

SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, September 19, 2024
Final Minutes

Present: Anna Heard, Jen Taylor, Nate Longcope, Leah Jack, members; Jeremy Mailloux, Chair; Caitlin Sheridan, Director of Finance & Operations; Anne Magill, Principal; Shannon White-Cleveland, Superintendent; Public Guests.

A. Meeting Called to Order by Jeremy at 7:01 P.M.

B. Public Hearings: None.

C. Review of Agenda and Perpetual Calendar:

Jeremy noted he needs to write a blurb for *Our Town* about the goings-on recently.

D. Warrants and Gifts:

Accounts Payable:

Voucher/Bid Number	Date	Amount
3030	6/30/2024	\$19,658.72
3001	7/1/2024	\$9,973.52
3002	8/6/2024	\$14,545.54
3003	8/6/2024	\$9,434.28
3004	8/20/2024	\$37,448.34
3005	9/3/2024	\$12,365.45
3006	9/17/2024	\$9,571.59

Payroll:

Voucher/Bid Number	Date	Amount
301	7/9/2024	\$76,641.99
302	7/23/2024	\$78,687.18
303	8/5/2024	\$84,689.62
304	8/20/2024	\$78,820.35
305	9/3/2024	\$87,947.79
306	9/17/2024	\$87,815.66

Gifts: None.

Grants: None.

E. Approval of Minutes from June 20, 2024:

JEN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JUNE 20, 2024. NATE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

F. Unfinished Business / Updates:

1. Capital Projects/Building Process - Discussion (Roof, Boilers, Kitchen Floor, etc.):

Nate said he doesn't have any new information. In the past, Jackie brought forward this type of information. Jen suggested contacting Steve Sullivan, who's a great resource. Fin Com member Susie Mosher added that Jackie worked out a robust Capital Plan that has a lot of detail. Anne can look into this. Caitlin said she can do some work to see where we are with the boilers and where we can go from here in relation to grant applications.

G. New Business / Discussion Items:

1. Shutesbury School Committee and Shutesbury Elementary Educators / Shutesbury Affiliated Workers Settlement Agreement - Discussion and Possible Vote:

Jeremy recounted part of the process of arriving to this point. We intended to bring teacher and para salaries up to parity with the county. Leah commented on her previous experience in the school district: it's not always clear from the contract what is supposed to be accomplished. She asked about vacation and school day language for head administrators; it seems as if we could pay out a lot of vacation if the person were to leave their position. Shannon suggested clarifying language. SSC decided to let the item go through this time and address it in the next contract.

Anna asked how much the overall increase in the staff budget might be. Caitlin said next year, some steps in some positions is over 3%. It's hard to give a concise answer to this question without going through all the data. The nuances of the increases might be a little hard to explain succinctly, but Susie assured SSC that she'll communicate to the Fin Com that the increases are targeting positions that sorely need them, and that there's support from SSC and the union for them.

ANNA MOVED TO APPROVE THE SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE AND SHUTESBURY ELEMENTARY EDUCATORS / SHUTESBURY AFFILIATED WORKERS SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT. JEN SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

H. Reports:

1. Superintendent's Report:

Shannon reported that she's presenting her Entry Plan to each individual SC in order to get feedback and make sure everyone understands it. The first 100 days focus on her getting to know the communities of U#28 and assess the system we currently have in place. She's getting to know the strengths, challenges, and areas of growth for each school. She also wants to understand and protect the special characteristics of each school. She reviewed recent personnel changes in other schools and U#28. She's attending the New

Superintendents Induction Program and has a mentor and is holding Leadership Teams regularly. She's also met with safety personnel at each school. We had a great Opening Day in Erving (location will rotate each year). She's working to streamline some processes and is working with Principals on MCAS data. We've had wonderful coordination of safety training across the district, and Caitlin has been especially helpful in answering her every question. She'll be presenting her annual goals in November.

Leah asked if it would be appropriate for SC members to attend any Learning Walks. Shannon said she'd like to plan separate events from those at which teachers are trying to assess what's going on in classrooms.

2. Director of Finance and Operations:

Caitlin reported that our FY23 audit was completed by Marcum and submitted to the state. FY24 EOY reports are almost done, so it's a busy time making adjustments between the two as needed. She'll present this to SSC for approval soon. The first draft of the budget was sent to the Budget & Personnel SubCommittee and presented at the first JSC meeting. There are no significant changes to the budget, just the COLA and step salary increases. The overall increase is 2.6%. We don't have allocations for the four districts yet (Oct 1). Last but not least, SES has been beautifully painted!

