

**THETFORD TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Tuesday, June 6, 2017**  
**Thetford Elementary School**

**APPROVED MINUTES**

Shannon Darrah convened the meeting at 6:34 p.m.. The following were present: Julie Acker, Charlie Buttrey, Shannon Darrah, Scott MacPhee, Kristen Downey (arrived at 7:50 p.m.) School Board; Kevin Petrone, TES Principal.

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** Jim Masland (departed 7:03 p.m.)

**AGENDA REVIEW:** Agenda approved with amendments.

**MINUTES REVIEW:** MOTION: (Buttrey/Acker) moved/seconded to approve the minutes of the May 16, 2017 Board meeting as amended (unanimous approval, Acker abstained).

Acker re: the May 2, 2017 minutes, received an email from Jill Graff - school district treasurer through the Town - Graff clarified she handles the cash flow not the finances. She is willing to attend a meeting.

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF ORDERS:** MOTION: (Acker/Buttrey) moved/seconded to approve accounts payable order # 5988 and payroll warrant # 5987 (unanimous approval).

**PUBLIC COMMENT/CORRESPONDENCE:** Petrone received a letter from Sukie Knight of West Newbury, VT with a request for public records for all checks made payable to Cobb and Thompson with supporting documentation for the current school year. The request has gone to all OESU school boards. Petrone responded long ago. Fulfilled per Darrah.

Buttrey received an email from teacher negotiation team which he will share in exec session.

Acker received school reports from Ben Merrill (consultant) - various examples. He does start doing them in the fall but is currently scheduling. Will discuss when entire Board is present to decide if going to proceed with his help.

**Jim Masland - Questions about Teacher Health Care:** He is curious to learn about teacher's health care to fill in some of blanks of what he has heard of various school districts.

The Governor vetoed the budget and the yield bill (which sets residential property tax rates for the year). He does not know if legislative leadership has a strategy to address this.

In regards to the 26 million dollar savings that the Governor has been pushing on teacher healthcare, it is doubtful it's really 26 million. If the \$26M is actual ongoing savings per year, the average savings for a \$250K house would be \$22. This year it would be \$11. It's really not about the money, it's about how and by whom the negotiations are going to be conducted. Masland asked, are all teachers faculty and support staff under VEHI? Yes, per Buttrey. Masland noted

that it is said in some towns, the individual contribution varies based on the person's position (fulltime teachers, vs. custodial vs. paras). Buttrey replied that for TTSD there are 2 separate contracts with teachers and paras. TTSD currently pays the same percentage to both, but they are separate negotiations. Masland said in some towns, where support staff pays less than teachers, the support staff would have to make a very large contribution if their share of the healthcare was changed to 20%. That is a vulnerable population. The Gov. wants everyone on the same 80/20 ratio. Masland understands TTSD's plea about how the teacher's union can talk to others all over the State, but TTSD can't talk to other boards. He would like to learn more about this. He has expressed to leadership that they need to figure out how to restructure the negotiations so that the scale is evened. He hasn't noticed much interest in that. Depending on what happens next week, maybe start over on a few things. Masland needs some more information. They go back into special session 6/21 and 6/22. He wants to learn more about collective bargaining and what could be done to make communication more equitable. He welcomed communication from TTSD Board members. Buttrey thanked him for coming. Buttrey stated it has been a frustrating year. One's health care benefits should not be based on the affluence of the town, per Buttrey. Masland agreed. The teachers have a tactical advantage because they have awareness of what other towns are doing. Ways and Means very frustrating per Masland. Masland added that a bill he has introduced three times in five years regarding legalizing marijuana use for PTSD has finally passed. Discussion followed. RE: Act 46 - last week an amendment was added that hopefully will make things easier for towns like Thetford. He still believes Act 46 went off in the wrong direction. He has an op. ed piece he is working on for publication.

