Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Date: November 24, 2020

Held via Zoom videoconferencing

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

CES called meeting to order at 5:38pm

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 October 13 regular meeting. BH motions to approve, PS seconds. All in favor. None opposed.

Correspondence

- Board received a letter from retired teacher Cory Mangelinckx thanking us for her tenure and all the the Board did for her and the teachers, especially during COVID

Next meetings

- December 8: 5:30pm Finance committee
- December 15: 5:30pm Board
- January 5: 5:30pm Finance committee
- January 12: 5:30pm Board

Dean of School update

Enrollment

- 2020-21 enrollment at 224, wait list at 125

Status related to COVID

- Several COVID cases among staff and students; moved to two full weeks remote before and after Thanksgiving to protect from spread; have had teachers affected by student quarantine and moved impacted class to remote
- Will fumigate the building via parent volunteer before school resumes
- The nurse and Health officer are working hard to be proactive in sending students home and educating parents about when their child can return and getting them tested. We have had a couple of incidents of understandable pushback, but most parents are very understanding and supportive. The only pushback we have gotten has been from instances where siblings are presenting with symptoms on different days.
- Technical issues have been greatly improved this month.
    - Teachers have employed some workarounds
    - Internet signal itself has been more stable
    - Received drastically fewer parent phone calls about technical issues.
- Have had a couple of days with teachers out due to illness or quarantine that have taxed the system, but so far we have been able to compensate. There is a possibility, going into the holidays, that this could cause us to go remote for a short period of time.

Overall Status

- Conducted state assessment interim testing in grades 4-8; initial data looks good.
- Mrs. LeBlanc has begun putting out Forest Forum again and has done a great job; she plans to expand by adding classroom activities, and is working with teachers on this.
- Mrs. LeBlanc, Mrs. Osorio and CDS met to talk about a Birches tour/informational video. CES to bring proposal to the Board before proceeding.

Personnel/HR

- Added Jennifer LeBlanc into the Art room for a small amount of hours to help out Mrs. Hawkes; it seems to be a great fit.

Foundation update

- Annual Appeal
    - Under discussion about when to launch; goal is early December
- Focus on community
    - Teacher support monthly (pies for Thanksgiving, monthly snacks, etc.)
    - Friends Helping Friends to help Birches families in need during the holidays
    - Have reopened the school store
- Current Fundraisers:
    - Cash calendar - November
        - Have 6 more days of drawing

        - Good participation, including from new families, but $10,000 goal fell short; feel the virtual aspect impacted participation
    - Bags2School October drive $242
    - Scholastic Bookfair
        - Underway as a virtual event
        - We won't get money but we will get product credit
    - Scrips gift cards
    - Meadow Farm Catalog
        - 8 different catalogs - wrapping paper, candy, etc.
        - Sales direct ship to purchaser
        - Online store open until 11/30
    - Tuft & Needle 25% of all mattress sales will go to the school.
        - We earned a free mattress to raffle off
        - No set goal; at $1700

Committee updates

Finance

- Reviewed October financials budget. DK motions to approve, BH seconds. DK, MG, BH, AR, CES in favor. PS abstains. None opposed.
- Motion to 45 SPSRF program. BH motions to approve, AR seconds, All in favor. None oppose
- New state grant
    - JW attended a call last week to determine allowable expenses under a new 10M grant from the state
    - We applied for 28K, 15K of which is not yet allocated and may not be spent unless we get the grant.
    - All money must be spent and items in hand by 12/30
    - Applications are not due until 12/1 and we won't know until 12/8 much we will get.

Governance

- Have a few potential new members, MG continuing to investigate

Outreach

- November 11 meeting canceled, scheduling for December
- Promotion for K lottery, cash calendar in Windham Independent
- Continue to publish 2-3x/week on Facebook and Instagram

Personnel

- CDS 2019-20 review completed

Assessment & Accountability, Curriculum, Strategic Planning

- All need to schedule meetings

Capital Campaign

- Need to meet with bank in January to ensure we have the financial plan in place
- Charter renewal starts summer 2021; if we want to expand our student population with a new school we would apply for it then
    - There is some state funding available for this

Policy Reviews

Held off on reviewing policies in November, will also hold off for December and resume in January - Board to be notified which to review

No public comment.

AR motions to adjourn. BH seconds. All agree. 6:58pm meeting adjourned.