

SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, April 17, 2025
FINAL Minutes

Present: Nate Longcope, Leah Jack, Members; Jeremy Mailloux, Chair; Caitlin Sheridan, Director of Finance & Operations; Anne Magill, Principal; Shannon White-Cleveland, Superintendent; Public Guests.

A. Meeting Called to Order by Jeremy at 7:04 P.M.

B. Public Hearings: None.

C. Review of Agenda and Perpetual Calendar:

Jeremy noted the Town Meeting has been moved. Susie Mosher, Fin Com, added that Fin Com will be doing an explainer for an All Board meeting on May 13 about the overall budget. Jeremy asked whether SSC needed to do something more with the warrant for our part of the budget. Susie said the PR needs to get out there and there needs to be copies of the SES budget available at Town Meeting. The Fin Com is recommending the budget SSC has passed, but of course it'll still be up to the Town to adopt.

D. Warrants and Gifts:

Accounts Payable

3020	4/1/2025	\$32,405.30
3021	4/15/2025	\$16,605.13

Payroll

320	4/1/2025	\$91,738.31
321	4/15/2025	\$91,378.50

Gifts: None.

Grants: None.

E. Approval of Minutes from March 20, 2025:

NATE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 20, 2025. LEAH SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

F. Unfinished Business / Updates:

1. Capital Projects/Building Process –Update:

Nate went to the Capital Projects/Building Committee meeting: we have resurfacing the parking lots on the agenda and need to find some consultants for the project next. There's a problem with people pulling up

onto the grass when dropping off for Pre-K. We also discussed replacing the tractor (20+ years old) and we have a quote from John Deere for a 2025R that should fit into the shed at a cost of ~\$35K. We might be able to throw that into the parking lot request, since it's the vehicle that would maintain the resurfaced lots. Jeremy offered to attend a Building Committee meeting if that would be helpful.

Caitlin added that if we got funding through the Town, we might be able to get the lots done through FRCOG. We would need a design to create an invitation to bid, but FRCOG is very helpful with processes like these.

G. New Business / Discussion Items:

1. School of Choice – Vote:

Impact of School Choice - Transitioning to ARMS: Shannon explained that every SC has to vote annually for their schools to participate in the School Choice program. SES has been a School of Choice for some time now, as are all the other U#28 schools (EES will start next year). One thing to be aware of is that it's a long-standing practice in SES and LES that Choice students matriculate to Amherst, and Choice students at SRS matriculate to Mahar, regardless of where they live. That practice is not actually allowed by DESE, and we need to stop engaging in it. The only thing that's allowed is Choice siblings being allowed to attend a school as well. When Choice students move to 7th Grade, they'll have to apply to their School of Choice again.

Anne said in our current 6th Grade, 9 of 17 are Choice students. We have Choice students going to various schools (charter schools and local feeder schools). Numbers-wise, we want to keep some seats open in each Grade for new students moving to town. We could have up to 5 Kindergarten students at this point, a couple of students in 2nd Grade, and possibly 2 students in 4th Grade. Shannon noted that SSC has to do the Choice vote today to make the state deadline, but we don't vote on specific seat counts, which are left to the discretion of the Principal. Anne recommended the vote; it's nice having students from all these different towns, fostering more diverse connections locally. Leah asked if Anne will have more accurate seat numbers at the next meeting: Yes!

LEAH MOVED TO APPROVE SES AS A SCHOOL OF CHOICE FOR AY25-26. NATE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

2. 2025-2026 Academic Calendar – Vote:

Jeremy asked what dates, if any, we should be aware of in the calendar. Shannon said we've tried to bring the schools into alignment on some things like conferences, since it allows us to have flexibility with Union-wide PD.

Leah asked to confirm that it covers the 185 days requirement: Shannon said it covers the required 180 days plus 5 days for possible weather closures.

LEAH MOVED TO APPROVE THE 2025-2026 ACADEMIC CALENDAR AS PRESENTED. NATE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

3. School Committee meeting date for June – Discussion and Possible Vote:

The current date is scheduled for June 19, 2025. SSC decided June 12 would be better.

NATE MOVED TO RESCHEDULE THE JUNE SSC MEETING TO JUNE 12. LEAH SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

H. Reports:

1. Superintendent's Report:

Shannon reported that SES staff and leadership participated in Curriculum Day recently with training on trauma-informed student support as well as role-specific PD. The day ended with a screening of *Counted Out*, a powerful documentary on the importance and challenges of math skills. Special thanks to Lindsay Rodriguez, our Director of Curriculum and Instruction. Shannon recently attended the Women's Educational Leadership Network; the agenda covered diversity in leadership as well as how to support disenfranchised students and families.

MASC is offering a required course for SC members, *Charting the Course* at Greenfield HS on June 7, 8-4. This covers many aspects of SC leadership. EES completed a successful Principal search: Beth Gannon, who has been serving as Interim since December, has been hired.

