

THETFORD ACADEMY

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
JANUARY 8, 2009

1. Call to order. Mr. Briglin called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

2. Meeting Participants. The following TA Trustees were present: Faith Alexandre, Vice President; Peter Boyd, Alumni Representative; Tim Briglin, President; Denise Froehlich; Gene Kadish; Karen Kaliski, Thetford Representative; Therese Linehan, Strafford Representative (left at 8:45); Barbara Mason; Chip Odell; Stephen Page, Clerk; Conrad Reining; Curtis Richardson, Treasurer; Bill Weyrick; Jim Wilson. A quorum was present.

Representing the school: Martha Rich, Head of School; David McGinn, Assistant Head of School (arrived at 8:55); Keith Merrick, Business Manager; Sarah Clarke, Development and Community Relations Director.

These Trustees were not present at the meeting: Charlie Buttrey; Peter Herman; Kevin Kerin, Lyme Representative;

3. Approval of Minutes

Corrections to Minutes of 15 December 2008

- 1) **Capital Campaign Update.** Ms. Clarke reported that we have \$546,000 in **donations and pledges to date.** **Cutting areas from the project may** jeopardize the ability to raise money **as some portions of the project** have received dedicated contributions from donors.

- 2) Capital Project Update, 1e:
 - change "people" to "parties"
 - delete "local"
 - change third sentence to read "It was decided to drop Phase Two from the Act 250 Application."

Reports, a. Business Report:

- delete "More" where it appears before "Mr. Richardson".

Reports, c. Town Reports:

- change third sentence to read "Ms. Kaliski, speaking for Thetford, explained that they are working on the Partnership Agreement

A motion (Curtis, Conrad) to accept the minutes as amended was approved unanimously.

4. Discussion and Action Items:

a. Capital Project Update.

Mr. Briglin handed out a copy of the presentation he gave at the TES public meeting on Dec. 16. Approximately fifty people were at the public meeting. Costs, tuition, and tax breaks for the new project comprised most of the discussion. Mr. Briglin felt that the meeting ended with a feeling that people were supportive. Mr. Heinz Trebitz, in attendance, felt that the meeting was useful.

b. Regulatory Update, Cost Estimates, and Financing:

In two weeks, the board is to hear back on the water permits. This is the last part of the Act 250 process. Tim Briglin reported that the interest rates are lower now than they were a year ago. Sarah Clarke reported that the Capital Campaign is at \$567,500 in gifts and pledges.

c. Budget for FY 2009.

On Sunday, January 4, the Steering Committee held a meeting to discuss. "How can we maximize our efforts to get the school budget passed?" Three ideas came out of that meeting:

1. Produce a printed piece, a summary document. Could discuss curricular changes.
2. Use the newly formatted website. This would allow for people to be pointed in the right direction to get information about the building project, etc.
3. Coordinate a "Get Out to Vote" campaign. This could include alumni, students and parents. Mr. Buttrey and Mr. Reining expressed interest in this endeavor.

Discussion ensued:

Kaliski: The Elementary Board will have additional meetings to allow people to ask questions.

The February TA Trustee meeting will be held at the Thetford Community Center. As always, it will be an open community meeting.

Discussion followed about the difficulty of explaining the two part school budget vote to Thetford voters. The need to educate townspeople on this new process was emphasized.

5. Academic Update and Head's Report.

Ms. Rich had said in the fall that she was going to try a new method of "classroom walks." This can lead to more discussion, either philosophical discussion or talking about our thoughts during the classroom walk.

She elaborated on Professional Standards. If students were in the classroom, what would the teacher expect to see? (Notes) There has been added a seventh Principle. It is: to be Responsible and Collaborative.

The evaluation system will now be less cumbersome than the narrative method. It will be more summative. (Sp?) Discussion ensued. There was a question of whether, in the future, could it be used on an annual basis. This might be too ambitious. Maybe use a rotation system. "Will there also be a self-evaluation?" "Yes." This is at the heart of importance here at TA. How can we communicate to people that this key issue is being worked on here? A question was asked, "the professional standards vary in depth, but are 50+ variables too cumbersome?" Ms. Rich explained that she wanted the indicators to be all encompassing. "We could go back to the six standards and say to a teacher, 'in each component, what are the five indicators you feel are the most important?'" _____looked at professional people and _____appeared more difficult(Notes)

6. Budget for FY2010.

Mr. Briglin explained that the Board needed to adopt a tuition rate. Discussion ensued around pertinent issues. Changes in personnel are estimated to save \$20,000. The wells and water systems must be worked on to be up to code. These repairs are needed regardless of the Building Project. There is a projected increase in the operating budget of \$138,000, 2.8%. The increase in tuition is suggested to be 4.6%. This is due to a decline in the number of students. (13 students.) Rivendell and Hanover had between 15% and 17% debt service as a % of the budget. TA had 8%. (For every \$1 that goes to tuition, \$.08 goes to debt service.)

The computer program for grading, Mac School, is not popular. It must be run into the ground for now. To replace it would cost \$9,500.

A motion (Page/Richardson) to adopt the tuition rate, not to exceed \$16,225, was accepted unanimously.

Ms. Froehlich said she would like to have financial information in advance of meetings. It is hard to make decisions without seeing facts and figures ahead of time. Others agreed and recommended that mailings could be marked "confidential." A list of members who preferred "snail mail," was made.

Mr. Richardson made a clarification. Previously it had been mentioned that the changes to personnel would all be faculty and staff. Administration is also to be included.

7. Reports

a. Town Reports. No report for Lyme Mr. Kerin was not present. For Thetford, Ms. Kaliski explained that the Board will hold three meetings for the public to learn about the school budget. Speaking for Strafford, Ms. Linehan reported the Strafford Board needs a TA rep from their board. This will probably happen after town meeting. The Head's Transition Team will be looking for Board input at the Retreat on Feb. 8.

b. Assistant Head's Report. Mr. McGinn is meeting with SST to try to start up the Outback program. This might be held at Goddard Hall.

c. Business Report. Mr. Merrick submitted a Business Manager's Report. Please see booklet.

d. Head's Report. Ms. Rich announced that a Farm to Work Grant, in the amount of \$13,500, has been received.

e. Partnership Agreement. Ms. Rich, Ms. Linehan, and Ms. Alexandre have been working on this document. Ms. Alexandre explained that if it is approved, it gives the Thetford schools a chance to have it at the town meeting. Many changes have been made. They tried to _____clarifying language and housekeeping details. (Notes) Please refer to the Partnership Agreement brochure. Mr. Wilson moved to adopt the document. Mr. Richardson seconded. It passed unanimously.

f. Strategic Planning Task Force. Mr. Richardson explained that the committee had met twice. They have clarified a mission statement and have a working draft. There are audiences to talk to. There will be an attempt to have a panel to discuss "Thriving in the 21st Century." Ms. Rich mentioned a desire to get NEASC approval to use some of their language.

g. Retreat. Ms. Alexandre...Board Management Committee...Advancement Committee. (Notes) The Retreat will be held on Sunday, February 8 from 1:00-4:30. The theme will be, "Ten Years From Now." Sub themes:

- What will the school be like?
- How will our new Head help us get there?
- This will lead into the Head Transition.
- Endowment?
- Fund Sources?

Ms. Rich said she was pleased to see a structured discussion.

8. Adjournment. A motion (Page/Mason) to adjourn was approved unanimously at 9:59.
9. Minutes prepared by Thomas O'Quinn, Recording Secretary, on January 29, 2009.
10. Minutes approved by Board of Trustees on_____.