

THETFORD TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
Tuesday, December 11, 2018
Thetford Elementary School

APPROVED MINUTES

Shannon Darrah convened the meeting at 6:35 p.m. The following were present: Julie Acker, Charlie Buttrey, Shannon Darrah, Kristen Downey, School Board; Colin McLaughlin, Interim TES Principal; Emilie Knisley, OESU Superintendent

PUBLIC PRESENT: Stuart Rogers, Cynthia O'Dell

AGENDA REVIEW: Agenda approved with amendments.

MINUTES REVIEW: MOTION: (Buttrey/Acker) moved/seconded to approve the minutes of the November 27, 2018, Board meeting (unanimous approval).

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF ORDERS: MOTION: (Acker/Buttrey) moved/seconded to approve accounts payable order # 6817, and payroll warrants # 6796 and 6791 (unanimous approval).

PUBLIC COMMENT/CORRESPONDENCE: The Board received a letter from Marty Bouchard regarding her intention to retire at end of the school year. She is requesting the retirement incentive package. The Board expressed their sincere gratitude for Bouchard's 37 years of service.

UPDATE ON FACILITIES: Boiler #1 has been running for four straight weeks. It will cost \$11,825 to repair boiler #2. A new boiler costs \$30,000. A second boiler is needed for back up and runs with the primary boiler when it is very cold. The contract with ARC for repairs has been signed and the job will be scheduled. It is a three day process with three people working all day to rebuild 2,400 pounds of boiler. Funding will come out of the capital fund pending funding from an expected special education surplus. Darrah encouraged Rogers to submit a bill to TTSD for his time spent on TES facilities. Rogers stated he has done so. Rogers is participating in an upcoming onsite meeting with the involved contractors regarding the septic repairs. A test sample was collected from the leach field outflow, and the tanks were checked at the school. The last tank did not have enough inflow to test. There is a daily monitor of how much water is being used in the school. If this is consistent with the system design, then Rogers is confident repairs can wait until May. A follow up letter has been sent to the state. A charging station is not part of the trailhead and parking lot projects. Adding a charging station will cost an additional ~\$4,100. The state recommended keeping a charging station out of this project to avoid delays, as well as to keep funding separate. The charging station will wait and grant funding may be pursued later.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT (Colin McLaughlin): The Senior luncheon was held today. Students served food and greeted Seniors. This luncheon gives TES great exposure to the community and fosters wonderful connections between the children and Seniors. Bouchard has been the energy behind this event. School nurse, Joette Hayashigawa, has submitted her letter of intent to retire. McLaughlin met with her to discuss all of her roles outside of her school nurse duties, such as the playground upkeep, gardens, and compost. The Board expressed their deep thanks. She and McLaughlin discussed how to thoughtfully maintain those things that are part TES's identity. A commitment from the school is needed for continuation. This could be a good time to institutionalize these responsibilities with a stipend, not just expect a current staff member to pick these projects up on the side. Cat Buxton plays a role in the gardens. Perhaps Cat's role could be expanded in addition to finding a school-based person to connect the classrooms and Cat. At the staff meeting on Tuesday there was conversation about expanding multi-age education next year. The faculty is generally supportive of expanding multi-age classrooms to make three sections of grades 5/6. McLaughlin stated that in order to do it really well, there needs to be professional development and training. He is looking into these opportunities with experienced multi-age educators. Multi-age classes will continue to address pockets of small class sizes moving through the school. Discussion followed. It is too early to know about kindergarten enrollment for next year. In addition, the availability of substitutes is a day to day concern. TTSD needs to offer competitive pay. TES is at the bottom of the range for daily pay. The daily rate will be \$83 as of January 1. The SU sets the rate for the entire SU. \$100 is more on par with the region. McLaughlin met with Ben Merrill about the annual report and provided an interview. McLaughlin has been working on his TES report. There has been a lot of positive parent energy around continuing the school play. The school had decided there would not be a school play this year. A group of parents including Robin Junker-Boyce, Angie Spickard, Michelle Joyce and Sara Ecker have been meeting with McLaughlin to plan a play. The parents wrote a letter to the Byrne Foundation and received a \$3,000 donation to hire a director. Jonathan Verge of Lebanon High School was hired as director. It is nice to see active parents with a productive mindset. The title of the musical is under discussion. It will be performed in early May.

