

SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, December 19, 2024
Final Minutes

Present: Nate Longcope, Anna Heard, 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 7:02 P.M.

B. Public Hearings: None.

C. Review of Agenda and Perpetual Calendar: None.

D. Warrants and Gifts:

Accounts Payable:

3011	11/26/2024	\$23,723.47
3012	12/10/2024	\$38,438.05

Payroll:

311	11/26/2024	\$96,125.92
312	12/10/2024	\$92,421.09

Gifts: None.

Grants:

Rural Aid

- \$82,085.00

REAP

- \$15,932.00

NATE MOVED TO ACCEPT THE RURAL AID AND REAP GRANTS AS PRESENTED. ANNA SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

E. Approval of Minutes from November 21, 2024:

ANNA MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 21, 2024. NATE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

F. Unfinished Business / Updates:

1. Capital Projects/Building Process - Discussion (Roof, Boilers, Kitchen Floor, etc.): No updates. (Susie Mosher suggested that SSC appoint a representative to the Capital Planning Committee. Perhaps the tractor can be considered for submission?)

2. PTO/School Committee Outreach – Update:

Jeremy has reached out to the PTO about some events going on in the spring. They're definitely open to SSC members showing up.

G. New Business / Discussion Items:

1. February Meeting Date – Discussion and Vote:

Jeremy suggested moving the February meeting date to 2/13.

ANNA MOVED TO RESCHEDULE THE FEBRUARY MEETING TO 2/13/2024. NATE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

2. Family Handbook – Review and Possible Vote:

ANNA MOVED TO APPROVE THE FAMILY HANDBOOK. NATE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

3. School Improvement Plan – Review and Possible Vote:

ANNA MOVED TO APPROVE THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN. NATE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

H. Reports:

1. Superintendent's Report:

Shannon reported that SES took part in the Common Jobs Day along with U#28 schools, which provided an opportunity to do professional development and networking with professionals at other schools. Representatives from all U#28 SCs will work with Shannon to examine the efficiency study by the Collins Center to see which recommendations we might be able to implement (Leah is SSC's representative). Shannon continues to participate in the New Superintendent orientation program. It's been a busy fall with many good things happening in the Union!

2. Director of Finance and Operations:

Caitlin reported we're slotted for a Food Service Procurement Review by DESE this year. Last Thursday we had our on-site visit, which went well; we got all four schools done in one day. It was really helpful, more of an exit interview to guide us going forward. Two action items are creating Union-wide Code of Conduct and Procedures documents, for which we have templates. We can't procure produce because its price fluctuates week to week. We'll have to do three RFPs per week before buying produce, but that can all be done automatically. SES doesn't have other reviews that two other U#28 schools are having this year, which will give us time to prepare for them next year.

Absence management across U#28 is done via paper sheets that are approved and sent to Central Office, where it's entered in a Google Sheet before being returned. There's no way staff can directly see their info. We've found a vendor, Frontline Asset Management, that can provide that for us. They're well known. Anna asked about how all the different components of the payroll system talk to each other. How will they interface with Frontline? They will, and staff will have much easier access to their payroll and PTO information.

In terms of our budget, we're looking at a 4.93% increase next year, much of which has to do with contractual increases. No big movement for administrative portions of the budget. The Rural Aid number might change before the next meeting; it changed now because a couple of school districts became eligible, diluting the funds a bit. SSC discussed the change in Special Education lines: Shannon explained that it's hard to budget for because we can't predict our needs. It can feel quite substantial in a small budget. Caitlin added that we have to demonstrate maintenance of effort (that we're spending in this area each year). Susie noted that Jo Comerford attended a recent Select Board meeting and related that the Legislature is trying to raise the Rural Aid line to \$60 million next year. Charter schools draining our budget are also an issue.

3. Principal's Report:

Anne reported that the students are giving their feedback on cafeteria options. We've been giving students opportunities for leadership roles, including projects that 6th Graders did like Technology Club and student government. Groups supported Physical Education classes and Library processes too. Students also counted money for the Book Fair for the first time. Students reflected on how these opportunities helped them develop responsibility and actually become role models for others. The group helping the Kindergarten had wonderful insights into what it's like to be a child. Students were very excited to continue this program. We had a successful lockdown drill today, and she thanked the entire school for being so professional and supportive, especially with our littlest learners. The building is in a great place now; Nate has been very helpful with that. We look forward to welcoming in the new year and learning more.

