

South Hadley Public Schools

School Committee Meeting Minutes

June 1, 2023

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

- I. **Call to Order:** Noticing a quorum, Chair, Eric Friesner called to order the remote South Hadley School Committee meeting, a Zoom Meeting accessible via SHCTV15 and SHCTV.com

In Attendance: Eric Friesner, Chairperson; Danielle Cooke, Vice Chairperson; Lynda Pickbourn-Smith, Member; Lawrence Dixon, Member; Daniel Vieu, 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; Danielle Jajko, Vice President, Michael E. Smith Foundation Board; Christopher Fontaine, MESMS Principal; & Mary Walsh, Director of Health Services.

- II. **Public Comment:** None.

- III. **SHEA Report:** Amy Foley presented – “Thank you for having me. This evening, I'd like to start with our SHEA shoutouts. I'd first like to recognize the Michael E. Smith Middle School staff who brought the eighth-grade students to Washington, DC last week. To travel quite a distance with a whole class of students for 4 days is quite a feat, and I'd like to commend the administrators and teachers for providing this opportunity and for getting everyone home safely. Every year at some point in every one of my classes at the high school students share fond memories of this trip and I'm so glad we were able to return to this tradition this year. Next, I'd like to congratulate the South Hadley High School class of 2023. Tomorrow morning, they will take part in one of my favorite senior week events as they walk the halls of the 4 schools. Not only will they be seen as models for our younger students, but they will be able to reconnect with former educators who will happily celebrate the students' accomplishments. Then tomorrow night, as the graduates walk across the stage at Mount Holyoke College, hopefully under sunny skies, they will be recognized for their hard work over the last 13 years. Congratulations to the class of 2023. As we wrap up our school year SHEA had the opportunity at our annual picnic to honor our members' graduating high school seniors, as well as our 5 members who are retiring this year. I'd like to congratulate and recognize Mike Gauthier, Eve Green, Beth Bach, Cindy Fitzgerald, and Nancy Jessup, for their many years of dedication and hard work in the South Hadley schools. I'm also happy to report tonight that the impact bargaining for the Michael E. Smith Middle School daily schedule change has come to a close, and we look forward to the approval of the MOA later in your agenda this evening. The discussions and bargaining I found to be very productive, and both sides, I believe, felt they were heard. As you know, the first half of this year was turbulent, and the relationship between SHEA and the district Administration was tenuous. The discussions we had in the impact bargaining for the middle school schedule was an excellent example of how both SHEA and the District Administrative team can work together for the benefit of our students. With that, said SHEA's vice President, Neil Bergstrom and myself plan to meet with and share a summary of our morale survey results with Mark and Jenn in the next week or so. Our goal is to share with the district the challenges teachers are facing in each

South Hadley Public Schools

School Committee Meeting Minutes

June 1, 2023

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

building, and to begin to develop a plan forward that looks to continue to improve the educational environment for our educators and most importantly, our students.”

- IV. Summer 2024 Foreign Trip Proposal: (VOTE)** Amy Foley provided some background regarding the Global Citizen Program, her experience with this program thus far and reviewed the cost, schedule, and goals for the proposed trip. The Committee asked a few questions about equity, fundraising and cost comparison to other companies.
- (VOTE)** Vice Chair Cooke made a motion to approve the Summer 2024 Foreign Trip as presented this evening.
- L. Dixon seconded.
- No further discussion.
- D. Cooke – Aye; L. Pickbourn – Aye; L. Dixon – Aye; D. Vieu – Aye; & E. Friesner – Aye.
- This motion passed unanimously, 5-0.
- V. Michael E. Smith Endowment:** Danielle Jajko presented – “Thank you very much for having me tonight at your meeting. I am the Vice President of the Michael E. Smith Foundation Board and we just wanted to come on and talk about our 2023-year grants that were approved through our board. It's really exciting. But first I just wanted to go over the mission so everyone watching, our teachers and educators will know about it. The mission statement for the Michael E. Smith Endowment is to provide funding in support of excellence in education throughout the South Hadley Public School system. The intent is to augment the public-school experience by providing South Hadley's children with unique and innovative resources, materials and hand-on experiences and opportunities for growth which exceed those possible through the annual operating budget of the school district. So, each year we have a deadline for grants. This year, it was May first. Next year, it will be May first, 2024. So, teachers have some time to get their new proposals up and we do review them to meet our criteria. This year we handed out over \$26,000 in grant money to all 4 schools and this is the first time in a long time that we've had applications and given out grants to all the schools in the district, which was really exciting to see it spread around and affecting all the schools and most of the students in those schools. So, at Plain we did some gross motor equipment, playground equipment, and a communication board that was over \$4,000. Mosier, it was a Norcross Wildlife Sanctuary trip and math recovery training so that was over \$4,000. At the middle school, we're funding project lead the way, and a band field trip to Broadway was partially funded and Gizmo science stimulations and that was over \$10,000 to Michael E. Smith. Then the High School the English journalism field trips that were requested to local colleges and their journalism departments and local papers and then a vocational criminal justice program equipment so that was over \$7,000 for the high school. So, it was really exciting to see the grant applications really ramp up this year, and I know that our President Ryan, really tried very hard to get into principal meetings. I attended one with her, and to really reach out to all the schools to make sure that the educators know about these

