

THETFORD TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
Tuesday, May 22, 2018
Thetford Academy

DRAFT MINUTES

Shannon Darrah convened the meeting at 7:50 p.m.. The following were present: Julie Acker, Charlie Buttrey, Shannon Darrah, Kristen Downey, Scott MacPhee, School Board; Kevin Petrone, TES Principal

PUBLIC PRESENT: Abby Harrington, Kate Hill, Beth McGee, Bette Nunez, Stuart Rogers, Sue Rogers, Laura Sharpless, Mary Wunderlich

AGENDA REVIEW: Agenda approved.

MINUTES REVIEW: MOTION: (Buttrey/MacPhee) moved/seconded to approve the minutes of the May 8, 2018 Board meeting as amended (unanimous approval).

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF ORDERS: MOTION: (Acker/MacPhee) moved/seconded to approve accounts payable orders # 6466 and 6433 (unanimous approval). Acker thanked Northwoods Excavating for discounting a bill by over \$2,000. They charged TTSD basically only for materials. This was for the culvert around the garage.

PUBLIC COMMENT/CORRESPONDENCE: The selectboard appointed a treasurer effective June 8: Tracy Borst, and assistant treasurer, Kristi Wadsworth. Borst will attend a future Board meeting.

DISCUSS PRINCIPAL SEARCH FOR 18-19: Petrone has resigned, effective June 30. Darrah met with TES staff last week to inform them that the Board had not made a final decision about plans for next year, as they had not yet met in public session. The Board had discussed hiring for an interim position vs. conducting a full search. Darrah summarized the Board was initially leaning toward an interim principal for the next year to allow time for a thoughtful search, but a conclusion had not been reached. Bette Nunez had sent Darrah her thoughts by email, which Darrah forwarded to the Board. Buttrey reiterated the Board has not come to a decision. Downey encouraged acknowledgement that a change in leadership is typically disruptive. An interim can also be somewhat disruptive, because it may not feel like there is any forward motion, just maintaining. It is late to do a full search. There are many principal openings across VT and NH, more so than the typical year. It is best to start a search earlier next year. MacPhee stated the next principal has to be the best fit for our community and teachers should be involved. Beth McGee asked if an interim has to be someone from within TES? Downey responded, no, it means it is for one year, but certainly that person may be a good candidate for the permanent position. Someone from within our community could serve as an interim, and may be a stabilizing factor because they are already known. It is not an option to leave the position vacant.

Darrah suggested forming a small committee for an interim search. Nunez has expressed interest. The interim position will be advertised internally and externally. Buttrey volunteered to serve on this committee. Downey offered to chair the committee. Following discussion, the Board concluded the committee shall have five members including two teachers, two board members and one TES staff member. Petrone is happy to provide input. He wants to make sure the school moves forward. He agrees this will be disruptive. There are a lot of good things in place now and it can stay that way next year, but there also some good initiatives starting and the staff needs to dig deeper into those, like the new math program, the responsive classroom, and project based learning. Petrone offered behind the scenes administrative support throughout the summer. Nunez will spread the word to teachers. Interested teachers should email Downey. Darrah will contact Melanie Elliott at OESU regarding posting the position internally and externally (school spring) ASAP. Stuart Rogers suggested making the meeting schedule clear from the beginning to ensure committee members can commit. Discussion followed regarding a time line. It will be a short but intense schedule, likely weekly meetings plus interviews. Discussion followed regarding Nunez's email to Darrah about leadership roles. The Board thought there were some interesting ideas. Nunez summarized her communication, stating this is the first time for a big changeover, not just with Petrone leaving but also with staff because there are a lot of new and young people. She feels strongly there should be leaders within teams, such as the primary wing. Grades 3 and 4 are engaging in the multi age classroom model for the first time. Having a leader in grades 3 and 4, as well as in 5 and 6, with mentoring, is important and would be helpful to the interim principal. Downey added that strong mentoring programs are what retain teachers. This could be something to look at for next year. Downey has experience in this area and would be happy to work on this. The new superintendent may also have some ideas.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT (Kevin Petrone): Petrone presented a letter of resignation from Beth Tilden, from food service. The Board expressed gratitude for Tilden's service. Petrone reviewed resignations and staffing for next year. Robert Bartlett (Spanish) resigned. Petrone has been interviewing and there may be a candidate. Jessie Pierpont (music) resigned. The search is ongoing with a possible candidate. Jacqueline Porter (K/1) resigned. This vacancy would have allowed Amanda Gray to stay on staff (her position had been cut) but she had already accepted another position. Megan Oliver, who was filling in for Sarah Atherton's maternity leave, is taking Porter's position. Sharpless noted that all the classroom teachers who are teaching next year are TES veterans with at least one year at TES. Some will be teaching new grade levels. The classroom staff is stable. McGee expressed she feels concerned when considering who is close to retirement on top of the changes happening now. Petrone reported the school play was fantastic. McGee did a wonderful job, with help from Pierpont and parent volunteers. If the school continues with the play, he is considering how it can be more manageable for the kids and more integrated into school. Kids give up a lot of recess time and two Saturdays. McGee stated visiting director, Perry Allison, was wonderful but it took her some time to get to know the kids. This year the play was a lot of work for McGee, as she is only a 0.6 employee. She worked many, many extra hours. An in house team is needed. The play is a wonderful tradition she wants to continue, but it can't continue the way it has been. Discussion followed. Northern Stage has a two week visiting theatre program. A member of the public suggested integrating the play into

