

THETFORD TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
Tuesday, September 5, 2017
Oxbow High School

DRAFT MINUTES

Shannon Darrah convened the meeting at 7:20 p.m. The following were present: Julie Acker, Charlie Buttrey, Shannon Darrah, Scott MacPhee, School Board; Kevin Petrone, TES Principal; Melanie Elliott, OESU, Keith Thompson, OESU Assistant Superintendent (arrived 8:09 p.m.)

PUBLIC PRESENT: None

AGENDA REVIEW: Agenda approved.

MINUTES REVIEW: MOTION: (Buttrey/MacPhee) moved/seconded to approve the minutes of the August 22, 2017 Board meeting (unanimous approval).

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF ORDERS: MOTION: (Acker/Buttrey) moved/seconded to approve accounts payable order # 6133 and payroll warrant # 6123 (unanimous approval).

PUBLIC COMMENT/CORRESPONDENCE: See bus routes. Contracts were presented for Board signatures for: Bridget Veracka (para-educator), Carolyn “Rosie” Wysocki (para-educator), Jessica Pierpont (music teacher), and Katherine Hill (teacher)

FINANCIAL REPORT FY17 END OF YEAR (Melanie Elliot): The most notable figures are TA tuition, which was under budgeted by \$113,000, and special education. The TA tuition shortfall is due to students moving in over the summer, and no tuition reserve fund. The deficit is \$188,138. The three year deficit has been cleared as of the end of FY17. The legal expenses line item is under by \$22,000. Once TTSD has an audited fund balance of \$127,000, the \$188,000 can be offset. If encumbrances are included, the deficit is ~\$184,000. Thompson and Elliott will work with Petrone on next year’s budget. Elliot stated her goal is to present quarterly financial reports for FY18. Elliott plans to discuss a time line with Thompson and will present that information with the first quarter FY18 report. Discussion followed regarding the fund balance sheet.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT (Kevin Petrone): Prior to the beginning of the school year, 27 teachers received training in the Responsive Classroom, taught by Ramona McCullough from Washington, D.C. This social-emotional curriculum is based on the book, The First Six Weeks of School, and focuses on building the school environment, practicing rules and routine, exploring supplies, etc. There was space for only three para-educators, and more had requested to attend. TES staff will have two more days with McCullough later in the year. The idea is to invest time up front so that as the year progresses and the kids understand the expectations, more time can be spent on academics. The 8 foot tall climbing wall has been completely installed and was ready on

first day of school. The mural is gorgeous. There are two rules: Do not grab anything above the wall, and don't stand underneath someone who is on the wall. Petrone has been scheduling meetings with the Montshire. Grant funding has ended and TES is now paying \$3,000 for those services. Grades 3 through 6 are going to the Tunbridge Fair on September 14. Cat Buxton is scheduling meetings with teachers regarding gardens and composting. There are many new teachers on staff, and there is a good feeling right now in the building with a lot of excitement. The buses look full. Some routes are extending past an hour, with some children dropped off as late as ~4:10/4:15. TES staffs the office until all the bus routes are complete. The route with the construction takes the longest due to the stop lights. There are no bus monitors. There are video cameras on the buses. Students are separated by age. Bus driver, Mike Brown, is concerned about having too many riders on Wednesday afternoons due to the after school program at Peabody Library. Neither Darrah nor Petrone have heard any comments about morning drop off.

