

SHARON BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
REGULAR MEETING  
TUESDAY, MARCH 9, 2021 - 6:00 PM  
@  
VIA GOOGLE MEET  
**APPROVED Minutes**

*This meeting was publicly warned in conformance with H.681 authorizing temporary amendments to Vermont's open meeting law to protect the health and safety of the public, board members, and town employees during the state of emergency declared due to COVID-19.*

*Links were provided for public participation by videoconference software or by conventional phone.*

**Present:**

**School Board:** Chantelle Brackett, Samantha Potter, Don Shaw

**Staff & Other:** Keenan Haley (SES Principal), Jamie Kinnarney (WRVSU Superintendent), Tara Weatherell (WRVSU Business Manager), Raymond Ballou (WRVSU Technology Manager), Nicole Antal (Sharon Recording Secretary), Laura Lewis (Interventionist at SES), Liz Spriggs (PreK co-Director), Lyall Smith (helping the Sharon School Board on the paving project, Director of buildings & grounds at Williston School District VT.)

**Public (speaking):** Angela Carpenter (SES Parent), Stephanie Gergely-Davis (SES parent), Will Davis (SES Parent), Holly Cathcart (SES Parent), Nicole Antal (Sharon resident), Suzanne Jones (Sharon resident), Karen Rodis (SES Parent), Steve Gagliardone (Sharon resident and committee member)

**Public present (Non-Speaking):** Briana Pronto (SES Parent), Donna Locke (SES Staff), Dulce O'Hare (SES Staff), Katie Chesnut (Sharon Resident), Sarah Canterbury (Sharon resident), Jennifer Pomerville (Sharon resident), Sara Pfeiffer (SES Parent), Lisanne Velez (SES parent), 3 unidentified phone number.

1. Call to Order  
Don Shaw called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm
2. Adjustments to the Agenda  
None
3. Assign times/time keeper  
None
4. Consent Agenda
  - 4.1. Approve the Minutes of Tuesday, February 9, 2021 (Regular)
  - 4.2. Approve the Minutes of Wednesday, February 10, 2021 (Special)
  - 4.3. Approve the Minutes of Tuesday, February 16, 2021 (Special)

***Brackett made a motion to approve the minutes of Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2021, as written and submitted. Potter seconded. Motion carried unanimously.***

***Brackett made a motion to approve the minutes of Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2021, as written and submitted. Potter seconded. Motion carried unanimously.***

***Brackett made a motion to approve the minutes of Tuesday, Feb 16, 2021, with an amendment (add a missing 't' to Brackett's last name 2). Shaw seconded. Motion carried unanimously.***

## 5. Board Communications

None

## 6. Public Comments

None at this time (*see Discussion for public comments*)

## 7. Reports to the Board

### 7.1. Superintendent

*(Kinnarney shared a report with the School Board prior to the meeting, see attached documents on our website, [sharonelementary.org/minutes-agenda](http://sharonelementary.org/minutes-agenda))*

Kinnarney shared that the school personnel is starting to get appointments for vaccination; this is for school personnel and contractors who are in direct contact with students. 30% have already signed in.

Kinnarney enthusiastically shared that the SU is launching a recovery task force. They will be in charge of creating a recovery plan to support students academically, socially and emotionally, and with engagement. According to data they have received, the focus will be on math and math intervention. He is hopeful that they can leverage some of the money for professional development for teachers and add interventionists separate from the district budget at the SU level.

WRVSU is also gearing up for a robust summer intervention program. It will have a focus on core content in the mornings.

The SU is also preparing for the new bill coming out of Washington DC: figuring out how to leverage the potential revenue. HBAC systems, heating systems will probably qualify across the buildings.

Right now, his main goal is how does the SU leverage federal funding to expand programs across the SU by utilizing these funds, even though these positions will not be funded at the local district level.

