

SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, January 15, 2026
FINAL Minutes

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

A. Meeting Called to Order by Jeremy at 7:02 P.M.

B. Public Hearings:

Jeremy invited the public to comment: no comments.

C. Review of Agenda and Perpetual Calendar:

Jeremy noted we met with the Fin Com this week. Not sure about the All Boards meeting. Susie Mosher noted the Fin Com wants to hold a fiscal summit once we have more information from the state level.

D. Warrants and Gifts:

○ **Accounts Payable**

3015	1/6/2026	\$26,053.19
3016	1/20/2026	\$1,103.13

○ **Payroll**

314	1/5/2026	\$91,848.83
315	1/19/2026	\$89,313.51

Gifts: None.

Grants: None.

E. Approval of Minutes from December 18, 2025:

NATE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 18, 2025. KATRINA SECONDED. PASSED.

F. Unfinished Business / Updates:

a. Capital Projects/Building Process: Nate said he presented the mechanics of the gym (about \$3K) to the Building Committee and put in a request for the paving project and the snowblowers. He got some feedback and submitted revised forms. The DPW hit the basketball hoop and damaged it, so perhaps we should be moving back to the tractor rather than the snowblowers. The damage is pretty bad: Anne said it's severed (the vehicle was backed into it full throttle and it snapped in half). They're expensive to replace.

Shannon said if it's a one-time accident, we might still benefit from DPW plowing, but if their equipment isn't appropriate for the area, we should think of something else. Susie asked about order of plowing in town: Anne said if we have a two-hour delay due to a storm, they usually come early and plow us out first. They sand and salt too. There are a lot of variables that go into it. She doesn't think this will be a regular problem. Their equipment clears the lot faster than anything we could buy and use. She doesn't think this will happen again. The snowblowers are contingent on the DPW being able to clean the lot in the main (we'd use snowblowers for the sidewalks and edges. Anna asked if Town insurance is covering the hoop: Yes, it should. There are mailboxes, etc., that are probably damaged by accident on occasion.

Nate continued: He met with Berkshire Design Group to discuss the landscaping and walkway project. We're looking at an ADA grant to help pay for this; everything would be ADA compliant then. Some reps from ECAC did an audit and walkthrough, and Nate got some clarity about how the heating system works. We have two oil-burning boilers that run a ventilation system and heat our water. The ventilation system sucks in fresh air, heats it, and sends it through the building, then sucks out stale air. When school isn't in session, there are radiators that keep the rooms sufficiently warm.

Jeremy thanked Nate for his continuing work on this.

b. SIP - Discussion and Vote: Shannon explained she missed cueing SSC to vote on the SIP, which must be approved by the SC each year. Leah said she recalled SSC intending to vote on it during this meeting, so Shannon didn't miss anything. Leah appreciated the goals presented, but wanted more specifics about how we're going to measure what we're supposed to achieve. Where are the metrics? Anne said we use the SABERS evaluation for social-emotional improvement (focused on feeling safe and welcome at school). She's open to suggestions for how we evaluate those results (of course, we want everyone to feel safe here). We look at the office referrals we have, how we could improve teaching skills students don't have, etc. Shannon said some of the metrics we'd look at at the Central Office level include attendance rates (especially chronic absenteeism) and referrals. Are there certain times of day we're seeing an uptick in not-so-positive interactions? Sometimes we can mitigate these with scheduling or supervisory solutions. Leah asked if there targets we're trying to hit or percentages of improvement, etc. Shannon said that's great feedback, and we're always striving for 100% no matter the metric. We could add tracking more metrics like incidents. Anne said we don't have a huge pool of students, hence not a huge set of data on any of this. We'll be looking at the data we do have as a team soon.

Anna commented that in the SIP, there's a lot of things we could use as evidence of completion, but there's no specific measure for completion. For example, for Goal 1, it states "screening results" for evidence of completion. What results are you looking for, like 50%? Anne said that's to identify the percentage of students that fall into each category in each grade level. What's the evidence of completion, knowing the percentage in each grade? Yes. It would be helpful if the evidence was written in a more specific or concrete way. To take another example, what does "lesson plans" mean in this context? Anne: We adjust lesson plans to reflect what we learn from screenings. Anna: So please make more explicit how these results are defined and how they tie into each goal. Anne: Sure. Shannon thanked Leah and Anna for their feedback. It's more typical for these very specific goals to be listed at the individual grade level, but we can compile those metrics and make a more general school-wide listing. Every school district is taking a different look at their operations and goals, and SIPs are written in many different ways to reflect those goals. We're a high-performing school, which means we have more autonomy at the state level. If you'd

like more specifics about how we measure each goal, that's fine. We can add that, and SSC can do a formal vote in Feb. Shannon went on: We do use metrics and rating systems we apply when we do our walkthroughs. Jeremy clarified: Does Anna want a clearer connection between the type of metric and the goal? Yes. Katrina added that she'd like to see the metrics collected in the SIP where they make sense, and she's fine with not adding metrics where they don't.

