Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Date: May 11, 2015

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

Present: Andy Ducharme (Chair), Dianne Wright (Treasurer), Dael Angelico-Hart (HOS), Jessica Wachsman, Kara Christesen, Alyssa Ross (acting secretary), John Mack, Alexa Stewart, Jody Ronayne, Christie Storniolo, Melissa Magnuson

Regrets: Christine Miele, Erin McArdle (Teacher Representative), Nicole Charest (Teacher Representative)

Public: None

AD called meeting to order at 7:09 PM

1. Public Comment or Correspondence: None
2. Head of School Update from DAH:
    a. No changes in attendance #s from last meeting
    b. Book fair was very successful – rep who ran it was surprised for a school our size. Taking profits in books, about $2500 (over about $1200 if taken in cash)
    c. Teacher Appreciation Week taking place this week
    d. Parent Satisfaction survey. 41 completions, over about 30 last year. A few people disagreed with nearly every question. Some learnings:
        d.i. DAH will create a list for all things you can do to support the school, over helping out in the classroom.
        d.ii. Excellence in science came up, as it has in staff – so teachers are going to be more explicit with labeling things as doing science.
        d.iii. Consider a volunteer coordinator – but this takes a lot of time. Or put together a 'cheat sheet' for each event and break it down to help people not feel overwhelmed and give them a roadmap.
    e. Smarter Balanced test feedback – discussion on accommodations, feel it was a bit stressful but overall it went well. No indication on when results are expected.
    f. ELL plan. Followed template from state. We pay an ELL teacher a few hours a week to work with the ~6 ELL students. No action needed by the Board. DAH submitting to the state.

g. HB563 vote this coming Thursday. DAH will continue to communicate to the school.
h. Curriculum committee canceled due to lack of availability
i. Personnel committee – J. Mack did an exit interview of M. Devine, whose last day is this Friday
j. Kindergarten and 1st house open houses planned

3. Finance Reports:
    a. Finance report reviewed. Before/after care is doing well, enrichment is doing less so but is still not an expense and is positive to the community.
    b. Got last federal grant check – must be spent by end of June
    c. Kindergarten location. Finance has had a number of meetings due to landlord requests regarding downstairs space. He has put together a proposal that finance committee has reviewed. His concerns were that as part of our lease we will do what we can to mitigate sound, but it also says it is understood we are a school. Lawyer says this is subject to interpretation. Sound proofing is 60K which neither school nor landlord will pay for. We have reiterated this is not within our budget given funding by state being unknown, and have shared that more space is at the bottom of our list. He wants to give us the space now with a few accommodations and if the state increase comes and is at least 1K, we will start to pay Sept 2016. If increase does not come, we are not obligated and we would still have right of first refusal. Jessica and Christine met, discussed that salary increases are first priority, some benefits and additional positions are next priorities. We asked about building a wall to split up the space and he said he would consider that. He cannot take the space back during the school year even if he finds a new tenant. Storage unit is still under discussion. Finance voted 5-0 to proceed. JM moved to vote, MM seconded. All in favor (JM, DAH, KC, AS, AD, MM, DW, JR, AR) no against. (CS had left).
4. Foundation Update:
    a. Foundation has brought in over 100K this year, plus expenses
        a.i. Foundation should look to buy a laptop with Quickbooks given the size of the revenue and to retain documentation for history, email, etc.
    b. C. Miele has recommended that we do a special recognition for the Foundation board given the success; DAH suggested an acknowledgement at the spring concert. Discussed putting a rock with all board members names at the bottom of the tree. Both were agreed to.
5. Main Issues and Policy Updates:
    a. Only policy was ELL
    b. KC provided update on HoS review. Process has been realigned and streamlined. Surveys going to board and staff; need 100% participation by June 5. Review to be completed by July. One thing to improve is to make HoS goals more clear to Board, and discussed throughout the year. KC will send out DAH reflections on current goals.
    c. Agreed that we should have a long term planning meeting after we know the funding. Possibly July 18.
6. Housekeeping
    a. No minutes to approve yet from April
    b. Question about where the board bios are – JW to go back to CM

JM approves to adjourn, KC seconds. All agree.

8:27 meeting adjourned.