

THETFORD TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
Tuesday, October 10, 2017
Thetford Elementary School

DRAFT MINUTES

Charlie Buttrey convened the meeting at 6:32 p.m. The following were present: Julie Acker, Charlie Buttrey (departed 6:57 p.m.), Shannon Darrah (arrived 6:44 p.m.), Scott MacPhee, School Board; Kevin Petrone, TES Principal; Melanie Elliott (OESU business manager and HR director)

PUBLIC PRESENT: None

AGENDA REVIEW: Agenda approved.

MINUTES REVIEW: MOTION: (MacPhee/Acker) moved/seconded to approve the minutes of the September 19, 2017 Board meeting as amended (unanimous approval).

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF ORDERS: MOTION: (Acker/MacPhee) moved/seconded to approve accounts payable orders # 6035, 5916, 6198, and 6167 (unanimous approval).

PUBLIC COMMENT/CORRESPONDENCE: The Board received correspondence from para-educator representatives, indicating their intent to negotiate a collective bargaining agreement. Buttrey acknowledged receipt and will respond in a timely manner. Buttrey volunteered to represent the Board and hopes that Downey will also volunteer. Health insurance is expected to be the biggest point of negotiation. The Board received highly complementary correspondence from Karen MacPhee regarding how Petrone handled a student matter.

FINANCIAL REPORT (Melanie Elliott): Elliott referred to the FY18 quarter 1 review handout. Quarter reviews are a snapshot. They do not look at revenue, since revenue will be a negative number until year end. Elliott directed the Board to look at expenditures, encumbered expenses and budgeted items. Direct instruction has the potential for \$90,000 in savings, but Elliott expects this to decrease. \$300,000 is budgeted for debt service; Elliott expects to break even by the third quarter. The quarter 2 review will include health insurance elections and will be more accurate.

HEALTH INSURANCE RECAPTURE: Elliott explained that health insurance recapture is what the State tells districts they should save on costs with the VEHI gold CDHP plan beginning January 1, 2018, as compared with health insurance expenses in fiscal year 2017. The recapture will be deducted from the State Education Fund payments to districts. The full difference will not be known until open enrollment ends on October 13 and all paperwork is processed. Thetford's possible recapture is \$48,464, although health insurance is fluid. One person changing plans can really affect the financials. Thetford is unique in that support staff (paras, kitchen, and office

staffs) is not moving to VEHI until potentially FY19 (pending negotiations). Elliott questioned, why should TTSD be responsible for the support staff recapture? Elliott will try to argue this with the State. Acker predicted budgeting for next year will be challenging.

TES GARDEN/SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT (Cat Buxton/Joette Hayashigawa): Buxton and Hayashigawa used a slideshow to summarize the growth of this program over past the ten years. Buxton has taken over 10,000 photos that show the work in each grade in the gardens. This is Buxton's first time presenting to the school board during these 10 years. Hayashigawa explained that when it became a federal mandate to get nutrition into school lunches, she began to think about a school garden. At the beginning, Buxton began to show up at school to volunteer. She has just started working at Cedar Circle Farm. Hayashigawa and Buxton have been working together ever since. For the first three years, CCF donated Buxton's time. Thank you to CCF! Buxton has been on her own for the last three years. Initially there were seven raised beds and only K-2 participated. Kindergarten focuses on coloring, studying and planting seeds. Kindergarten also plants the rainbow garden and the sensory garden. First grade studies soil and plants a 3 sisters garden (corn, beans and squash) and studies the history of this garden in the Native American culture. Second grade studies insects (parts and functions), especially pollinators. K-2 starts and cares for seeds after spring break with indoor grow lights. Third graders did research to decide which varieties of berries to plant. The number of beds increased when the cafeteria asked for more food. The school lunch beds were planted in accordance with what the cafeteria can actually use. Every year Hayashigawa writes grants to get Sheila Piper in the cafeteria a stipend to process the summer veggies for the school year. Piper keeps a list of the harvest. Theme gardens were installed in the courtyard to replace the former blank space there. It had been a hot green lawn. Next, the third grade berries were added in the courtyard (donated by E.C. Browns). The outdoor reading room was also added, which gave a lot of nice shade. (Hayashigawa's husband designed and built it with parent volunteers). There is also great bird activity out in the courtyard now. Spring planting is always the first week of June, with all grades outside to help. The gardens have grown to include 13 raised beds, cranberries, blueberries, raspberries, apple, peach and pear trees. There was a natural evolution to composting. The upper grades are using the compost and the gardens as a science lab. There is still a lot of potential. Buxton tries to help teachers tie their curricula to the gardens. Teachers are incorporating the gardens into project based learning. The children have learned to love labor, digging in the dirt and taking on real life problems. Buttrey suggested sharing this with a presentation at town meeting.

