

THETFORD ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Sunday, November 4, 2018
Thetford Academy Library

MINUTES

Ann Bumpus (President) convened the meeting at 10:37 a.m. In attendance were the following:

Trustees: Ann Bumpus, Karen Burgess, Giovanni Bosco, Melody Burkins, Bob Christensen, Shannon Darrah, Karl Furstenberg, Kate Hesser, Lindsey Klecan, Therese Linehan, Jonathan Stableford, Donna Steinberg, Carrie Wells, Ben Williams, Jim Wilson

Administration: Bill Bugg (Head of School)

Absent: Peter Boyd, Robin Junker-Boyce, Keith Lewandoski, Jeff Solsaa

1. Approval of October 11, 2018, Meeting Minutes

Motion: Accept the minutes of October 11, 2018.

Moved: Therese Linehan

Seconded: Donna Steinberg

The motion passed unanimously.

Karen Burgess arrived.

2. Public Comment Period

Therese reported on the TA Boys' Cross-Country Team's recent win of the Vermont Division III Championship. She complimented the amazing volunteer effort required to put on this event, and how the volunteers maintained an upbeat attitude despite the miserable weather. TA students even stuck around afterward to help with the cleanup. Bob added a comment from an attendee that TA is like a "well-oiled machine" in its hosting of the event. He also reported that, although the weather turned the field muddy where the spectators were, the cross-country course itself stayed in great shape.

Gio reported on the TA Girls' Soccer Team's recent win of the Vermont Division III Championship. He read a quote in the *Valley News* (November 4, 2018) by a soccer team member who, along with two other soccer players, is in her first year at TA. It highlights the welcoming nature of the TA community: "I really loved the environment at Thetford... They just welcomed [us] with open arms and wanted us no matter what. They love to have new people and they welcomed us. I think that overall, that's what made me come here."

Ann shared that she had received feedback about the trustee page on the TA website — specifically, the lack of contact information. Therese said that the Board Management Committee would lead a discussion about this later in the meeting.

3. Head of School's Report

Bill reiterated that the two state championships have been very exciting. Typically, around 80% of the TA student body participates in at least one after-school activity during the year. Bill also expressed his gratitude to all of the volunteers.

Bill gave a brief update about TA's presence on social media, an effort that was started by Bridget Dugan-Sullivan (former Assistant Director of Development & Communications) before she moved away, and that has been carried on by Patty McIlvaine (Director of Development & Communications) and Diana Garcia-Lavigne (Director of the International Student Program) along with a TA senior student intern who is doing a challenge course in communications. Bill reported that, in addition to their work with social media, they are keeping the TA website "vibrant, fresh, and relevant."

Bill reported that faculty have been meeting once a month in the afternoon to work, within each department, on Vermont's Educational Quality Standards related to Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements — a new way of teaching and learning in which, according to the Agency of Education, "schools' graduation requirements [are] rooted in demonstrations of student proficiency as opposed to time spent in classrooms." Two outside experts are working with the faculty on this multi-year effort: Joey Hawkins on literacy-related standards, and Julie Conrad on numeracy-related standards.

Bill shared news about some upcoming events at Thetford Academy:

- Wednesday is the Fall Sports Banquet.
- Thursday is the Counseling Office's third college workshop this fall; this one is entitled "College Money 101."
- Cameron Cudhea (former Board President and TA parent) has organized an impressive list of speakers for the Bicentennial Speaker Series. On Monday, November 12, at 7:00 p.m., Dartmouth Professor Sonu Bedi will speak on "Why Rights Are Not the Defining Feature of the U.S. Constitution." Bill strongly encouraged trustees to attend. The Academy has purposely sought speakers who are not connected to TA and who will "stretch TA." Trustees offered Bill ideas for additional publicity.
- The Fall Play, "Almost, Maine," will be presented on November 15–17 at 7:00 p.m. On opening night, the Thetford Academy Parents Association is hosting a dinner fundraiser prior to the play in the TA Cafe at 5:30 p.m. In the second semester, Ray Chapin (TA Drama Teacher) will be running the One-Act Play as an after-school activity.
- The TA Alumni Association's annual and popular Craft Fair will be happening on Saturday, November 17.