South Hadley Public Schools School Committee Meeting Minutes

June 1, 2023

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

grants and are able to get their grants in on time. So, we're really excited and just fun to share that with you." Gratitude expressed by Superintendent to Danielle and the endowment. Some discussion regarding the endowment's history, impacts of covid, fundraising efforts and community involvement.

VI. Routine Items

A. Approval of Warrants (2 VOTES)

Date	Number	Amount
May 2, 2023	Warrant #2023-265	\$141,987.66
May 9, 2023	Warrant #2023-273	\$252,948.92
May 11, 2023	Biweekly Payroll	\$765,671.10
May 25, 2023	Biweekly Payroll	\$768,202.75

(VOTE) D. Cooke made a motion for all those eligible to approve the following warrant, it is warrant dated May 9, 2023, it is warrant #2023-273 in the amount of \$252,948.92.

D. View seconded the motion.

No further discussion.

D. Cooke – Abstained; L. Pickbourn – Aye; L. Dixon – Aye; D. View – Aye; & E. Friesner – Aye.

This motion passed with 4 in favor and one abstention.

(VOTE) D. Cooke made a motion to approve the following three warrants, the first is warrant dated May 2, 2023, it is warrant #2023-265 in the amount of \$141,987.66, the second is warrant dated May 11, 2023, it is a biweekly payroll in the amount of \$765,671.10 and the third is warrant dated May 25, 2023, it is a biweekly payroll in the amount of \$768,202.75.

D. View seconded the motion.

D. Cooke – Aye; L. Pickbourn – Aye; L. Dixon – Aye; D. View – Aye; & E. Friesner – Aye.

This motion passed unanimously.

B. Approval of Minutes 05/04/2023 (VOTE)

(VOTE) Chair Friesner entertained a motion to approve the minutes from May 4, 2023.

L. Pickbourn so moved.

D. Cooke seconded.

No further discussion.

D. Cooke – Aye; L. Pickbourn – Aye; L. Dixon – Aye; D. View – Aye; & E. Friesner – Aye.

This motion passed unanimously.

C. Budget Transfers (2 VOTES): J. Voyik shared the details of each budget transfer.

South Hadley Public Schools

School Committee Meeting Minutes

June 1, 2023

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

(VOTE) Chair Friesner entertained a motion to approve budget transfer dated 5/16/23 in the amount of \$3,085.00 and budget transfer dated 5/24/23 in the amount of \$5,540.00 as presented.

L. Dixon so moved.

L. Pickbourn seconded.

No further discussion.

D. Cooke – Abstained; L. Pickbourn – Aye; L. Dixon – Aye; D. Vieu – Aye; & E. Friesner – Aye.

This motion passed 4 in favor and 1 abstention.

(VOTE) Chair Friesner entertained a motion to approve budget transfer dated 5/22/23 in the amount of \$99,703.00, budget transfer dated 5/23/23 in the amount of \$3,103.00, and budget transfer dated 5/23/23 in the amount of \$1,011.00 as presented.

Vice Chair Cooke so moved.

D. Vieu seconded.

No further discussion.

D. Cooke – Aye; L. Pickbourn – Aye; L. Dixon – Aye; D. Vieu – Aye; & E. Friesner – Aye.

This motion passed unanimously.

VII. Reports of Standing Committees

A. Subcommittee Reports

- 1. Racial Justice Task Force:** Danielle Cooke shared that the last meeting of the year was on May 17th. The Task Force received great points of feedback from members during that meeting. One was from member Tara Cole, who shared that she, Athletic Director, Eric Castonguay, High School Principal Liz Wood, Assistant Superintendent, Jenn Voyik were able to attend a conference with diversity, equity and inclusion focus for our athletic programs for the future, which motivated Tara to want to reintroduce a former program that she had run in the district. It was called Salt, Student Athletic Leadership Team so that student athletes can learn how to be better captains, allies, and members of society beyond just their athletic or student duties. They also had some other great feedback from Melissa Lake, at the Middle School, that Vice Principal Scanlan-Emigh is continuing to follow-up and see how she can be an asset, carrying over some of that work into the district. Memberships needed for September are a second school committee member, Plains School staff member, 2 additional students and at least one caregiver that would represent the elementary school population. The Task Force will be putting out flyers for enrollment for that over the summer and into September. They worked on the term cycles, the Admin position, as well as the Middle School and Mosier positions will need to be filled throughout the course of this upcoming year and will be taking applications on more of a rolling basis to fill those positions, preventing any gaps in service. The RJTF formally announced their interest in having a representative apply for a spot on the Superintendent Search Committee once the district is in a place to be

