

THETFORD ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Thursday, June 6, 2019
Thetford Academy Library

MINUTES

Ann Bumpus (President) convened the meeting at 7:05 p.m. In attendance were the following:

Trustees: Ann Bumpus, Giovanni Bosco, Peter Boyd, Melody Burkins, Bob Christensen, Shannon Darrah (arrived 7:45 p.m.), Karl Furstenberg, Lindsey Klecan (arrived 7:26 p.m.), Therese Linehan, Jonathan Stableford, Donna Steinberg, Carrie Wells, Ben Williams

Administration: Bill Bugg (Head of School, arrived 7:20 p.m.), Linda Lanteigne-Magoon (CFO), Carrie Brennan (incoming Head of School, arrived telephonically at 7:14 p.m.)

Absent: Kate Hesser, Robin Junker-Boyce, Keith Lewandoski, Jeff Solsaa, Jim Wilson

1. Approval of May Minutes

Motion: Accept the minutes of May 9, 2019.

Moved: Therese Linehan

Seconded: Donna Steinberg

Abstained: Peter Boyd, Carrie Wells

The motion passed.

2. Public Comment Period

There was no public comment.

3. Introduction of Trustee Candidate

Donna introduced a candidate for the Board of Trustees: John Ziegler, Senior Vice President at Mascoma Bank, whose daughter graduated from TA in 2017. Introductions were made around the table. John shared that his daughter chose TA over Hanover High School and it was a wonderful place for her. TA prepared her well for college and helped her gain admission to her first two college choices.

4. Report of Board Composition Task Force

Donna shared some general thoughts from the Board Composition Task Force:

- Reduce the size of the Board to about 15 members
- Prioritize "the right people at the right time" rather than just filling seats or a certain niche
- Seek both geographic diversity and psychological diversity (in ages, cultures, etc.)
- With Peter's term ending, the Board will need a new alumni rep

Karl mentioned that this time of transition offers the opportunity to step back and rethink how we work as a Board. The philanthropic capacity of the Board is secondary.

5. Head of School's Report

Bill said that it has been an amazing year for sports at TA, with six state championships in a single year!

Bill read House Concurrent Resolution 52, passed by the Vermont General Assembly on February 15, which congratulated Thetford Academy on the observance of its bicentennial. The resolution was sponsored by Reps. Timothy Briglin and James Masland.

Bill then provided a report on admissions and enrollment for 2019-2020, which had slightly higher numbers than the previous month's report.

As reported recently in the *Valley News*, Bill and Greg Bagnato, the outgoing principal of Strafford's Newton School, have been talking about TA helping with Strafford's middle-school program. The Strafford middle-schoolers could come to TA during D-block to have access to foreign-language, arts, and a host of elective classes, as well as optional after-school athletics. Additionally, because class sizes are small at the Newton School, the Strafford middle-schoolers would benefit from the opportunity to expand their social networks. If this plan would cause TA to incur additional costs — for example, from having to add additional course sections in order to accommodate the Strafford students — then these costs would be covered by the Strafford School District. The Strafford School Board will vote on the plan on Tuesday. A TA Board member will attend that meeting to be available to answer any questions that may arise.

Jon and Therese added some brief comments about the ongoing work of Strafford's task force on its middle-school program.

6. Executive Session: Administrative Personnel

At 7:49 p.m., the Board chose to go into executive session.

Motion: Move into executive session to discuss a personnel matter.

Moved: Donna Steinberg

Seconded: Jon Stableford

The motion passed unanimously.

Out of executive session at 8:17 p.m. No action taken.

7. Approval of Awarding of Diplomas

Motion: That a state-certified academic high-school graduation diploma be conferred on the students recommended by the faculty at their meeting on June 13, 2019.

Moved: Giovanni Bosco

Seconded: Lindsey Klecan

The motion passed unanimously.

8. Committee Reports

Advancement

Karl reported that it has been a very good year for the Development office. Once Carrie arrives and begins work as the new Head of School, the Advancement Committee will start to do some planning about what comes next.

Board Management

Therese presented one policy for (re-)adoption. Lindsey briefly reviewed for the Board the three minor changes that needed to be made in order for the policy to be consistent with the recently-renewed partnership agreement between TA and the Thetford School District.

