

THETFORD TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
Tuesday, May 8, 2018
Thetford Elementary School

DRAFT MINUTES

Shannon Darrah convened the meeting at 7:06 p.m. The following were present: Julie Acker, Charlie Buttrey, Shannon Darrah, Kristen Downey, Scott MacPhee, School Board

PUBLIC PRESENT: Stuart Rogers, Bette Nunez

AGENDA REVIEW: Agenda approved with amendments.

MINUTES REVIEW: MOTION: (Buttrey/MacPhee) moved/seconded to approve the minutes of the April 24, 2018 Board meeting as amended (unanimous approval, Darrah abstained).

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF ORDERS: MOTION: (Acker/Buttrey) moved/seconded to approve accounts payable orders # 6429, 6439, and 6437, and payroll warrant # 6434 (unanimous approval). Buttrey noticed a bill from EC Brown's nursery for about \$1,000. Buttrey explained this bill was discounted by at least half. The Browns have been very generous to TES.

PUBLIC COMMENT/CORRESPONDENCE: Stuart Rogers will continue to serve as the select board liaison to the school board. The Board received a letter of resignation from Spanish teacher, Robert Bartlett. Acker stated she read the letter with regret, and she appreciated Bartlett's kind words. The position has been posted and there have already been a couple of candidates. The Board received a letter of resignation from primary teacher, Jacqueline Porter. She has accepted a position closer to her family teaching pre-K in Woodstock. The Board wishes her the best. A letter of resignation was also received from Amanda Grey, the board wishes her well. Discussion followed. Darrah will ask Petrone to provide a staffing update at the next meeting. In response to Rogers's inquiry regarding the school treasurer, Darrah explained that at this time, the Board has decided not to appoint a treasurer. The Board will wait to see whom the select board hires. Graff's last day will be June 7. There are many treasurer duties already performed by TES office staffer, Cynthia O'Dell. Discussion followed.

TES WEBSITE DISCUSSION WITH MICHELE HASTINGS AND MARY

WUNDERLICH: Hastings reported she and Wunderlich have been trying to make the TES website simpler and aspire to make it a marketing tool for TES with Instagram and Facebook. Buttrey posed, what is the purpose of an elementary school website? Hastings responded that as a parent, the website should provide an at-a-glance look at news, schedules, and classroom pages. Wunderlich presented data about website activity and distributed the summary. There have been 24,000 hits since the website was started in 2009. PTO news is the first hit, then photos, directions, announcements (home page), and various classroom photo galleries. A new site is being tested on Wix. The monthly fee is \$80. Google and Joomla are free. Discussion

followed regarding options and costs. Downey stated that Wordpress has a flat fee for life with professional advanced templates. OESU, Bradford and Crossroads use Wordpress. Hastings showed a draft website. As a parent she wants to see a welcome, a calendar (can link a google calendar to it), principal's messages, lunch menu, and links to social platforms. Hastings used Darla's titles for staff that were created for the new phone list. Downey stated she looks at various school websites and that the principal's name and a list of email addresses are the most difficult pieces of information to find. Discussion followed regarding security and spam email. Since everyone has the same domain name, the website could specify that all staff email is the first initial last name at thefordeschool.org Hastings has been thinking about a tab for important links such as TA, TASP (if they have a separate website), Thetford Rec., classroom parent pages. The new platform would make it is very easy for the teachers to update classroom pages. Downey stated the school website gives a first impression and if it is dated, folks may wonder if the school is also dated. Hastings looked at other schools' websites, and found some to be drab. Wix is mobile friendly. Darrah stated the Board wants to pursue this. A stipend would be appropriate because it is someone's time to develop and maintain the site. Darrah asked for a time estimate. TES has over 100 followers on Facebook now. Hastings posted information about the upcoming play on Facebook and it is interesting to see how many people have shared. It is great to share the school as people consider Thetford as a place to move. Hastings and Wunderlich will return June 22 with more information on pricing and time to implement. Discussion followed regarding TA's website and app. The TA lunch menu is hard to find on the website. The grading portal is also not accessible through the website. Buttrey added that school cancelations would be nice to have on the new website.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT (Darrah for Petrone): The TES musical, Beauty and the Beast, is this week with an in school dress rehearsal on Thursday and performances on Friday and Saturday. Next week is bike week in PE focusing on bike safety. Bikes and helmets will be available during recess. Literacy week is also next week, including a visit from author, Karen Roy. Kindergarten visiting day is Friday, May 26. Incoming families can visit classrooms, meet teachers and take a few primary assessments.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION RE: BUSING FOR NEXT SCHOOL YEAR: Petrone heard back from Butler's that bus 3 has the capacity for the Strafford kids, and that time would not be added to the route because the route would start in Strafford. Darrah later realized it makes no sense for the route to start in Strafford because that is in the middle of the route, and it can't start in Strafford in the afternoon. It would also add 20 minutes to the route. That route is already long; Darrah knows the current length of the route because her kids take bus 3 and are at the end of that route. They are usually dropped off at 3:45/3:50. Darrah is not worried about the capacity, but is concerned about adding 20 minutes. She has asked Petrone to get more details about the route. Darrah is not ready to tell TA that TTSD is going to do this. Regarding Chelsea, Darrah is not willing to add another bus. Acker stated that TA would need to reimburse if it was determined that another bus is needed to accommodate students from other towns. Darrah would also like to know that the Chelsea students are going to come back. Downey stated TA's

suggestion is not that TTSD is going to pay for the extra bus. Buttrey agreed, his understanding is that TA would be responsible for the cost. There is also a driver shortage. Discussion followed.

DISCUSSION RE: DRIVER’S EDUCATION AT TA: The Board received an email from a parent of a Thetford TA student. Apparently, TA has not planned for driver’s education for next year. Darrah emailed Bugg and Stanley about this. There are provisions that Vermont must provide driver’s education free of charge. Stanley has a call into the AOE for some guidance because the parent posed, “Wouldn’t I be in the position to sue the school district for failing to meet its legal obligation to my child?” Discussion followed regarding how the statute is worded. Or, this may be a rule by the State board and not a statute. Stanley suspects the AOE will answer that it is the superintendent’s responsibility to ensure there are appropriate driver’s education classes in place, and therefore since TA is a designated school, drivers’ education needs to be available. Stanley has not heard back from the AOE. Darrah stated there are a lot of unhappy parents. Acker stated that as a parent of a student who is recently 15, she received an email from TA regarding a June 30 enrollment deadline to ensure it will be paid for, but after that there is no guarantee and no plan. Acker feels it is not fair to ask a student that may not be ready to rush to take driver’s education in order to get the \$650 cost covered. Currently, TA contracts with two different driver’s education companies, but is not sure if they will do the same next year. This needs discussion with the TA board, perhaps during the upcoming joint meeting. Darrah will follow up with Stanley.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (Para-educator negotiations): MOTION: (Buttrey /Acker) moved/seconded to go into Executive Session at 8:10 p.m. to discuss para-educator negotiations, the premature dissemination of which may place the Board at a substantial disadvantage. Out of executive session at 8:14 p.m. No action taken.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (Principal’s contract): MOTION: (Buttrey / MacPhee) moved/seconded to go into Executive Session at 8:15 p.m. to discuss the Principal’s contract. Out of executive session at 8:47 p.m. No action taken.

ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: (Buttrey / Downey) moved/seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 p.m. (unanimous approval).

FUTURE MEETINGS:

5/22/18 Joint Thetford Town School District/TA Board of Trustees Meeting (at TA) 7:00 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Amy Bosco, Minutes Clerk

These minutes are not official until approved by the School Board.