

Thetford Town School District

Regular Board Meeting
Date: November 14, 2023

PRESENT:

School board: Nic Cook, Greta Marchesi, Megan Snider, Mary Chin, Jeff Jamele

Administration: Bernice Mills, Caitlin Toleno **OESU:** Randy Gawel

Community: Hope Waterfield **TA Staff:** John Brown, Carrie Brennan

I. Welcome

Meeting called to order by Snider at 6:01 pm.

II. Board Business-

a) Agenda Review/Approval

Adding Jamele's notes from VSBA Act 127 webinar.

b) Approve Minutes: 10/10/23

Motion to approve (Chin/Jamele). Unanimous.

c) Review Orders

Snider signed orders this month and reported no irregularities.

d) Correspondence-

(1) Hope Waterfield- Maintenance Contract

(2) Ben Merrill- Annual Report

(3) Resignations with regrets-

■ Sheila Piper, 6/30/24, Food Service Manager

■ Bernice Mills, 06/30/24, Principal

(4) Marchesi talked about the food service manager position. She said someone approached her about TES looking into hiring a chef to cook and run the cafeteria that would be employed by TES, as has recently been done by Bradford Elementary.

III. Public Comment

None.

IV. Reports

A. Principal's Report

1) Reunification Drill

I am pleased to report on the successful execution of our organization's first All-Hazard Parent Reunification Drill, which took place on November 3, 2023. It is with great enthusiasm that I share the outcomes of this drill and our commitment to ongoing improvements in our emergency preparedness.

The first All-Hazard Parent Reunification Drill was conducted with meticulous planning and a focus on our key objectives, which included testing our communication systems and protocols, evaluating the coordination between staff, and emergency responders, and assessing our overall readiness to handle various emergency scenarios. We sought to identify strengths and areas for improvement in our reunification procedures, and I am delighted to report that the results exceeded our expectations.

Key Achievements and Success of the Drill:

Our team executed the drill with the utmost professionalism, dedication, and a deep commitment to the safety and well-being of the children under our care. The drill showcased several notable achievements:

Efficient Communication and Coordination: Communication and coordination among all stakeholders were exceptionally effective, which led to the safe and expedient reunification of parents and children.

Following the drill, a debriefing session was conducted. The insights gained during this session have been invaluable for identifying areas where we can enhance our preparedness even further.

We will debrief with staff and emergency services during the next staff meeting to gain further insight on the drill. In addition, we have asked parents to provide us feedback.

We are all extremely thankful to students, parents, and staff for doing a wonderful job at the drill.

2) Budget

In preparation for the budget for the 2024/2025 school year, I have scheduled meetings to discuss the technology and facilities budgets. These meetings are crucial in ensuring that our school's financial resources are allocated effectively to meet the needs of our students, staff, and infrastructure.

During these meetings, we will engage in discussions to identify and prioritize budgetary needs for the 2024/2025 school year. The goal is to allocate resources in a manner that best supports our students, staff, and building infrastructure. This will include identifying areas where additional funding may be required and determining the most effective use of resources to address these priorities.

The timeline for the budget planning process is as follows:

- Meetings to discuss technology and facilities budgets are scheduled to take place between November and December.
- These discussions will culminate in the completion of the technology and facilities budgets by mid-December, ensuring that we stay on track to meet our budgeting goals for the 2024/2025 school year.

B. TA Report and Updates- Jamele

TA still has some concerns about their budget given their current under-enrollment. Jamele has been impressed by the way the school and the DEI coordinator have been foregrounding inclusion in the curriculum.

V. Action Item- TA Maintenance Contract- All

Brown and Mills have met and have both agreed that the current contract does not meet the needs of TES, ending 6/30/2023. TES needs someone to deal with the outside as well as inside and would prefer to post for the school maintenance positions in-house in order to have coverage through the entire school day as well as the exterior of the school. OESU ran the numbers and also determined that going in-house would be a significant cost savings for the school. Much appreciation for the past five years of the contract.

Motion to terminate the contract between TES and Thetford Academy as of 6/30/23 (Marchesi/Jamele). Unanimous.

VI. School Board Annual Conference- Chin

Chin thanked the board and OESU for the opportunity to attend the VSBA annual conference in Fairlee. She was sad that no one else from OESU attended. She attended a “policies and procedures class;” based on that workshop, Chin confirmed that board policies should be reviewed every 3-5 years and procedures need specific language determined legally by the state. She recommended that others also attend next year. One reason attendance may have been limited is that districts need to pay out of the district education budget for attendance and members were concerned about school budgeting issues.

VII. Annual Report- Snider

Ben Merrill wanted to know if we wanted them to do the annual report again this year. Marchesi felt that the report as it has been produced for the last couple of years may be higher quality in terms of paper/printing than our district needs or can afford in the current budget environment. Snider said she would talk to Ben about ways to bring the costs down this year. Motion to approve Ben Merrill to again do the annual report (Jamele/Chin). Unanimous.

VIII. Principal Search Process - Gawel

OESU administrators will review the job posting and it should be posted tomorrow. The job will be posted for 10 days. At that time, Randy and John will review resumes, identify qualified candidates for 20 minute screening interview, then debrief to make assessments and on-board finalist candidates. At that point a search committee will be appointed that will include Thetford representatives, including a teacher and/or staff person and potentially a TTSD board member. People can send notes to Gawel if there are things they want to see in a candidate.

Webinar about Act 127,

Jamele had the opportunity to view this webinar about Act 127, which is an add on to Act 60. He gave the following take-aways.

- Expected 8.5% increase regardless of additional factors.
- Inflationary pressures amongst 16.4% increase in health care costs driving increases.
- An assessment coming in fall about school facilities is assumed to be cost driver, as facilities around the state have been neglected. This assessment was done by a company from NJ to avoid any local conflicts of interest. It will give broad strokes of what buildings need and approximate costs, though their placeholder values have been very low.
- Task force to assist with this from legislature.

IX . Policy Committee Update- Cook

A. A23 Community Engagement and Vision Policy Original document read and described the rationale for cutting parts out.

B. A23 Community Engagement and Vision Policy Amended.

First reading done. Action item for next meeting.

There will be another meeting for the policies and procedures committee, to be scheduled.

X. Public Comment

None.

XII. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn at 6:55 pm (Jamele/Chin). Unanimous.

Minutes Prepared By:

Ginni Balch, Board Clerk

Future Meetings:

December 12, 2023 Thetford Town School District Board Meeting 6:00 p.m.

Regular School Board Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month during the school year.

These minutes are not official until they are approved by the School Board.