thetford students wanting to attend Hanover than Norwich students attending TA? Not really, replied Darrah. Part of the reason Norwich is open to this conversation is that they have been getting requests to attend TA; but the ratio of students to schools is unclear.

INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT RECRUITMENT UPDATE: A couple of candidates have been interviewed.

BOARD RETREAT PLANNING: Darrah stated the Board needs to choose one direction for Act 46. Where should the Board's energies be directed? By November 30 TTSD needs a plan. Buttrey suggested inviting the Secretary of Education to a Board meeting. The retreat will be after school ends.

OTHER BUSINESS: Darrah reminded Board members the joint meeting with TA is on May 11 in the TA library at 7 p.m.. Cobb recommended Katherine Hill for a K/1 teaching position. Hill is from the Newton School. She has multi-age classroom experience. **MOTION:** (Buttrey/Acker) moved/seconded to offer a K/1 teaching position to Katherine Hill to begin for the 17/18 school year (unanimous approval).

EXECUTIVE SESSION (Student Matter): **MOTION:** (Buttrey/MacPhee) moved/seconded to go into Executive Session at 6:55 p.m. to discuss a student matter. Out of executive session at 6:57 p.m. No action taken.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (Student Matter): **MOTION:** (Buttrey/Acker) moved/seconded to go into Executive Session at 6:58 p.m. to discuss a student matter. Out of executive session at 7:05 p.m. No action taken.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (Teacher Negotiation Strategy): **MOTION:** (Buttrey/MacPhee) moved/seconded to go into Executive Session at 7:06 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 7:15 p.m. No action taken.

ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: (Downey/MacPhee) moved/seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:16 p.m. (unanimous approval).

FUTURE MEETINGS:

5/11/17	Thetford Academy Board of Trustees/TTSD Joint Meeting	7:00 p.m.
5/16/17	Thetford Town School District Meeting	6:30 p.m.
6/6/17	OESU Meeting	6:00 p.m.
6/6/17	Thetford Town School District Meeting	7:15 p.m.

Minutes Prepared By:
Amy Bosco, Minutes Clerk

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Julie Acker, Board Clerk