

THETFORD TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
Tuesday, August 23, 2016
Thetford Elementary School Art Room

APPROVED MINUTES

Shannon Darrah convened the meeting at 7:03 p.m.. The following were present: Julie Acker, Charlie Buttrey, Shannon Darrah, Kristen Downey, Scott MacPhee, School Board; Kevin Petrone, TES Principal

PUBLIC PRESENT: None

AGENDA REVIEW: Agenda approved with amendments.

MINUTES REVIEW: MOTION: (Buttrey/MacPhee) moved/seconded to approve the minutes of the August 1 and August 8, 2016 Board meetings (unanimous approval).

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF ORDERS: MOTION: (Acker/MacPhee) moved/seconded to approve accounts payable orders # 5527 and 5847, and payroll warrants # 5499 and 5415 (unanimous approval).

PUBLIC COMMENT/CORRESPONDENCE: The Board was copied on correspondence between Cynthia Perry and the Secretary of Education, Rebecca Holcombe. Perry is the director of the new Raven's Wood Outdoor School in Thetford. Holcombe determined the Raven's Wood program is not an approved independent school, and therefore any TES student who attends would be considered truant. This opinion is in agreement with Superintendent Cobb's prior assessment.

Darrah reported an email from Perry suggesting a meeting with Petrone, Gregg Bagnato (Principal of the Newton School, Strafford) and Barrett Williams (Principal of Sharon Elementary) and Representatives Jim Masland and Tim Briglin to discuss partnering with Raven's Wood for upcoming school year. Darrah responded this is a busy time of year and suggested meeting in September. Perry would like to meet sooner. Darrah stated that respectfully, this requires a thorough analysis. A decision for TES students to attend Raven's Wood for one day per week for the entire school year can not be made quickly.

TA REPORT (Darrah): During the last TA Board meeting there was a summary of new hires, the outdoor education initiative and related grants, and goals for the year. Enrollment looks very good, estimated at 340. TA budgeted for 332. There are 10 international students: 8 Chinese, 1 Greek, and 1 Rwandan. The new trustees joined the Board and were at the last meeting. Older projections call for a significant drop in enrollment around 2019. However, the projections need remodeling because true enrollment has been higher than predicted. TA is trying to keep tuition down and trying to strengthen recruitment efforts.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT (Kevin Petrone): E.C. Brown's has been doing a lot of landscaping on the playground. There are new Hydrangea and River Birches. There are two sand boxes and a

natural playscape with rocks and a hill of dirt. The climbing wall won't be ready by the start of school. It is at Doug Moody's house being painted by local students. Beth McGee plans to continue the work with TES students. The bike track has been lengthened by Petrone and his family.

Petrone gave an update on his recent meeting with the Montshire. After six years of partnership, this year the units will align more with the next generation science standards. The Montshire staff will meet with each individual grade level team. There is also potential for some funding changes. The program has been free for all six years. TES may have to pay for 25% of the program which would be \$3,000 - \$4,000 added to the 16/17 budget. Petrone strongly recommended keeping the partnership. The board agreed.

Petrone met with Robin Junker-Boyce regarding TES students leaving to attend Crossroads Academy. On average, one student per year leaves for Crossroads. Petrone is interested in starting exit interviews when students leave TES. Petrone emailed the Upper Valley principals to inquire how many students they lose. Marion Cross loses one student per year to private school. The others schools lose not quite one student per year. Those schools also gain some students from private schools. Buttrey will help Petrone work on the exit interview process. Petrone has a list of about five families over the past years and could start there.

There are 27 Pre-K students enrolled at \$3,090 per student for a total of \$83,430. School begins next week, August 31, at 8:30. Teachers will be out on the playground to meet the kids. There will be a brief assembly in the multi-purpose room at 9:30. There will be a coffee hour 8:30 – 9:30 hosted by the PTO.

DISCUSS NON-RESIDENT TUITION POLICY: Buttrey and Downey met and have recommendations. The policy should be revised because after looking at other policies, the TTSD current policy is not consistent with other policies. The current admission policy allows for discrimination based on disability. It is illegal for any program which receives federal money to discriminate against disability.

There are complicated things to consider with revision. The new policy should result in a more ethical and lawful practice, and it may have significant effects on costs. There are four criteria for admitting non-resident students in the current policy – two of the criteria are discriminatory. There have been four children tuitioned in the past three years. Downey has not looked at other towns' policies. The VSBA has a recommended policy for admission of non-resident tuition students. With the current policy admission is up to the principal. No one has ever been told no, to date. Can the school meet the needs of the student? If not, they need to go elsewhere. If TES can't meet the needs, it's not discriminatory.

Acker suggested reviewing the policies of the other schools in OESU, as well as other area towns. It makes sense to revise the current policy to be more in line with the State's current recommendation. Downey and Buttrey will continue to work on a draft in time for the 9/20 Board meeting. There also needs to be discussion regarding the difference between the allowable and announced tuition.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (STUDENT MATTER): MOTION: (Buttrey/MacPhee) moved/seconded to go into Executive Session at 7:52 p.m. to discuss a student matter. Out of executive session at 7:55 p.m. No action taken.

ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: (Buttrey/MacPhee) moved/seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 p.m. (unanimous approval).

FUTURE MEETINGS

9/6/16	Thetford Town School District Board Meeting (Oxbow)	6:00 p.m.
9/6/16	OESU Board Retreat (Oxbow)	6:30 p.m.
9/20/16	Thetford Town School District Board Meeting	6:30 p.m.

Minutes Prepared By:
Amy Bosco, Minutes Clerk

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Julie Acker, Board Clerk