**PRINCIPAL REPORT (Kevin Petrone):** Petrone presented a letter from retiring para educator, Emily Wetmore. She has been here for ~30 years. Darrah accepted her resignation with gratitude for all her service. This year she is in Regina Bradley's third grade classroom. Not sure if advertising for the position. He is assessing the needs and looking at how many spaces are available.

Today visitors from Lebanon toured the recycling program. Two 6th graders gave them a tour of the flow of the program and shared the recipes for manure and wood shavings, paper towels and food scraps. This has been going on for 6 years, and while routine for TES, the visit was a reminder of how great the system operates.

Tomorrow is disability awareness day. Kristen Hansen and Sara Bailey will participate in various activities that will highlight what its like. Two guests: Owen Dybvig and Sam Drazen.

Last Friday was PBL expo day. Band and strings played outside. Then classrooms were open. About 150 people attended. Hoping to repeat next year. The 4th graders have their chicken coop. A coop was donated to the school, which needs a little bit of work. No definite answer yet about how the project will proceed or when chickens may arrive.

SBAC testing almost complete, some makeup tests need to be scheduled. Scores will be released in August, but preliminary data coming out now.

Long term substitute has been hired. Megan Oliver will be filling in for Sarah Atherton in the Fall in 3rd grade. She was an intern here. She is starting day 1. Atherton is scheduled to return after December break. Currently interviewing for the K/1 long term substitute for Jacqueline Porter's maternity leave.

The 5th grade overnight trip is this Friday to Ascutney State Park. Petrone will attend. PTO is also hosting a drive-in movie for the 6th graders. Next week is graduation for the 6th graders. Assembly at 10 a.m. and plan to be crossing the bridge around 11 a.m.

**BUSING:** Darrah - update, she spoke with Bugg and he asked her to let him know if no longer busing Strafford kids. She asked him to remember it's not just the number of students but the length of the route. She suggested to him to investigate options. Also, Thompson is going to check in with Bugg, because there are some Thetford kids that are being picked up as part of the Lyme bus (a different bus contract), and maybe would need to move those kids to an OESU bus route. Bugg needs to work with Butler, OESU and Petrone to sort it out. Reminded him this is a work in progress.

**BOARD RETREAT PLANNING - PICK A DATE, TOPIC:** Act 46 will be the topic. Darrah also suggested that the board talk about whether to continue to meet twice a month. Lots of boards meet once per month. Discussion followed. Acker suggested that if a treasurer is appointed, perhaps some of the typical business that takes place during a meeting could be taken care of by the treasurer.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Acker walked the proposed sidewalk with Stuart Rogers. Cat Buxton is planning gardens, but she knows the sidewalk is coming through so she requested more information. Buxton, Rogers, Acker, Mary Wunderlich and Bruce Avery walked and discussed the impact to existing trees and school activities with Rogers. There is concern about the proximity of the sidewalk to the building. Acker highly recommends for the Board to walk the route, she has much better understanding of the map. There is one tree that is up for discussion that may be taken down. To save the apple trees in front of the school, they will use air to excavate and prune the roots and pack the roots back in, this will be good for the septic system also located there. There was discussion on using hardpack vs. concrete. Rogers is discussing with the State and will report back. The parking lot won't be done until summer 2018. Acker did propose composting toilet to replace the occasional porta-potty. Buxton is enthusiastic and she indicated a willingness to help maintain it. Rogers plans to come on June 20 with updates.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION (Teacher Negotiation Strategy):** MOTION (Buttrey/MacPhee ) moved/seconded to go into Executive Session at 7:36 p.m. to discuss teacher negotiations, the premature dissemination of which may place the Board at a substantial disadvantage. Out of executive session at 8:29 p.m. No action taken.

**ADJOURNMENT:** MOTION: (Buttrey/MacPhee) moved/seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 p.m. (unanimous approval).

**FUTURE MEETINGS:**

06/13/17 OESU Meeting - Oxbow High School

6:00 p.m.

06/20/17 Thetford School District meeting

6:30 p.m.

Minutes Prepared By:  
Amy Bosco, Minutes Clerk

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

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Julie Acker, Board Clerk