LEAH MOVED TO APPROVE THE AY26-27 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN AS PRESENTED. KATRINA SECONDED. WITHDRAWN.

ANNA MOVED TO TABLE THE AY26-27 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN AS PRESENTED UNTIL NEXT MEETING. LEAH SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

G. New Business / Discussion Items:

a. Additional Warrant Signer - discussion and vote: Jeremy explained we need an additional warrant signer due to scheduling issues. He's willing to do it.

ANNA MOVED TO APPOINT JEREMY A BACKUP WARRANT SIGNER. NATE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

H. Reports:

a. Superintendent's Report:

Shannon reported that members of SSC and building and Union leadership met with the Fin Com on Jan 13 to discuss our budgetary needs. It was a very productive meeting where we were able to offer our perspective on our needs. She and Lindsay Rodriguez did a walkthrough with consultants from TNTIP under the aegis of the PRISM grants to examine how to improve literacy education. SES uses a different curriculum and was not able to be part of the grant consortium, but DESE has been very generous in allowing SES to participate in the Union-wide process nonetheless.

The U#28 SEPAC group met yesterday at LES to discuss progress reports and IEP goal setting. All U#28 families are welcome at SEPAC events, which focus on topics related to special education support.

JSC met Jan 12 and passed the U#28 budget for FY26-27. Caitlin presented a 411 regarding how school budget works, specifically how our complex Union budget works; JSC received the presentation well and Caitlin did great work on it, as always.

On the legislative front, Shannon submitted testimony to DEEC advocating for continued support of the Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) grant program, sharing the impact it has on families in our small, rural communities. She shared her testimony with SSC.

b. Director of Finance and Operations:

i. Expenditure Report: Caitlin reviewed the Expenditure Report and items that are encumbered already. Some can't be encumbered or need to be encumbered manually as we go since we can't predict what we'll be spending in a given line. Right now, we're looking at \$155K to spend on unexpected expenses for the rest of the year, which is a bit better outlook than recently.

ii. FY27 Shutesbury Elementary School Draft Budget - Discussion and Possible Vote on Adoption of Preliminary Budget: Caitlin shared the FY27 Draft Budget presented to the Fin Com. The overall increase is 6.32%, more than typical. We've had increases in SPED costs and are looking to decrease reliance on School Choice funds, since we don't know what's coming in until later this month. Rural Aid decreased, and we have less coming in from grants and Circuit Breaker. Shutesbury's allocation to U#28 over the 5-year rolling average has increased due to happily increased enrollment at SES.

Caitlin invited questions about the budget. Nate asked what the percentage increase would be without Out-of-District placement: only 2.39%. She and Shannon have worked hard to trim the budget without impacting salaries. We know the Towns are all in financial hardship right now, so we've tried to minimize our impact on the Town. Nate commended all that hard work by Caitlin and Shannon. Anna added that at the regional level, all four Towns are in tight situations. Shutesbury's allocation to the region is decreasing; it shouldn't increase more than 2.5% at most. That would be devastating for the region. Leverett is looking to limit their allocation to 2.5% as well. There's almost no chance Shutesbury would be asked to go as high as 4%. That's the good news. Susie commented that the Fin Com understand SSC's budgetary responsibility, and we need to keep pushing for restoration of Rural Aid this year and full funding for next year. She's working on a postcard campaign to the Governor, who has the chance to be a real leader here. The regional budget and Town budget are both getting screwed up because of the health insurance increases. Nate seconded Susie's comments. We met with a rep from Rep. Aaron Saunders to push for what can be done *now* in terms of restoring Rural Aid. Everyone should write their rep.

Leah asked when we're holding public hearing on the budget: Susie said the Fin Com sends out updates as they work on the budget. Caitlin said SSC would have a public hearing in Feb (if the initial vote on the budget happens tonight). We'd have a final adoption vote after that.

