

THETFORD ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Thursday, March 8, 2018
Thetford Academy Library

DRAFT MINUTES

Cameron Cudhea (President) convened the meeting at 7:03 p.m. In attendance were the following:

Trustees: Cameron Cudhea, Giovanni Bosco, Peter Boyd, Ann Bumpus, Melody Burkins, Bob Christensen, Shannon Darrah, Karl Furstenberg (*arrived 8:43 p.m.*), Kate Hesser, Zoe Keller (telephonically), Lindsey Klecan, Suzanna Liepmann, Therese Linehan, Jonathan Stableford, Donna Steinberg, Susie Weider, Ben Williams, Jim Wilson

Administration: Bill Bugg (Head of School), Linda Lanteigne-Magoon (CFO),
John Brown (Director of Buildings and Grounds)

Absent: Hilary Linehan, Carrie Wells

1. Approval of February 8, 2018, Meeting Minutes

Motion: Accept the minutes of February 8, 2018, with two minor corrections.

Moved: Donna Steinberg

Seconded: Jonathan Stableford

Abstained: Susie Weider

The motion passed.

2. Public Comment Period

Jane Chambers, President of the Thetford Academy Education Association, asked the Board whether it had a timeline for a response to the documents that she presented on behalf of TAEA at the February Board of Trustees meeting. Ann replied that a response had already been mailed and should be received imminently.

Peter asked why TA's budget numbers were not included in the Town Report. Cameron replied that, this year, TA's budget numbers were provided in the slide show and were also posted on TA's website (on the Board of Trustees page), but they were not in the Town Report itself. Next year, they will be included in the Report.

3. Head of School Report

Bill reported that interest continues to be high from Chelsea for next year. There even have been 7-8 Chelsea families attending TA basketball games recently.

The NEASC reaccreditation team will be coming to TA on Sunday, April 29. Trustees, faculty, staff, and administrators all are invited to the opening reception that evening. The NEASC reaccreditation process is continuing to go well.

The Vermont Agency of Education's special-education approval review is going on right now also. This happens every three years. The AOE will be sending a team to review TA in mid-March to mid-April.

On March 14, a Student Walkout is planned from 10:00 a.m. to 10:17 a.m. TA will be permitting students to participate in a controlled way. Students may assemble on the quad, and there will be no penalty for participating. Teachers will continue to teach during the walkout, and those who are not teaching during that time will supervise the walkout at a distance.

4. Committee & Task Force Reports

Advancement: Annual Fund and Bicentennial Updates

Zoe reported that the Advancement Committee proposes a goal for the Annual Fund next year of \$200,000 in honor of TA's Bicentennial (cf. this year's goal of \$75,000). At the April Board meeting, the committee will come back to the Board for formal approval.

Cathee Clement (Chair of the Bicentennial Gala) attended the most-recent committee meeting, and there was a lot of conversation around the plans for the Gala (which will occur on or near Founders' Day). The committee clarified that the goal of the event is not to fundraise, but instead to generate excitement about and engagement with TA. However, if the school is not self-funding this event, it will have to fund it another way. The committee is working on getting clarity on the budget for the Bicentennial events, and will bring this information back to the Board at the April meeting.

Resources

The Resources Committee had no report.

Board Management

The Board Management Committee's report was delivered later in the meeting in executive session.

Personnel: Licensing

Jonathan reported that the Personnel Committee has begun working with the faculty on the issue of teacher licensing. Simultaneously, the Board Management Committee has been working on a policy related to this issue. Both groups have consulted with the Dean of Academics, Marc Chabot. Yesterday, Personnel had a good meeting with the faculty about plans for implementation.

Buildings & Grounds: Physical Plant Report

Peter introduced John Brown, Director of Buildings and Grounds. John reported that his crew has been working hard, and that they were complimented by the NEASC visiting team about the cleanliness of TA's facilities.

John described the web-based facilities-management system that he has introduced, which allows employees to submit work orders online. (It just hit 400 work orders.) Regarding the heating plant, the four boilers have been running smoothly with no big problems. John has

been working with Linda on a five-year plan to forecast upcoming major replacement costs of equipment.

John reported on some upcoming challenges that he will be tackling. The first is figuring out how to allocate job responsibilities—e.g., supervising custodians, maintaining machinery, ordering supplies, mowing, covering for absent workers—among himself and his crew if it should turn out that he does not have an assistant director next year. The second challenge is to look at the big list he has of projects and improvements he would like to do, and to decide where best to focus next year in order to maintain both the facilities and the current level of service his crew provides.

Cameron asked what is at the top of the list of a critical nature that the Board of Trustees should be aware of. John replied that having the assistant director position is important in order to be able to delegate some responsibilities to the assistant and free himself up to do other things. He said that TA's physical plant is in great shape for the most part. However, it will be important to look at the capital forecast, because there will be some big expenses coming up in the next 4-5 years.

Cameron commented on the 400 work orders, and asked what range of things are requested. John said that it includes things like changing light bulbs, but it also includes preventive maintenance (i.e., servicing various things)—about a 50/50 split between the two. The facilities-management system is working great. It shows employees the status of their work orders, so that they can see that John is addressing their requests.

