

**SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**Thursday, April 13, 2023**  
**Final Minutes**

**Present:** Jen Taylor, Bethany Rose, Stephen Sullivan, Julie Martel, members; Dan Hayes, Chair; Jackie Mendonsa, Principal; Caitlin Sheridan, Director of Finance & Operations; Jennifer Culkeen, Superintendent; Public Guests

**A. Meeting Called to Order by Dan at 7:14 P.M.**

**B. Public Hearings:**

**C. Review of Agenda and Perpetual Calendar:**

Dan noted that the Town Meeting will be in June this year. He invited SSC to send any edits on the statement to the newsletter.

**D. Warrants and Gifts:**

**Accounts Payable:**

<b>3020</b>	<b>4/4/2023</b>	<b>\$28,974.20</b>
<b>3021</b>	<b>4/18/2023</b>	<b>\$32,510.82</b>

**Payroll:**

<b>320</b>	<b>4/3/2023</b>	<b>\$86,737.53</b>
<b>321</b>	<b>4/17/2023</b>	<b>\$86,963.61</b>

**Gifts: wah-wahn**

**Grants:** Jennifer noted SSC received an additional \$30 in one allocation, an additional \$27 allocation in Title I, and an additional \$192 in IDEA allocation, and an additional \$10 allocation to our Early Childhood Education grant.

**BETHANY MOVED TO ACCEPT THE AMENDED GRANTS AS PRESENTED. JULIE SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL AYE.**

**E. Approval of Minutes from March 16, 2023:**

**JULIE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 16, 2023. BETHANY SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL AYE.**

**F. Unfinished Business / Updates:**

1. Capital Projects/Building Process - Discussion (Roof, Boilers, Kitchen Floor, Telephone):

Fin Com member Becky Torres discussed recent approvals from the Capital Planning Committee. SSC also discussed outstanding issues in the building, including electrical problems in the kitchen that need to be addressed and flooring that needs to be replaced. SSC discussed additional infrastructure problems that need addressing, and the options for how we could pay for these. Jackie says we've spent \$100K to \$170K each year for several years out of Choice funds, so we're trying to be really cautious when we come to the Town for funds. Dan suggested SSC try to put all items we need to pay for in the FY24-25 budget, so the Town knows what the real expenses are. It's not a good idea to continue to use Choice funds for things that the Town should be supporting. SSC and Fin Com members discussed the details of how capital expenses are handled via the Town rather than through the school budget (as capital expenditures are handled for other Town departments). Dan argued for this practice to continue, as using Choice funds for capital expenditures is not a sustainable practice. Jackie noted that the building is old and a lot of things are going at the same time, and COVID has complicated and delayed the process of replacing them.

Bethany said she was not comfortable with allocating additional funds from Choice for the HVAC system (leaving only \$7K). Jackie agreed in principle, but we have 20 Choice students, so we'll be getting \$100K back in those funds over the course of the next year. Caitlin noted that the purpose of Choice funds is to educate the additional students we get; we need to be careful about how those funds are used. Becky invited SSC to consider getting the camera expenses on a precash allocation warrant for Town Meeting. Jackie said that's worth considering. Debbie also has all the information that Town officials might want to see about the camera plans.

Dan thanked Becky for coming tonight.

**JULIE MOVED TO APPROVE \$23,620 FROM SCHOOL CHOICE FUNDS FOR FOR CHANGE ORDERS TO THE HVAC SYSTEM AS PRESENTED BY BECKY TORRES. BETHANY SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL AYE.**

## 2. School Safety Features - Continue Discussion:

Security Cameras: Jackie said that we've needed some sort of safety security cameras in and around the building for a number of years. COVID delayed that, but now it's the top priority for the Safety Committee. Jackie praised Debbie Lee ("a wonder") for her scrupulous and thorough process in selecting technology to meet multiple criteria (budget, functionality, etc.). We won't publicly show the maps of where cameras will be installed, but we'll talk in general about the planned installation.

