

South Hadley Public Schools

School Committee Meeting Minutes

September 7, 2023

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

I. Call to Order: At 6:00 pm 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; Jennifer Voyik, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Business Operations for South Hadley Public Schools & Tobias Smith, Student Representative.

Guests: Amy Foley, SHEA President; Elizabeth Wood, SHHS Principal; Christopher Fontaine, MESMS Principal; Cynthia Flynn, Mosier Principal; & Carla Lussier, Plains Principal.

II. Public Comment: None

III. SHEA Report: Presented by Amy Foley: "Hello, and Happy New year. I choose Happy New Year, because we, as educators, greet the new school year with the same energy and hope that we all greet the New Year on January first. To show you just how enthusiastically educators have embraced the new school year, I'd like to start off the SHEA Update tonight with some SHEA shoutouts! I have 3 shoutouts tonight, and I'd like to start at Plains School and recognize the PBIS Team there. This team consists of Kristene Schwantner, Mary Mitchell, Andrea Allees, Rachael Campos, Ashley Lapierre, and Jackie Dolan. This team coordinated recess orientations on the first day of school for first grade, and on the first day of school for kindergarten, so that students could start the year knowing expectations on the playground, and how to safely use the equipment. From what I understand, this is a big deal, because without this orientation there could be chaos on the playground. It involves heavy logistics with teachers' and specialists' schedules as they work with one class at a time on the playground. Next, I'd like to recognize Michelle Kostek, the ELL Teacher at Mosier School. She's been welcoming new family after new family these past few days. She's been giving tours to families and even extended families who may speak other languages, and greets them with warmth, and makes them feel welcome. She makes the child and family feel as though Mosier will be a safe and happy learning environment. She is always kind, compassionate, and is willing to help kids and adults. My last shoutout is to the district for making the right call today by having a half day of school because of the heat and humidity. Many members reached out to me today to let me know how much they appreciated it. We, as educators, value our time in the classroom with our students, especially at the beginning of the year but I know from firsthand experience yesterday the conditions were such that we, as educators, could not get the most out of our students. In the time of tight budgets and climate change it is easier to say that we should air condition every classroom, that it's easier to do that than it is to make that happen so the half day today was the compromise that made sense. And now for the update which involves how SHEA plans to move forward with the district this year. We're seeing many positive changes in the district that we know will be to the benefit of our students. Many of these changes, like the addition of special education evaluation team leaders, will help give special educators some more time to

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do what they do best, which is to work directly with students. This change and more came directly out of the negotiations process last year. Even though negotiations were very challenging for all of us, we came to an agreement that is going to benefit our students and move the district forward. In this spirit SHEA looks forward to continuing the work of the JLMC by starting the year off looking to revise the teacher evaluation system. I know this past spring I really appreciated the collaborative nature of the JLMC meeting to create the job description for the new ETL positions. I also look to continue to improve SHEA's communication with district leadership. As you are probably aware, our building representatives in each school meet once a month with the building administration to build our relationship with the school leaders, and to have open communication about possible concerns within the educational setting. In addition to these meetings this year Neil Bergstrom and myself look forward to meeting with Dr. McLaughlin and Jenn Voyik monthly to work on challenges we may be facing in the district. I believe that with this level of communication we're headed in the right direction. And finally, I'd like to ask the School Committee to consider showing their support for the MCAS ballot question. If approved and included on the ballot, this question would eliminate the requirement that students pass the MCAS to graduate. Our high school teachers have seen the stress and anxiety this requirement places on our students who already struggle with the pressure of testing. We also believe that assessments should provide educators with important and valuable information about our students' learning. It should not determine whether a student should graduate high school or not. We would greatly appreciate your support, and I thank you for the time tonight.

IV. Routine Items

A. Approval of Warrants (3 VOTES)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Warrant</u>	<u>Amount</u>
June 30, 2023	Warrant #2023-328	\$491,657.27
July 25, 2023	Warrant #2024-21	\$1,383.68
August 8, 2023	Warrant #2024-32	\$186,656.80
August 17, 2023	Biweekly Payroll	\$720,454.44
August 22, 2023	Warrant #2024-46	\$137,984.86
August 29, 2023	Warrant #2024-52	\$117,322.11
August 31, 2023	Biweekly Payroll	\$702,189.86

South Hadley Public Schools

School Committee Meeting Minutes

September 7, 2023

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

Vote #1

D. Cooke made a motion to approve the following warrants, warrant dated July 25, 2023, it is warrant #2024-21 in the amount of \$1,383.68, warrant dated August 8, 2023, it is warrant # 2024-32 in the amount of \$186,656.80, warrant dated August 17, 2023, it is a biweekly payroll in the amount of \$720,454.44, warrant dated August 22, 2023, it is warrant 2024-46 in the amount of 137,984.86 and warrant dated August 31, 2023, it is a biweekly payroll in the amount of \$702,189.86.

L. Dixon seconded.

No further discussion.

Cooke – aye; Pickbourn – aye; Dixon – aye; View – aye; & Friesner – aye.

This motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Vote #2

D. Cooke made a motion to all those eligible to vote to approve warrant dated June 30, 2023, it is warrant #2023-328 in the amount of \$491,657.27.

View seconded.

No further discussion.

Cooke – abstained; Pickbourn – aye; Dixon – aye; View – aye; & Friesner – aye.

This motion passed with 4 in favor and one abstention.

Vote #3

D. Cooke made a motion to all those eligible to vote to approve warrant dated August 29, 2023, it is warrant #2024-52 in the amount of \$117,322.11.

L. Pickbourn seconded.

E. Friesner explained that he would be abstaining due to conflict of interest.

No further discussion.

