

South Hadley Public Schools School Committee Meeting Minutes

April 6, 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 6:00 p.m. A Zoom video conference meeting accessible via SHCTV15 and SHCTV.com was made possible by Governor Healy's recent extension to the remote meeting provision.

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

Guests: Stefani Holmes, SHEA Treasurer & Chris Fontaine, MESM Principal.

- II. **Public Comment:** Andrea Allees, SLP at Plains Elementary School; "I've been working in South Hadley for quite some time now, and I've been following school committee and contract negotiations, and as we come back from virtual worlds, it's my understanding that Maura Healy has extended the right for Massachusetts School committees to be remote for another 2 years. I'm reaching out tonight because I want to express my disappointment with the South Hadley School Committee that tonight, after so long the school committee has chosen to yet again present, remotely. I understand how convenient it can be to be remote, but I hope that this is only temporary. I hope that the school committee can embrace at the very least a hybrid model, just as surrounding districts and towns have locally. And the following reasons come to mind as I drove home tonight one, I encourage the school committee to consider the hybrid meetings create generally more accessibility for those with and without reliable Internet, for those with and without a computer, or those with or without a camera on the computer. I encourage the school committee to consider public meetings as a hybrid public meeting, as a way of seeing the diverse entirety of our community, including all human reactions to the dialogue that happens out in the open. I'm encouraging the School committee to consider that numbers speak as well, whether we agree or disagree with that with those numbers, and whatever brought people and those numbers to the meeting. So, I encourage the school Committee to consider live in person communication a more engaging and more meaningful method of communication. So, I want you to consider body language, if more than 70 to 90 of what we say is not verbal, then what you're effectively doing is diminishing communication between you and the public. At last, I encourage the school committee to consider that live in person communication yields more overall accountability for both speaker and communication partner. So, I encourage the school committee of South Hadley to consider moving to at least a hybrid model and sacrifice some convenience for more total communication. Thank you."

- III. **SHEA Report:** Presented by Stefani Holmes, SHEA Treasurer: "We'd like to recognize the paraprofessionals in our Unit E. April 3rd was paraprofessionals' day. I have this little quip here about paraprofessionals, 'the heartfelt hero, using their talents to help students discover their

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own, dedicating their time and energy each day to the students in their care and doing it while all meeting the individual needs of many.' Got that from school heroes. So, thank you to our paraprofessionals. Secondly, the bargaining meetings regarding the prospective middle school schedule are going well, we're looking forward to meeting again next week again with Jenn Voyik, the superintendent, and some other people. The reason I am here tonight is because we have many members of SHEA that are at the Delaney House at a Western Massachusetts School Safety and Workplace Violence discussion and training. I was not able to go, but Amy Foley is there, Neil Bergstrom is there, and I believe there's a handful of other people who are also there. I look forward to seeing what they find out. Next month we'll have a new member dinner. We have not been able to do that for a couple of years, so hopefully we will have new members for SHEA and their mentors from the last 3 years. I don't know what the date is for that quite yet though. On May 25th we'll be having our retirement celebration picnic and recognizing our honorariums. The honorarium is something that SHEA puts together for the immediate family of all active SHEA members who are parents or legal guardians of high school seniors and so they compose a letter to us, and they do not have to be South Hadley graduates they can be any school but their adult needs to be a member of SHEA. The last 3 years we've awarded 23 different awards to 23 different students to further their education."

IV. Routine Items

a. Approval of Warrants:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Amount</u>
March 21, 2023	Warrant #2023-227	\$168,039.68
March 21, 2023	Warrant #2023-235	\$628,724.66
March 30, 2023	Biweekly Payroll	\$786,515.77

(VOTE) Danielle Cooke made a motion to approve the following three warrants, the first is dated 3/21/23, it is warrant #2023-227 in the amount of \$168,039.68, the second is dated 3/21/23, it is warrant #2023-235 in the amount of \$628,724.66 and finally a biweekly payroll dated 3/30/23 in the amount of \$786,515.77.

Kyle Belanger seconded.

No further discussion.

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

The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

b. Approval of Minutes for 3/2/23, 3/16/23 Joint Meeting & 3/16/23 School Committee Meeting

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(VOTE) Chair Schlachter entertained a motion to approve the minutes from the School Committee meetings from both 3/2/23 and 3/16/23 and the minutes from the joint meeting that happened on 3/16/23.

