Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Date: October 13, 2020

Held via Zoom videoconferencing

Present: Chair: Christie Storniolo (CES),Vice Chair: Christine Miele (CM); Secretary: Alyssa Ross (AR), Michael Gendreau (MG), Debbie Kruzel (DK), Bob Hawkes (BH)
Staff: Chris Smith (CDS), Jessica Wachsman (JW), Aimye Haroutunian (AH), Erin Balfe (EB)
Public: Pamela Sarantis

CM called meeting to order at 5:35pm

General

This meeting is taking place during the COVID-19 pandemic; we are holding the meeting via videoconferencing software. The public was notified and invited to join. CES noted that even when school reopens the Board may continue to meet via Zoom in order to limit activity at school.

Approval of minutes from September 15 regular meeting. MG motions to approve with change to the November Board meeting date, DK seconds. MG, AR, DK approve. CM, MG abstained. CES had not yet joined to vote. None opposed.

Correspondence

- none

Next meetings

- November 10 5:30pm Finance committee
- November 24: 5:30pm Board
- December 8: 5:30pm Finance committee
- December 15: 5:30pm Board

Dean of School update

Enrollment

- 2020-21 enrollment at 224, wait list at 125
- ~25% fully remote

Status related to COVID protocols

- Moving to a four-day week

    - Planning out logistics for room dividers, etc.
    - Concentrating on K-2 as they will be back in the building first on October 13.
    - Brainstorming with other classes to ensure we are ready when the rest of the kids come back later in October.
- Have had some technical glitches; working to correct them and be creative in finding work-arounds. Parents are good at calling CDS to share issues so that we can address them in real time.
- Specials teachers are doing a great job delivering their content in a blended format.
- Parents have been very cooperative about getting kids tested when they are potentially exposed or showing symptoms.
- Professional Learning Community groups (teachers helping teachers during COVID) have produced good results; teachers have been working well together.

Overall Status

- Giving the state assessment this month in grades 4-8.
- Held virtual back to school night on Thursday October 8th. Feedback was good. Mrs. Templeton did an excellent job creating a repository to house all of the teacher links. She also worked on the parent resource page and a staff site.
- Held school picture day on two days and remote students came in to get their pictures taken. Group pictures are postponed until the spring.

Personnel/HR

- No changes

Foundation update

- Current Fundraisers:
    - Cash calendar - November
        - Tickets to be sold through October 31
        - $10 or 3 for $25
        - Goal is to raise $10,000; asking each family to see at least 15 tickets
    - Bags2School - October 29 and 30
    - Meadow Farm Catalog
        - 8 different catalogs - wrapping paper, candy, etc.
        - Sales direct ship to purchaser
        - Online store will open 10/1/2020-11/30/2020
    - Tuft & Needle 25% of all mattress sales will go to the school.
        - We earned a free mattress to raffle off
        - No set goal; at $1579

Committee updates

Finance

- Reviewed September financials budget to actual with COVID 2020-21 budget. DK motions to approve, MG seconds. All in favor. None opposed.

Governance

- Have 5 potential new members, interviewing one tonight

Outreach

- Last meeting: October 7, 8am
- Next meeting: November 11, 8am
- External Media:
    - Intern on hold until Alyssa has more content/time to train and manage
    - Set goal for 2-3 Facebook and Instagram posts/week - dependant on content from school and with COVID we don't want to add anything else to anyone's to do list
    - Alyssa updated website Life After Birches page with fall 2020 info for 8th graders and current fundraisers
- Ongoing Projects:
    - Christine updating Bloomerang
    - Christine and Debbie working on the Alumni/Past Donor newsletter
    - Reaching out to parent ambassadors to kick start the program (launched just before COVID so it never got started)
- New Projects:
    - Alyssa to work on crisis communication plan, and later a management plan (plan is much more detailed)
    - Reaching out to local realtors to let them know about Birches to pass information to their clients
    - Alyssa to submit lottery and cash calendar to newspaper

Personnel

- CDS 2019-20 review in process with subcommittee of AR, CES
    - CDS has Board/teacher input, will add his comments by October 24 - but initial conversation signals agreement
    - Once CDS input is in:
        - AR to schedule time with each Board member to review
        - CES and AR to meet with CDS to verbally review the final and confirm 2020-21 goals

Assessment & Accountability, Capital Campaign, Curriculum, Strategic Planning

- All need to schedule meetings

Policy Reviews

October policies to review

- Personal Medical Leave. MG motions to approve, CES seconds. All approve. None opposed.
- COVID attendance policies. BH motions to approve, CES seconds. All approve. None opposed.

November policies to review

- none

Interview of Board Candidate - Pamela Sarantis

- Pamelia Sarantis, parent of an alumni and a current 5th grader
  - Has experience with multiple schools, IEPs, marketing, real estate
  - Interested most in joining the curriculum and facilities committee.
- Motion to move to non-public. CM motions, MG seconds. Roll call: all in favor.
- Motion to return to public. CM motions, BH seconds. Roll call: all in favor.
- Nomination of Pamela Sarantis to join Birches Board of Trustees. CM motions, BH seconds. All in favor.

No public comment.

CM motions to adjourn. BH seconds. All agree. 7:25pm meeting adjourned.