

South Hadley Public Schools School Committee Meeting Minutes

March 2, 2023

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

I. Call to Order

Noticing a quorum, Chairperson, Allison Schlachter called the virtual School Committee Meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. A Zoom video conference meeting accessible via SHCTV15 and SHCTV.com made possible by Governor Baker's June 16, 2021, remote meeting provision to the March 12, 2020, COVID-19 Emergency

In Attendance: Allison Schlachter, Chairperson; Eric Friesner, Vice Chairperson; Danielle Cooke, Member; Lynda Pickbourn-Smith, Member; Mark McLaughlin, Interim Superintendent for South Hadley Public Schools; and Jennifer Voyik, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Business Operations for South Hadley Public Schools.

Guests: Amy Foley, SHEA President; Liz Wood, Principal of SHHS; Chris Fontaine, Principal of MESMS; Beth Cooke, Director of Student Services; Moira, James & Kristin Doolittle, SHHS Student and Caregivers.

Absent: Kyle Belanger, Member & Junoon Giridhar, Student Representative.

II. Public Comment: Megan Juchno, First Grade Teacher at Plains Elementary School:

"I just wanted to share an awesome training that I just completed today. The district allotted 10 slots for a math recovery course. Lisa Beauchemin over at Mosier was our presenter, and it was a 4-day course. We did 2 days before vacation, and we just finished our 2 days this week. I just wanted to come on and thank the district for putting this on for us. I know it was not a cheap course for us to take, but I really wanted to express how much this will impact the teachers' classrooms that were able to get this training. Just to give a brief overview, we started with learning about the progress of math skills, and that is not something that I ever learned in a college course. It was interesting to think about as an educator but don't really talk about the skills leading up to where students need to be coming into first grade. They come into first grade, and we expect them to be able to do the task versus thinking about what did they need to learn before coming to me; what skills might they need more help developing before coming to me in first grade. We started off, learning about the progression of skills, how they get more complicated as you go up in the things that you're doing. And then we learned about the assessments that we can administer now that we're certified to identify the skills that are lacking. We learned about the assessments and there's 3 of them, very overwhelming, but it was so wonderful to think about these tools and how I could apply them in my classroom. Yesterday we used a group of Mosier students to record our sessions, giving these assessments. We worked together to review how we gave and scored the assessment so we could look directly at what the students need more of. Today we left with learning about how the kids progress in their skills, how we can assess them and how we can use the assessments for instruction. I truly feel like tomorrow I could jump in and give the assessment to one of my students and then start on Monday. I just really wanted to share with the committee. It was such a great course that I

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really hope we can provide to more teachers in the future because it's going to directly impact our students. It's a training that instead of having to do more research to be able to apply the skills, I could turn around tomorrow and directly apply everything that we've learned. So, I just want to shout out Lisa Beauchemin for being an amazing coach, mentor and helper in all things math recovery.

III. **SHEA Report: Presented by Amy Foley:**

“It was so good to hear from Megan. Thank you once again for this opportunity tonight. I have only a few points of interest to share with you. First, the SHEA Executive Board is in the process of collecting data from a morale survey that I hope to share a summary of with district leadership when it's complete. With the events of the last few years and the transition we've experienced at the district and building level, the Executive Board thought it was necessary to see where our members stand. As we've discussed in the past the challenges facing those working in public education have only increased, and to work on the challenges facing our members in South Hadley, we felt it necessary to see where the main areas of concern are, to be able to partner with the district to work on these challenges. We also wanted to commend Middle School Principal Chris Fontaine on his presentation of the proposed schedule changes for the Middle school. The educators at the middle school do recognize there is a need to change and look forward to entering bargaining so that we can take a collaborative approach for all stakeholders in regards to working conditions and equity. We recognize how time-sensitive this work is with the goal to implement a new schedule for the beginning of the next school year. I would also like to share the concerns our elementary level educators have with the decisions being made around curriculum. The issue is not that change is coming. The teachers here in South Hadley have the experience in regard to regular and timely changes in curriculum. Until recently we've experienced 5-year cycles where our curriculum would be under review. In the past department chairs at the high school, curriculum facilitators at the middle school and grade level coordinators at Mosier and Plains would lead the work around reviewing curriculum with teachers, and then report to principals who would then work with the Assistant Superintendent or Superintendent in getting final approval on the curriculum. We found this process to be very collaborative, where all stakeholders voices were considered. The concern now is that with curriculum facilitators and grade level positions not being posted and filled at Plains and Mosier and curriculum facilitators at the middle school. Now I know these positions are under review, and that the district has discussed using the money budgeted for the Business Manager's position to fund a Curriculum and Grants Coordinator but at this time teacher data and their firsthand experience of what our students are presenting on a daily basis in the classroom is getting lost. Covid, in some people's minds may be gone but we're truly and honestly still facing the many consequences from students not being in a classroom for over a year and the effects of the trauma of a pandemic students have experienced for a number of years now. Finally, I'd like to go on your spirit of appreciation and give some SHEA shout out this evening. First, I'd like

