Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes OPEN
Date: Monday, August 12, 2013 7pm

Held at: Birches Academy
419 South Broadway Ave, Salem, NH 03079

Present: Christie Storniolo, Chair, Dr. Dael Angelico-Hart, Head of School, Kevin Collins, Treasurer, Nicole Charest, Teacher Representative Ruth Templeton, Dianne Wright, Melissa Magnuson, John Mack, Caren Brown, Tara Ingalls, Christine Miele

Committee/Community Members: Jessica Wachsman

Regrets: Holly Ruocco, Secretary, Ola Lessard

Community Members: Tamara B., Joanne R., Emmalie A., Stephen D.

1. Call to Order: CS called to order 7:04 pm

2. Approval last meetings minutes: MM motions to approve the minutes for 7/22/13, JM seconds. All in favor: All; All Oppose: None. Minutes are approved.

3. No correspondence received by the secretary.

HOS Update

DAH provided an update. Please see her notes attached. In addition to her comments the following was discussed:

- Enrollment and the Student waitlist
  - School year 2012/2013 because the enrollment numbers fluctuated Birches lost approx $6,000.00
  - School year 2013/2014 Birches needs the state funding to pay out on all 168 students. In order to ensure this, the average classroom size must be 24 student per classroom and at some times, there will be 25 students per classroom

- Lead teachers
    - Kathleen Cox designated for grades 1-4
    - John Dinger designated for grades 5-8

  CS inquired if a situation arises when the HOS is off school property, would the 2 designated lead teachers collaborate on a matter requiring immediate attention.

  DAH confirmed the Lead teachers will collaborate when HOS is not on school property and an immediate decision regarding any matter is required.

- Student Directory
    - There will be a Student Directory established for the entire school to access that will include contact information for students.

  DAH discussed creating a disclaimer for families to authorize the release of their contact info.

  MM suggested adding that form to one of the upcoming mailings that has other forms families are required to sign and submit prior to the start of school.

  DAH discussed the concern of getting that paperwork back in a timely fashion to distribute to the participating families

  CS concludes that the form will be drafted up informing families that all families will be included in the Student Directory unless they complete the form to "Opt Out" of the directory. This will motivate the families to submit the paperwork that do not wish to be included in the Student Directory.

- Potential new furniture being donated in October.
    - The furniture is referred to as: Active Learning Echo Systems and there has been over $1 million dollars spent on the research and development of these products. The particular pieces being donated are Node Chairs and Verb Tables. It is estimated that the new furniture takes approximately 1 day for a student to get familiarized with. This is the same company that donated the "White Boards" to the Birches last year.
    - The Birches has in turn, agreed to have the classroom available upon request of the donating company to allow for visits so that the company can showcase the furniture to their potential clients.
    - John Dinger will be going to Grand Rapids, MI for training regarding the new furniture

JW elaborated on the donation informing that although the furniture will be set up in the new 7-8 classroom, grades 5-8 will experience the new furniture due to the rotating classes that will take place this school year.

Governance Update:

CS discussed the Strategic Session in June and following up on the items that were generated from that meeting. She is in the process of developing an Action Matrix. Christine D'Allesandro will be collaborating with CS determine the process. The tentative completion date is September. If completed, the matrix will be delivered to all Board members at the September meeting. Each subcommittee will then take the matrix and begin working on their committee's action items.

CS discusses the Bi-Laws and the terms that each member serves.

- Each position is a one year term with a 3 year maximum served. Candidates are voted in by existing Board members.
- JM, CB, KC, MM are up for re-election in September. CS encourages these members to inform her as soon as possible if they do not plan to serve on the Board for another term.
- There is an available Trustee position – Vice Chair. CS encourages current members to consider being elected for this position and to let her know as soon as possible as they would be elected at the September meeting.

Curriculum Committee Update:

DAH provided an update. Please see her notes attached.

Benchmark Writer's Workshop has been purchased. Only one copy of the Teacher's Manual was included.

DAH is looking for a volunteer to copy the Teacher's Manual for the Benchmark Writer's Workshop. There was a savings of $1000.00 by not purchasing additional copies of this manual

Finance Committee:

KC provided overview of August 1sts subcommittee meeting. He informed the Board that the recent audit was successfully completed.

JW reviewed the recent audit process.

- The auditors were onsite for 3 days.
- Next year they will only be onsite for 2 days.

- The audit package will be delivered to the school and NOT the state.
- There were no material defects.
- The auditors noticed the change in leadership amongst the Foundation Board. They approved the way the change occurred.
- A form needs to be created for when money is transferred between the Foundation and the school.

  CS aske if each transfer would require this form.

  JW provided necessary clarification on the process of the form.

  KC suggested that this new form is included in their procedure

  JW confirmed they are not required to include this form in their internal policy

7:39pm DW joins the meeting via speaker phone

- Auditors inform that BAC needs to determine a Capitalization threshold in our policy and suggests it's set @ $5k. Items owned by BAC that are $5k or over must be depreciated.

  CS wants this process added to the Finance policy.