Kyle Belanger so moved.

Danielle Cooke seconded.

No further discussion.

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

The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

V. Reports of Standing Committees

a. School Committee Liaison Reports

b. Advisory Committees

c. Site-Based Committees

d. Report of the Interim Superintendent: In wake of recent events Mark McLaughlin reached out to Town Administrator, Lisa Wong, Police Chief Gundersen, each Principal, the SHPS School Resource Officer, and both Fire Chiefs to form a meeting where each can share their different perspectives and collectively and proactively continue to reinforce safety and security in not just our schools but in our town. M. McLaughlin will report to the School Committee the results of that meeting. M. McLaughlin acknowledged that this is the last meeting for two of the current School Committee Members, Allison Schlachter and Kyle Belanger. A review of some of the accomplishments the Committee reached during their terms and presented them with plaques.

e. Report of the Chair and School Committee: Chair Schlachter reflected on her participation and role on the School Committee and recommended public service. Kyle Belanger spoke of his personal evolution throughout the past five years and stated the kids in this town are the reason why and thanked them.

f. Appreciations: Eric Friesner – District Paraprofessionals and how Allison Schlachter and Kyle Belanger modeled tone, courtesy, and inclusivity for the District always with student service in mind. Jennifer Voyik – SHHS Guidance Staff, Karen Eempio, Andrew Meeker, and Jess Austin.

VI. Grant Update at MESMS: Presented by Principal Chris Fontaine – The middle school is looking to add some new STEM programs over the next two years, such as, accelerated classes in medical detectives' program, aerodynamics, green architecture, design and modeling, and automation and robotics. MESMS received notice last week that they have been awarded \$25,000 over the next three years through a grant to jumpstart these programs. Principal Fontaine and his team are also working to gain funds through the Mass Life Science Grant for another \$50,000 to get the best quality programs, materials, and training that the students and staff deserve.

VII. Digitized Handbooks: Jenn Voyik presented on behalf of Steve Ziobrowski and made the correction the agenda item title which should read digitized policy manual, which went live today on the SHPS website, <https://www.southhadleyschools.org/Page/30> . This makes the

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manual more accessible. Gratitude was expressed to Steve Ziobrowski, Director of Technology for all the hard work that went into this. More work to come with links to Massachusetts General Laws that policies are based on.

- VIII. Statement of Interest to MA School Building Authority:** Jenn Voyik stated the District is requesting approval to submit a Statement of Interest to the Massachusetts Building Authority to try to get in line for a new building for Mosier. Part of the process is that the Selectboard and the School Committee hold a formal vote in support of the Statement of Interest being submitted.

(VOTE) Chair Schlachter entertain a motion to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated April 4th, 2023, for the Mosier Elementary School located at 101 Mosier Street, South Hadley, MA 01075 which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority categories for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future: Replacement, renovation or modernization of school facility systems, such as roofs, windows, boilers, heating and ventilation systems, to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in a school facility; Replacement of or addition to obsolete buildings in order to provide for a full range of programs consistent with state and approved local requirements; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority or commits the South Hadley Public Schools to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

Kyle Belanger so moved.

Eric Friesner seconded.

No further discussion.

E. Friesner – Aye; D. Cooke – Aye; L. Pickbourn – Aye; K. Belanger – Aye; & A. Schlachter – Aye. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

- IX. Sub Rate Approval (VOTE):** Jenn Voyik reviewed the substitute rates that were proposed for approval by the School Committee, these included substitutes for paraprofessionals, ETAs, Unit D positions and custodians.

(VOTE) Chair Schlachter entertained a motion to approve the sub rates as presented tonight.

Kyle Belanger so moved.

Eric Friesner seconded.

No further discussion.

E. Friesner – Aye; D. Cooke – Aye; L. Pickbourn – Aye; K. Belanger – Aye; & A. Schlachter – Aye. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

- X. Information Only: None**

- XI. Unfinished Business: None**

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XII. New Business: None

(VOTE) Chair Schlachter entertained a motion to adjourn.

Kyle Belanger so moved.

Danielle Cooke seconded.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:19pm

Respectfully submitted by Kiesha Keitt, Executive Assistant, South Hadley Public Schools.