

THETFORD TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
Tuesday, September 25, 2018
Thetford Elementary School

DRAFT MINUTES

Shannon Darrah convened the meeting at 7:03 p.m. The following were present: Julie Acker, Shannon Darrah, Scott MacPhee, School Board; Colin McLaughlin, Interim TES Principal; Bruce Williams, Assistant OESU Superintendent

PUBLIC PRESENT: Brent Mellen, Kati Sloop, Nathan Maxwell, Scott Hesser, Stuart Rogers, Krystal McGovern

AGENDA REVIEW: Agenda approved.

MINUTES REVIEW: MOTION: (Acker/MacPhee) moved/seconded to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2018 Board meeting as amended (unanimous approval).

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF ORDERS: MOTION: (Acker /MacPhee) moved/seconded to approve accounts payable order # 6677 and payroll warrant # 6661 (unanimous approval).

PUBLIC COMMENT/CORRESPONDENCE: None

TES BIKE TRAIL DISCUSSION (Brent Mellen): Mellen has been working with a trail designer who also designed the Huntley Meadows track. They have decided to design the track to avoid right of way legalities. The track will stay within TES property. The existing pump track will be upgraded with new clay and sod will be scraped to form the track with clay added for bumps. Mellen asked permission to trim brush in a couple of spots on TES property. The Board agreed, specifying the trees must be on TES property. Mellen distributed a GPS map of the track. Removable wood features will be installed, such as a narrow bridge and a seesaw. The total loop is about 0.25 mile. Discussion followed with Recreation Director Maxwell regarding the distance from the soccer field boundaries. Maxwell approved the track's path. The school board is pleased and supportive of the plan. Scott Hesser, Chair of TASP, stated that TASP will give \$5,000 to the project. Over the years TASP has been accumulating a reserve for a project that would benefit the school and TASP. TASP is grateful that TES allows use of the building. The Ompompanoosuc Community Trust will be the fiscal agent. Kati Sloop plans to attend their meeting next month. TASP will make their financial transaction with OTC and OTC can distribute money as needed. The estimated cost is \$3,200- \$3,300. The balance from TASP will be used for upkeep and repair. It was clarified that TTSD will not have maintenance responsibilities. Mellen stated maintenance will probably be the responsibility of the parents involved in the project. Maxwell added that if the recreation department can use the track, with town approval they may be able to contribute funds. Darrah assured the group that collectively all involved parties will make sure the track will be maintained. Sloop stated she visited the Putney Central School. Their bike trail

is awesome and is always used. It is plowed in the winter to allow for winter riding. Their principal offered to come to TES to talk to the Board. There will be a bike shed. Assistant Superintendent Williams reported that Bradford Elementary is also installing a bike trail. They have had trouble with bike maintenance because of lack of storage. Mellen asked about access for two contractors: a trail designer with a small excavator working on the pump track, and clay material hauled in by a TES parent. McLaughlin advised there is a culvert near the pump track. Mellen asked about insurance requirements for work on school grounds. Discussion followed. Williams stated Bradford is checking with their insurance company for installation as well as for general use. Darrah deferred to McLaughlin to arrange for appropriate timing of the work. Mellen is considering the weekend of October 13 and 14. McLaughlin will determine where to put the discarded sod and invited future questions. The Board expressed gratitude to the parents involved and to TASP for leading this project to completion. Acker will take photos for the school report.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT (Colin McLaughlin): Grades 3-6 attended the Tunbridge Fair, thanks to funding by the PTO. September 19 was picture day. On September 21 TES held a Peace Day assembly. Peace Day is an OESU initiative to recognize this UN sanctioned holiday with schools showing a commitment to peace. Four panelists were asked to comment on, “what does peace mean to you?” Panelists included Reverend Robin Junker-Boyce; VFW representative Fred Adams; Psychologist Ray Chin; and Thetford Police Chief Michael Evans. The kids will respond to the same prompt and McLaughlin hopes to make a movie of the responses to share with the community and OESU. At the assembly the PTO presented their annual fundraiser. The assembly ended with a school sing along of This Little Light of Mine. Regina Bradley and Joette Hayashigawa played musical accompaniments. Williams reported he attended Peace Day at Blue Mountain and he is looking forward to the OESU schools sharing their event experiences.