Cooke – aye; Pickbourn – aye; Dixon – aye; View – aye; & Friesner – abstained.

This motion passed with 4 in favor and one abstention.

B. Approval of Minutes 8/3/2023 (VOTE)

E. Friesner made a motion to approve the minutes for 8/3/23.

L. Dixon so moved.

D. Cooke seconded.

No further discussion.

Cooke – aye; Pickbourn – abstained; Dixon – aye; View – aye; & Friesner – aye.

This motion passed with 4 in favor and one abstention.

V. Reports of Standing Committees

South Hadley Public Schools

School Committee Meeting Minutes

September 7, 2023

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

A. Subcommittee Reports: None

B. Report of Interim Superintendent: Dr. McLaughlin extended a welcome to the students of South Hadley and appreciation for SHEA. He addressed the hot weather we've recently had and discussed the decision-making process. Jennifer Voyik shared with the Committee the conversation she had with Scott Moore regarding the cost involved to cool the schools with one option equating to \$10k per classroom or a full chiller, costing over one million. It was agreed by Committee and District Administration that this could be discussed in greater detail in the future.

C. Report of Chair & School Committee: Chair Friesner welcomed back all students and staff of South Hadley Public Schools, wishing them a great new school year. Appreciation was appropriated to SHEA for highlighting the positive changes within the district.

D. Appreciations: D. Cooke – The new MESMS schedule and Administrative Team. E. Friesner – Scott Moore.

VI. Handbook Review (VOTE): Principal Wood offered the changes for the SHHS Handbook which consisted of the attendance committee and buyback, parking changes to student parking passes for the lower lot; make-up work policy, artificial intelligence, and plagiarism; and the safety plan.

Principal Fontaine disclosed suggested changes for the MESMS Handbook consisting of the mission/vision statement; make-up work with Google Classroom; expectations for cafeteria and called by table; false charges to match SHHS language; backpacks; National Junior Honor Society; and quarters instead of trimesters.

Principal Flynn offered changes for the Mosier Handbook which consisted of the language of parent to caregiver; table of contents; office phone number added where mentioned; homework; chaperone added/Volunteer; drop-off/pick-up language; PBIS implementation; cellphones; technology being offered as a special; and free lunch.

Principal Lussier disclosed that she has worked very closely with Principal Flynn to make sure the handbooks are quite aligned. A table of contents was added, along with School Committee members and some graphics to make it a little more kid friendly.

Dr. McLaughlin acknowledged all the hard work by the Principals and Assistant Principals referencing how schools aren't just schools but are sports venues, restaurants, medical centers, transportation hubs, places to receive mental health services along with occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech services in addition to so much more.

Some questions were taken by the Administrative Team from the Committee.

South Hadley Public Schools

School Committee Meeting Minutes

September 7, 2023

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

(VOTE) Chair Friesner made a motion to approve the handbook changes for all four schools as presented.

Cooke so moved.

Vieu seconded.

Cooke – aye; Pickbourn – aye; Dixon – aye; Vieu – aye; & Friesner – aye.

This motion passed unanimously.

VII. Update on Opening of School: Dr. McLaughlin presented a slideshow reviewing the day of convocation, which was August 28th, and the two professional developments days that followed. He shared in detail what each school focused on for the day. Dr. McLaughlin also recapped what the Student Services Department worked on during those days preceding the first day of school. He then affirmed the District’s initiatives and commitments for the 2023-2024 school year, such as, anti-bullying advocacy at the school and community level, review of and re-commitment to preK-12 content standards, trauma sensitive instruction, elementary literacy, ELA curriculum review for grades 5-12, arts and physical education curriculum development, social emotional learning and mental health, and multi-tiered systems of support.

VIII. Review of Policy JJIF & JJIF-R; Athletic Concussion (VOTE): Dr. McLaughlin stated there are some significant policies that need to be reviewed and ensure they remain current and that is the case with the athletic concussion policies. There were no changes suggested for this policy but is looking to make the date current signifying the review of this policy by District Administration and the School Committee. There was discussion pertaining to the protocol and evaluation.

(VOTE) D. Cooke made a motion to approve the policy.

L. Pickbourn seconded.

Some more discussion took place.

Then the vote; Cooke – aye; Pickbourn – aye; Dixon – aye; Vieu – aye; & Friesner – aye.

This motion passed unanimously.

IX. Donation from the Class of 1973 (VOTE): Jenn Voyik shared with the Committee that the Class of 1973 had a 50/50 raffle at their most recent reunion if approved the money will go into the general gift account at the high school to help students with the cost of field trips and other student activities that require payment.

(VOTE) D. Cooke made a motion to accept the donation from the Class of 1973.

L. Pickbourn seconded.

Some more discussion about how the money will help the students.

South Hadley Public Schools School Committee Meeting Minutes

September 7, 2023

Video Conference Meeting Accessible via SHCTV1 or SHCTV1.com

No further discussion.

Cooke – aye; Pickbourn – aye; Dixon – aye; Vieu – aye; & Friesner – aye.

This motion passed unanimously.

X. Discussion – Future Format of School Committee Meetings: Discussion took place amongst the Committee members regarding changing the current format of the School Committee Meetings. It was agreed that October 19th would be a trial hybrid model.

XI. Discussion about Super Evaluation: After some discussion the Committee decided to move forward with plans to evaluate the Interim Superintendent.

XII. Information Only: Friday September 8th, 2023, will be a full day of school.

XIII. Unfinished Business: None.

XIV. New Business: None.

(VOTE) Chair Friesner entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

D. Cooke so moved.

I. Dixon seconded.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:41 p.m.