

SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, May 21, 2026
Final Minutes

Present: Leah Jack, Anna Heard, Katrina Catalano, Megan Lennon, Members; Leah Jack, 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. Welcome New Members:

Nate welcomed Megan Lennon! Thank you for joining us.

a. Reorganization of the Committee - Discussion and Vote:

Nate invited nominations for the committee positions. SSC discussed each position as it arose.

ANNA NOMINATED LEAH AS CHAIR. NATE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

ANNA NOMINATED NATE AS VICE CHAIR. KATRINA SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

KATRINA NOMINATED HERSELF AND NATE NOMINATED HIMSELF FOR U#28 REPRESENTATIVES, AND LEAH NOMINATED HERSELF. NATE AND ANNA SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

LEAH NOMINATED NATE FOR U#28 BUDGET & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE. KATRINA SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

LEAH NOMINATED ANNA FOR AMHERST-PELHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE. KATRINA SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

KATRINA NOMINATED NATE AS CAPITAL PLANNING COMMITTEE LIAISON. ANNA SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

LEAH NOMINATED HERSELF AND KATRINA NOMINATED HERSELF FOR POLICY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES. ANNA SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

MEGAN NOMINATED HERSELF AS WARRANT SIGNER. NATE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

LEAH MOVED TO NOMINATE KATRINA AS COLLECTIVE FOR EDUCATIONAL SERVICES REPRESENTATIVE. ANNA SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

LEAH NOMINATED HERSELF AND MEGAN AS NEGOTIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES. ANNA SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

LEAH NOMINATED HERSELF AS BACKUP WARRANT SIGNER. ANNA SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

C. Public Comment: None.

D. Review of Agenda and Perpetual Calendar - Review and Discussion:

Leah reviewed the agenda. Shannon noted that the identification of School Choice seats was taken care of at the last meeting and won't be necessary tonight. Leah discussed the perpetual calendar.

E. Warrants and Gifts:

○ **Accounts Payable**

3024	5/12/2026	\$4,822.04
3025	5/26/2026	\$56,487.76

○ **Payroll**

322	4/27/2026	\$97,790.96
323	5/11/2026	\$88,889.01

Gifts: None.

Grants: None.

F. Approval of Minutes from April 16, 2026:

ANNA MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF APRIL 16, 2026. KATRINA SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

G. Unfinished Business / Updates:

a. Capital Projects/Building Process: Nate reported that we got all our warrants approved at Town Meeting, which is a big deal. The survey for the parking lot is being organized now. We got the snowblowers as well as the gym divider approved, thanks to support from Anne and the Fin Com members who spoke up for it. We've got a quote for a patching and fixing of the sidewalk, although it's high so we need to do three bids for it. We'll have to dig in on those numbers. The Building Committee communicated that they're taking on the CTC automation system that will monitor all our equipment (boiler, HVAC, etc.). Anne added they're looking into the solar project as well (which involved some serious drilling). Lots of things going on right now. If we're really able to get Town administration to take this seriously and look at all the moving parts together, we could make great progress. The survey and design are the first steps.

Anna reported that she was there for site visits from two outfits, one of which (Train) can do the entire design and is precleared already (and is an HVAC manufacturer as well). They have to do some background work to determine the size of the needed system. It does seem like most of the forced air system can accommodate the old system. There's a possibility of recouping some percentage of total project cost with

tax credits, which is another incentive to do everything all together and not piecemeal. She doesn't have a preference between the two companies, both of which seemed fully capable. Fin Com member Susie Mosher asked for more information about grants coming up that could support this work. SSC discussed next steps for these projects; getting the survey done will pave the way for any grant proposals. He and Anne will be meeting with Hayley at 9 a.m. on June 10 to explain the whole landscape of the projects. Anne emphasized that we need to get the whole picture since there are so many moving parts. SSC members are invited to the meeting as well. Shannon said she or Caitlin should be there as well to be helpful to Anne.

H. New Business / Discussion Items:

- a. Identification of School Choice Seats: No discussion (item dealt with previously).

