

**SMITHFIELD SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
SMITHFIELD HIGH SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER
THURSDAY, JUNE 4, 2026
6:30 PM
MINUTES**

Members present: Mr. Richard Iannitelli Chair, Mrs. Jessica Sala, Vice-Chair, Mrs. Amanda Fafard, Secretary, Mr. Jeffrey LeBlanc and Dr. Ashley Hogan. Also present: Lisa Odom-Villella, Superintendent, Wendy Amelotte, Assistant Superintendent, Eileen Crudele, Director of Special Education, John Ward, Interim Finance Director, Sean Clough, Esq., School Committee/School Department Attorney and Student Representative Logan Boucher.

1. Meeting called to order. Mr. Iannitelli called the meeting order at 6:30 pm.
2. Salute to the Flag. Mr. Iannitelli conducted a Salute to the Flag.
3. Emergency Evacuation and Health Notification. Mr. Iannitelli read the Emergency Evacuation and Health Notification and notified the public regarding the public comment sign up sheet as well as notification to the public to speak at the podium when addressing the committee.

4. Consent Agenda Items:

Mrs. Sala moved to approve Consent Agenda Items:

4.1 Minutes:

A) Open minutes of the May 21, 2026 School Committee Meeting

4.2 Bills:

A) Regular Bills totaling \$176,845.73

B) Direct Checks from May 22, 2026 through June 2, 2026 totaling \$27,235.81

Mrs. Fafard seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote.

5. High School Representatives Report.

Logan reported:

- Junior Prom was at Crystal lake on May 22, and Senior Prom was at Quidnesset Country Club on May 30. Both events were successful and safe dances.
- The new chapter of the National Honor Society has been selected. Two meetings have already taken place. Executive board elections are currently underway.
- Student Body Council campaigns are now underway, with upcoming seniors running for Social Chairs, Treasurer, Secretary, Vice President, and President. Students running for this position will represent the whole school in planning for pep rallies and other events involving all of the classes.
- Seniors last day was June 3, and will now take exams. Graduation is on the 13th.

6. Recognition of 2025-2026 Smithfield Retirees. The committee recognized Smithfield Public Schools employees that are retiring at the end of the 25/26 School Year and presented each with a certificate of recognition for their years of service to the school department.

<u>Employee</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Years of Service</u>
Cheryl Mattson	LaPerche	Paraprofessional	20
Mary Grundy	GMS	Social Studies Teacher	33
Jane Ramos	GMS	Science Teacher	37

Not in attendance of the meeting:

Janet Reardon	GMS	School Nurse	12
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7. Recognition of Smithfield 2025-2026 Education Support Professional of the Year. The committee recognized the Smithfield 2025-2026 Education Support Professional of the Year Renee Melaragno and presented her with a Certificate of Appreciation. Ms. Melaragno was present with her family to accept the certificate.
8. Recognition of Smithfield 2025-2026 Teacher of the Year. The committee recognized the Smithfield 2025-2026 Teacher of the Year. The committee recognized the Smithfield 2025-2026 Teacher of the Year Karalyn Anderson and presented her with a Certificate of Appreciation. Ms. Anderson was present with her family to accept the certificate.
9. Second reading and approval of the district's cell phone policy JIJC. Mrs. Sala moved to approve the district's cell phone policy JIJC. Mrs. Fafard seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote. The committee did a first reading at the last meeting, and suggested changes from that meeting had been incorporated into the policy. There were no further changes.
10. Discuss Review and Approve the naming of a district throwing cage in honor of a coach. Mr. LeBlanc moved to approve the naming of a district throwing cage in honor of coach John Sliney. Dr. Hogan seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote. This was a request submitted by the family to committee member LeBlanc to name a district throwing cage.
11. FY27 School Budget Update. Superintendent Odom-Villella gave an update on the FY27 budget stating difficult cuts were made, however there is still a gap. The General Assembly proposed to increase state aid and the state aid is intended to supplement the school budget. She stated that where the Budget Review Board has landed still doesn't allow the school department to have items needed in the budget. Superintendent Odom-Villella requests full local appropriation recommended by the BRB, to be approved by the town council. And encourages the public to support the school department at the June 9th BRB presentation at 6pm at Sr. Center. And also on June 16th at 7pm at town hall, the town council will review and finalize the school budget. The School Committee discussed the decreases the school department has received from the town. It was reiterated that the state is giving more money to support their mandates, meanwhile the town decreases the school budget leaving the school department to rely on state aid.
12. Discuss and Review timeline associated with unified transportation services. Mr. Iannitelli reviewed the timeline related to the unified transportation services and provided an overview to the public.

The current transportation contract with DATTCO expires on June 30. The School Department discussed a contract extension with DATTCO, and the School Committee had reluctantly agreed to a 10.5% increase. However, DATTCO subsequently required the School Department to back its pension plan agreement with the union, which the School Department was not interested in assuming that obligation.

The School Department then partnered with Lincoln Public Schools, whose transportation contract was also expiring, to solicit bids for transportation services. DATTCO submitted a bid for Lincoln but did not bid on Smithfield or the unified transportation arrangement between the two districts.

Following review of the bids received, the selected proposal was approximately \$188,000 less than DATTCO's proposal. An award letter was issued. Smithfield also entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with Lincoln, under which each community will continue to operate its own transportation services independently.