DISCUSS ORDER APPROVAL PROCESS (Julie Acker): The process will change after the New Year. Acker met with TES office manager, Cynthia O'Dell, and town treasurer, Tracy Borst, and discovered that the SU process and O'Dell's processes are very efficient. O'Dell's coordination with Borst is also very efficient. The most inefficient part of the process is the TTSD Board. Acker proposed a process for review and approval of invoices and payments. Discussion followed. Acker will summarize the new process in writing. O'Dell stated there are a few invoices from McLaughlin that are due to personal charges for TES expenses because TES still does not have a credit card. Discussion followed regarding options. Knisley will check on it again. Acker added it is important to ensure previous employees are no longer signatories on TTSD accounts, and confirm that Borst has authorization. O'Dell will follow up with Borst.

SECOND DRAFT OF BUDGET FY20 – POSSIBLE LEA POSITION DISCUSSION (Keith Merrick): The budget looks a little better. There are no equalized pupil or CLA figures

yet. This budget includes the two retiring senior staff members. The state base homestead tax rate has not been set. It is difficult to report and project special education revenue and cost. ELL is also included. Merrick added 3% plus one step to teacher salaries. Health insurance costs increased by 11%. Dental insurance is flat. Starting in 2021 health insurance will be a statewide benefit. Merrick followed the contract for the paras. Darrah reported that an LEA position would be somewhat reimbursable for the first year. But the following year, when special education funding changes, it would not be reimbursable. Discussion followed regarding adding an LEA position. Darrah has not discussed this with TA. McLaughlin has to follow Thetford middle and high school students to other schools. Buttrey asked if an LEA position could be combined with another position. McLaughlin reminded the Board of Hayashigawa's non-nursing responsibilities. Or, an assistant principal could be hired as LEA and to handle behavior issues. Knisley added since special education is being centralized to the SU, an LEA position would be hired at the SU level and put into the OESU budget and dispersed across the SU. Currently, Thetford is paying for a portion of Oxbow's LEA. An assistant principal position would be TTSD's cost. Waits River has an LEA that follows their students to their receiving school. The OESU budget has not been drafted for the upcoming year. Discussion followed.

Darrah revisited the idea of hiring an assistant principal. Downey stated a thorough assessment of need and investigation of staffing at comparable area schools would be required. McLaughlin indicated his support for hiring an LEA and someone to manage behavioral issues. A combination of the two positions might be close to full time. McLaughlin stated he is often responding in a reactionary role to discipline issues, which makes it difficult for him to work on long term planning or professional development. Knisley stated there is a grid organized by SU that summarizes administrative roles. The VSA also publishes that information. Downey reminded the Board that TES has one of the lowest student to adult ratios in the State. Knisley added that mandates regarding ratios may be coming from the State. Buttrey added the budget and the effect on taxes will also influence the ability to hire additional staff. Downey asked if an OESU employee working at TES would be counted in TES's student to adult ratio. Knisley thinks that would fall under the SU. Acker asked why the line item for library and technology increased by over 20%? The librarian position was reduced to 0.8. Discussion followed. Merrick will investigate. Knisley noticed that band and strings is not in the budget. This was an oversight and Merrick will correct it.

SCHOOL REPORT PLANNING: Acker reported the school report is on schedule. She gave designer, Ben Merrill, last year's tally for the number of reports to be printed. Last year too many were printed (1,050). Acker plans to mail 980 to residents and extra are needed for distribution around town and at Town meeting. Downey suggested distributing the report to real estate agents. Michele Hastings planned to collect new photos from this year. The budget and the warning will be the last pieces to add into the completed school report. Merrill will be in touch with TA. TA's tuition figure should be out in January. In the past, the budget is a "proposed" budget because it is not approved until September. Acker will follow up with TA regarding how best to represent TA's proposed budget. Rogers stated Town meeting will be Saturday, March 2 at TA. The school will go first.

UPDATE ON OBTAINING FEEDBACK ON PRINCIPAL PERFORMANCE: Postponed.

DISCUSS MEETING SCHEDULE: January 8 is the next scheduled meeting. The CLA will be in then. The following meeting will be January 22. Meetings may have to be added.

OPEN BID FOR FACILITIES SERVICES AT THETFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:
Postponed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (STUDENT MATTER and TEACHER NEGOTIATIONS:
MOTION: (Buttrey/Acker) moved/seconded to go into Executive Session at 8:14 p.m. to discuss a student matter and teacher negotiations, the premature dissemination of which may place the Board at a substantial disadvantage. Out of executive session at 8:36 p.m. No action taken.

ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: (Buttrey/Acker) moved/seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 p.m. (unanimous approval).

FUTURE MEETINGS:

01/08/19	Thetford Town School District Meeting	6:30 p.m.
01/22/19	Thetford Town School District Meeting	6:30 p.m.

Minutes Prepared By:
Amy Bosco, Minutes Clerk

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,
Julie Acker, Board Clerk