- *Admission of Day Students [C25]:*

Motion: Adopt the policy on Admission of Day Students.

Moved: Donna Steinberg

Seconded: Therese Linehan

The motion passed unanimously.

Donna informed the Board that approval of the Educational Support System policy [D21] had been postponed because the policy needs more attention. She then presented another policy for adoption, and she explained that the issues previously raised by the Board about this policy had now been resolved.

- *Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students [C28]:*

Motion: Adopt the policy on Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students.

Moved: Therese Linehan

Seconded: Lindsey Klecan

The motion passed unanimously.

Personnel

Ben reported that the Personnel Committee is working actively with the negotiation teams to wrap up 2018-19 and focus on 2019-20. Staff negotiations are almost complete, and the committee is scheduled to meet with the faculty next week. Ben thanked Linda for gathering data and supplying timely numbers, which he said has been enormously helpful.

Ben reported that there has been discussion about engaging a professional negotiator. Shannon shared the experience of the Thetford School Board, which does not use a professional negotiator. She explained that the Vermont School Boards Association has resources that could be helpful to TA. Ann expressed concern about the amount of the Personnel Committee's time that is taken up by contract negotiations, which prevents the committee from being able to address other issues. Shannon said that having multi-year contracts could be a solution to this problem. Jon and Peter also spoke up in favor of keeping the Board directly involved in contract negotiations. Gio expressed empathy for the amount

of time that the Personnel Committee members are expending, and he suggested that the Board trust them to come up with the best option for the committee. Ann concluded the discussion by asking the Personnel Committee to look more deeply into what resources the VSBA offers, and she said that the Board would make a final decision after it has more information.

Resources

Bob reported that the Resources Committee has been working on an occupancy agreement for Slafter Hall for the new Head of School.

Next, Bob distributed a draft of an updated Investment policy for the Board to review. Bob said that this update only required a little tweaking of the old investment policy. The new policy will be brought back to the Board for a vote of approval at the July meeting. John Ziegler commented that this type of policy is very important for an organization to have. Peter asked whether the Board should impose any limitations on investments (for example, requiring socially-responsible and/or environmentally-conscious investments).

Bob asked for the Board's approval to renew TA's line of credit at Mascoma Savings Bank.

Motion: Renew TA's line of credit for another year, with all terms and conditions unchanged from the current contract.

Moved: Bob Christensen

Seconded: Therese Linehan

The motion passed unanimously.

9. Town Reports

Lyme

Karl reported that the school year ends soon for the Lyme School. He also said that there is a good vibe in Lyme about TA. Lyme and TA also share an interest in outdoor education.

Strafford

Therese and Jon reported that the principal of the Newton School is leaving, and there will be an interim principal for a year.

Thetford

Shannon reported that the Thetford School Board is planning to meet only once per month during the summer and to have a joint meeting with TA in July.

Shannon said that the parking lot at the Thetford Elementary School will be re-done this summer due to a grant that the town received. She said that TA has graciously allowed some of TES's summer school to be moved to TA since the parking lot will be completely unusable.

The TES custodial services will be transitioning to TA's oversight on July 1. Jon Brown (TA's Director of Buildings and Grounds) came to talk about a school-safety grant. The TES principal now will no longer have to be responsible for custodial issues. The new principal is keen to continue the great relationship between TES and TA and to see if there are ways to expand on that. He is also a big fan of outdoor education. He is looking forward to meeting Carrie as soon as possible after her arrival.

There is a Thetford School Board retreat planned for August. The board needs to do a new strategic plan and might like to have a member of the TA Board to help.

10. Committee Reports (continued)

Board Management (continued)

Ballots were distributed for voting on the new trustee candidate, town representatives, and Board Treasurer. Donna collected the ballots and confirmed that all persons on the ballot had been voted in.

11. Goodbye to Outgoing Board Members

Ann recognized the outgoing Board members — Therese, Peter, Jon, and Bob — and made heartfelt remarks about our gratitude for their service, how much we've learned from them, and how much we will miss them. It was noted that these four departing members have served the Board collectively for 40 years.

Motion: Adjourn the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Moved: Therese Linehan

Seconded: Peter Boyd

The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Lindsey Klecan (Clerk),
with some note-taking assistance from Melody Burkins