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to congratulate the teachers in the district who are receiving the Grinspoon award and look forward to the announcement of these recipients later in your meeting. I'd like to recognize those students and staff at the Michael E Smith Middle School, who are working so hard to prepare for the presentation Frozen Jr. Today the cast was invited to perform a pre-show for the fourth graders at Mosier as they get ready for performances on March 9th – 12th at the High School. A little shout out to the times with matinees on Saturday and Sunday at 2, and the evening showing Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 7. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$6 for students and seniors. I can't wait to go see it. I would also like to recognize Lisa Beauchemin, a math interventionist at Mosier for leading math recovery training for math teachers from Plains Mosier, and the middle school over the last 4 days. At Plains, I would like to recognize all of the staff there today for leading read across America activities with their students. It was so great to see the staff dressed in cat and the hat themed attire. Finally, I want to recognize Paula Lonergan and the Spanish students going on a service trip to Costa Rica over April vacation. Students were preparing and holding a dinner this evening, of which I hope to get some leftovers in a little bit after I leave this meeting as I go on to cheer on our girls and boys basketball teams as they compete in the State tournament this evening. Go, tigers big and small. Thank you.”

IV. Routine Items

A. Approval of Warrants (VOTE)

Date	Number	Amount
February 14, 2023	Warrant #2023-197	\$151,192.67
February 17, 2023	Biweekly Payroll	\$1,000.23
March 2, 2023	Biweekly Payroll	\$751,499.73

(VOTE) D. Cooke made a motion to approve the following three warrants the first is dated 2/14/23 in the amount of \$151,192.67, the second is warrant dated 2/17/23, it is a biweekly payroll in the amount of \$1,000.23 and the final is warrant dated 3/2/23, it is also a biweekly payroll in the amount of \$751,499.73.

E. Friesner seconded the motion.

J. Voyik explained that the biweekly payroll on 2/17/23 is a supplemental pay for an employee for retro pay that was missed.

No further discussion

E. Friesner - Aye; D. Cooke - Aye; and A. Schlachter – Aye.

This motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

B. Approval of Minutes 2/16/2023 (VOTE)

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(VOTE) Chairperson Schlachter entertained a motion to approve the minutes from 2/16/2023.

Danielle Cooke so moved.

Eric Friesner seconded.

E. Friesner – Aye; D. Cooke – Aye; L. Pickbourn – Aye; A. Schlachter – Aye.

This motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

V. Reports of Standing Committees

A. School Committee Liaison Reports

B. Advisory Committees

C. Site-based Committees

D. Report of Student Representative: Junoon Giridhar was not in attendance but did provide a report that was shared by A. Schlachter. Mosier fourth graders truly enjoyed having the cast of Frozen come to visit from MESMS today. They are so talented, and so many of our students can't wait to join the Drama Club next year. From Michael E. Smith Middle School: The Middle School is getting ready for their performance, Frozen Jr from March ninth through March twelfth. The Middle School had players from the Springfield Thunderbirds visit the school before vacation to talk about our core values and meet with kids. From South Hadley High School: Congrats on the award that Dianne Young won. She is a very talented and inspiring educator within the High School. South Hadley girls' basketball team are in the first round of state playoffs against Pope Francis. The boys' basketball team are in their first game of the State tournament at 7:15pm against Lunenburg. The class of 2025 is hosting a fundraiser at Chipotle on Memorial drive in Chicopee on Saturday, March 4th from 5 to 9 pm. Don't forget to tell the cashier when checking out that you would like to support the South Hadley class of 2025 or if you order online, apply the code, 86EMM6H. Congratulations to winter cheer as they won their League championship over the weekend at Shepherd Hill. They will compete in the State competition this Sunday at 10 at Shepherd Hill. Congratulations to Emma Sanford, who finished fourth at States in the hurdles and set a new school record. Emma Sanford and Emma Laverne will compete in the Pentathlon next.