project based learning, or using time during all school meetings. Downey agreed, and shared her 6th grade daughter's experience of feeling frustrated the last week, but then thrilled after the dress rehearsal. Last week was literacy week. Librarian, Mary Wunderlich, reported on new initiatives. She worked a lot with the primary team this year, initiating the family read before the book character parade. She also added rock'n read with rocking chairs. Everyone took part in that. The visiting author was incredible, teaching workshops with the 4th grade. It was also bike week during PE. Helmets and bikes were supplied. May 25 is Kindergarten registration day. There are 27 incoming kindergartners: 6 girls and 21 boys. The new math program will be Bridges 2.0 in grades K-5, and College Prep Math in grades 6-8. Buttrey asked if there is any concern about the transition between the two programs after fifth grade. Sharpless responded, the two math programs are published by different companies so they are not designed to flow, but Bridges says that College Prep Math is a good follow up. It will be a change working out of a text book instead of worksheets. There are a lot of e-tools in both programs. Overall, having consistent programs will smooth things out. May 30 at 12:30 is the spring concert and learning expo. Strings and choral performances will be first, followed by open classrooms. Summer work is planned, including a new oil line, which necessitates digging up the playground, and water line work due to issues with hot water temperature regulation.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION RE: BUSING FOR NEXT SCHOOL YEAR: Darrah asked, how will route 3 be run? Petrone responded that Butler Bus suggested starting and ending the route in Strafford to minimize bus time for Thetford students. This means that kids who live close to the Strafford line would likely have a long ride in both directions. Strafford is in the middle of the route, and Darrah does not understand how to reconfigure the route to begin in Strafford in the morning and end in Strafford in the afternoon. Butler reports that the buses have the capacity to take the extra kids. TTSD will not agree to a new route if it will add significant time, even though TA will pay for increase in cost. Discussion followed. Darrah wants to see the route and the times. Darrah knows the route well because her kids ride bus 3. If there is going to be a change, the information needs to go out to parents as soon as possible.

DISCUSS VSBA STRATEGIC PLANNING CONSULTANT: VSBA can provide a consultant at a reasonable rate. Darrah has invited Susan Holson to a future Board meeting to present what she can offer the Board. Buttrey suggested changing the meeting time to 7 p.m. in the summer, starting with the June 12 meeting. The Board agreed.

DRIVER'S ED DISCUSSION: A concern was raised by Mr. Bugg regarding the minutes of the last meeting regarding the board's discussion of TA's driver's ed program. They seemed to imply that TA has no plan for driver's education for the next year and felt that was detrimental to Thetford Academy and requested the Thetford School District clarify these remarks. The board discussed this and felt that the minutes were an accurate documentation of the conversation. Acker posed, did the Board misinterpret a parent communication received from TA and incorrectly conclude that a plan is not in place for driver's ed next year? Discussion followed. Acker did not intend to make it sound as if TA is not planning anything. She apologized for not being sensitive to the wording prior to posting. Acker has not heard any details for next year, but

is confident that TA is working towards a solution. Driver's education was added as an agenda item to the last meeting during the agenda review due to correspondence that was received from concerned parents, therefore TA was not aware that discussion was going to be happening. Bugg's email to Darrah after reading the minutes on the listserv indicates that the issue at the state level is complex. Acker asked for an update regarding the AOE requirements. Darrah reported there is a new person at the AOE who handles this and they are still determining the legalities. This topic will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (Para-educator Negotiations): MOTION: (Buttrey/MacPhee) moved/seconded to go into Executive Session at 8:59 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 9:08 p.m. No action taken.

ADJOURNMENT: MOTION (MacPhee/Downey) moved/seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:09 p.m. (unanimous approval).

FUTURE MEETINGS:

06/05/18	OESU Board Meeting	6:00 p.m.
06/12/18	Thetford Town School District Meeting	7:00 p.m.
06/26/18	Thetford Town School District Meeting	7:00 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Amy Bosco, Minutes Clerk

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