UPDATE ON FACILITIES: Rogers and McLaughlin met earlier in the week. Rogers can order the chlorination pump. The Board agreed and requested that Rogers invoice the school. Williams reported he has an updated agreement with Advanced On Site Inspection. They are preparing an estimate to replace the septic pumps to bring the system up to current technology. It is a 4-hour repair process and will not require the school to close. A state certified engineer will be involved in the permitting. Williams and the Board thanked Rogers for all his help and expertise. Rogers stated the current pumps are 20 years old and “they’ve done their job.” TES will greatly benefit from the upgrade, and a pump failure would cost far more. An estimate is expected soon. McLaughlin has reviewed the VSBIT report with Rogers. The majority of compliance recommendations are small things that do not require projects or much money, such as minor updates, a few electrical items, and mitigating fall hazards. There is no update on the detergent in the storm drain.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Darrah and McLaughlin have been discussing financial items between meetings. Darrah wanted these requests to go to the Board. Williams gave a quick update on the finances and presented an unaudited year end (June 30) report. The true audit is ongoing now.

TTSD ended the year with ~\$274,000 of accumulated deficit. There was a larger end of year deficit the previous year, of \$299,811. Even though there is a \$25,000 surplus, the budget is \$60,000 short. Williams is trying to get precise numbers on special education. TTSD significantly over budgeted for special education and under projected the revenue. There will be a large special education surplus. OESU will adjust TTSD's special education assessment, which will have a positive impact on the deficit. Discussion followed.

McLaughlin informed the Board he would like to hire a full time special educator for intensive needs in kindergarten this year and in anticipation of similar needs in future years. McLaughlin posted a position for another para-educator in the upper wing because service plans need more minutes. A Spanish speaker would be ideal. McLaughlin also posted a position for a 0.5 math interventionist once Sharpless goes on extended medical leave in the near future. The music teacher will run the band program. The strings program is usually staffed by the Upper Valley Music Center and costs ~\$5,000. McLaughlin stated 15 students have expressed interest in strings and there have already been two meetings. However, McLaughlin does not see strings in the budget. It is usually a line item. Discussion followed that this must have been an accidental oversight. Williams will compare former and current budgets. TES is planning to offer band and strings during the school day to attract more students, instead of after school. New radios are needed for school safety. Chief Evans got a quote for long-range radios that can communicate with fire, police and TA, as well as out to the wetlands and Mimi's trail. TES currently has one upgraded radio that came with the new phone system. The remaining radios are unreliable and often cannot communicate between the office and the playground. Cost = \$2,800 for 10 radios. Williams stated that Bradford just bought radios for \$200 apiece, but he was not sure about the capabilities. Rogers stated the town has the same radios as Evans' quote and ideally TES radios should be able to interface with the town radios. There is an annual \$7,500 grant for safety improvements for the entire SU. The balance is unknown. The Board agreed to fund the radios. McLaughlin requested 13 new iPads for grades 3 and 4. \$4,800 including a service plan. There have never been one to one iPads in third grade. This need has come up because of multi-age grade 3 and 4 classrooms. MacPhee suggested investigating grants. Discussion followed. The Board agreed to try to do without new iPads. Williams stated that soon there will be more information about finances related to over budgeting for special education.

TA REPORT (Darrah): At the last meeting the TA Board reviewed Head of School search logistics. There was a preview of the draft strategic plan, which has a big focus on the academic mission of the school. The strategic plan will hopefully inform the Head of School search. The Board did some policy work. The TA/TTSD agreement expires in 2019. TA has decided to streamline their agreements and make them all similar. Darrah stated that Strafford and Lyme can be similar, but TTSDs agreement ought to differ. Partnership and designation are different. Lyme and Strafford have two-year agreements. Darrah encouraged TTSD to start thinking about TTSD's interests in the partnership agreement.

OTHER BUSINESS - October meeting schedule: Downey and Darrah have conflicts on October 9. If Buttrey can attend, there can be a meeting. Acker reported that she and Downey

met with Merrill regarding the annual report. The annual report will highlight the ways TES delivers special education and present the new sensory room. Merrill will forward a timeline for publishing, printing and mailing. Acker was given permission by Darrah to sign Merrill's proposal. Acker will introduce Merrill and McLaughlin by email soon.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (Personnel): MOTION: (Acker/MacPhee) moved/seconded to go into Executive Session at 8:35 p.m. for the purposes of considering an employee contract. Out of executive session at 8:37 p.m. No action taken.

ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: (Acker/MacPhee) moved/seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:38 p.m. (unanimous approval).

FUTURE MEETINGS:

10/02/18	OESU Meeting	6:00 p.m.
10/09/18	Thetford Town School District Meeting	6:30 p.m.
10/23/18	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.