Debbie explained that we have a secure, cloud-based camera selection, and we were able to speak with a facilities director at another school with the same camera system, who praised our choice. We feel very comfortable with what we've chosen. We'll have an on-site walkthrough by installers to see how everything will work. The RFP is out to bid now, and we have a rough MSRP for licensing after installation of \$2800 per year.

Chief Kristin Burgess, Shutesbury PD, discussed her concerns about the lack of cameras at SES. We're on the same page regarding this issue, but she was shocked there was no system in place when she arrived in town. We might not want to think about the possibility that our children could face this kind of danger, but it's our duty as a community to take care of our children in every way we can. Cameras can deter theft, vandalism, and mischief, as well as provide some evidentiary purpose for us. And cameras are pretty much everywhere now where we don't expect privacy, but where we *do* expect privacy (like in the classroom),

we're not looking to install cameras or monitor school spaces. In the case that someone does enter the school intending harm, we want to make sure we have a clear id and understand exactly how they entered the building. It would also be very helpful to be able to stop whatever's happening by looking at the camera system to understand what's going on. So these cameras are not a monitoring system, but they will be monitored whenever they need to be. It's also important to be able to look at footage from specific dates for specific reasons. She hopes this alleviates any concerns about privacy or monitoring that the community might have. Jackie underscored that there will be no cameras in classrooms, private meeting spaces, and bathrooms.

Dan noted he's heard about a school whose color scheme provides subtle direction for where children and staff should go in the event of an intruder, and he offered to put Jackie in touch with someone who knows more about that. Debbie noted that the vendors are all vetted for security systems. After speaking with Catilin and Jennifer, Jackie recommends we use School Choice funds for this project in order to get it done quickly (instead of going through the Town for the money). Jennifer said she's comfortable with this decision, since Choice funds are meant to be used for one-time rather than operational expenses.

Jennifer suggested SSC take a ballpark vote on approving Choice funds, then firming that number up by June. Chief Kristin stressed that when schools are ill prepared in their safety, they see a lot of liability coming their way. We're far behind on this issue. We might have to amend next year's budget for the licensing, then work it into future budgets.

SSC thanked Debbie Lee for her excellent work and Chief Kristin for supporting our students, school, and community.

**JULIE MOVED TO APPROVE UP TO \$60,000 FROM SCHOOL CHOICE FUNDS FOR THE INSTALLATION OF SECURITY CAMERAS AND ALL INCIDENTAL COSTS. BETHANY SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL AYE.**

**G. New Business / Discussion Items:**

1. School of Choice - Vote:

**BETHANY MOVED TO IDENTIFY SES AS A SCHOOL OF CHOICE FOR AY23-24. JULIE SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL AYE.**

**H. Reports:**

1. Superintendent's Report:

Jennifer reported on the Student Opportunity Act report that was recently submitted to DESE on our progress in closing inequitable outcome gaps. We made four commitments focusing on student subgroups like students with high needs and those with disabilities. We've been providing our educators with PD on these issues and looking at increasing our organization and attention in Tiers II and III (more specialized/individualized instruction). We'll be continuing to focus on our four commitments; we welcome feedback and input as we craft our report over the next three years.

2. Director of Finance and Operations:

Caitlin reported that SES is locked in at a rate of \$2.72/gal for 11K gallons of heating fuel for next winter. We were not able to lock in a rate last year. So far this year, we've purchased 6K gallons of fuel, covered by our budget and Rural Aid. We feel like we're in a much better place in terms of budget for fuel next year. She's going through an MCPPO certification class in May, after which she'll be able to become a licensed procurement agent and better navigate the procurement and capital planning processes.