ANNA MOVED TO ADOPT THE DRAFT FY27 BUDGET AS PRESENTED. KATRINA SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

c. Principal's Report:

Anne reported we're off to a great start this year, with steady improvements in literacy and mathematics. We're learning a lot in our walkthroughs and continue to strengthen targeted intervention work to create an inclusive, safe, and respectful school environment. We're excited to hold the Golden Ball given to us by the state for outstanding attendance, which motivates some students even more. We'd like to thank Layla, our K teacher, for working with our PTO setting up the "Chain Reactions & Creative Contraptions" building workshop for students next Friday, Jan 16 with Jay Mankita. The Enrichment Clubs are being developed now; so far, they include Chess Club, Crochet, Drama, Pickle Ball and Kick Boxing Clubs. These are led by staff, who share their passion for the things they love. Anna said students shouldn't be pushing themselves to come in a little sick. Anne said absolutely not; we're making that clear to them. Susie asked if the school is tracking absences due to illness. Yes: We meet with the Nurse and Psychologist regularly to

discuss student situations and adjust our practices. We teach students good hygiene to reduce illness, and we've seen a huge decrease in illness as a result.

d. Amherst-Pelham Representative's Report:

Anna reported that if the regional budget increases enough that Amherst's allocation goes up 3%, that would put other Towns' at 5 or even 7%. It seems we can't get the Towns to increase over that. We need to expect close to a \$2.6 million reduction from level services, which is equivalent to 20 teachers. That's devastating, and she doesn't know how that might happen. Anything we can do to get other Towns to chip in more would help. Shutesbury's increase is going to be relatively small in any scenario. The High School Principal announced he's not returning next year, and the Director of Student Services left already. There are a lot of changes going on. There's a mixed reaction to fixing the Middle School roof, since there are other capital projects that, if done, would reduce annual operating costs. Anna thinks repairing the roof is necessary to prevent additional costs. Amherst doesn't want to be the only contributor to fixing the roof, and they asked the other Towns to contribute. According to the Regional Agreement, Shutesbury's portion would be about \$111K. Leverett doesn't even want to pass this on to their Fin Com, and Pelham is reluctant to do it too. It's possible that if all three Towns say no, Amherst might do something else instead like fix sidewalks. Susie commented that Shutesbury residents are reacting to leaps in property tax bills, but the regional budget has been cut for years. We're still in early stages of wrestling with our budget, but she doesn't think we can find \$111K to contribute to the roof. Jeremy commented that if you're going to replace a roof, it makes sense to do the whole roof at once, not just 75% of it as proposed by MSBA. Anna said MSBA has been moving the roof age threshold for replacement back a year for years so it hasn't qualified for funding. So we have these problems that have built up. Jeremy said MSBA should be looking at function rather than age.

e. Joint Supervisory Committee Report, including Budget & Personnel:

Nate reported that Shannon brought to JSC a request to increase the daily substitute rates for both teachers and paras by \$5 (now \$125 and \$105). This will have a minimal impact on our budget and bring up the rates a bit in comparison to surrounding towns. Katrina added that we got more context on the Hampshire Trust updates that impact U#28 employees. When we look at other insurance groups, the increases seem comparable.

f. CES Report:

Leah reported there was an off-cycle meeting recently. CES is looking to install a new Executive Director and had three finalist interviews last night, and we've made an offer to one. The Chair and Vice Chair will be negotiating a contract. The next meeting is Jan 28. No alternates are accepted at CES meetings, so Anna doesn't need to cover for Leah. Jeremy said he was shocked there are districts who never send reps to CES.

I. Policy Review:

First Read for Deletion:

IHAX - Early Childhood Education

IE - Organization of Instruction
IHAX - Early Childhood Education

First Read On: (Going back to the Policy Subcommittee)

IHBHE - Remote Learning
IJL - Library Materials Section and Adoption
IGB - Support Services Programs
IHAM-R- Health Education

Second Read, First Vote On:

IB - Academic Freedom
IC/ICA - School Year/School Calendar
ID - School Day

Final Vote On:

KA - School-Community Relations Goals
ECAB - Access to Buildings and Grounds
JJE – Student Fundraising Activities
KBE – Relations with Parent /Booster Organizations

Nate asked for e

ANNA MOVED TO APPROVE POLICIES IB - ACADEMIC FREEDOM, IC/ICA - SCHOOL YEAR/SCHOOL CALENDAR, AND ID - SCHOOL DAY. KATRINA SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

ANNA MOVED TO APPROVE POLICIES KA - SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS GOALS, ECAB - ACCESS TO BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS, JJE – STUDENT FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES, KBE – RELATIONS WITH PARENT /BOOSTER ORGANIZATIONS. KATRINA SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

J. Future Business:

- Shutesbury Policy Committee – Thursday, February 12, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.
- Shutesbury School Committee – Thursday, February 12, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.
- Budget & Personnel Committee – TBA
- Union #28 Joint Supervisory – Monday, March 16, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.
- Future agenda items: Leah noted the next CES meeting is Jan 28.

K. Adjournment at 8:35:

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