Bill briefly reported on TA admissions events that have been happening at area schools. He also apprised trustees of a meeting to be scheduled with Vermont's Agency of Natural Resources' Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, in order to review and update TA's forest management agreement.

4. New Strategic Plan: Discussion & Possible Adoption

Melody reported that the Strategic Plan is done except for a few minor updates ("word-smithing") from trustees and from the last task-force meeting. She emphasized that it is

meant to be a five-year "working" Strategic Plan, a "living document," that may need to be tweaked as TA starts figuring out its metrics for measuring progress, etc. The document (the version with photos) is ready to be posted on the TA website.

The Board discussed the tradeoffs of having additional conversations right now in order to insert more specificity into the document up-front, versus making the Strategic Plan public as a "living document" right now and then initiating these important conversations.

Bill left the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

Motion: Adopt the Strategic Plan as a living document.

Moved: Donna Steinberg

Seconded: Therese Linehan

Ayes: Bumpus, Burgess, Bosco, Burkins, Christensen, Darrah, Furstenberg, Hesser, Klecan, Linehan, Stableford, Steinberg, Wells, Williams

Nays: Wilson

The motion passed.

The Board took a break from 11:58 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. and then reconvened.

5. Update on HOS Search

Gio gave an overview of the upcoming schedule for the Head of School search. The task force expects to have 4–6 semifinalists, which it will narrow down to 2–3 finalists on January 7 unless there are fewer applicants in the pool which meet TA's standards. For the finalists, there will be a full day of interviews on campus involving trustees, teachers, students, staff, administrators, school board members and principals from sending towns, and other community members. The anticipated date for this is January 29, with January 31 as the snow date. Gio reported that the task force has done a good job of having honest and frank discussions. There is a nice sense of community within the group, which will serve the task force well as it moves forward with evaluating applicants, when there will inevitably be some differences of opinion.

Bill returned to the meeting at 1:05 p.m.

6. Bylaws: Review & Update

Jon presented updated Bylaws for discussion and adoption. Jon commented on how impressed he was by how closely the Board has hewn to the Bylaws, which says good things about the Board's culture. The Bylaws were last reviewed ten years ago. Jon went through some of the changes, and Board members had the opportunity to ask questions.

Motion: Adopt the revised Bylaws with two minor edits, conditional on checking with Linda Lanteigne-Magoon to ensure that Article X's wording is consistent with TA's insurance policies.

Moved: Therese Linehan

Seconded: Kate Hesser

The motion passed unanimously.

7. Committee Reports

Advancement

Karl reported on the budget for the Bicentennial Gala and received approval from the Board to move ahead. Faculty, staff, and administrators will be invited to the Gala as the Academy's guests. The Gala will be an exciting celebration of the school, with a cocktail-party reception, a short historical film, speakers, dinner, and TA-themed decorations.

Board Management

Therese revisited the question of the lack of contact information for trustees on the TA website. The Board affirmed that the trustee email address should be put on the website. Melody suggested that it also would be nice to take a group photo to include on the website.

Personnel

The Personnel Committee had no report this month.

Resources

The Resources Committee had no report this month.

8. Town Reports

Thetford

Shannon reported that Thetford received official notice that, under Act 46, it gets to remain a stand-alone district. Bradford, Newbury, and Oxbow are being forced to merge into a single district, which will change the dynamics in the supervisory union a little. The Vermont State Board of Education has not yet made a decision about Waits River, which has asked to be placed in another SU but to remain a K-8 choice district.

Lyme

Lyme had no report this month.

Strafford

Strafford had no report this month.

9. Update on TOP Task Force

Ann said that she would report on the status of the TOP Task Force next month.

Motion: Adjourn the meeting at 1:53 p.m.

Moved: Gio Bosco

Seconded: Donna Steinberg

The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Lindsey Klecan (Clerk)