Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Date: December 14, 2015

Held at: The Birches Academy
419 South Broadway, Salem NH

Present: Kara Christesen (Chair), Christine Miele (Secretary), Andy Ducharme, Dael Angelico-Hart (HOS), Jessica Wachsman, Alyssa Ross, Christie Storniolo, Dianne Wright (Co-Treasurer) (Call-In), Nicole Charest (Teacher Representative), Alexa Stewart, Jody Ronayne (Co-Treasurer), Melissa Magnuson (phone)

Regrets: Erin McArdle (Teacher Representative)

Public: Mike Gendreau, Debbie LeBlanc, John Toth

KC called meeting to order at 6:38 PM

1. Meeting Minutes from 10/19/15, 11/16/15:
    - AD motions to approve minutes from both, AR seconds. All in favor. None opposed. AS, JR abstain.
2. Motion to accept resignation of Christine Miele for board secretary. KC accepts with regret.
3. Motion to nomination Alyssa Ross for board secretary by KC. Approved.
4. KC will start to use birches.edu email for all board-related correspondence. Updated mailing distribution list will created to reflect this. KC confirmed everyone's email for the list, as well as the cell phone for each board member.
5. No correspondence.
6. Accountability report was submitted to the state; KC asked if anyone had anything to address or ask questions about.
    - DW asked if we put in field trips, especially Washington, DC. DAH said no, and she will add it under 'other learning experiences.'
    - Personal Learning Plan was discussed. Agreed to put this concept in the parking lot to discuss how to proceed with this school goal, including if it should be different at the elementary level and the middle school level.
    - Report used to be due Aug 1, but DAH is not sure when it will be due for 2016 or when we will get the notice regarding the timing. An online component called the charter dashboard (questions, drop box) is to be implemented, so it would be less narrative but still capture much of the same information in a more templated way in order to more easily access data.

- CS asked if we should put this on the website for both current and prospective parents. DAH thought that would be fine.

7. Student Poetry. DAH shared that Mrs. Black-Ward took the opportunity to submit some poems to a publication from the American Library of Poetry, and a number (7-8) were published in the book. Two of these students – Kendall Toth and Julia LeBlanc – shared their poems with the Board. Picture was taken by AR to submit to local papers.
8. Head of School Update
    - DW asked about renewal. DAH said the state board is quite behind (2 schools due last year have not been renewed, they have an extension until sometime 2016) because the state has not gotten to them yet.
    - At Charter Association Meeting, 3 schools talked about parent communication which DAH feels validated a lot of what we are doing. We don't do Twitter, but DAH doesn't feel it's needed at this point. Other schools shared the challenge about parent information. ASD always answers replies with a link to information; CM is going to try to help with doing this for Birches by getting all the links in the Bulletin onto the website.
    - 600K left of start up funds and there are 2 charter schools coming before Board of Education in January (LEAF up north, Windham – both have a STEM focus)
    - JW and DAH have looked at current 5th grade to try to project #s; best guess now is around 8 will leave.
    - Have a 2K advertising budget that we could use to target to get the middle school
        i. Retain 5th graders
        ii. Target new middle school
    - 3 alums made honor roll at Central Catholic
    - DAH is going to talk to the middle school teachers about putting a mid-term and study skills in place for the 7th/8th graders, for increasingly preparedness for high school
    - Hired a RTI teacher for part time help 2hr/day on both math and reading
    - Students participated in tree lighting on Dec 2
    - First holiday concert for K-3 went really well on Dec 10. 4-8 is this week, as well as Barnes & Noble.
    - Met with police and fire regarding safety situation should public storage open up; DAH provided copies of a School Security Assessment in conjunction with Homeland Security; there are grants of up to 20K that we are now eligible for related to this. These are numbered and must be given back are January meeting.
9. Personnel Committee Update.
    - AS shared that the committee talked about using funding for extra benefits for teachers to help offer a more enticing offer package. Idea to ask Staff via Survey Monkey what benefit they'd most like to get (i.e. disability, retirement, dental, cash, etc.)
    - Decision: JW committee will pull together #s for what the benefits would cost, to be discussed in next finance committee meeting. If we have those numbers, then we will discuss in the Jan 11 meeting.
10. Finance
    - Donor Relations job position. Now that we have the funding and our 10-year plan is not to stay in this facility, we need to consider this as a paid position if we are going to continue to try to raise upwards of 100K/year. The Board reviewed the job description. Equitable aid form revealed some additional money where this would be funded from.
        i. Decision: finance committee will review the job description and the funding. KC will reach out to legal team to discuss the reporting structure/org chart.

- JW needs to send KC the Oct, Nov and Dec to have Board accept in January.

11. Foundation Update
    - 501(c) status has been reinstated, with retroactivity; ensuring all other filings are happening
    - Reviewed Foundation/Friends fundraising budget.
        i. Annual Appeal has gone out with 3 different letters (new, never donated, previously donated) – 40K goal, at 9.5K – aiming for 100% participation; focusing on participation and education even for small amounts
        ii. Fill Your Cup – waiting for sports memorabilia which should go over the 20K goal
        iii. Misc Friends of the Birches events are already more than halfway to the annual goal (5.5K on goal of 10K)
12. Bylaw revisions – group discussion on pages 1-4 based on legal input. KC made changes directly into the document.
13. Motion to move to non-public by KC. AS seconded.
14. Motion to move to public by AD. AS seconded. Motion to seal the minutes from non-public by AD AS seconded. All in favor; unanimous.

9:30 meeting adjourned**.** RT motions, AD seconds. All in favor.