

THETFORD ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Tuesday, February 11, 2020
Thetford Academy Library

MINUTES

Gio Bosco (President) convened the meeting at 7:10 p.m. In attendance were the following:
Trustees: Donna Steinberg, Kate Hesser, Karl Furstenberg, Jon Ziegler, Ann Bumpus, Gio Bosco, Ben Williams, Melody Burkins

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

Absent: Lindsey Kleecan, Carrie Wells, Jeff Solsaa, Shannon Darrah, Robin Junker-Boyce

1. Public Comment Period

Jessica Eaton was in the public area. She let us know that she has children who graduated from Thetford Academy in 2003 and 2011, and they both were served well. She also noted that Barbara Smith said she had a good time at a recent Roundtable discussion.

2. Head of School Report

• **Teaching and Learning**

- Carrie used charts and tables to share information about honor roll at Thetford Academy. She described the Honor Roll Policy in TA Student & Family Handbook. Honor roll status is determined by quarter grades. To achieve ‘High Honors’ requires a GPA for the quarter of 3.6 or higher and no grade below a B-. To achieve ‘Honors’ requires a GPA for the quarter in the range of 3.2-3.59 and no grade below a B-.
- Regular early release days are being considered.
- Engaged currently in an exploration of student-led conferences and student presentations of learning. These may become a school-wide assessment program.
- Given the small incoming class next year, there is consideration of combining the 7th and 8th grades.

• **Partnerships**

- Hypertherm and Fuji are wrapping up a successful second year.
- These two companies have committed to a third year next year.
- Transportation still needs to be considered.
- A former TA student in the program is now employed by Hypertherm this year.
- Some of the students are considering careers in engineering.
- Melody added that was at the Open House related to the program, and noted that a diverse group of TA students are involved, and all have expressed loving the program.

- **Enrollment**

- Recruitment polls. We have a small incoming TES class (now in 6th grade), which we have known for years. We are slightly down for incoming 9th graders this year compared with last year.
- Our silver linings are:
 - a. We have higher levels of confirmations of this time compared with one year ago.
 - b. We have higher numbers of contacts this year compared with last, despite having smaller applicant pools.

- **Community Engagement**

- Founders' Day was earlier in the day.
- Carrie reported being impressed with the tradition. The students came together, worked well with each other, and all seemed to enjoy themselves.
- Former, retired faculty showed up, speaking well for the institution.

- **TA Strategic Plan**

- Many updated notes.
- Deeper dive can be completed at the retreat in June.

Upcoming Events include:

- Abenaki Tribal Heritage Event is coming to TA at 3/14/2020. This was to be a Dartmouth event, but since it fell through at Dartmouth, one of the professors/parents inquired about doing it at TA. Carrie said she was able to make it happen with a bit of rearranging.

3. Approval of January Minutes

Motion: Accept the minutes of January 9, 2020.

Moved to approve: John Ziegler

Seconded: Kate Hesser

Abstained: Ann Bumpus

The motion passed unanimously.

4. Town Reports

- Lyme: Karl said that there is a decline in high school students, which may be because families are moving out of district or going to private schools. Unlike Thetford, for Lyme, when students go to a private school, it is a savings.

- Thetford: Shannon was at the TES School Board meeting and was not here to share a report.

5. Strafford Agreement

- Sarah North, a Strafford trustee, and Gio had contact today. Sarah North stated that the reason their board deleted the paragraph in question was that they thought it inappropriate to mandate the contact between the schools. She said it was not in the previous agreement and should not be in this one. Ann has been reviewing old agreements between Thetford and Strafford, and said it is complex issue. Karl said that this paragraph is the language in the Lyme agreement. Sarah North related to Gio that she has concerns about liability if the visits do not happen. Gio asked her if they would consider alternative language. She would not commit to considering alternative language and said she could not speak for the other board members.
- We talked about coming up with alternative language for that paragraph, but there were concerns about doing so since it took so long to get the agreement back with the altered paragraph in section II (iv).
- We talked about the possibility for a small working group, comprised of trustees from both the Strafford school board and TA, to come up with language for the partnership agreement.
- Finally, we discussed creating a committee to assess the costs and benefits of continuing to be in partnership and designation with Strafford.

Motion to table the Strafford agreement as it is currently written: Karl Furstenberg

Seconded: Kate Hesser

Ayes: 4

Nays: 4

Motion that we will let Strafford know we will not accept the partnership agreement as it is written with the redactions, but we gladly invite them to discuss the paragraph in question: Ann Bumpus

Seconded: Ben Williams

We discussed importance of collecting information that:

- Thoroughly examines the cost and benefits to TA of maintaining a partnership agreement with the Strafford Town School Board, and to clearly define what purpose the document is intended to serve.
- Describes the benefits to TA of such a partnership beyond any legal obligations TA and Strafford are already bound to by Vermont law, and
- Explores designation of TA by Strafford. Explore the topic of school designation and examine cost/benefits to TA.

Ann Bumpus agreed to head this effort.

6. Committee and Task Force Reports

- Resources (John Ziegler):
 - Resources met with personnel this morning. F24 and F45 were reviewed and finished as far as resources is concerned, but they were not able to get these policies to all trustees in time for this meeting tonight with enough time to review. They will be ready well in advance of the March meeting.
 - Total of 307 students for this year as of today. (Two Thetford students moved out of town.)
 - Water testing situation: The second test came back positive and now we are contracting with engineers to handle the issue. This will be expensive to fix.
 - Endowment report will be forthcoming to all for March meeting.

- Advancement (Karl Furstenberg):
 - Karl reported that the roundtable breakfasts and open houses hosting prospective students have been home based, in the community, and have been informal discussions. They have been serving us well for fund raising and recruitment.
 - For grants writing, questions about trustee donations have been plentiful. This is an important metric for the health of an organization and we need all trustees to give a donation.

- Board Management (Donna Steinberg):
 - Head of School report formatting is a work in progress, and is going well.
 - Recruitment is going well, we continue to develop a larger list of potential candidates from which to choose. The plan is to continue to select new trustees based on the needs of the board.
 - Policy work, F24 and F45, were recently completed, and as John noted earlier, will be ready for the March meeting.
 - The June retreat date Doodle Poll is out. Please vote for the dates that work for you so we can settle the date soon.

- Personnel (Kate Hesser):
 - Resources and Personnel met today to discuss proposals from faculty and staff negotiating committees. We will meet tomorrow with the faculty to give an update.

Motion to Adjourn the meeting at 8:51 p.m.: Donna Steinberg

Second: Melody Burkins

The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Steinberg (Recording Clerk)