

THETFORD ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Thursday, September 12, 2019
Thetford Academy Library

DRAFT MINUTES

Ann Bumpus (President) convened the meeting at 7:06 p.m. In attendance were the following:

Trustees: Ann Bumpus, Giovanni Bosco, Melody Burkins, Shannon Darrah, Karl Furstenberg, Robin Junker-Boyce, Lindsey Klecan, Donna Steinberg, Carrie Wells, Ben Williams, John Ziegler

Administration: Carrie Brennan (Head of School); Linda Lanteigne-Magoon (CFO)

Absent: Kate Hesser

1. Welcome

Ann gave a warm welcome to all on our first Board meeting of the 2019-20 school year; she acknowledged and expressed gratitude for all the hard work and accomplishments of the past year by board members, faculty, staff, and community members for the various bicentennial celebration events, development of the strategic plan, negotiating of new contract agreements with faculty and staff, and hiring of our new Head of School (among other significant events).

2. Approval of July Minutes

Motion: Accept the minutes of July 11, 2019, with no edits.

Moved: Donna Steinberg

Seconded: Ben Williams

Abstained: none

The motion passed unanimously.

3. Public Comment Period

There was no public comment.

4. President's Report

Ann reported that the school year has been off to a great start, and that she and other board members have gotten overwhelmingly positive feedback. She thanked personnel committee trustees Kate Hesser, Robin Junker-Boyce, and Ben Williams for all their hard work with the TAEA representatives in reaching a faculty contract agreement. Ann signed the agreement at that time.

5. Head of School's Report

Carrie summarized the Head of School's Report through a slide presentation projected onto a screen. The presentation covered the following:

- (1) Teaching and learning at the start of the school year was off to a good start, and she introduced the six new faculty members at TA this year (only one of six is full-time). She stressed that people are excited to land a job here, as people want to teach at TA.
- (2) Back-to-school inservice days occurred in August -- 3 days in length and included all faculty and staff -- with lots of time for small-group work; Carrie showed survey responses from over 40 faculty/staff, very positive responses, lots of departmental time and grade-level time; "I had time to think."
- (3) She highlighted new partnerships, detailing one new partnership with Strafford's Newton Middle School where sixteen 7th- and 8th-graders have been arriving at TA by bus for D-block classes in the arts and world languages, as well as then participating in after-school athletics and clubs at TA. So far, we've had positive feedback from Newton School parents and staff; Carrie noted some scheduling challenges due to school-calendar conflicts that will need to be worked out in the future.
- (4) Enrollment: Carrie pointed out that enrollment is steadier than we tend to think over the past five years. Enrollment is currently at 308.
- (5) Community engagement: Carrie has held two meet-and-greet events with Chance Lindsley (new principal of Thetford Elementary School); the feedback so far has been overwhelming support for further collaboration between TA and TES.
- (6) Upcoming events: 10/19 opening of the new mountain-biking trail; trustees are encouraged to volunteer for the Woods Trail Run; alumni mountain day 9/15. Carrie pointed us to the TA Today hotlink on her report and the TA Today calendar icon that can be used to link the school calendar to personal calendars like Google.

6. Committee and Task Force Reports

Resources

Lindsey reported that Linda has advised that the Board needs to approve Carrie Brennan as a signer on checks for Mascoma Bank; Lindsey read the Mascoma document to the Board.

Motion: Adopt the resolution provided by Mascoma Bank, which adds Carrie Brennan as an authorized signer on the Mascoma Bank operating account.

Moved: Gio Bosco

Seconded: Donna Steinberg

The motion passed unanimously.

Lindsey also reminded us that within our current Strategic Plan, in the "Our Board" section, it calls for the Board to prioritize a strategic and sustainable financial model. It was suggested that, to this end, upcoming budget discussions later in the year will give us the opportunity to have higher-level discussions about how best to explore and achieve a sustainable financial model. Additionally, the Resources Committee will be tackling financial policies, first and foremost our investment policy. The committee may come to the Board with suggestions for an investment manager to help with endowment fund investment, but first specific investment and endowment-management policies need to be discussed and refined. Looking into future, the committee will be looking at other partnership agreements -- e.g., like the TA and TES facilities partnership.