### 3. Principal's Report:

Jackie reported there have been a lot of families in the building, which has been awesome (including a great Soup and Games night). The Spaghetti Dinner and Silent Auction are coming up soon, so please support them. Kids are going on field trips, including to the symphony, the Eric Carle Museum, and a lake. MCAS is happening now, and while we take it seriously, we try not to make it scary. We have a way to make our test-takers feel special and handle it without getting stressed. She's found funds for the Field Trip line, but there are two things she wants to ask for: \$1500 for bringing Nature on Wheels to SES next fall (for 4th through 6th Graders) and, since it's been a few years since we've provided a t-shirt to every student in the school, we want to provide Field Day t-shirts for staff and students, so she's requesting funds for those as well (it's a terrific morale booster).

**JULIE MOVED TO APPROVE \$4,000 FROM SCHOOL CHOICE FUNDS FOR NATURE ON WHEELS AND FIELD DAY SHIRTS FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF. BETHANY SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL AYE.**

### 4. Amherst-Pelham Representative's Report:

Steve reported that two unions still don't have contracts. One union (with 11 people in it) did sign. We had a wonderful presentation from the Food Service Director; breakfast and lunch usage is way up since they started offering free meals. Superintendent Morris confirmed that everyone who attends SES is automatically entering the Amherst Regional system. The fields have not been discussed in months, but Steve still supports turf.

### 5. Union #28 Report, including Budget & Personnel: No report.

### 6. CES Report:

CES took a tour of CES buildings and discussed rates for the virtual Academies. Dan has been working to elevate the presence of collaboratives at the state level and raise awareness about them with our legislators. He's also going to an art show in Boston put on by students in the judicial system. It's always a remarkable event.

## I. Policy Review:

Second Reading, First Vote on:

JIC - Student Discipline

AC - Non Discrimination including Harassment and Retaliation

GBA - Equal Employment Opportunity

GCF - Professional Staff Hiring  
JB - Equal Education Opportunities  
JFBB - School Choice

Final Vote on:

DGA - Authorized Signatures  
DH - Bonded Employees and Officers  
DI - Fiscal Accounting and Reporting  
DIE - Audits  
DJ - Purchasing  
DJE - Procurement Requirements  
DK - Payment Procedures

**BETHANY MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY JIC - STUDENT DISCIPLINE. STEVE SECONDED.  
VOICE VOTES ALL AYE.**

**BETHANY MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY AC - NON DISCRIMINATION INCLUDING  
HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION. STEVE SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL AYE.**

**BETHANY MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY GBA - EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY. STEVE  
SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL AYE.**

**BETHANY MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY GCF - PROFESSIONAL STAFF HIRING. STEVE  
SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL AYE.**

**BETHANY MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY JB - EQUAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES. STEVE  
SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL AYE.**

**BETHANY MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY JFBB - SCHOOL CHOICE. STEVE SECONDED. VOICE  
VOTES ALL AYE.**

**BETHANY MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY DGA - AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES. STEVE SECONDED.  
VOICE VOTES ALL AYE.**

**BETHANY MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY DH - BONDED EMPLOYEES AND OFFICERS. STEVE  
SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL AYE.**

**BETHANY MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY DI - FISCAL ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING. STEVE  
SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL AYE.**

**BETHANY MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY DIE - AUDITS. STEVE SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL  
AYE.**

**BETHANY MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY DJ - PURCHASING. STEVE SECONDED. VOICE VOTES  
ALL AYE.**

**BETHANY MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY DJE - PROCUREMENT REQUIREMENTS. STEVE SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL AYE.**

**BETHANY MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY DK - PAYMENT PROCEDURES. STEVE SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL AYE.**

**J. Future Business:**

Jennifer thanked Dan and Steve for all their long years of excellent service to SES and their community. Jackie underlined this: there are a lot of less functional SCs, and both members have been invaluable in supporting the school through all our challenges. Dan praised Jennifer for all her wonderful expertise and support as well.

- Shutesbury Policy Committee – Thursday, June 15, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.
- Shutesbury School Committee – Thursday, June 15, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.
- Union #28 Joint Supervisory – May 15, 2023
- Budget and Personnel Committee – TBD
- Future agenda items –

**K. Adjournment at 8:50**