- b. Special Education Reserve Fund - Discussion and Vote: Caitlin explained that Massachusetts has developed a SPED reserve fund where regional school districts could have a reserve fund held at the Town (up to 2% of the operating budget, or around \$55K for us) that could be very helpful to us when we have an Out-of-District placement we have to pay for. We'd have to get this approved at a special Town Meeting this fall, then we could start putting money into it. We'd have to go through a process to make use of the funds for an unexpected, big expense related to SPED. Everything that we normally end the year with goes back to the Town, but this reserve fund wouldn't. We'd budget for a small amount to transfer into the fund and go from there. Nate asked if this is a wise choice when we have to ask for money from the Town for various things. Is this the time to be putting \$16K a year into the fund? Susie said there may be some Rural Aid coming at the end of the year, or other kinds of funds. Some of those could be used. Shannon said an unanticipated OOD is a significant hit on a budget; transportation alone in another district is \$55K. We do get some money back through Circuit Breaker later on, but in the meantime we need to make sure the students get the services they need. It's a fiscally responsible thing to build up this reserve fund in anticipation of those unexpected costs.

ANNA MOVED TO ACCEPT THE PROVISIONS OF CHAPTER 40, SECTION 13E OF THE MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS TO ESTABLISH A SPECIAL EDUCATION RESERVE FUND. NATE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

I. Reports:

- a. Superintendent's Report:

Shannon extended her sincere thanks to the voters of Shutesbury to support our school budget. We deeply appreciate the community's commitment to invest in the students of Shutesbury. She recently met with SEE SAW and a larger body of SES staff to discuss a range of topics, challenges in curriculum development, succes, and professional development. The meetings were student focused, collaborative, and a great opportunity for Shannon to hear more about their passions.

Director of Curriculum & Instruction Lindsay Rodriguez is leading a cross-district team of educators across U#28 to revise our report cards with a focus on making them ADA compliant and ensuring vertical alignment across grade levels and within standards-based reporting.

There will be no SEPAC meeting in May, but Director of Student Support Amy Langdon will partner with school principals to attend upcoming PTO meetings.

On May 15, 2026, she joined area superintendents from Franklin and Hampshire County in meeting with the new Secretary of Education Stephen Zrike. This was sponsored by CES and was a great opportunity to give feedback to Secretary Zrike.

Massachusetts is experiencing some shifts in education policy, reflecting more emphasis on academic outcomes, student well-being, and equity, while increasing local responsibility for implementation. The state legislature is engaged in literacy reform mandates centered around the implementation of curriculum aligned with the Science of Reading. There are also updated regulations in Special Education in relation to restraint, time-out, and student safety practices.

The budget is being debated at the Senate now, and there are a number of amendments that could have a significant impact on our schools, especially small rural ones. Part of the problem is a lack of timeliness in Rural Aid decisions, leaving small communities to scramble to adjust when there's a sudden cut. We need to continue to advocate for these amendments. Nate noted that if Massachusetts became its own country, we'd have the sixth largest economy in the world, so we have the money to fund education here.

Shannon said small schools often have to share because individual schools don't always have the means to fund anything. SES benefitted from this this year since we participated in the PRISM grant PD even though we didn't receive that grant (we don't have the reading curriculum it was focused on). Sometimes we have to bundle the resources we have, and it was good for Shannon to hear from SES educators about their experiences. We need to look at what PD we offer so that teachers can get what they need for continuing education. Anna asked why the rest of U#28 chose the other reading curriculum? The decisions were made independently, though the state rates curricula according to standards alignment. SES stuck with the curriculum they're comfortable with, and Shannon fully supports the SES staff decision. The other schools applied as a consortium to get the grant (none were able to apply on their own since they didn't have enough children).

Nate asked Shannon to speak further about her meeting with SES staff; it was an informal conversation in the library. They gave her a lot of things to think about; everybody needs feedback. One of our themes this year was "everybody gets feedback." At some schools, teacher evals aren't always done. Shannon was upfront that she needs feedback, Anne needs feedback, everybody does.

b. Director of Finance and Operations:

Caitlin reported that she'll have a more complete budget overview at the next meeting. We'll also talk about budget transfers then.