  CM will have the policy updated and present to the Board for review at the September Board meeting.

  JW will provide CM with all the Audit information.

  JW discussed the DOE 25 report is due in September but not positive what the due date is. 6 Board members need to sign the report. This report is used to determine how much it costs to educate each individual student

  DW asked about the financial data that is submitted to the DOE. She wants to know if the DOE provides any feedback. Do they provide a comparison to other charter schools and where BAC stands in that comparison?

  CS asked KC to add that question to the Finance Parking List.

CS reviewed upcoming Board meeting dates to determine if the Finance reports can be completed in time for each proceeding Board meeting. December is the only meeting that poses an issue. The December meeting date is changed from 12/9 to 12/16. The website will be updated with the revised date.

JW informs the Board that she is in the process of getting quotes from other providers for workers compensation. LGC pools municipal workers like police, fire etc etc with schools and the rate is too high. Many local schools are switching.

JW reviews the monthly Finance Reports. The format has changed slightly based on the suggestion of the Auditors.

RT motioned to accept the 7/30/13 budget reports. CM seconded. In favor: All; Opposed: None. Reports are accepted.

Outreach Committee:

DAH discussed 9/9/13 @ 7pm – There will be a meeting. Parent Orientation/Birches 101 to help inform incoming families.

CS requests that Board members attend if available.

Back to School BBQ 8/26/13.

Back to School Night 9/19/13.

JW discusses upcoming fundraising event. JW & Aimye Hartounian are the coordinators of this event.

The Souper Bowl. This event is scheduled for 11/13/13 @ 5:30pm at the Atkinson Country Club in Atkinson, NH. Local restaurants will donate soup, baked goods, pastries, or other specialty items. Individuals can purchase a bowl and then sample all the available food. There will be a raffle and auction items as well.

This event needs a lot of volunteers and all Board members are encouraged to participate

There will be a "table" at the Back to School BBQ to help promote the event

The event coordinators are in the process of completing the marketing material for this event and as soon as it is completed, they will forward copies to all Board members so that they can assist in recruiting donations

8:13pm CS Requests motion to go into Closed Session

KC motions, MM seconded, All approved.

9:13pm Open Session

JM motions to seal the minutes, CB seconded the motion to seal the closed session minutes. All Approved.

Personnel:

- HOS Contract Reviewed

DW wants “Art Integration” more defined in the HOS Contract

CS creates official statement for the modification.

CS requests motion to approve the contract with the modification, CM motions to approve, CB seconded. In favor: All; Opposed: None.

Public Comment:

Stephen D – Who is making sure that the mission statement, is being adhered to?

CS – Replies that that is the responsibility of the Governing Board

Stephen D. – Does anyone on the Governing Board shadow the HOS or faculty members?

CS – There is no specific policy but includes all Board members and staff to participate in the 360 degree evaluation process

Emmalie A – How does the complaint process work?

CS – Updates are currently being made to the Parent/Student Handbook. All complaints would be directed to the HOS. The actual process will be defined in the 2013/2014 Parent/Student Handbook. *Clarified at the 9/9/13 meeting. There was a potentially verbiage that the board sees all correspondents that come into the school. However, this is at the discretion of the chair by law, as explained by the attorney.

Stephen D– What is the volunteer policy? Do they get background/criminal checks? His concern is if there is a volunteer working with his child, he wants reassurance that his child will be safe.

CS – There was Volunteer Orientation last year and will be again this year. Any volunteer that in on school property more than 3 times monthly are required to have the necessary background check done at their own cost.

Emmalie A – Why doesn’t everyone get them?

CS – The Birches doesn’t want to lose any person that would like to volunteer and offer any type of assistance, therefore requiring a background check on a volunteer that only comes 2 times a year, may deter that person and then Birches has lost that opportunity.

DAH – States that there needs to be a balance between safety and volunteering and therefore, the 3 times monthly is what the Birches requires.

Stephen D – Does the Salem Police Dept. offer any type of discount in the cost of criminal/background checks?

CS – The background checks are not done through the local police station.

JM – Asks if the faculty/staff have ID cards

JW – The Birches is working on this for this school year

CM – Who is tracking volunteer hours to ensure that the policy of 3 times monthly is being adhered to?

JW – Advises this has always been a "self-policing" item

MM – States that she thought this was being handled by the Foundation Board

DW – Doesn't feel this is something that a volunteer should be tracking

CS – HOS will ensure a process and policy are in place and provide an update on this at the September Board meeting.

An inquiry was made about the status of an issue raised and when a response would be provided.

CS – If there is a complaint filed and it is discussed at a Board meeting, it will be discussed in a "Closed Session . DAH – replied that she sent a response today (8/12/13)

Jo R. – What is the typical response time when a complaint is filed?

CS – Need to work with the HOS and that a response is right away. *Clarified at 9/9/13 meeting. Response is immediate but the resolution time will vary depending on the complexity and the time of year.

CB motioned to adjourn meeting. DW seconded. In favor: All; Opposed: None.

Meeting adjourned at 9:47pm.