### 7.2. Principal

*(Haley shared a report with the School Board before the meeting, see attached documents on our website, [sharonelementary.org/minutes-agenda](http://sharonelementary.org/minutes-agenda))*

- Haley highlighted from his report that a local woman has provided her knowledge and has been working with Mrs. O'Hare on how to look at data and student work. They will be working on how to model how we look at data, and share that knowledge across the SU.
- Haley said he was very proud of the 6th graders. Before their break, they organized a winter carnival for the school. Haley is brainstorming on how to get students involved at the town level.
- We had two roof leaks this week. The 6th-grade classroom was leaking, and the library also. Haley will be working with Lyall Smith and Whitaker to work on a 5-year plan of what needs to be done in the building; the roof should be on the list.
- Haley thanked the PTO in advance: they are bringing in lunch for the staff on Wednesday.

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### 7.3. Business Manager

*(Weatherell shared a report and financial information with the School Board before the meeting, see attached documents on our website, [sharonelementary.org/minutes-agenda](http://sharonelementary.org/minutes-agenda))*

Weatherell read from her reports she had shared with the board (and public) before the meeting. Some highlights from the Revenue and Expenditure report:

On the revenue side:

- The interest income was updated and is projected to be at \$11,733.
- She increased the COVID reimbursement to match Sharon's expenditure to \$34,623.

On the expenditure side and potential savings:

- Weatherell increased the expenditure for COVID Reimbursement.
- She adjusted Field Trips, books, dues and fees, other technical services, and employee training and development.

Kinnarney emphasized that what they have been focusing on is to keep a positive balance and pay the deficit back promptly.

At this point, Weatherell is projecting a surplus of \$42,224.

Revised Tax Sheet:

The Yield has increased since the last meeting (\$11,385), which decrease the residential tax rate to \$1.5258 (increase is 0.13 instead of the 0.23 previously projected in January).

#### 7.4. Policy Committee (Anti-Racism Policy)

*(WRVSU shared an Anti-Racism Policy draft with the School Board before the meeting, see attached documents on our website, [sharonelementary.org/minutes-agenda](http://sharonelementary.org/minutes-agenda))*

Kinnarney has been getting feedback from community members across the SU. He is collecting feedback, and all the feedback will be shared with the WRVSU committee.

Brackett asked if any templates had been provided by the state, like other policies in the past.

Kinnarney said that right now, there is no model policy through the state. The SU has been working with Arielle King and Jameson C. Davis from Writing Wrongs. They have worked with the Hartford School District and the town of Hartford. They have been assisting the committee in starting this policy. BALE has helped secure the SU a grant to support professional development for teachers in this area.

The next step will be for the policy committee to finalize the draft. The feedback has been positive.

Steve Gagliardone spoke to the board. He urged the board to advocate that the SU hire an equity coordinator to work with all the districts. He argued that it is important work that needs to be done. It would help with implementing professional development for teachers; this coordinator would do curriculum audits.

## 8. Discussion Items

### 8.1 Academic Data Report (January Universal Assessment) - Principal Haley will present academic achievement data in both math and reading

*(Haley shared a data report with the School Board prior to the meeting, see attached documents on our website, [sharonelementary.org/minutes-agenda](http://sharonelementary.org/minutes-agenda))*

Haley shared an Academic Data Report. He shared that Sharon School has made gains since coming to school. During COVID, the Math scores dipped, as it was harder to teach remotely. Overall, scores dipped in the fall but are starting to come back.

## 8.2 Board approved 21-22 Fiscal Year Budget

Kinnarney heard from community members that there were concerns regarding the reduction in force that the budget supported. He shared that the SU is looking to leverage federal funding to support those areas. Math intervention needs to happen across the SU, because we don't have math intervention right now.

In addition to that, the SU is focused on how to engage students. He cautioned folks that it's not because it is not funded at the district levels, that the positions will not be funded at the SU level via grant funds. They are looking to leverage grant funds to get personnel back into the buildings. Those grant funds need to be in front of kids. The goal is to decrease FTE at the SU level to free up more funds. He shared an example: the SU went from having 4 different leveled SU coaches, coordinators, and administrators down to 1 chief administrator officer to free up additional funds in the consolidated federal grant.