- i. Expenditure Report: Caitlin said our budget is looking very good for this year. We can come in without any of the stresses of last year's unexpected expenses.

Nate thanked Caitlin for her help at Town Meeting; she thanked Nate for speaking up there as well on behalf of the school.

c. Principal's Report:

Anne invited Shannon to speak about her visit to SES: the Strings Concert, which was amazing. The kids were so excited and attentive. Anne reported the band students will have their first concert coming up in a week or so. They've learned how to read music and are quite good. It was great having our 4th Grade students learning about civics, voting, and their rights be able to give a statement at Town Meeting. The field trips we've had this year have been just incredible. The whole school except for Pre-K was able to go to the Quabbin this year thanks to a generous donation by John Zebb. Anne discussed other Field Trips various grades were able to go on, including the Beneski Museum at Amherst College, the Silvio O. Conte Wildlife Refuge in Hadley, and the Smith College Museum of Art and Botanical Gardens. We've had a Pre-K / K pollinator picnic focused on native plants as well as virtual visits from several authors. A Birds of Prey rehab expert visited Grades 1 and 5. Shannon said we'll also be looking at test results and sharing out this fall. Anna noted we have to be mindful of not identifying individual students, which is hard to do at a small school without disaggregation. SSC discussed how there are serious equity gaps in educational achievement in Massachusetts even though the state overall is strong. This is the reason DESE is pushing a partnership with the legislature to make sure that literacy support is mandated. Susie commented that the 4th Graders' statement at Town Meeting was a significant tone setter; it was fun but also a great message that was delivered well. The Fin Com is putting together a thank-you card to the class and its teacher.

d. Amherst-Pelham Representative's Report:

Anna reported that there's been a lot of discussion, and we're near a point where everything is settling into place. One topic of discussion was changing start times. The flex block and guided study both needed to be revamped at DESE's insistence. Anna thinks this is hard on SPED kids because the block time was good for services, but now they're getting pulled out of classes. At the high school, it's become an extended block that rotates days. It hasn't worked out great for anyone, but it's come down from the state. We moved start time back a little. The Superintendent is putting further shifts on pause for now since the transportation impacts are just too great. They're thinking about how they can rearrange bus schedules to accommodate the new school.

We're also starting a conversation about updating the regional agreement, which has to be initiated by the RSC. It might involve an outside mediator. We need to get feedback from the towns on what we want to update and what we don't want to touch. The region needs to put more effort into addressing gaps in student success as well. We have a new Treasurer and got an update from DESE on the use of restraint and seclusion, which some think has been overused at Fort River (the SPED-focused programs take place there). SSC should make sure we're in compliance with the new state laws on these by updating our policies by August. Shannon noted some of the programming doesn't impact SES (we don't have a seclusion room, for example). We do need to update a policy, but it won't be as heavy a lift. Anne confirmed we don't have programming around physical management of kids who need help controlling themselves; it's a non-issue right now.

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

Nate reported that JSC met Monday. We talked about Shannon's mid-cycle review and the process as well as how we could streamline it. It's an interesting meeting with great perspectives. Katrina added there's a potential for shifting around how policy committees work in the Union. Shannon is looking at how to streamline that process too. Shannon said Robyn is looking into other models used at other districts. Leah discussed updates from the U#28 Directors as well.

f. CES Report: No report.

J. Policy Review:

First Read On:

IJLA - Library Resources
IJND - Access to Digital Resources
IJNDB - Use of Technology in Instruction

Second Read, First Vote On:

IGB - Support Services Programs
IHAM-R- Health Education

**NATE MOVED TO APPROVE POLICIES IGB - SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAMS AND
IHAM-R- HEALTH EDUCATION. MEGAN SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.**

K. Future Business:

- Shutesbury Policy Committee: TBD
- Shutesbury School Committee: Thursday, June 18, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.
- Future agenda items

Nate reminded SSC that the 6th Grade is presenting their portfolio projects.

L. Adjournment at 9:12:

NATE MOVED TO ADJOURN. KATRINA SECONDED.