E. Report of Interim Superintendent: M. McLaughlin clarified a couple of things mentioned in the SHEA report. In regards to the curriculum facilitators, the district has been public about putting a pause on that because there is a desire to take a deep dive into the work that has been done by these positions in comparison to the work that will need to be done moving forward. It is important to know that things change and what always used to be the case isn't necessarily what needs to be the case. He explained two motivating factors in the change, one being forecasted expectations from the State due the targeted review and grant opportunities that the district has tried to avail themselves to, so the local budget is not imposed upon with some requiring the district to move quicker than normal. In a

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meeting between district and personnel most impacted the curriculum changes were shared.

- F. Report of the Chair and School Committee:** Chair Schlachter plugged Frozen Jr at the middle school.
- G. Appreciations:** Lisa Beauchemin. E. Friesner appreciated the district and that all stakeholders can come and share and engage in conversation. Chair Schlachter – SH DPW.
- VI. National Merit Scholarship Finalist Moira Doolittle:** Principal Wood, James, Kirsten & Moira Doolittle joined the panel. Principal Wood shared that the National Merit Scholarship Program is an academic competition for recognition and scholarships that began in 1955. Approximately 1.5 million high school students enter the program each year. Being a scholarship finalist is just an amazing, prestigious accomplishment, and this year, South Hadley High School is incredibly lucky to have one of those finalists, Moira Doolittle.
- VII. MESMS Washington DC Trip (VOTE)**
Chair Schlachter entertained a motion to allow the Michael E. Smith Middle School Washington, D.C. trip for Spring 2023.
E. Friesner so moved.
No further discussion.
E. Friesner – Aye; D. Cooke – Aye; L. Pickbourn – Aye; A. Schlachter – Aye.
This motion passed unanimously, 4-0.
- VIII. FY24 Calendar Approval (VOTE):**
Chair Schlachter entertained a motion to approve the FY24 calendar as presented tonight.
Danielle Cooke so moved.
Lynda Pickbourn seconded.
No further discussion.
Danielle Cooke – Aye; L. Pickbourn – Aye; & A. Schlachter – Aye.
This motion passed unanimously, 3-0.
- IX. Grinspoon Foundation 2022-2023 Excellence in Teaching Award Winners:** M. McLaughlin described that this award is sponsored by the Harold Grinspoon Charitable Foundation which recognizes excellence in teaching practices, effectiveness and creativity, impact on students, support of and positive impact upon other teachers, participation in professional development and evidence of going above and beyond in the classroom, school, and community. He went to SHHS and Plains Elementary with flower bouquets to congratulate Dianne Young at the high school and Ashley Macey at Plains Elementary alongside Principals Wood and Lussier.

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- X. Conversation Concerning Upcoming Budget Meetings & Post-Election Meeting Schedule:**
Joint Meeting with Selectboard on 3/16/23
Public Budget Meeting March 28th, 2023, at 6:00pm
April 6th, 2023, will be last meeting for Alli and Kyle
April 27, 2023, reorganization meeting
May 4, 2023, meetings to get right back on track for biweekly meetings.
- XI. MOA Regarding Supervision of Clinical Fellows in the South Hadley School District: (VOTE)**
Beth Cooke presented a request for a memorandum of agreement with the Union. The District would like to hire a Speech and Language Pathology Clinical Fellow looking who is right out of college. They've got a master's degree and need to do a 9-month supervised clinical fellowship. It's a change in working conditions so this memorandum of agreement was developed allowing the Speech and Language Pathologists to supervise this clinical fellow for 9 months. Our plan is they would become a permanent member of our district staff after the completed supervision requirements for the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.
(VOTE) Chairperson Schlachter entertained a motion to approve the MOA regarding supervision of clinical fellows in the South Hadley School District.
E. Friesner so moved.
D. Cooke seconded.
No further discussion.
EF- Aye; DC - Aye; LP- Aye; AS – Aye.
This motion passed unanimously 4-0.
- XII. Information Only: NONE**
- XIII. Unfinished Business: NONE**
- XIV. New Business: NONE**
(VOTE) Chairperson Schlachter entertained a motion to adjourn.
L. Pickbourn so moved.
E. Friesner seconded.
No further discussion.
EF- Aye; DC - Aye; LP- Aye; AS – Aye.
This motion passed unanimously 4-0.
Meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Kiesha Keitt, Executive Assistant, South Hadley Public Schools. Date: 3/22/2023
Reviewed and approved by School Committee on 4/6/23