

THETFORD TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
Tuesday, November 13, 2018
Thetford Elementary School

DRAFT MINUTES

Shannon Darrah convened the meeting at 6:40 p.m. The following were present: Julie Acker, Charlie Buttrey, Shannon Darrah, Kristen Downey, School Board; Colin McLaughlin, Interim TES Principal; OESU Assistant Superintendent, Bruce Williams

PUBLIC PRESENT: Stuart Rogers, Kate Hill (arrived 7:13)

AGENDA REVIEW: Agenda approved.

MINUTES REVIEW: MOTION: (Buttrey/Downey) moved/seconded to approve the minutes of the October 25, 2018 Board meeting (unanimous approval).

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF ORDERS: MOTION: (Acker/Buttrey) moved/seconded to approve accounts payable order # 6778 and payroll warrant # 6763 (unanimous approval).

PUBLIC COMMENT/CORRESPONDENCE: None

PLANS FOR TRAILHEAD PROJECT/PARKING LOT: Rogers reviewed a rendering of parking lot plans with the Board. Discussion followed regarding location for an electric vehicle charging station. This is optional and could be funded with a State grant. The recommendation is to use the VTrans standard detail for installation at park and rides. Paving the entire parking lot is the most thorough option instead of grinding away the existing lines and repainting. When the job goes out to bid, it will be specified that although funding is for two projects from two separate grants, the projects are being done simultaneously this summer, which will make it more enticing to a contractor. The capacity of the proposed parking lot is ~78 lined parking spots. Discussion followed regarding any summer programs at TES that could conflict with the project, such as soccer camp and summer school. McLaughlin will approach TA to inquire about using fields and classrooms this summer.

TA REPORT: The TA Board met last Sunday. They voted to approve TA's new strategic plan which will be updated as needed and will be available online. They discussed the Head of School search and how that search will be informed by the strategic plan. There are many good candidates. The search committee hopes to have finalists by the end of January. Finalists will be brought to campus for visits and interviews.

UPDATE ON FACILITIES: McLaughlin reported that the urinal in the lower wing bathroom is out of order. While the plumber snaked the pipe which goes into the concrete wall, the pipe collapsed due to rust. This plumbing is original to the building (1962). At the time of

construction the galvanized pipe was laid directly into the concrete and it has eventually deteriorated. Current procedure is to sleeve the pipe to avoid contact with the concrete. The initial solution is to chip out the wall and the floor. The rest of the plumbing in that bathroom is questionable, especially the second urinal. Bathroom repair is not pressing, but it needs attention eventually. Chipping out concrete is probably a summer job. Downey suggested consideration of one gender neutral bathroom. Earlier this year TES had been notified that ammonia and detergent were detected in water in front of the school. The Agency of Natural Resources returned on Friday to perform dye testing to identify the origin of the chemicals. The results indicated the dye originated from a custodial closet (located in the lower wing). The dye was traced under Rt. 113 and into the wetlands. The present day cafeteria used to also serve as the gym. It took 86 buckets to mop the floor. The custodial closet used to house a sink and it was a lot of work to hoist and empty the buckets into the sink (which appropriately drained into the septic system). To make this job easier, the sink was removed and a floor drain was added. This floor drain was plumbed into a nearby drain for roof run off which is not connected to the septic. This is how the chemicals entered the stream. This drain was in use for 25 years. TES has stopped using that drain and a sign will be posted at the wetlands informing the public of a chemical contamination. The original sink drain is capped in the wall and a new sink can be installed. The oil supply to the furnace has been problematic. This became evident last year and recently re-emerged as an issue with the hot water heater problems caused by air and water in the lines. Water and air is getting into the fuel supply. It is a complicated system and difficult to trouble shoot. ARC was at TES all day today because there was no heat. Air is no longer getting into the lines. D&M Petroleum did the line work last summer and did more work on the oil tank today. They discovered microbial growth in the bottom of the tank due to mixing of water and oil. The sensor that runs on a float to assess the amount of water in the tank was stuck in place and falsely indicated there was no water. The bottom of the tank was pumped out, and hopefully the water issue is resolved because it does not appear water is returning. D&M returned to treat the microbial growth. Oil is now running directly to the furnaces. If the furnace is not on at 5:45am tomorrow, school will be canceled. It was 45 degrees in one classroom today. In addition, there are two furnaces, one is the lead (#1) and the other is the back up (#2). #1 is running but in the recent fuel line evaluation, #2 failed to turn on. #1 was rebuilt in 2016. #2 was not rebuilt and has never been serviced. It was discovered there was a flue leak in #2. It needs to be rebuilt. ARC's estimate to rebuild #2 is \$10,000. #2 is now locked because it is not serviceable. If #2 is rebuilt its life is estimated at 20 years. A new furnace would cost \$30,000. The Board agreed it needs to be repaired. There is a back up generator because TES is an emergency shelter. It is powered with propane. The exercise cycle runs weekly on Mondays. It ran for 5-6 hours today but it did not turn on automatically because the switch was in the wrong setting. It will be serviced next month. The generator is operated at the town's expense. The new hot water heater has been installed and is great. A couple of roof shingles need to be re-glued and a couple of other roof spots need to be addressed. The flat roof is in good shape. One nearby tree needs trimming which will be done at the time of the parking lot project. Custodians, Scott and Barb, were trained by Swish and a Bradford Elementary custodian on how to operate the floor washer for the gym.