*Angie Carpenter* asked Kinnarney to solidify the fact that Math Intervention will happen in Sharon. She inquired about the current 0.2 FTE position, and if that person will also be asked to be shared throughout the SU. Kinnarney answered that he is interested in keeping strong educators in front of the kids and not spreading them thin. He envisions hiring additional pathway coordinators and math interventionists across the SU.

*Nicole Antal* spoke as a member of the public. She asked the board to consider amending the budget approved at the January meeting, in light of the new financial information (new Yield that Weatherell shared). When the board voted on the budget, she argued, they were looking at a 0.23 difference in the tax rate. With the new yield, the difference is 0.13, and the majority of that increase is still due to the CLA, which the board has no control over.

She argued that if the General Ed Para position that has been removed from the budget was put back into the budget, it would be a difference of \$11 on a \$200,000. If the 0.2 FTE math interventionist position is also put back, it would be a \$22 difference.

She also mentioned that now that it is public knowledge that the General Ed Para position that is being cut has been staffed by someone in the PreK, she is worried about the preschool. She shared minutes from the August 2020 meeting, where the board learned that one of the 3 teachers had resigned, and it was decided in August not to replace that position. Antal is concerned that the training of a new para for this level will impact the program, staffed as it is.

*Liz Spriggs* spoke in her name and Blaise Smith's name, who couldn't be at the meeting. Spriggs and Smith are both co-directors of the preschool, and she spoke to give some facts about the position of preschool assistant (which is the position this general ed para has been fulfilling). She shared that because it is preschool, the requirements for the positions are different than at the elementary school level. The preschool assistant needs to have at least a current child development associate degree and at least 6 months of working with grade 3 children or younger. They have to have completed or working towards early development classes, hours requirements, etc., to be qualified to work as a preschool assistant. They both feel strongly that it would be extremely hard to lose this person.

*Angie Carpenter* spoke and gave an overview of her background as an educator. She explained that she understands that the board has asked the public to differentiate the position being cut from the person being asked to leave who is working in that position. She argued that losing support right now is not the time to do so. She is worried about the

classrooms' size and losing support, as we are in certain classrooms at the limit of what is recommended from the department of education in terms of ratio to follow Education Quality Standards. A general ed para, she said, would be not only needed, but required. If one general ed para leaves from the preschool, that position will be shifted from the elementary school, which would leave 5 classrooms without support.

She shared that Kinnarney has said that that person could become a special ed para, shifting a district position to an SU position. She said that in light of the recent event of a Special Ed para being asked to leave for another district, she is not comfortable losing local control over that supporting position.

She urged the board to reconsider amending the budget to add the general ed para back into the budget.

*Stephanie Gergely-Davis* thanked the board for letting the public speak on this matter. She reiterated Angie Carpenter's idea that it has been hard to differentiate between the position and the person holding that position, as we live in a small town with a small school.

She argued that parents cherish our school community, because of the people who are in it; the employees are curated adults that make up the school.

She also added that by removing this person from that position, we would be removing a male role model, which in the preschool world, is unfortunately unique. She argued that this person is an asset to our community and the education of our students.

*Suzanne Jones* spoke as a parent of a child who went through the Sharon school system a long time ago. She shared that her child was a child that needed a lot of support. The assistants in the classrooms are the people who provided him with the support. She spoke to support the children in the classrooms and the teachers.

*Karen Rodis* shared that for many years, Pano Rodis, her late husband, was a member of the school board and was very intricately involved in the building of the preschool program. It was at the time a unique offering, but important to offer. It was important to the group and Pano that the preschool was local, safe, affordable, and educationally excellent as a preschool opportunity for Sharon's children. She said that studies have shown that early education, the years at the preschool age, are critical in children's development. She attributes the success of the preschool to the highly professional staff and the community's support.