On the legislative stage, the Joint Committee on Ways and Means held a FY26 Budget Hearing at UMass Amherst and virtually, focused on education and local aid. Secretary Tutwiler is not reviewing the Chapter 70 funding formula, but said he would follow the Legislature's lead. Some budget items on the docket include fully funding SPED Out-of-District transportation costs, funding universal free school meals, and fully supporting the Student Opportunity Act. The proposed Chapter 70 increase of 6.17% would not reach most of the Chapter 70 schools.

Susie opined that the best way for us to see more money right now is through Rural Aid. Caitlin said Rural Aid is great for us; we have unique schools with challenges that arise out of our small size and scarcity of opportunities bigger, urban schools have, and Rural Aid has helped us address these challenges. She's worried we might lose REAP funding. Shannon said a study has shown rural school need is something like \$60 million, but only \$16 million is currently budgeted there. Susie criticized state legislators who don't seem to be willing to plug this hole in our budgets.

2. Director of Finance and Operations:

Caitlin said she'll have copies of the FY26 Final Adopted budget at the Annual Town Meeting on May 31 at 9 a.m. at SES. She reviewed grant expenditures to date: we spent ~\$16K out of REAP toward a professional teacher salary, used up the last of our ESSER funding for supplies, contracted services, and instructional staff, spent funds out of Title I, IIA, and IV on supplies and contracted services, used IDEA and IDEA Early Childhood monies on paraeducator salaries, supplies, and support staff, and used SPED Program Improvement Grant monies for more supplies and contracted services.

We're carefully tracking expenditures and encumbrances as we approach the end of the fiscal year. We're currently over budget by about \$45K, in legal counsel fees, SPED transportation, fuel, FY25-FY27 bargaining agreement, a triannual audit, and substitute salaries. SSC discussed how to manage this jointly with the Fin Com going forward.

3. Principal's Report:

Anne said MCAS testing is underway. The process is a little different this year, but the students are working their tails off, and the staff support is terrific. The students have tons of perseverance. There's a science test coming up that's not part of the yearly assessment. We still have Math to finish up. In other news, students tapped a maple tree, collected sap, and went through the whole syruping process and enjoyed maple-flavored foods. We had an author visit from a local author and a visit from Missoula Theater Group, who taught students about theater techniques and skills. Then the whole School Assembly participated in a Greek theater event, a super fun time. The students were engaged the whole time. Upper-grade students participated in the Fish and Wildlife stocking of the Quabbin Reservoir and talked about their feelings that the fish would be caught; these young conservationists had very in-depth conversations about the whole ecological picture in the Reservoir. Friends of the Quabbin offered to provide transportation. Students also took a field trip to UMass (they loved the food) and a planetarium is coming to visit us and teach us about the night sky. Students have organized and run two Talent Shows; it was magical seeing our students support each other going through this, and we appreciate the community members who were able to attend. Jeremy added the 4th Grade pulled off an ad hoc field trip to Greenfield to see a concert.

4. Amherst-Pelham Representative's Report: None.

5. Joint Supervisory Committee Report, including Budget & Personnel: None.

- Next Meeting Date: Monday, May 19, 2025

6. CES Report: None.

I. Policy Review:

First Read On:

ADC – Tobacco Products on School Premises Prohibited
BBA – School Committee Powers and Duties
BBBC – School Committee Member Resignation
BDA – School Committee Organizational Meeting

Leah had some questions about BDA (we don't seem to follow this process) and will follow up with Jeremy offline. She also had a question about BBA: we don't weigh in on all these positions. Shannon and the Policy Committee will make changes to BBA for the next round of review.

Second Read, First Vote On:

JKAA – Physical Restraint of Students
JLCB – Immunization of Students
KCD – Public Gifts to the Schools

Second Read and Final Vote on Deletion:

KCDA – Public Gifts to the School District

LEAH MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY JKAA – PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS. NATE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

LEAH MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY JLCB – IMMUNIZATION OF STUDENTS. NATE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

LEAH MOVED TO APPROVE POLICY KCD – PUBLIC GIFTS TO THE SCHOOLS. NATE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

LEAH MOVED TO DELETE KCDA – PUBLIC GIFTS TO THE SCHOOL DISTRICT. NATE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

J. Future Business:

- Shutesbury Policy Committee – Thursday, May 15, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.
- Shutesbury School Committee – Thursday, May 15, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.
- Budget & Personnel Committee – TBD
- Union #28 Joint Supervisory – Monday, May 19, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.
- Shutesbury Town Meeting – May 31, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.
- Future agenda items: Discussion about meeting with Fin Com about reserve funds and reimbursing for antifreeze and coil.

K. Adjournment at 8:17

LEAH MOVED TO ADJOURN. NATE SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL AYE.