South Hadley Public Schools School Committee Meeting Minutes

June 1, 2023

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

able to think about filling that future vacancy. Happy Pride Month from the Task Force. They have an updated policy to propose to the School Committee over the summer that South Hadley Public Schools would not approve selectively opting out of curriculum and programming that does not align to the Massachusetts general law.

- B. Report of Student Representative:** None due to technical difficulties.
 - C. Report of Interim Superintendent:** Dr. McLaughlin gave a reminder that graduation is scheduled for June 2nd. He gave thanks to Principal Wood for her attention to the incredible amount of detail and work in preparation for graduation and he congratulated the Seniors. Dr. McLaughlin shared that he met earlier in the day with the Chair of the School Committee and SHHS Principal to review applications for the Smith Educational Fund which is another avenue offered to South Hadley Residents for financial support. Next meeting the Administrative Team will present a summary of progress made on the District and School Improvement Plans. DR. McLaughlin affirmed the District's commitment to policy review. He expressed appreciation for Jenn Voyik and Steve Ziobrowski for digitizing the policy manual on SHPS's website.
 - D. Report of the School Committee:** Chair Friesner stated that there is great stuff going on in the District, shared his experience of reviewing applications for the Smith Ed Fund. Chair spoke about the Mosier PTO's donut fundraising and the Art's Night at Plains. Ashley Macey reached out to Chair Friesner to share that Tara Cole and Laura Ketteringham brought students from the High School to Plains to interact with first graders which was a success.
 - E. Appreciations:** L. Dixon – MESMS teachers and Principal Fontaine for the D.C. trip; D. Cooke – Chaperones of MESMS 5th grade Plymouth trip & Coach Danielle Miele and Girls' Lacrosse team making it to Western Mass Championship; Jenn Voyik – The Girls Lacrosse team won & Nicholina Sodano for the DC trip and Chris Glenn for hi-five Fridays.
- VIII. MOA of MESMS Schedule (VOTE):** Dr. McLaughlin spoke about the collaboration with SHEA and Administration who met for impact bargaining to discuss proper working conditions for teachers regarding the proposed schedule changes. Some questions asked by the committee pertaining to previous presentations, prep periods, time for planning, student periods, elective classes and tier 1 and tier 2 interventions. Chair Friesner shared that Principal Fontaine previously presented on February 16, 2023, changes to the MESMS which is accessible on SHCTV.com.
- (VOTE)** Chair Friesner entertained a motion to accept the Memorandum of Agreement of the MESMS Schedule as presented this evening.
- I. Dixon so moved.
 - D. Vieu seconded.
- No further discussion.
- D. Cooke – Aye; L. Pickbourn – Aye; L. Dixon – Aye; D. Vieu – Aye; & E. Friesner – Aye.
This motion passed unanimously.

South Hadley Public Schools

School Committee Meeting Minutes

June 1, 2023

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

- IX. Mask Policy (VOTE):** Mary Walsh, Director of Health Services gave context for the policy currently in place and explained why we think it's in the district's best interest to rescind the policy. As of May 11th the Mass Dept. of Public Health has provided new guidance. **(VOTE)** Chair Friesner entertained a motion to rescind the current mask policy.
D. Cooke so moved.
D. Vieu seconded.
No further discussion.
D. Cooke – Aye; L. Pickbourn – Aye; L. Dixon – Aye; D. Vieu – Aye; & E. Friesner – Aye.
This motion passed unanimously.
- X. Update on Elementary Reading Program Evolution:** Dr. McLaughlin articulated that it is right and good to review curriculum and instruction and student performance data ought to drive the decisions we make and then we should respond to that. He explained a bit of the science involved in why the changes to literacy curriculum are being adjusted. Dr. McLaughlin spoke about professional development that has taken place and some that is scheduled, materials that have been ordered and that principals will be present at the next meeting to give updates.
- XI. Information Only:** Next School Committee Meeting will be June 15th at 6pm.
- XII. Unfinished Business:** Remote over the summer and will revisit the discussion before school starts. Summer meeting schedule to be on the next agenda.
- XIII. New Business:** None
- (VOTE)** Chair Friesner entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.
D. Cooke so moved.
D. Vieu seconded.
D. Cooke – Aye; L. Pickbourn – Aye; L. Dixon – Aye; D. Vieu – Aye; & E. Friesner – Aye.
The meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

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