

THETFORD TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
Tuesday January 10, 2012
Thetford Elementary School

MINUTES

Elise Tillinghast convened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the Art Room. The following were present: Lisa Swett, Shannon Darrah, Howard Sussman, Charlie Buttrey, School Board; Keith Thompson, TES Principal; Don Johnson, OESU Superintendent.

OTHERS PRESENT: Bette Nunez and Phil Chaput, teachers

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Minutes from 12/20/11 board meeting were reviewed. Amendments made. MOTION (Tillinghast/Sussman) moved/seconded to approve minutes from the 12/20/11 board meeting with amendments (unanimous approval).

APPROVAL OF ORDERS:

MOTION: (Swett/Darrah) moved/seconded to approve payroll order #2681 and payables #2685 and 2701 (unanimous approval).

PUBLIC COMMENT & CORRESPONDENCE:

Carrie Wells, a parent left a comment that children were left waiting for a school bus for 20 minutes on January 4th. Thompson sent out a message to the parents that this event had happened. TES's reaction was swift; however, the bus company needs a way to quickly notify the school. Thompson said this was an issue with TA's bus route. TA needs to give us a call that the bus was delayed. In years past, First Student did not notify the school. Thompson sent an alert that the Bus 3 students would be covered. Butler did not let TA know; they let Thompson know. Thompson will follow up with Ms. Wells. Thompson sent out a follow up e-mail notice to all parents as to this occurrence.

LEACH FIELD:

A breakfast meeting was scheduled last week with Swett, Buttrey and Town Selectman, Tig Tillinghast. Swett distributed to the Board correspondence from the Girl Scouts. A short history on this issue was related to the Board. The Girl Scouts own 27 acres across Route 113 from the school. It is subject to a right of way relating to the TES leach field. The Girl Scouts are looking to sell this property. The Thetford School District has the opportunity to purchase this property for \$80,000.

This property could provide permanent space for leach field, outdoor education and other uses, as well as be sold in all or part to town in future, if desirable to school district. The town has also discussed using land for Thetford trail system.

The question was raised, is this land worth the price? Should the School District jump in now? Will the price go up? The easement with the leach field is good for another 36 years. Where would the school district find the money for this purchase? There is potential for a twenty year bond at 2%.

The land could be used for future TES outdoor classrooms, TA dormitories and/or or other uses. This also gives the School District other possibilities.

The Town of Thetford could also make a later offer to purchase a portion of the land from Camp Farnsworth. Regardless of the School District, the Girl Scouts are looking at a trail system across the property.

The Board agreed to delay further consideration of this issue until Sharon Stearns arrived, in order to discuss the financial impact of going forward with purchase. Any purchase offer would be contingent on yes vote by town.

REVIEW OF THE PRINTING OF THE ANNUAL REPORT (including discussion of timeline for completion of annual report):

Swett distributed a document regarding the Printing of Annual Report with Estimates from three vendors. The Board discussed the options as regards price and offerings. The Board used Gnomon Copy last year and found them to be satisfactory. The Board again decided to use Gnomon Copy as the printer of the Annual Report.

Swett distributed a document depicting a timeline to produce the Annual Report.

Tillinghast will draft the Board's portion of the Annual Report. This will be distributed in the next few days to Board members and the Board's input is solicited as to content and editing. Tillinghast expressed appreciation for the excellent work by Swett organizing this process.

By the 17th of January the Board will sign the Warning.

All photos to be included in the Annual Report depicting students have parental permission granted.

REPORTS:

THETFORD ACADEMY REPORT: Shannon Darrah

The TA Trustees will meet on Thursday to review their budget and approve a tuition rate at their meeting on January 12th. It is expected that the tuition rate will remain essentially flat for next year.

Buttrey states that TA is moving ahead on the Head search.

This Friday, TA is hosting a dinner/theater with plays written by TA students and dinner at TA by local restaurant establishments. This is a fund raiser for Project Graduation. The Board is invited to attend.

Swett voiced concerns about TA's communication with parents regarding plans for specific classes/grade levels. A suggestion of monthly or bi-monthly newsletters being sent home to parents was made. These reports could include class/grade level budgets, plans for trips, etc. Darrah and Swett will discuss further, and Darrah will follow up with the Trustees on this issue.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT: Keith Thompson

Alternative activities for the TES ski program commenced on Friday. The programs include robotics and arts and crafts. There were about 45-50 students involved in these alternative programs. The alternative programs

went very well and will continue. As there is no snow, the cross country students went for a hike. The teachers met in their TLC groups during this timeframe.

Yesterday at OESU the Vermont Dept of Education was present to monitor the CFP funds that are utilized for technology. TES utilizes these funds sparingly. The DOE will visit TES in the near future. Thresher, the State representative, will also come to TES soon.

Thompson installed a 52 inch monitor in the 5th grade classroom to coordinate with the use of the iPads. Thompson is looking at document cameras as well.

Thompson and several other TES staff members will be attending an in-service on Monday the 16th of January on the new Common Core standards that will replace NECAP in Vermont's student performance evaluation.

Thompson responded with a denial as regards letters and requests for kindergarten enrollment outside of current policy. These parents will most probably request consideration of the Board in the near future.

OESU SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Don Johnson

Work is ongoing relative to the OESU budget. TES, Oxbow and OESU are the priorities at this point in time.

OESU had a facilities meeting and is contemplating two promising sites for OESU administration. No final decision has been made as yet.

Policy work continues to move forward.

The OESU Finance Committee is considering a .75 position to assist Sharon Stearns for the next year. This would be at the level of a bookkeeper position.

Sharon Stearns arrived at 7:55 p.m.

BUDGET: Sharon Stearns and Keith Thompson

FY 2012-13 Estimated Finance, Budget Revenue and Budget Expenditure detailed documents were distributed: Stearns and Thompson discussed and reviewed these documents with ongoing Board questions and discussion. There was lengthy discussion regarding the commencement of a special education FTE/position to be equally shared with TA.

MOTION to go into Executive Session to discuss **TES Staff Negotiations** (Buttrey/Sussman) at 10:00 p.m. Out of executive session at 10:15 p.m. No action taken.

MOTION to go into Executive Session to discuss **TES Teacher Negotiations** (Buttrey/Sussman) at 10:15 p.m. Out of executive session at 10:59 p.m. No action taken.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: (Sussman/Darrah)
Motion to adjourn at 11 p.m. (unanimous approval).

NEXT THETFORD BOARD MEETINGS: January 13, 2012 (special meeting, if needed, to continue work on budget) 7:00 p.m.; January 17, 2012, 7:00 p.m.; January 24, 2012, 7:00 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Lorrie Wilkes,
Minutes Clerk

These minutes were approved by the School Board on January 17, 2012.