Williams reported that VTrans called last week. They had been in touch with the former OESU administration regarding work that needs to be done on a bank on Rt. 113 across from the girl scout camp. VTrans has a plan which includes a temporary deed to a small part of TTSD land so that VTrans assumes insurance responsibility. OESU signed off on that. Trees will be cut soon because bats do not nest there now, and next summer the work will be done under the highway to make a retaining wall at the bank.

Buttrey reviewed the Agreement for Engineering Services provided by Rogers for the septic work. **MOTION:** (Buttrey/Downey) moved/seconded to authorize the Chair to sign the contract with Horizons Engineering (unanimous approval). Rogers reported that all three septic tanks, as well as the grease trap for the kitchen, were pumped last week. John Harrington and his father, of Harrington Engineering did the original septic design. They were acquired by Horizons Engineering last spring. John did the drawings and he will return to do the engineering. The group is hoping to meet onsite next week with work ideally completed before winter. Rogers reported the large chimney in the back of the school marks the site of the original boiler before the addition. Up until last week it was used to vent the old hot water heater, but with the new hot water heater it is no longer needed. It needs a cap to prevent snow and animals. The flue has deteriorated due to condensation.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT (Colin McLaughlin): TES held its annual Veterans Day assembly earlier this week. It was a nice showing of gratitude. The assembly was tied to the food drive and gratitude for the sacrifices others make for us. Veterans who are parents and from the American Legion attended. Each veteran gave a description of their time in the service. Bag pipers played and children sang. The veterans were very appreciative. TES has selected a Spanish teacher who has verbally accepted the position and will start after Thanksgiving. She is not certified and OESU will facilitate emergency certification. Three candidates taught sample lessons to upper and lower end classes. All three were strong candidates which made the decision difficult. Special educator, Kristen Hansen, is on unexpected medical leave for an undetermined amount of time. As of November 5, Joe Minicello is working with students for 0.5 of the special educator job to keep IEP goals progressing. Jennifer Clogston has assumed the IEP legal end of the special educator job and is not working directly with students. Minicello shuffled prearranged substitute teaching jobs to accommodate TES. McLaughlin has received positive feedback from a parent of a student with an IEP regarding how the transition has been handled and praised the staff selection.

QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REPORT: Darrah reported on behalf of the Superintendent, that HRA expenses appear to be overspent, but the overall spending is in line with expected expenses. Computers and technology are overspent. Principal is overspent due to professional development. \$18,000 of repairs and maintenance are over budget. Tuition payments to TA are looking under budget now. Some special education revenue has been received. The year end 2018 deficit is \$274,272. In FY19 it is budgeted to recover \$200,000 assuming other costs stay within budget. \$70,000 will be made up in FY20. Special education spending is slightly under budget despite extra costs this Fall. More will be known after Q2.

DISCUSS BUDGET TIMELINE AND ANNUAL REPORT PREPARATION: The first draft of the FY20 budget is expected at the next meeting and the second draft by December 11. TA's tuition will be voted on at their January meeting. Discussion followed regarding timing for signing the warning. Darrah is running for re-election and will need a petition. February 20 is the deadline for mailing town reports. Pre-town school meeting will be February 26. Positive feedback was received from townspeople regarding the school meeting going first. Due to possible basketball quarter finals hosted at TA on March 2, it may be best to have town meeting at TES. Darrah will discuss this with TA.

PLANS FOR PRINCIPAL SEARCH – POSSIBLE EXECUTIVE SESSION: Downey stated TES has an interim principal who is giving it his all. As with any interim, it is important to take a close look at this person who is doing the job now. Downey recommended a process to gather the relevant information from all stakeholders about how McLaughlin is doing so far, in order to make the best decision for a permanent principal. Downey suggested another community forum to meet McLaughlin, with a rating scale and open ended questions. Downey is aware there could be a conflict in receiving feedback from teachers because McLaughlin is the teachers' evaluator. Perhaps there could be an anonymous process for questions from teachers. OESU is also evaluating McLaughlin. McLaughlin stated he does want to apply for a permanent position. Williams commented that The Ray School had a process similar to what Downey is suggesting. Kate Hill stated she is not sure how to get opinions during a community meeting without putting McLaughlin in the hot seat. Downey agreed and reiterated striving to mitigate conflicts of interest. Discussion followed. McLaughlin is on track to receive his principal's certification by the end of the year. McLaughlin stated the information from a forum would be helpful for him too, as it is challenging to know how people are receiving him. There is no search committee now and it is unclear if a committee is needed. Downey will be in charge of the process. Darrah stated keeping the process transparent is important.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (CONTRACTS): MOTION: (Buttrey/Downey) moved/seconded to go into Executive Session at 8:19 p.m. to discuss contracts with specific personnel. Out of executive session at 8:36 p.m. No action taken.

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

FUTURE MEETINGS:

11/27/18 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.