3. Principal's Report:

Anne reported that SES was one of the top 10 schools in the state to reduce chronic absenteeism; we got a Celtics-signed basketball as an award. We're using a Choose Love social-emotional program school-wide. Enrollment will be 125. We've done our building and safety trainings and had our very successful first fire drill. We have some new hires, a 4th-Grade teacher and two new paras. We'll have another staff member helping with preschool soon as well.

4. Amherst-Pelham Representative's Report:

Anna reported that the Regional School District has a new Superintendent as well, who's doing really well; everyone seems happy with her so far. She has a lot of ambitious goals and RSC suggested paring her list down a bit the first year. She's putting out a lot of fires at multiple schools. Shutesbury has approved the CPA funds and will make the recommendation to the Town at our next Town Meeting; these relate to the decrepit track and field, and the project has become more expensive, but with some extra funding, we'll also be able to reorient the field so that it's north-south. There's been a pretty contentious budget process this year due to rising costs and extended negotiations with the teacher's union. To do a level-services budget, we need more than an 8.5% increase over last year. That's a lot more than members are willing to stomach, it seems. Susie noted that the Fin Com's plan is to focus on the assessment method this year (to use guardrails so that all Towns don't pay the same increase). An increase of only 2.5% would mean slashing 30 positions, which nobody wants, either. It will be a long, difficult process to get to a reasonable place with the budget, including explaining these problems to the public. Jen asked if the new Superintendent was aware of the mold and structural issues in the Middle School: yes, she is, but there's only so much that can be done with a lack of funding. There might be a way forward with capital planning funding from the state that's offered on a cyclical basis. The full structure of the Administration won't be complete until next year; the reorganization is still in progress.

5. Union #28 Report, including Budget & Personnel:

Jeremy reported that JSC needs to figure out the process for addressing complaints about U#28 staff; there isn't a clear policy about this. We're starting to discuss how to be transparent about this. Leah reported JSC reorganized: Steven Blinder is Chair, Mandy Blackbird is Vice Chair. There was a presentation about the new IEP released by the state, and training is going on at all the schools to help support staff in implementing these.

6. CES Report: None.

I. Policy Review:

First Reading On:

JFABE – Educational Opportunities for Military Children
JFABF – Educational Opportunities for Children in Foster Care
JH – Student Absences and Excuses

Final Vote On:

EEAJ – Motor Vehicle Idling on School Grounds
GBEBC – Gifts to and Solicitations by Staff
GBEBD – Online fundraising and Solicitations-Crowdfunding
GBK – Staff complaints and Grievances
GCG – Substitute Professional Staff Employment
HA – Negotiations Goals
HB – Negotiations Legal Status
HF – School Committee Negotiating Agents

LEAH MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY EEAJ – MOTOR VEHICLE IDLING ON SCHOOL GROUNDS AS EMENDED. JEN SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

LEAH MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY GBEBC – GIFTS TO AND SOLICITATIONS BY STAFF AS EMENDED. JEN SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

LEAH MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY GBEBD – ONLINE FUNDRAISING AND SOLICITATIONS-CROWDFUNDING. JEN SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

LEAH MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY GBK – STAFF COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES. JEN SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

LEAH MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY GCG – SUBSTITUTE PROFESSIONAL STAFF EMPLOYMENT. JEN SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

LEAH MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY HA – NEGOTIATIONS GOALS. JEN SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

LEAH MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY HB – NEGOTIATIONS LEGAL STATUS AS EMENDED. JEN SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

LEAH MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY HF – SCHOOL COMMITTEE NEGOTIATING AGENTS. JEN SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

J. Executive Session: Not necessary.

K. Future Business:

- Shutesbury Policy Committee – Thursday, October 17, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.
- Shutesbury School Committee – Thursday, October 17, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.
- Union #28 Joint Supervisory – November 18, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.
- Future agenda items – Jen asked about items to add to the agenda for next time: She'd love to move to hold our September meeting on a different night because it conflicts with the Amherst Block Party. Also, she'd love to take a look together at the process for homeschool applications. Leah said we may have a Budget & Personnel SubCommittee meeting in October.

L. Adjournment at 8:20

ANNA MOVED TO ADJOURN. JEN SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL AYE.