Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Date: October 12, 2021

Held at The Birches Academy

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

CES called meeting to order at 5:36pm

General

Board meetings are intended to take place in person again, though committee meetings may still be via Zoom.

Approval of minutes from September 21 regular meeting. PS motions to approve, CM seconds. All others in favor. None opposed.

Correspondence

- 2 letters related to school reopening plan; will submit into the record when we get to that part of the agenda

Upcoming events:

- October 14: state inspection related to charter
- October 27: spotlight tour

Next meetings

- November 2: 5:30pm Finance committee (remote)
- November 9: 5:30pm Board
- December 7: 5:30pm Finance committee (remote)
- December 14: 5:30pm Board

Dean of School update

2021-22 Reopening Plan

- CES welcomed the in person audience, shared the guidelines

- CDS shared:
    - Quarantine numbers
        - 25 closed cases
        - 8 open cases
    - Have had 1 case in school but no in-school transmission
        - PS asked about administrative requirements to handle a single case; CDS and JW spent hours over the weekend calling staff and reaching out to families, answering all questions
        - CES asked students from that class are in the SASS testing; JW said there are several but also a number of students went and proactively got tested
    - Results from SASS: Results from the second round were also all negative.
    - State information: the nurse continues to participate in the twice a month call with the state (DHHS) and share info/documentation with CDS and the Board.
    - At this time the teachers have not shifted their stance on mask wearing.
    - CDS recommends we continue with masks; cited a study from Arizona about lower transmission rates for schools wearing masks.

- Public comment on reopening plan:
    - Donna Wells: in favor of mandatory masks, citing the zero transmission from the one case and lack of contract tracing - shared how it would have impacted her and others, financially (personally and for the school), emotionally and otherwise if they would have had to quarantine due to that case. Wants to understand threshold for having to go remote.
    - Chhourath Tan: asks how school was made aware of the case? CDS confirmed it was that from the family. He asks that masks be optional.
    - Chris Mederois: Did not see the AZ study cited but shared other studies which he will share with CDS which are all saying masks are not significantly significant and can be threatening to student health. Asking for parent choice.
    - Jessica Grover: reiterated her comments from last meeting about what Salem is doing and how it is working there, including when there was an outbreak - has a letter from the district she can share about how they're handling it.
    - Daniel Keefe: reiterated concerns about virus molecule size and asked for mask optional.
    - Richard Glatz: a doctor in a high-transmission community who has three kids in different schools, those with optional masks are seeing higher cases than those fully masked - with closer contact settings more likely to transmit and that time of year is coming up - especially in a school where most kids aren't eligible feels masks protects them
    - Rob St. Germain: here again to ask for parent choice; cited studies from Florida that found no statistical difference between counties that required masks and

those that didn't; there was a case of strep throat in his son's class - why are parents not informed of that when they are informed about COVID
    - Paul Burns - feels there is no easy way to parent during COVID but believes strongly that the mask mandate is right; you can find studies that point both ways; until there is a vaccine available for all children some kids are scared and don't feel protected

- CES reminded everyone we got 2 letters: one from teachers and one from a parent

- Board comments on reopening plan:
    - DK: we shouldn't rely only on the CDC; feels the mainstream media is invoking fear - reiterated her scientific background and stance for mask choice
    - PS: feels teachers are asking for masks and they are already overburdened so if we don't we are not serving them; schools all around us are shutting down due to clusters
    - AR: wants to vote mask optional but the teachers are very largely pro-mask and the concern is we will lose staff which we can't afford to do; we already are tight and teachers are leaving jobs everywhere so it would be easy to lose teachers; acknowledges that kids are without masks everywhere and families concerned can still enforce masks - but also that mental health goes both ways and some students and staff will be emotionally impacted if others around them at school are not wearing masks.

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CES asked if anyone has changed their vote from the September meeting. No one has. Mask policy remains in place. CES shared that none of the Board wants masks and we will continue to look at the data and listen to our staff. Confirmed we will revisit this in the November meeting.

Enrollment

- 222 enrolled; all openings are in K so will look to fill those slots - could be in K or another grade level
- Wait list at 134; Chris and Jessica will provide details by grade next month.

