

# THETFORD TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT

March 23, 2021 via Zoom

## Draft Minutes

Shannon Darrah convened the meeting at 6:34 p.m.

### PRESENT:

**School Board:** Shannon Darrah, Donna Pluta, Megan Snider, Julie Acker

**OESU:** Bruce Williams, Melanie Rhoads (7:00)

**Community:** Mike Kiess (left 7:15), Troy McBride, Eloise Ginty, Geoff Martin, Laura Covalla, Sharon Harkay, Nick Clark, Chuck Cole, Bob Walker (6:45) Amy Fahey (7:15)

**Staff:** Tippi Oshoniyi, Kim Crow, Ashley Mousley, Sarah Atherton, Lauren Lacasse (7:05)

**Agenda Review** as is

**Review and Approve Minutes** MOTION (Acker/Snider) to approve the minutes of 3/9/21. Unanimous.

**Review of Orders** Payables sent out for review, no questions or comments.

**Public Comment:** Balch asked to bring up issues regarding lighting for night custodian. By the time he leaves it is pitch black out and there are no lights on outside. It has been icy, as well as the unevenness of the driveway in the front, has made the trek to his car at night dangerous. Darrah will contact John Brown.

**Correspondence:** Bryan Gazda, new Thetford Town Manager, is the selectboard liaison to the school board. He asked Acker who the best person to talk to about how school districts are structured in VT. Start with Darrah and move up from there. Williams is also willing to speak with him, and it may make sense to speak with Gazda at the same time as the new Assistant Superintendent.

### Reports:

#### TA Report

Darrah reported that TA is no longer accepting designation from Strafford. Discussion followed. Acker pointed out that by law, designation is when the district agrees to send all their students, and the school in turn agrees to accept all the students from that district. Strafford's tuition waiver exception has meant that not all students are attending TA. There can still be a partnership agreement between the TA and Strafford, which Darrah thinks will end up happening.

## **More Solar on TES Land Discussion – Mike Kiess et. al.**

McBride (Norwich Solar Technologies) and Martin (Regional Energy Coordinator) presented.

**Background** - Regional Coordinator Martin researched if the school array is off-setting its cost? Not all costs are being covered by the array. Is there a way to enlarge the array to the town as well, and maybe broader community? Opportunity to add 380 kilowatts which would cover all the school. Benefit to school - receive a certain amount of credits, Environmental benefit as well.

- Darrah - the school owns the array, and it used to cover the schools energy needs. Are the panels just getting older and need to be replaced? McBride -\$10,000 cost 2 years ago, \$800 last year with covid. The first two years were really good, and we had no snow. How many panels in addition? Another 6 rows would need to be added. Screen shared drawing to illustrate what it would look like.
- Snider - would TES still own our current panels? Walker asked McBride and Martin - if you add new solar there, the pricing on the original array would have to transfer to the what the current pricing structure is, which is less favorable. Is that correct? Also, might there be an opportunity here to get a philanthropic investor to cover part of the project to enable lower income residents to join the array at a greater discount?
- Darrah - town garage still being thought of for that site? Clark - would cost \$250K to make the road accessible. Also would include adding a turn lane on Rt 113.
- McBride - possible to get philanthropic investors. Permitting process takes a year plus.
- Kiess - the original array with the value of each credit, expanded array will be under the old pricing structure? Martin - yes.
- Williams - clarify that old equipment is owned by TES, new would be owned by third party.
- Darrah - what are you looking for from the TTSD? Martin - do you want to continue to research the possibility of a 3rd party array on school land? Snider and Acker are interested in exploring it further.
- Darrah - would like to discuss further at the next meeting when Charlie is present.
- Walker - any way to use solar to operate heat pumps?
- Walker - window dressers to be built over the summer, and yes TTSD is interested in pursuing them.

## **Principal Search Update:**

Thursday the candidates will meet with community 6:00-7:30 with community, and 7:30-8:30 with the board. The candidates will meet with Carrie as well as they work closely together. There will be feedback forms to fill in.

## **Summer Lunch Program:**

Postponed to next meeting

**Other Business:** none

**Executive Session – Student Matter**

MOTION (Acker/Pluta) to find that the following discussion be held in executive session as it may identify a student. Unanimous.

MOTION (Acker/Pluta) to enter into executive session at 7:28 pm to discuss a student matter. Unanimous. Williams was invited to participate. Out of executive session at 8:01 pm. No action taken.

**Adjournment:**

MOTION (Snider/Pluta) to adjourn at 8:01 pm. Unanimous.

Minutes Prepared By: Ginni Balch, Minutes Clerk

Respectfully Submitted,

Julie Acker, Board Clerk

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

**FUTURE MEETINGS:**

04/13/21 Thetford Town School District Meeting 6:30pm