

SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Wednesday, June 16, 2021
Final Minutes

Present: Lauren Thomas-Paquin, Jen Malcolm-Brown, Bethany Rose, Stephen Sullivan, members; Dan Hayes, Chair; Jackie Mendonsa, Principal; Bruce Turner, Director of Finance & Operations; Jennifer Culkeen, Superintendent; Public Guests

A. Meeting Called to Order by Dan at 7:06 P.M.

B. Public Hearings:

A member of the public connected with Morse Hill School notified SSC that an architect is working with them to verify that the building is up to code for the purposes of serving as a private elementary school. She requested that SSC hold a vote on authorizing the school once the certification process is complete.

C. Review of Agenda and Perpetual Calendar: None.

D. Warrants and Gifts:

#325 6/14/21 \$79,955.90

#326 6/28/21 \$81,870.30

#3027 6/1/21 \$27,110.58

#3028 6/15/21 \$17,160.65

E. Approval of Minutes from May 20, 2021:

LAUREN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MAY 20. JEN SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

F. Unfinished Business / Updates:

1. Capital Projects (heat, roof, sliders, etc.) - Information / Updates:

Bruce said it was a fruitful Town Meeting: the Town approved funding to repair the gym roof as well as upgrading the controls for our heating system. Sliders are in the process of being ordered and delivered. All of this will be very helpful for the school, so we're grateful for the Town's support. Steven added that the doors are good to go as they are. Dan thanked Jackie and Bruce for being so well spoken and well prepared to explain our needs at Town Meeting.

2. Morse Hill School Update:

Dan explained that Morse Hill School has been in communication about pursuing their Certificate of Occupancy, fire inspection, etc. At the time, the code review hadn't been finished, but that is underway now. Once everything's been certified, Dan will share those documents with SSC, which can then reconvene to address the school's request. Dan directed Morse Hill School to Jim Hawkins with any specific questions about the building requirements. Dan and Jackie reviewed the curriculum plan

submitted; that all looks good. The sign-off from the Building Inspector is the next step. School proponents noted how unique the school's curriculum and operations will be and thanked everyone who's been working with them to make the school a reality; they added that they intend to collaborate with SES. Dan thanked Morse Hill School guests for attending.

G. New Business / Discussion Items:

1. Shutesbury School Committee and SEESAW Settlement Agreement - Discussion and Possible Vote:
Moved to Executive Session.

H. Reports:

1. Superintendent's Report:

Jennifer expressed relief that the Governor approved the continued use of the remote format for public meetings. She's taken our new Director of Student Support Services on a tour of the U#28 schools, which was just delightful. She'll be starting on July 1. Jennifer is looking forward to in-person Leadership Team meetings. We've done an amazing job of navigating the COVID world and all its complications. We had a meeting with Commissioner Riley today, the gist of which that masks are required through the end of the school year but are optional for the summer. There will be no mask mandate this Fall.

2. Director of Finance and Operations:

Bruce thanked everyone for Town Meeting, where our budget passed without much of an issue. He's working with Matt to make sure our air conditioning is up to snuff to support both our server room and summer programs in the school. There are no budget transfers required; everything looks good, including the Food Service.

Dan asked about a whole-school ventilation system; can we get that funded under a grant? Bruce said we've updated the system to ensure that air in the rooms are turning over with sufficient frequency. Jackie noted we have problems we have to address all the time, and Bruce said Dan's question is all part of the new planned control system. The grant money the Town has provided has been very helpful in upgrading the system to this point.

Dan praised the flexibility and the working relationship we have with the Town to meet the school's needs. It's clear that we don't have a padded budget, and in return, the Town has always been there for us when problems arise.

3. Principal's Report:

Jackie reported that we tried to do a lot of end-of-year traditions, including Field Day in the rain (the kids loved it, the adults not so much), a 6th Grade Movie Night, and a Graduation Parade. We have a summer school program for about 30 students this summer. They'll be wearing masks indoors but not outdoors. Jackie recognized three retiring staff members, Andrea Darby, Jan Tyner, and Rob Reiss, who have dedicated a whole lot of time and talent to the school. They'll be missed. Dan thanked these retirees for their service.

Dan noted that we don't want to fall into the trap of coming to rely on School Choice funds for normal operations. Jackie agreed, and said that how we've used the funds this year (for short-term needs that crop up) is how she'd like to keep using it. We are hiring a teacher for one year with these funds to help give the students an academic boost. Jackie noted how big a difference even a few students make in our budget; these small fluctuations in enrollment can impact our budget significantly. Jennifer agreed that ongoing needs should not be met with School Choice funds, but should be included in the budget. Dan agreed with all of this, but added that Choice monies are accumulating, and suggested that we could budget some of it as a contingency. When we reach some threshold, perhaps we could return some of that money to the Town. He doesn't want our budget to be impacted, but he wants people to be aware of how Choice funds benefit the entire community. Susie Mosher noted that there are some limitations in the law that restrict how the Choice monies can be spent. Dan proposed adding this discussion about Choice funds back on the agenda. Jackie noted that there are some significant needs in Preschool next year, and she might need support from Choice funds for that.

4. Amherst-Pelham Representative's Report:

Steve reported that the regional graduations went well. The 6th Grade-to-Middle-School discussion is continuing, and we should keep discussing it as well. We lost a middle schooler to the "TikTok blackout challenge" yesterday. Their parents want everyone to know about it so that it can be discussed with other students.

5. Union #28 Report, including Budget & Personnel: No report.

6. CES Report:

Dan reported that CES has hired its next Executive Director. They meet next week. The \$1.5 million deficit has been closed significantly.

I. Policy Review:

1. Vote to Waive School Committee Policy: BGB Policy Adoption for the purpose of Editing Policy EBCFA - Face Coverings in one vote - Discussion and Vote:

Jennifer explained that the revision to policy EBCFA is to reflect mask mandate changes at the state level, bringing it into line with the current recommendations.

LAUREN MOVED TO WAIVE POLICY BGB POLICY ADOPTION FOR TONIGHT'S MEETING ONLY. JEN SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

LAUREN MOVED TO ADOPT THE REVISIONS READ BY JENNIFER TO EBCFA - FACE COVERINGS. JEN SECONDED. MOTION PASSES.

Lauren thanked SES for the wonderful experiences her son had at the close of the year; it was all well managed, fun, and very memorable. The Graduation Parade is certainly a tradition that could continue.

Jackie noted that we ungendered our bathrooms by separating bathrooms by grade, and there's so much support from students, staff, and parents that we're continuing with this practice.

J. Future Business:

- Shutesbury Policy Committee – Thursday, October 21, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.
- Shutesbury School Committee – Thursday, September 16, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.
- Union #28 Joint Supervisory – September 2021
- Budget and Personnel Committee – October 2021
- Future agenda items –

Jen noted that she's resigning from SSC and thanked everyone for their excellent support and hard work, especially over this past year. Jennifer also thanked SSC for supporting Jackie, Jennifer, and the school all along.

K. Executive Session to Discuss Strategy With Respect to Collective Bargaining or Litigation:

DAN MOVED TO ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS STRATEGY WITH RESPECT TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING OR LITIGATION, TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION AFTERWARD. JEN SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL AYES. UNANIMOUS.

L. Adjournment