*Laura Lewis* asked Kinnarney about funding for the Math Interventionist position; if the grant doesn't happen, as stated by Kinnarney, what is the other pan for this position. Kinnarney shared that he is confident they will get the money. The data supports the need for it; the funds have been awarded, it is just allocated and proving the Math Intervention is needed. He said with the data collected; it would be hard to argue the positions are not needed. He is extremely confident it will be awarded.

*Holly Cathcart* also commented on the general ed para position and shared her support to keep this male educator in the building.

Potter said that back in January, the board was looking at a very different picture in terms of budget, as Antal stated. She understands that there are a lot of people in town with fixed incomes. But she argued that with the new financial information, the board has more information to go on with.

Brackett said to the public present that she also has children in the school, and that the board is in no way trying to diminish the educational opportunities for children in town. She agreed with Potter, saying that it is a different picture budget-wise than it was in January. She said that it would be appropriate to think about it.

*Will Davis* asked the board for a timeline to discuss the budget and possibly take action on this matter.

Potter asked Weatherell to give the board a new draft budget with the position of General Ed Para added back in the budget. The board decided to meet again on Monday, March 15, 2021, to decide on this matter.

8.3 WRVSU Food Service - The board will continue the discussion of the pros and cons to centralize food service at the WRVSU for fiscal year 21-22

Weatherell shared that there is still a want to continue the discussion about centralizing foodservice across the WRVSU. There is a need for the discussion; it has been hard to find trained substitutes across the SU at the foodservice level. There has been a warm reception to the idea, according to Weatherell.

8.4 Australian Ballot vs. In-person Annual Meeting - Board will discuss survey results collected regarding preferred style of meeting

The survey result from the community came in, with a majority favoring Australian Ballot.

Shaw asked the public to speak: Holly Cathcart shared her view, saying that she would love to think we are in a place in time where voting in person would be feasible, but that she doesn't think we will be there yet, in May. She also shared that if even one person is not comfortable coming to the meeting because of concerns, we should not have an in-person meeting.

Suzanne Jones also said she is in favor of voting by Australian Ballot.

Brackett shared that she has gone back and forth a lot on this issue since the last board meeting. She mentioned that she heard's Antal's comment at the last meeting, and that she has read the state's guidelines and that it seems hard to have an in-person meeting in those conditions.

Potter agreed with Brackett.

Both shared that an informational meeting or meetings will have to happen to allow for diffusion to occur. Discussion followed on how to reach everyone,

Shaw hears and understands the concerns. He shared that he still thinks it would be possible to have a safe in-person meeting, especially outside.

An informational meeting will have to occur 10 days before the meeting, the format, how many meetings, and dates will be determined at the April meeting.

8.5 19-20 Audit

This will be discussed on Monday at the Special Meeting as the Board just received the reports that day.

9. Action/Possible Action

1. Australian Ballot or finalize date/time of In-person Annual Meeting

*(See discussion 8.4)*

***Potter made a motion pursuant to Act 162 of 2020 moves to conduct the Sharon School District's 2021 Annual Meeting using the Australian voting mechanism for all voting***

**articles. Brackett seconded. Brackett - Yeah, Potter - Yeah, Shaw - opposed. The motion passed with Brackett and Potter voting in favor, and Shaw voting against.**

2. 19-20 Audit

*Tabled until Monday March 15, 2021 Special Meeting.*

10. New Hires

None

11. Executive Session - Contracts

***Brackett made a motion to enter an executive session at 7:42 pm. Potter seconded. Motion carried.***

*Present during executive session : Don Shaw, Chantelle Brackett, Sam Potter, Jamie Kinnarney, Keenan Haley, Lyall Smith, Tara Weatherell.*

12. Return to Public Session

***Potter made a motion to exit Executive Session to discuss contracts at 7:54 pm. Brackett Seconded. Motion carried. No action was taken.***

13. Confirm Next Meeting Dates

13.1. Tuesday, April 13, 2021 - 6:00 PM @ VIA GOOGLE MEET (Regular)

13.2. Monday, March 15 - 4 pm. @ VIA GOOGLE MEET (Special)

14. Adjourn

***Potter made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 pm. Brackett seconded. Motion carried.***