Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Date: December 10, 2019

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

Present: Chair: Christie Storniolo (CES), Secretary: Alyssa Ross (AR), Christine Miele (CM), Bob Hawkes (BH), Michael Gendreau (MG), Debbie Kruzel (DK)
Staff: Chris Smith (CDS), Jessica Wachsman (JW), Erin Balfe (EB)
Consultant: WIlliam Nevious (WN)

CES called meeting to order at 5:53 pm

General

Approval of minutes from Nov 12 meeting. CM motions to approve, MG seconds. All others approve. None opposed.

Correspondence: none

Next meetings

- January 7: 5:15pm Finance committee
- January 14: 5:15pm Board
- February 4: 5:15pm Finance committee
- February 11: 5:30pm Board

Chamber of Commerce event

- 7:30-9am January 29
- Chamber flyer has been sent
- Need a flyer/postcard for legislative to invite them to the Chamber open house
- AR to add to website in January
- AR, CDS discuss agenda on December 13

Foundation update

Fill Your Cup, November 22

- 315 attendees, including 123 children
- Good amount of new families attended
- Approx. $11k in revenue after expenses
    - Will decide about entertainment options in future years to lower expenses
- Castleton is reserved for next year; will confirm soon if we will retain the date or change the time of year

Spring Campaign

- Cash calendar

Annual Campaign

- Holiday/New Year mailing in the draft stage; goal to get this out in 2019 before the close of the tax year

Friends of the Birches

- Parent Date Night/Movie Night held 12/6
- Scholastic Book Fair scheduled for 12/16-12/19; parent shopping night 12/18
- Special Friends Day scheduled for 12/19
- Planning:
    - Valentine Gram
    - Another parent date night in February

National School Choice Week: begins January 29

- Chamber Open House 1/29
- Looking to host and Current Family & Alumni Open House would like to be 1/31; AH and JW to plan

Dean of School update

Enrollment

- 225
- K lottery at 27; overall waitlist stable at 137

Events and Updates

- Had two snow days already; followed Salem's lead and changed Wednesday, December 11 to a full day instead of an early release
- Ready the Prepared Puppy came to Forest Forum on November 21 to talk about emergency preparedness
- Windham PD scheduled to hold for another ADD parent prep session on Tuesday, December 17
- Grant received for VEX robotics for $3,392.00; covers everything to get us through a year of competition.
    - BH motion to accept grant, DK seconds. All in favor.. None opposed.

Makerspace

- First after-school sewing class held; students got familiar with the machine and have a series of practice lessons in process.
    - Considering making pillow cases for Boston cancer patients; a grandparent will donate material and her time

Personnel/HR

- Fully staffed; one teacher on maternity leave, one going out soon

Arts Integration

- Mrs. Balfe's class created boomtowns, some using scale models, for towns west of the Mississippi
- Third grade students wrote and typed out poems and then drew pictures for fall
- Saplings 2 studied maps and then worked to create their own

Middle School Update

- Sixth grade continues to improve; seventh and eighth graders are taking more initiative
- Robin Neill from the Intergenerational Collaborative returned to Mrs. Kinson's class to talk about steam engines
- Continue data analysis and continue student learning modifications
    - We have made a few referrals and are making plans to assess our current programs of instruction to see if there are better alternatives available.
    - Anecdotal evidence shows the teachers are feeling that "Fundations" is efficacious, but at the end of the year we will have a more concrete idea.

Committee updates

Finance

- December committee meeting postponed due to weather.
- Will do staff education regarding how our state funding comes to help them better understand how and when to make requests.
    - Created teachers wish lists for the holidays
- Reviewed financial statements through July-November 30. CM motions to accept, BH seconds. All approve. None opposed.
- Federal grant: discussed tabled in November to December 13. Fiscal committee provided a list of questions to the DoE, who in turn have come to some of the schools to help answer the questions. JW providing information as requested.
    - Board members to send by December 13 a personalized note to Joint Legislative Fiscal committee in support of accepting the grant.
    - WIll either post on community Facebook or send an email to encourage parents to reach out as well.

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Outreach

- Pursuing communications intern; have some leads
- Website:
    - Creating parent study on usability and input
    - Developing Life After Birches page to talk about the high school process
- Ongoing promotion on external Facebook account
- Developing Instagram account; goal to be live by January
- Community Ambassadors
    - Have developed a role description
    - Have identified 15 potential people
    - Will recruit after Christmas
- New Projects:
    - Create a crisis communication plan
    - Develop Alumni/Past Donor newsletter to be sent in January
    - Realtor outreach
- Next meeting: January 8

Strategic Planning

- 2 meetings scheduled

- Planning session scheduled

Governance, Personnel, Curriculum, Assessment & Accountability
- All need to schedule meetings

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Policy Reviews

December Policies
- Approval of Sexual Harassment for Employees policy. CM motions to approve with changes discussed, AR seconds. All approve.
- Approval of Non Discrimination policy. CM motions to approve with changes discussed, AR seconds. All approve.

January Policies to review
- Sexual Harassment for Students.
- Federal Grants Management.

Capital Campaign

Bloomerang software purchased to manage donors; populating with information from other databases/existing sources

Case for Support
- Draft developed with collective input received from Board
- Board is asked to review the draft no later than Friday, December 13

Committees
- Draft developed with committee descriptions and potential members
- Need to agree on giving amounts per role

Campaign handbook in development

Public comment: none

AR motions to adjourn. BH seconds. All agree. 7:56pm meeting adjourned.