4. Amherst-Pelham Representative's Report:

Anna reported that the Four Town meeting happened, and RSC discussed Town contributions. We're going through some discussion about how we can get closer to actual, correct contributions based on enrollment; it seems that Leverett and Pelham are subsidized right now. Everyone recognizes the need to get closer to the right allocations. Amherst is feeling pinched, but they're pinched every year. We might be able to save money on transportation if we can figure out how to do it well. We're exploring different starting times, whether that would support older students in showing up on time, etc. We also got a huge report on the Superintendent's Entry Assessment. We got the highlights in an hour; it was hard to follow, it was so extensive and rich with data. RSC is going to be entering into contract negotiations this year. Susie and Jeremy praised Anna for taking on the RSC rep role, which she has become quite adept at.

5. Union #28 Report, including Budget & Personnel: None.

6. CES Report: None.

I. Policy Review:

Second Reading and Final Vote on Deletion:

IE – Organization of Instruction
JBA – Student-to-Student Harassment

Second Reading, First Vote On:

ACAB – Sex-Based Harassment/Discrimination (Title IX)
IGA/IGD - Curriculum Development
JIC- Student Discipline
JICFB – Bullying Prevention

Final Vote On:

LBC – Relations with Nonpublic Schools
JLCC – Communicable Diseases
KLG – Relations with Police Authorities

Jeremy reminded SSC that the policies to be deleted come on the recommendation of MASC.

Anna noted ACAB seems pretty wordy; can we edit it? Jeremy said most of that language has been provided to us; it addresses Title IX requirements.

Anna commented on JIC: She's opposed to elementary school students being suspended, much less for 10 days. That's appropriate only in very rare, unlikely situations. The language here also makes it seem like parents don't need to be notified for suspensions of less than 10 days. Shannon responded that unless an action is a felony, there's a whole policy whereby a letter is sent to the parents, there's a meeting, etc. It's deliberative. We need to have a policy at this level. Anna feels that even that kind of behavior needs a different response at this grade level. Every kid needs to be taken on a case-by-case basis. SSC examined and discussed the suspension process and agreed to emend it.

Anna discussed JICFB: Could we just say bullying is prohibited, not list the locations? Anne said the reason for that is the locations are where we can control it. Anna said if the bullying creates a hostile environment at the school, it should be prohibited no matter where it happens, right? Shannon said when we open up this language, you're asking school personnel to talk with families about what happens outside their purview. They can't police interactions that happen elsewhere. Anna: What about cyberbullying? Anne: Depends on the situation; the police might have to get involved with that. SSC discussed the line between what school employees can control or deal with and what they can't. Anna: I'd like the language to reflect that we're not *only* prohibiting this behavior when it happens at school. Other SSC members pointed out that language is already in the policy (beneath the list of school-associated locations). Jeremy argued the policy is trying to be comprehensive about prohibiting all the places where bullying actions might occur. He supports more general language for a mission statement, but feels this very specific language is important to have in a policy. Anna agreed. Shannon pointed out this is only the first vote, and she's happy to share this conversation with our attorney for their perspective. Shannon and Anne reviewed the bullying prevention and intervention plan, which we need to do reporting on to DESE. Anna said she's concerned more about the bullying that's not substantiated, documented, and pursued to resolution. She'd like SSC to know how many reports are filed (currently 0 at SES). Anne stressed that there are plenty of

interactions that might be unkind that aren't bullying, but rather learning opportunities for students. Anna referred to the horrible bullying that happened in the Region. We need reliable reporting.

ANNA MOVED TO DELETE POLICY IE – ORGANIZATION OF INSTRUCTION. NATE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

ANNA MOVED TO DELETE POLICY JBA – STUDENT-TO-STUDENT HARASSMENT. NATE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

ANNA MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY ACAB – SEX-BASED HARASSMENT/ DISCRIMINATION (TITLE IX). NATE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

ANNA MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY IGA/IGD – CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT. NATE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

ANNA MOVED TO DELETE “OR AN IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION OF LESS THAN 10 DAYS” IN THE NOTICE OF SUSPENSION SECTION OF POLICY JIC – STUDENT DISCIPLINE. NATE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

ANNA MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY JIC – STUDENT DISCIPLINE AS EMENDED. NATE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

ANNA MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY JICFB – BULLYING PREVENTION. NATE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

ANNA MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY LBC – RELATIONS WITH NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS. NATE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

ANNA MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY JLCC – COMMUNICABLE DISEASES. NATE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

ANNA MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY KLG – RELATIONS WITH POLICE AUTHORITIES. NATE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

J. Executive Session: Not necessary.

K. Future Business:

- Shutesbury Policy Committee – Thursday, January 16, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.
- Shutesbury School Committee – Thursday, January 16, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.
- Budget & Personnel Committee – TBD
- Union #28 Joint Supervisory – January 13, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.
- Future agenda items – Anna asked when we'll be looking at a proposed calendar to vote on (typically in February).

L. Adjournment at 8:45

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