Public comment:

The following spoke about the bus merger and the impact on drivers and families.

Tracey Johnson

Denise Howard

Jennifer Dube

Dave Malone

Kristen

Lisa Gallagher

Nicole Le

Tony Suazo

Matt Taibi

Ken Sousa

John Dorsi

Richard Caprirol, General Mgr. of First Student, Transportation - spoke regarding the bidding process and the transportation merger. He also addressed the collective bargaining process with First Student, including fringe benefits for drivers and aides, and noted that all members would have equal rights under the agreement. He stated that First Student would be willing to negotiate with employees and explained the seniority process, including that there would be a transition between an ending union contract and a new contract. He also addressed concerns related to bus routes and noted that the location was clearly outlined in the proposal. Mr. Mencucci clarified that the RFP requires car seats to be provided by First Student, and further noted that parents have the option to provide their own car seats.

There were also discussions regarding labor and seniority issues between the employer and the union. Attorney Clough clarified that the contract term is five years and provided clarification on the terms of the RFP and contract mandates, including compliance with the RFP.

The School Committee asked questions, and Mr. Mencucci provided responses regarding bus occupancy, consolidation-related concerns, and procedures in the event of school closures in one district versus the other. The potential for an emergency bus to be housed in Smithfield was also discussed.

13. Discuss Review and Approve Memorandum of Agreement with Lincoln Public Schools for unified transportation services. Mr. LeBlanc moved to approve the MOA for unified transportation services as amended. Dr. Hogan seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote. The MOA has been reviewed by legal counsel. Discussion ensued regarding School Calendar Coordination. Superintendent Odom-Villella gave an explanation of different scenarios in the Smithfield calendar vs. Lincoln; she reiterated that the districts are separate and will abide by each district's calendar.

14. Communications:

- A) A copy of resignations/retirements/new hires in the district
- B) A copy of Budget Transfers
- C) A copy of Smithfield's award letter to First Student

15. Superintendent's Report.

NonViolent Schools Training:

As part of our commitment to strengthen our school culture to make all students feel welcome, NonViolent Schools training has started. 14 SHS students in grades 9-11 participated in a 3 day training to learn about the 6 principles of how to reduce conflict and engage in positive ways to include all. The students were engaged with the work and are planning how to expand and continue the efforts next year. 12 GMS will be participating next week in the training. 26 teachers from GMS & SHS will

be engaging in the training June 22-24th. The Professional Development Committee will be working on their annual Professional Learning plan that will include continuing this work next year.

Unified Field Day:

Last week, the district held their annual Elementary Unified Field Day. While all elementary Schools have field days for all students, most happening this week, the unified field day highlights activities that are inclusive for all students. Thank you to Principal Dorsey for coordinating this event annually, with the support from administrators, teachers, parents, and community members across the district.

Rural Health Transformation Grant:

Smithfield is one of 17 districts eligible to apply for the Rural Health grant. The goal of this grant is to expand health care opportunities and access to rural communities. The state was awarded a 156 billion dollar grant over five years. RIDE has been awarded 25 million over five years. The district is looking to add EMT to our pathways, occupational therapy and behavioral health pathways.

16. Public Forum:

SHS Music Dept. students - opposing non-renewal of the music teacher and the effects on the students. Erica Tibbetts - spoke about the non renewal of the music teacher in the district and its impact on students.

Melissa Moroni - spoke about the music dept. and decisions kids are faced with due to budget cuts. Spoke about the lack of opportunities for students with music in the district.

17. Consider Items to Add to Future Agendas: Mr. Iannitelli stated at the next meeting the attendance and medication policies will be on the next agenda as well as approval of handbooks.

18. Consider and Vote on Motion (by roll call vote) to convene Executive Session pursuant to RI Gen. Laws 42-46-5(a). Mrs. Sala moved to convene Executive Session pursuant to RI Gen. Laws 42-46-5(a). Discussions of matters pertaining to legal advice related to release and repayment agreement in accordance with RI Gen. Laws 42-46-5 (a)(2). Review of Executive Session minutes of April 16, 2026. Mr. LeBlanc seconded the motion. This requires an individual vote. The individual vote was 5-0 vote polled by Mr. Iannitelli, Chair.

19. Executive Session (Closed) pursuant to RI General Laws Section 42-46-5(a) to discuss:

- A) Matters pertaining to legal advice related to release and repayment agreement in accordance with the Open Meetings Act RI Gen. Laws 42-46-5(a)(2)
- B) Review of Executive Session Minutes of April 16, 2026
- C) Consideration and Vote to adjourn Executive Session

Returned to open session at 9:53 pm. Mr. Iannitelli reported there were no votes taken in the executive session.

20. Discuss Review and Vote on sealing of executive session minutes of June 4, 2026. Mrs. Sala moved to seal the executive session minutes of June 4, 2026. Mrs. Fafard seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote.

21. Consider, Discuss, and Approve release and repayment agreement. Mrs. Sala moved to approve the release and repayment agreement. Mrs. Fafard seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote.

22. Consider and Vote on Motion to Adjourn. Motion to adjourn made by Mrs. Sala; Mrs. Fafard seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Petrone
Secretary