DISCUSSION RE: ACT 46 AND NORWICH/DRESDEN OPTIONS: Darrah reminded the Board that a long time ago the Norwich School Board contacted Darrah to discuss collaboration possibilities because Norwich may want another high school option for their kids. Darrah, TA Board Chair, Cameron Cudhea, and Tim Briglin met with Norwich representatives, with the understanding that TTSD would not be merging into Dresden. Any relationship would be more like a partnership. After the meeting, Norwich planned to seek legal opinions and report back to Darrah. On August 25, Darrah received an email from the Norwich Board chair, Tom Candon. Norwich received information from their lawyer about opening up the Dresden compact. The lawyer reported, "It does seem there is a way to include other towns into the (Dresden) compact by following the same approach when the compact was first formed." The lawyer posed the most significant question: "To what extent can admission of a new member to the interstate district be conditioned on terms not applicable to either the interstate district itself or to its current member districts? That is, can the planning committee recommend that a newly admitted district be treated differently than the other districts in areas such as transportation, education services, expense allocation, etc." Darrah responded that she did not imagine TTSD entering into the Dresden compact, but could rather be a side or partner. Darrah asked the other Board members about their interest in merging into Dresden. Buttrey stated he thinks merging with Dresden would be a hard sell to Thetford. However, he believes it would benefit TTSD if Dresden and TTSD each had a K-6 district and had choice to Hanover and TA. This would have to be structured as a side to Dresden. Acker does not believe there is any appetite in Thetford for being part of an interstate school district, especially where the education standards for 7-12 are based in another state. Acker reminded the Board to be careful with the language: It would not be choice, it would be designation. TTSD has already thoroughly discussed the intricacies of designating a high school in another state that is part of an inter-state school district. Acker does think there is interest in having the opportunity for Thetford students to go to Hanover, but is unsure how to do that without Norwich leaving Dresden or TTSD joining Dresden. Darrah stated, if Norwich kids had the opportunity to attend TA, then Hanover kids would also need to have that option. Can Thetford have designation to Hanover without joining Dresden? Discussion followed. Norwich K-6 is its own supervisory district. Theoretically, Thetford could be a side with Norwich, but the 7-12 is the piece that does not fit. Under Act 46, it does not do any good to partner with Norwich

because high school students do not have the same opportunities. Discussion followed. The Dresden compact would have to be opened up. In addition, would the Vermont Board of Education approve of a Vermont district sending students to a New Hampshire high school? Darrah reminded the Board that in the past, Secretary Rebecca Holcombe recommended that TTSD talk with Norwich. Acker speculated that if TTSD could designate a school in NH in addition to TA, Strafford might want to join. Darrah disagreed, stating that Strafford wants choice. Darrah wondered if Norwich has interest in discussing a side, not a merger into Dresden. Norwich already has their lawyers looking at this. There is no timeline because Norwich is not bound to comply with Act 46. TTSD can prove to the Board of Education all merger efforts put forth to date. Darrah will respond to Norwich that it may be an option to partner, but not to merge into Dresden. Norwich is a supervisory district that receives superintendent services through Dresden. Darrah has a meeting planned with Rebecca Holcombe. TTSD has to submit an Act 46 plan by mid-January. Darrah will ask Holcombe about expectations for the Act 46 plan.

DISCUSSION RE: BUS ROUTES – INITIAL FEEDBACK: Darrah received some parent feedback about bus #1's (East Thetford) erratic timing during the first week of school for TA. She has not heard anything else from those parents. Petrone pointed out that if certain kids are not riding the bus, the route is faster and the driver may need to pull over to stay on schedule. Discussion followed. Darrah has heard all sorts of opinions from TES and TA students not liking the combined route, but nothing that has resulted in any communication. Petrone has not received any feedback. The morning and afternoon routes are running in the same direction. Acker asked, what is the plan on the days that TA has a delayed start? There will be two bus runs, with TA paying for their own later bus run. Thompson will inquire of Butler about the timing of the delayed TA bus schedule. Bugg needs to communicate the schedule to parents. Petrone noted he needs to communicate with Bugg about the plan for delayed starts on snow days.

OTHER BUSINESS: Acker reported Ben Merrill sent her a draft contract for hiring him to provide TTSD's annual report. Acker will bring the draft to the next meeting, and in the meantime she will email it to Board members. Merrill suggested starting to build a photo bank now, especially using photos taken by students. Acker has been in touch with Bugg about the TA photography club participating. She will also reach out to Michele Hastings, who is an excellent photographer at TES, as well as Dan Grossman.

ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: (Acker/MacPhee) moved/seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 p.m. (unanimous approval).

FUTURE MEETINGS:

9/19/17	Thetford Town School District Meeting	6:30 p.m.
10/03/17	OESU Meeting	7:15 p.m.
10/03/17	Thetford Town School District Meeting	7:15 p.m.
10/17/17	Thetford Town School District Meeting	6:30 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Amy Bosco, Minutes Clerk

These minutes are not official until approved by the School Board.