

**THETFORD ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**Thursday, July 11, 2019**  
**Thetford Academy Library**

**MEETING OF THE THETFORD ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**MINUTES**

Ann Bumpus (President) convened the meeting at 7:04 p.m. In attendance were the following:

Trustees: Ann Bumpus, Giovanni Bosco, Melody Burkins, Shannon Darrah, Karl Furstenberg, Kate Hesser, Robin Junker-Boyce, Lindsey Klecan, Donna Steinberg, Carrie Wells (arrived 7:15 p.m.), John Ziegler

Administration: Carrie Brennan (Head of School)

Absent: Ben Williams

**1. Welcome**

Ann gave a warm welcome, on behalf of the Board, to John Ziegler, a new trustee, and Carrie Brennan, the new Head of School.

**2. Approval of June Minutes**

Motion: Accept the minutes of June 6, 2019, with one edit.

Moved: Donna Steinberg

Seconded: Karl Furstenberg

Abstained: Kate Hesser, Robin Junker-Boyce, John Ziegler

The motion passed.

**3. Public Comment Period**

Linnea Spelman (both a current and an alumni parent), shared with the Board some concerns that she and her children have had about class scheduling — both the timing of available courses and the support provided in scheduling courses at and outside of TA. She also asked for clarification about the rules for early departures/late arrivals for students attending Dartmouth classes. Board members listened attentively and asked questions, and Carrie B. took notes for later consideration by the school's administration.

**4. Update from Personnel Committee**

Kate shared that there is no signed contract yet with the faculty. The Personnel Committee had nothing further to report this month.

## 5. Refining the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan

Carrie B. praised TA for accomplishing three major initiatives simultaneously over the past 18-24 months: the ten-year NEASC reaccreditation process, the search for a new Head of School, and the development of a new five-year Strategic Plan.

Carrie B. reported that she and Melody had met to discuss how TA's Strategic Plan can best help us launch the new school year. It is a dynamic plan, with room to continue developing it. The Plan contains six strategic priorities, each with one big goal and several actions. Three of the strategic priorities — Our Academics, Our Students, and Our Faculty, Staff & Administration — are what Carrie B. will be leading, and there are a lot of people at TA already doing good work in these areas. Carrie B. pointed out that the remaining three strategic priorities — Our Campus & Community, Our Board, and Our Future — are where the Board's role will be critically important. These areas involve looking out long-term, and we will need the Board as a governance body and its committees to dive into these.

Carrie B. had hung up posters showing each of the latter three strategic priorities. The Board then engaged in an exercise, where Board members indicated with sticky notes which actions they felt were most important for the coming year and any actions they felt were missing from the current Plan. A brief summary and discussion led by Melody followed.

Melody reminded the Board that the next step is to decide who on the Board will take a leadership role for each action, and which metrics we will use to measure success. She also said that the Board has more work to do to add specificity to the "Our Future" actions, which will also tie in with the "Our Board" actions.

Ann said that the Board's Committee of Chairs will discuss next steps at its upcoming meeting. Gio asked whether the leadership roles for the Strategic Plan will involve Board members exclusively or will the Board be partnering with others at TA. Carrie B. responded that there definitely is and will be collaboration. Also, priorities set by the Board and its committees may then be enacted by the Head of School's team.

Motion: Adjourn the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

Moved: Giovanni Bosco

Seconded: Melody Burkins

The motion passed unanimously.

## **JOINT MEETING OF THE THETFORD ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND THE THETFORD SCHOOL BOARD**

### **MINUTES**

Ann Bumpus (President of TA Board of Trustees) called the meeting to order at 8:15 p.m. In attendance were the following:

TA Trustees: Ann Bumpus, Giovanni Bosco, Melody Burkins, Shannon Darrah (Thetford Town Representative), Karl Furstenberg (Lyme Town Representative), Kate Hesser, Robin Junker-Boyce, Lindsey Klecan, Donna Steinberg, Carrie Wells, Ben Williams, John Ziegler

Thetford School Board Members: Shannon Darrah (Chair of Thetford School Board), Julie Acker, Megan Snider, Donna Pluta

TA Administration: Carrie Brennan (Head of School)

Thetford Elementary School Administration: Chance Lindsley (Principal)

Absent: Charlie Buttrey (Thetford School Board)

## **1. New Beginnings: Introductions, Q&A for New Members**

Introductions were made around the table, for the benefit of the new members of each board and the new heads of each school. An opportunity then was provided for the new folks to ask questions.

Chance asked if there is one leading goal at TA. Ann replied that a goal is stable or growing enrollment. Chance asked what is one thing you're proud of at TA. Gio replied that the student culture is very special: The kids are good to one another and very accepting, and TA overall is a very inclusive community. This is frequently noted by others outside the school when the students go to other places. Donna added that students at TA feel that they are in a safe environment, and they learn better than if they were in a high-pressure environment.

Karl asked for ideas about how to get the message about TA out to the broader public in the region. Meg responded by asking about what TA has been doing already, and Board members answered with details. After hearing about TA's academically-high-achieving students, Donna P. asked about students whose goals are more "middle-of-the-road." Ann replied that one of the special things about TA is its mission to challenge each student to fulfill his/her potential, and this is reflected in the wide range of future plans for TA's recent graduates. Donna P. commended TA on its dedication to its mission, because "sometimes when you speak to one group you can lose another group."

Megan expressed her excitement and optimism about the new leadership at both schools and the collaboration between the schools. Carrie B. shared that she and Chance have already scheduled a monthly lunch meeting for the coming academic year.

## **2. TA Outreach to TES Students and Families; Continuing and Strengthening Collaboration**

Karl added to Ann's previous statement, saying that TA's mission is to challenge all students wherever they are. Kate said, "We don't care how smart you are; we care how you are smart." Julie shared that she thinks some Thetford Elementary School parents don't understand all that is offered at TA, especially for high-talent kids. She also thinks some parents don't understand the relationship between TA and the Town of Thetford — i.e., that

TA is an independent school and makes its own decisions. She encouraged TA to reach out to TES parents earlier than their child's sixth-grade year.

Ann agreed that TA's engagement with TES has been more with the TES students than with their parents. There are so many potential options available for TES students at TA — sports, outdoor programs, robotics, academic collaborations between TA & TES teachers, etc. Julie reiterated that TA should make TES families aware of all the great opportunities that are at TA. A brief discussion ensued about student retention at TES and its impact on middle-school enrollment at TA. Megan asked about conducting student surveys.

Shannon said that it is in both schools' best interest to take good care of Thetford students. She said that she is excited to move forward. Gio concurred, and said that we want our collaborative spirit to grow. He said that TA looks forward to working with TES, and there is no reason why there couldn't be more interaction between our communities.

Shannon told the TA Board that the Thetford School Board has to develop a new strategic plan this year. She said that it would be wonderful if someone from the TA Board could participate in this process.

Motion: Adjourn the meeting at 9:14 p.m.

Moved: Melody Burkins

Seconded: Donna Steinberg

The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lindsey Klecan (Clerk, TA Board of Trustees)