

# THETFORD TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Theftord Town School District Board of Directors

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board@thetfordeschool.org

DATE: Tuesday, May 24, 2011

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: Thetford Elementary School Art Room

### APPROVED MINUTES

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#### **Approval of minutes, orders, public correspondence, public comment**

Elise Tillinghast convened the meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the art room without a quorum. The following were also present: Lisa Swett, Charlie Buttrey at 7:45 p.m., and Shannon Darrah at 7:50 p.m., School board; Keith Thompson, TES Principal; Don Johnson, OESU Superintendant

**Teachers Present:** Kevin Petrone

**Others Present:** Deb Powers, Michelle Longo, Cathee Daum Clement, Faith Alexandre, Wanda Vaughan

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from Tuesday, May 10, 2011 board meeting reviewed. **MOTION:** Buttrey/Darrah moved/seconded to approve minutes from the 5/10/11 board meeting (unanimous approval).

**Approval of Orders:** **MOTION:** Swett/Tillinghast moved/seconded to approve payable order # 2297 and payroll order # 2307 (unanimous approval).

#### **OESU Report: Don Johnson**

VT Dept of Education Grant Agreement (see attachment): it can include job funds; it is for eligible expenses for FY 11 or 12 expenses; It can include: identified salary early retirements; can utilize this money for a salary and take that money and use it for technology etc; it can be used to offset costs from 2011 and could help avoid cutting positions by using the money to put a position back in place; can be used to establish a new position.

OESU is advertising again for a business manager/administrator and will identify a few individuals to interview. John Gifford will sit in on those interviews to ask questions of those without VT school experience.

OESU continues to struggle with office space. The current space lease is finished June 30<sup>th</sup>. OESU is looking at other alternatives for the short run. They might need to use space at Oxbow High School

Sherry Hoyt is the new administrative assistant. Newly hired HR director, Katrina Meigs is starting in June for a few days of transition. Sandra Stanley the new special education director has started. Kathy Callahan is on vacation for the rest of the year.

Elise met with OSEU superintendant for assistance as regards financial issues.

### **TES Principal Report: Keith Thompson**

Fourth grade one year position is ready for hire.

Sixth grade teachers are meeting with 7<sup>th</sup> grade teachers to discuss math curriculum; looking at strengths and weaknesses of students transitioning; looking at Connected Math; will work with TA to strengthen the program

Jean Ward the science consultant was here to consult with teachers to decide on science notebooks for next year.

The foreign language advertisement closes out this week. There are six responses. One candidate is Russian. One candidate is certified. OESU can get emergency certification for this position if necessary. First committee meeting on hiring this position is Wednesday June 1<sup>st</sup> and interviews will commence the week of June 6<sup>th</sup>. One board member and one community member need to be on the committee. Shannon Darrah will be the board member on this committee. Community member advertisement is now on the list serve.

Friday is the in-service transition day. Looking at all students with special education involved.

Incoming kindergarten is 21 or 22 students and graduating 6<sup>th</sup> grade is 30.

PTO movie night is Thursday night. The movie is Gnomeo and Juliet

Keith and Torrelee have met to discuss common issues and curriculum.

Last day of school is June 16<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade graduation is at 10:30 on that day.

### **TA Report: Shannon Darrah**

Discussed NECAP scores.

Are the low scores caused by students not taking seriously or do we need curriculum changes

### **Policy Report:**

**Bus Discipline:** discussion ensued; page one under discipline. “... if the offense warrants disciplinary action.” Will revise and review again in June 2011.

**Food Service:** delete 3; 4 “. . . within two weeks of sending the letter.”  
Para 5 – leave out exclamation mark; Para 7, may pursue a small claims court procedure. Will post a revised version for the next meeting.

**Substitute Teachers:** Swett/Tillinghast moved/seconded to approve policy (unanimous approval)

**Student Drug and Alcohol:** Buttrey/Tillinghast moved/seconded to approve policy (unanimous approval)

**Transportation:** Tabled for future discussion

**Education Support System:** Tillinghast/Darrah moved/seconded to approve policy (unanimous approval)

**Discussion – Tuition Waiver Policy:** Buttrey reviewed a Supreme Court case regarding this issue. A student that is merely dissatisfied cannot obtain a tuition waiver and the Board has the final say. The question is, is it in the child’s best interests? The board needs more conversation at subsequent meetings. Are we talking about TA only? What do other schools do? St. J uses a voucher program.

A discussion ensued regarding the reasons for updating the tuition waiver policy; legislative directives and caps; criteria used to evaluate such requests; and should it apply to just TA or TES as well.

The Board chose to keep this item on the agenda for the next few meetings and will advertise these discussions to the community so as to collect viewpoints from a wide range of people. No timetable has been set on this issue but would like the updated policy to be adopted by the time school starts in the fall.

Update on options for financial management/fall budgeting & coordination with OESU

**TES Strategic Plan Draft (first look):** The formal draft will be ready for the June meeting. Tonight one piece of it was distributed. There are three goals and third goal is board related. The board will identify a limited number of high priority items doable in five years and list them in a way to determine if goals are reachable with measures. The board needs to keep it short identifying specific areas based on community forums. This is an excellent committee and Aimee Toth and Keith T. deserve a lot of credit for this project.

**Governance:** update on research, outreach on options, planning for Winhall trip

Buttrey is meeting with Sharon School Board on May 26<sup>th</sup> and Strafford school Board on June 13<sup>th</sup>. Hope we will have good news from all towns. There is not any speedy relationship with Lyme.

Winhall trip: Everyone is good to go in the morning to talk and tour. There are some handouts to give us re procedure. North Bennington is going private and the Winhall principal is consulting with them. He is talking with lots of area schools regarding keeping local control etc. The test scores have gone up. Our board is interested to pick his brain. He meets with boards for just a mileage fee.

**Other Business:**

Montshire Museum Science Outreach Initiative: We received an e-mail regarding this program. We should sit down and meet them. TES is one of its designated outreach schools. The board says let's talk with them. Kevin Petrone says that Rivendell School is involved with this program. A scientist came to his classroom. It was a good dialogue with the teacher and the museum. We will inquire as to best way to go forward.

**6<sup>th</sup> grade graduation on June 16<sup>th</sup>:** need to have board members there

**Tuition for out of town students:** Keith needs to be empowered to make this decision. He will be working on this i.e. \$10,000? We will save this discussion for later. It would be for a year from now for the currently interested student. Should we offer a tuition break for staff members or place it in their contract – discount or tuition waiver or benefit? There is nothing to prevent us from bargaining. We should be doing recruitment; Open Fields' tuition is \$5,500. Keith will talk with Lynn. Elise Tillinghast will do some research and look elementary school tuition rates. We will identify each year how many students we can take in.

**Motion:** Buttrey/Tillinghast moved/seconded to approve the tuition letter dated 5/23/11 advances in the amount of \$500,000 as in Keith Merrick's letter as regards payment of tuition for next year (unanimous approval).

**Adjournment:** MOTION: Tillinghast/Buttrey moved/seconded to adjourn (unanimous approval).

**Next Meeting June 14, 2011 at Thetford Elementary School 7:00 p.m.**

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED

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Lorrie Wilkes,  
Minutes Clerk

*These minutes were approved by the School Board on June 14, 2011*