Last year second grade planted native pollinator plants near the wetland area close to Rt 113. The Black Eyed Susans were the only ones that made it through the July 1 flood. Summer school students also use the gardens and care for them. This year there are so many peaches and pears. Hayashigawa sees the children eating fruit at recess and at TASP. The K-2 Farmer's market takes place over five days afterschool. Not only do the children sell produce, but also bug magnets, pressed flower bookmarks, and popcorn that they grew. The kids do all the signage, math, and accounting. Third graders do a lot of cooking, using the cooking cart (paid for by a grant written by Hayashigawa). Fourth graders study compost up close – how does compost connect to climate

change, and they learn about new legislation. Fourth graders are also the tree stewards. They have used GPS mapping and with help from the tree warden, have analyzed the condition of each tree on the TES campus and are also developing a plan to care for the trees. Fifth grade does a lot of labor such as hanging garlic, selecting the largest heads for breeding. They harvest sweet potatoes. Fifth grade does instructional writing for how to grow potatoes, etc. There are many gardening and composting lessons learned at TES that Buxton shares with other schools. Sixth graders want to start selling TES compost. Buxton plans to have the compost analyzed first. Grades 4 – 6 share the composting duties. Sixth graders manage the compost by taking the temperature, tracking data, and squeezing for water content. Buxton puts all the data on a Google spread sheet. 6th grade measures water infiltration rates in soil and the effect of adding organic matter to soil to mediate water infiltration. They are studying where water collects on campus. Buxton got a small grant for sixth grade teachers to use observation rings to track this data year after year. Art also uses the gardens. TES bought their own cider press this year. Piper makes applesauce. Over time Buxton has developed trust with the teachers. Teachers are really into it now, and the kids are really engaged. Every year the school gets a little more in depth with the gardens. Buxton plans a spring pollinator garden in the front once the sidewalk project is complete. Perennial companion plants near the apple trees are also planned. Hayashigawa would like a medicinal garden. Ms. Bradley is planning a raised bed for herbs outside her classroom once the sidewalk project is complete. Hayashigawa feels the gardens and the food loop makes TES stand out when people visit. Petrone stated that many schools visit TES to learn. Cat holds seminars at TES. Educators come shadow her while she works with the kids, and Buxton showcases how teachers use the gardens. The school culture is why this works at TES. Acker thanked Hayashigawa and Buxton for all the grant writing success. Darrah asked Hayashigawa and Buxton to let Petrone know if there are any future expenses for the Board to consider as budget season approaches.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT (Kevin Petrone): Last Thursday was back to school night. There was a great turnout, with most classrooms at ~90% parent attendance. Petrone received positive feedback from parents who have just moved into TTSD. They were appreciative of the kids leading the evening and both parents free to attend. With supervision by school nurse, Joette Hayashigawa, children made quesadillas on the cooking cart. Teachers had their third responsive classroom training with Ramona McCullough to check in about how things are going, and teachers' comfort levels with implementation of the responsive classroom. One example of school wide adaptation of the responsive classroom is logical consequences, which are consequences that fit the "crime". What are the steps of logical consequences so it is predictable between classrooms? The second all school meeting will be run by Ms. Gray's 1-2 class. Each classroom will present their classroom rules, and will bring their posters listing these rules, with the goal of noticing similarities and developing "whole school rules" that apply to common spaces like hallways and lunchrooms. The strings program with Celene DuTemple from Upper Valley Music Center has 10 students signed up. Instruments are privately rented and scholarships are offered for rental fees. There is no band program this year. Petrone is still looking to fill a 4 hour /week position. Greg Melligner used to teach band at TES, and when he left about 3 years ago several teachers have come and gone. Petrone plans to keep the search open until mid-year.

The annual Hike for Hunger is October 27, and will kick off the food drive for the Thetford Food Shelf. Many 6th graders competed in the Woods Trail Run.

ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: (MacPhee/Acker) moved/seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 p.m. (unanimous approval).

FUTURE MEETINGS:

10/24/17 Thetford Town School District Meeting	6:30pm
11/07/17 OESU Meeting	6:00pm
11/07/17 Thetford Town School District Meeting (Bradford)	7:15pm
11/21/17 Thetford Town School District Meeting	6:30pm

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Amy Bosco, Minutes Clerk

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