Linda explained that the presentation of financial statements has changed partly due to changing standards of financial audits.

Linda reported that enrollment last year ended up at 297, and since we had budgeted for 301 we ended the year well compared to the budget; the largest difference in real vs. expected number of enrolled students is seen in the 9th grade. There was some discussion in order to clarify how the enrollment number is calculated and how/when the school gets paid for those students.

John described planned changes to the presentation of the quarterly financial reports: comparison of actual vs. budget rather than vs. prior year, and the addition of a quarterly endowment summary.

Advancement

Karl reported that the committee composition is fantastic, including Carrie, with lots of experience in marketing, communications, admissions. The priority this year is to focus on enrollment/admissions and not so much on fundraising, although some will still occur. Karl talked about messaging strategies, and the need to explore new student markets, international enrollment components, possible five-day boarding program, having different town open houses by parents to answer questions/inform others in their town about TA; also need to be mindful of retention. Board members may be called upon to participate and help in all these areas.

Board Management

Donna requested signed Trustee affirmation statements from all board members.

Donna reported that the Board Composition Task Force met with Tim Briglin. Tim served for many years on the TA Board, including as president of the Board. Tim generously spent almost two hours with the task force to give us perspective on past Board issues, many of which were still relevant to our current Board. We focused on Board composition, Board size, and how to identify strategic thinkers and others with specific types of expertise as potential Board members. The task force continues to discuss and develop strategies for recruiting new Board members as well as community members that would like to serve on committees but not necessarily as trustees.

Donna briefly described the "consent agenda" practice, distributed a handout, and suggested we have a full discussion in October after Board members have had time to familiarize themselves with this practice.

Personnel

Ben reported that the committee wrapped up the 2018-2020 TAEA faculty agreement, including compensation packages, and noted that the staff agreement is almost done; he thanked Carrie and Linda for help in getting all this done. The next thing ahead is to work on the next multi-year agreements; this will be heavy lifting but will be well worth the effort as it will avoid complex negotiations occurring every year and offer more stability for faculty; additionally, addressing staff and faculty at the top of the pay grid will be something to tackle next.

7. Town Reports

Lyme

Karl reported that enrollment is robust. No news on Lyme/Thetford bridge construction work.

Thetford

Shannon reported that 194 students enrolled this year vs. 199 last year. The parking lot is completed but other small things still remain. By law, this year the TES board will be required to negotiate as a team with representatives from each of the OESU districts. A consultant has been hired for helping with the strategic plan. A TES board member will lead the process, and the strategic plan committee is seeking participation from the community, students, and a TA Board member. Ann will help in identifying a TA Board member and Carrie will help in identifying a TA student that will participate in the TES strategic plan committee.

8. New Business

Policy on Prevention of Employee Harassment (B5)

Donna presented the policy on Prevention of Employee Harassment for adoption. Karl submitted some edits; Lindsey added a critical word or two for clarification.

Motion: Adopt the policy on Prevention of Employee Harassment with minor suggested edits.

Moved: Donna Steinberg

Seconded: Melody Burkins

The motion passed unanimously.

Carrie requested a copy of the edited approved version in order to insert it into the new faculty handbook.

Personnel Matter

Ann reported that a vote of the Board was required to approve a request by an employee to extend a leave, as specified in the contract.

Motion: Approve the employee leave extension as requested.

Moved: Donna Steinberg

Seconded: John Ziegler

The motion passed unanimously.

Motion: Adjourn the meeting at 8:20pm.

Moved: Giovanni Bosco

Seconded: Carrie Wells

The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Gio Bosco (Recording Clerk)