Peter thanked John, and concurred that the system is working well. Peter also reported that they just had their first formal meeting about security, and that they will need a budget for it in order to implement some things. Peter also reminded the Board that the B&G Committee had been asked to generate an estimate for preserving the Barrett House until a definitive decision can be made on what to do with it. Peter said that John has \$2,000 in his budget to spend on the Barrett property, and that \$2,000 or less should be sufficient to keep the house standing until the uncertainty around the house's future has been resolved.

Cameron asked for more details about security initiatives. Peter replied that the security audit is scheduled for March 19, and the consultant will provide a report after that. Cameron asked Bill how this plan coincides with what the Secretary of Education has asked for. Bill replied that there is a deadline of March 31 for all Vermont schools to have had a security audit. TA has not yet been contacted about when those folks will be coming.

Cameron thanked John and his crew for the incredible work they do. He remarked on the pride that John's crew clearly takes in their work, and thanked them all again for making the school such a nice place for kids to come learn.

Strategic Plan Task Force

Melody reported that the task force is coming together. It will be meeting potentially on March 20. Right now, she is just waiting on confirmation of the names of faculty members and administrators who will be participating. Kristin Downey from the Thetford School District also is serving on the task force.

Ann informed the Board that the quarterly report on the current Strategic Plan has been put off until the April Board meeting. Melody said that some task force members have asked about TA's status with respect to implementation of the current Strategic Plan. Ann replied that she is able to supply the task force with a document which gives the status of each item in the Plan.

Cameron asked Bill when TA would get the NEASC feedback. Bill replied that the visiting team will have the final report ready sometime in the summer, but that TA will have lots to share with the task force before then.

Donna asked how TA employees are being chosen for the task force, and Melody replied that they are choosing among themselves who will participate.

5. Town Reports

Strafford (including Town Meeting Update)

Therese reported that the Strafford budget usually passes without trouble. At Town Meeting, there were the usual questions about designation because some people were unclear as to the reason behind it. Therese said that Hilary answered the questions well, and that Bill presented about TA beautifully.

Ann reported that Strafford is still working on the partnership agreement.

Jon commented that he suspected uncertainty about Act 46 had led to people's questions about designation and choice.

Lyme

There was no Lyme report.

Thetford (including Town Meeting Update)

Cameron thanked Shannon for a great presentation at Town Meeting.

Shannon said that it was nice to have a lot of people show up. There was a lot of discussion about special-education costs, and Shannon felt that it was nice to have the opportunity to explain some of that. It also seemed to work well to have the school portion of the meeting first. Shannon reported that she got good feedback about this.

Thetford will be meeting with the Secretary of Education on March 14 regarding Act 46, because the school district is not part of a merger plan or a structure proposal. Others from Orange East Supervisory Union also will be meeting with the Secretary, to talk about how OESU could ideally be configured.

The budget passed with a fair amount of ease, and the deficit bond also passed. It looks like the tax-rate increase may be a bit lower than expected. However, it's hard to know for sure, given the uncertainty about what may happen with the new education-funding formula.

Cameron thanked Shannon again for all of her efforts.

6. Alumni Representative Report

Peter reported that the Alumni Association has a group of 10-12 members who are especially active. The Association sponsors such things as the Memory Tree (around the holidays), the Craft Bazaar, the food tent at cross-country events (which is the Association's largest fundraiser), and preservation of school history (for example, the Association saved the center court from the old gym). The Alumni Association became the school's de facto Booster Club when it took over the food tent, and TAAA has been donating money back to the school ever since. In the past nine years, TAAA has donated \$171,000 (including \$35,000 this year), which has funded things such as the startup costs of the Robotics program, equipment for the Timber Framing class, and various athletic equipment.

Peter commented on the importance of Wendy Cole to the Alumni Association, because she is TA's liaison to the Association, and she handles both the mailing list of alumni and also TAAA's information on the school's website.

TAAA has contributed \$15,000 toward the Bicentennial history book. Peter asked about the status of the Bicentennial Book Committee's work. Bill replied that Alan Berolzheimer, a writer/historian in Norwich, is working with Steve Niederhauser and Mr. Niederhauser's "Barns, Mills, and Mountains" class on the book. A speaker is coming to the class to teach the students how to conduct oral histories. Other members of the community, including Martha Rich (a former Head of School), are also working on the project. Therese reported that she had spoken with Alan, and he is very excited that the students are working on the project, and he also thinks that their research is coming along beautifully.

The Board took a break from 7:44 p.m. to 7:54 p.m. and then reconvened.

9. Executive Session: Personnel, Head of School Review

At 7:55 p.m., the Board chose to go into executive session.

Motion: Move into executive session to

Moved: Therese Linehan

Seconded: Cameron Cudhea

The motion passed unanimously.

Karl arrived at 8:43 p.m.

Out of executive session at 11:05 p.m. No action was taken.

Motion: Adjourn the meeting at 11:06 p.m.

Moved: Therese Linehan

Seconded: Jim Wilson

The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Lindsey Klecan (Clerk)