

**THETFORD TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Tuesday, December 5, 2017**  
**Oxbow High School**

**APPROVED MINUTES**

Shannon Darrah convened the meeting at 6:10 p.m. The following were present: Julie Acker, Charlie Buttrey, Shannon Darrah, Kristen Downey, School Board; Kevin Petrone, TES Principal; Melanie Elliott, OESU business office/human resources; Sandra Stanley, Interim OESU Superintendent

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** None

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

**MINUTES REVIEW:** MOTION: (Buttrey/Acker) moved/seconded to approve the minutes of the November 21, 2017 Board meeting (Downey abstained; unanimous approval).

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF ORDERS:** MOTION: (Acker/Buttrey) moved/seconded to approve payroll warrant # 6254 (unanimous approval).

**PUBLIC COMMENT/CORRESPONDENCE:** None

**PRINCIPAL'S REPORT (Kevin Petrone):** Petrone attended a meeting with Superintendent Stanley, and two other OESU administrators regarding ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act), which is replacing No Child Left Behind. The meeting focused on a new science assessment slated to begin this year to replace the science NECAP, which is moving to 5<sup>th</sup> grade. The ESSA will be aligned with next generation science standards. A new physical education assessment will be piloted this year. OESU will participate in the Integrated Field Assessment this year. A group of staff from different OESU schools will be getting together to tour all the OESU schools to assess five areas: Academic proficiency, high quality staffing, investment priorities, personalization, and safe and healthy schools. Stanley has asked principals to submit evidence of these categories in their schools. Discussion followed. Petrone will be out next week for two days for IFR observation and documentation training to prepare for touring schools. The group will also tour schools outside of OESU, such as Rivendell. Holiday vacation is coming quickly. The senior luncheon is Wednesday, December 13. There will be some singing and playing by the strings group. A holiday concert will be held on December 20 at 6pm.

**ACT 46 DISCUSSION – MEETING WITH NORWICH NEXT STEPS:** Darrah reported she and Downey met with representatives from Norwich, TA, Hanover and Dresden (including the superintendent) for a broad discussion about possible areas for collaboration. Areas that might benefit from collaboration and sharing of students include language classes, TA's outdoor education program, and upper level math classes. Professional development is an area of poten-

tial collaboration for the elementary schools. The group plans to meet again with a wish list. The legalities still need to be investigated. The Dresden superintendent seemed enthusiastic. Downey stated the conversation focused mostly on grades 7-12. There may be a separate conversation for the elementary schools. Marion Cross plans to have in house preschool next year. Both districts are facing similar challenges of declining enrollment and rising special education costs. Dresden has low enrollment in some classes, such as German, and perhaps TA students could increase such a class' enrollment so that it can be continued to be offered. More meeting participants, such as Petrone, will be included as needed. The communities will also need to be consulted. The Norwich Board Chair indicated a percentage of Norwich parents are hoping for an option in addition to Hanover. Some Hanover families may also be interested in a TA option. The next meeting is scheduled for December 20.

Stanley met with Secretary Holcombe regarding Act 46. Stanley also just met with the Bradford and Oxbow Boards. They want to merge and agreed to write a plan. They would like to continue to be partners with Thetford and Waits River; they are including Newbury and Blue Mountain. They are hoping to have their plan in by December 26 to receive feedback. Discussion followed. Stanley suggested the TTSD Board notify her if TTSD wants to be part of this plan. White River Valley SU is the other option for TTSD. TTSD could attach to the Oxbow/Bradford plan, or express an opinion about which SU to join. Buttrey asked for an estimate of costs comparing SUs. WRSU calculates special education costs differently than OESU. Stanley added that OESU has been out of compliance with special education costs, which needs to be corrected. OESU should not be allocating actuals. Comparing two different formulas makes it difficult to compare SUs. Taxpayers will want to know the cost difference. Intuitively, being in a larger district should translate to lower costs. Discussion followed regarding post Act 46 special education costs; would those costs be consolidated within an SU or separate for the elementary school? Stanley will follow up.

**ANNUAL REPORT PLANNING AND ENGAGING COMMUNITY IN BUDGET DISCUSSION:** There are some decisions to make about layout and content after Acker and Downey met with Ben Merrill last week. Acker showed some examples of layouts. A theme of community connections goes well with the TES motto: "Together Everyone Succeeds." Partnerships include the Montshire, Cat Buxton, and TA. Merrill plans to contact a couple of teachers regarding teaching science and the interface with Montshire partnership. Merrill interviewed a Montshire staff member, as well as talking with TES teacher, Ben LaRoche, who attended TA. A report from the Board chair regarding the next budget and Act 46, and a letter from the principal, will be included. Acker suggested recognition of last years retired teachers, discussion followed. Project based learning can be a focus, with an interview planned with last year's 5<sup>th</sup> graders regarding their field trip project. Petrone may be interviewed about the responsive classroom. Merrill also had a list of topics to discuss with Bill Bugg. Discussion followed.

In the upcoming weeks the Board will be developing the budget. Darrah encouraged the Board to start thinking about how to educate the community about what is behind the budget, with the goal of raising public awareness. Would a forum be helpful? Buttrey suggested pointing out concrete consequences of various budget scenarios. The link to the VSBA video about how taxes are calculated could be put on the listserv. The increase is a result of the State handing down costs to local districts. Discussion followed. It is important for townspeople to hear what TA is doing with their budget, too. The warning needs to be signed by January 22.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION (Para-educator negotiations):** MOTION: (Buttrey/Acker) moved/seconded to go into Executive Session at 7:00 p.m. to discuss para-educator negotiations, the premature dissemination of which may place the Board at a substantial disadvantage. Out of executive session at 7:15 p.m. No action taken.

**ADJOURNMENT:** MOTION: (Buttrey/Downey) moved/seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m. (unanimous approval).

**FUTURE MEETINGS:**

12/12/17 Thetford Town School District Meeting with TA Board 6:30 p.m.  
January schedule to be determined.

Minutes Prepared By:  
Amy Bosco, Minutes Clerk

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Julie Acker, Board Clerk