Events and Updates

- Dungeons and Dragons had a successful first meeting
- Forest Forum is running with a limited number of classes i person and others in their classrooms; it is getting better as we adapt to technology needs for broadcasting it to the classes in real time.
- Looking at alternative formats for the Holiday shows
- Working to schedule Robin Neill back into the school to share his historical ship art and history with our middle school again

- 6th grade students went on a field trip to Camp Lincoln; they enjoyed it and represented us well.

Personnel Update

- Hired third grade TA: Ms. Sorenson
- Searching for an additional TA

Foundation update

***Current activity*:**

- Meadow Farms Catalog sales: last day to purchase 12/3 for holiday delivery
- Socktober (sock collection for the homeless): collecting until 10/29
- Boo Grams: Bugs & Kisses holiday gram sale. $1 each delivered 10/29 to students

Possible community engagement opportunities in the coming months:

- **Salem Town Halloween Event**
  - Tuesday, October 26 from 4:30PM-6:00PM (rain date: Wednesday, October 27, 4:30PM-6:00PM)
  - Would have a table to hand out candy to registered cars. Free to participate.
- **Windham Mom Alliance**:
  - Annual Daycare/Preschool/Kindergarten Fair at Golden Brook School on November 13.
  - Usually do sand art.
  - Last two years have not been widely attended but they moved from Feb to a Nov date.
  - Tables are $75; all proceeds will go to the Windham Recreation Dept to help with improvements to Griffin Park
- **Pelham Festival of Trees:**
  - Options include: Donate A Tree to be raffled off or participate in program book mailed to 5000 Pelham households (deadline October 25)

Others events in the plan:

- November:
  - Canned food drive
  - Cash Calendar sales start, cash to win every day in January.
- December:
  - Movie Night/Stuff a Mascot Event 12/3
  - Scholastic Book Fair December 12/10-12/17
  - Grandparents/Special Friends breakfast 12/14 (tentative: depending on holiday concert schedule)
- January: Cultural Fair, School Choice Week, Alumni Open House
- February: Candy Grams
- March: Read a Thon
- April: Cash Calendar

- May: Spring party
- June: NH Day of Giving

Committee updates

Finance

- Review September financials.
    - Confirmed lease aid is approved, but prorated but it's 18K more than we budgeted - comes in two installments.
    - Audit engagement letter was received; to be signed.
    - CM motions to approve, PS seconds. All in favor. None opposed.

Personnel, Curriculum, Strategic Planning - did not meet but Personnel will schedule time with CDS for his review/goal setting before next meeting.

Governance

- No specific updates but does have someone interested

Outreach

- Updating overall marketing plan - including something for Grandparent breakfast
- We have a parent who will help with outreach since we have not gotten an intern; AR sent details but needs to follow up.
- Got a logo; AR and CM to discuss usage

Capital Campaign

- CM shared Day of Giving plan
- CM and AH met with David Erwin, Chief Advancement Office, from Central Catholic
    - CCHS has done this for 6 years
    - Made 50K first year, 150K in 5th year, and 350K in 6th year
    - Provided their successes and failures
    - Discussion also included platform options, virtual ambassadors, promotion toolkit, timelines, incentives/prize tiers
- Would require a pronged approach on a very specific timetable: AR, AH and CM to meet to work that out

Facilities Management

- Met last week to look at options
- WIll go into non-public to discuss

BH motions to move into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3, II(d) Consideration of the acquisition, sale or lease of real or personal property which, if discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general community.
BH seconds. All in favor.

CM motions to move out of non-public session and into public at 7:55pm. AR seconds. All in favor.

Vote to seal the minutes of the non-public session because divulgence of the non-public minutes is likely to adversely affect the reputation of a person other than the member of the Board per RSA 91-A:3, II(d). All in favor.

- Approval for CES to sign the lease proposal from our landoard. PS motions to approve, CM seconds. All others in favor. None opposed.

Policy Reviews

October:

- **COVID-19 Attendance.** CM motions to approve, AR seconds. All others in favor. None opposed.

November:

- **TBD**

Public comment:

- None

PS motions to adjourn. BH seconds. All agree. 8:08pm meeting adjourned.