

Board of Directors – FSAS | MINUTES

Approved

Meeting date, time 06/27/2020 8:30am | Meeting location: Online/ZOOM

Meeting called by William Doughty, Chair

Type of meeting Regular Meeting

Facilitator William Doughty, Chair

Secretary Carolyn Beem,
Secretary (8:30-10)
Penny Collins, Vice
Chair (10:15-end)

Meeting called to order at 8:30am

Quorum of 8 present, full board

Attendees:

Bill Doughty, Chair
Penny Collins, Vice Chair
Melanie Prinz, Treasurer
Carolyn Beem, Secretary (departed 10:15 am)
Sally Morris, Board member
Ben Kramer, Board member
Doug Lynch, Board member
Vincent Micale, Board member (departed 10:50 am)

Also Present: Jacinda Cotton-Castro, Executive Director

Additional Attendees:

Fern Desjardin, Maine Charter School Commission
Bob Kautz, Maine Charter School Commission
Lizabeth Harrington
Jen Damon

Excused: none

AGENDA TOPICS

Public Comment: None

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve May 23 minutes by Sally
Seconded: Doug
Discussion: none Approved: 8:0

Motion to approve minutes from special meetings of June 6 and June 13: Doug
Seconded: Sally

Discussion: none
Approved: 8:0

Executive Director Update:

Jacinda:
Maine Charter School Commission report about complete; Karen doing an amazing job with facilities arrangements; implementing precautionary measures such as sneeze guard; working with an artist to bring more color into the building

Questions: none

Celebration of Melanie Prinz!!

Melanie has agreed to continue on the board - HOORAY!

Motion to approve : Sally
Seconded: Doug
Discussion: none
Approved: 7:0 (Melanie abstaining)

Executive Session

To discuss purchase of 25 Shaker Road

Motion to enter Executive Session(s): 405.6.A to discuss status of purchase of 25 Shaker Road
8:49 AM: Ben
Seconded: Sally

Motion passed: 8:0

Motion to exit Executive Session(s): 405.6.A 9:25 AM
Motion by: Penny
Seconded by: Carolyn

Motion passed: 8:0

Action: Board approval of Executive Committee action

Motion to empower purchase team to continue discussions and negotiate with Center for revised purchase and sales agreement and lease extension as discussed in Exec Session : Ben

Seconded: Sally

Discussion: None

Approved: 8:0

Consideration of plans to reopen school in August:

Informational:

Jacinda explained overall plan at high level:

3 scenarios/models: partial in-school/remote learning, full remote, and full return to school. Models were developed based on feedback from parents and staff

Questions/Discussion: Jen shared how much in agreement parents and staff have been
Plan strikes a good balance; noting all subject to changes based on guidelines from State and CDC

Consideration of before/after care program

To help parents with the loss of the Center for before/after school care; the program would be outside the regular school budget.

Discussion: does this stretch staff too thin given all the pressures/challenges staff is currently facing; what if demand exceeds what we can deliver?

Action: Board vote to consider approval of concept (only)

Motion to approve concept of and begin planning for before/after care for Fiddlehead families;
approval for administration to move forward: Carolyn

Seconded: Penny

Approved

10:00 am - Break. Carolyn Beem left for a prior commitment, notes taken over by Penny Collins.

2020-2021 Budget Approval

2020-2021 Budget

Ben gave update on current budget draft. Current draft seeks to include a 10% budget reduction to account for anticipated budget impact from the state. Assumptions built in include holding out of cost of living increases for staff, which has been discussed as the first item to return should we not incur a cut from the state. Facilities costs include assumptions on rent, mortgage, insurance, etc. Staffing budgeted for includes 9 lead teachers, 2 SPED full time teachers and 1 assistant, and 5 traditional class TAs. There is a half time increase to RTI services. Discussion ongoing about an online coordinator, which isn't included in this current budget.

Question posed to Bob from the Charter Commission regarding expectations about state funding for next year. There is no firm information at this time, though there have been discussions about prioritizing full funding. There is a planned meeting in August by the legislative body making that decision. The Charter Commission is recommending that charter schools be prepared for 5 to 20 percent cuts.

Motion to approve the current budget as drafted by Finance by Sally. Seconded by Doug.

Discussion: Penny voiced concerns about timeline to include teacher salary increases back into budget. Concern shared by other board members and idea shared to use reserves. Ben clarified that the pressure for a budget timeline is driven by filing requirements.

Motion amended to read: Approve the current budget as drafted by Finance with the inclusion of a commitment to use reserves as needed to cover cost of living increases for our staff by Sally.
Seconded by Doug.

Discussion: None

Approved 7-0

Motion to approve the interim budget with inclusion of staff cost of living increases by Sally.
Seconded by Doug.

Approved 7-0

Education Committee

Doug highlighted topics from Committee report and recent work. Current challenge has been getting materials for instruction. Eureka Math has new materials and we have gotten a \$5,000 grant for PBIS materials.

Updates from staff/shared learnings: There have been some challenges with Zoom, though Joanna Frankel, COTL, shares that some reported struggles with Zoom was based on size of group. Looking at smaller group and one-on-one usage with Zoom next year. Liz Harrington, second grade lead, shared an upside of the remote learning due to the needed amount of parent-teacher interaction to coordinate the learning and use of technology for the younger students. Teachers are aware of impacts and basic needs of families and childrens in a different and broader way.

Nature of support requested/desired from Joanna Frankel from the Board. Financial support is crucial, i.e. things such as remote learning coordinator. Being unified with what the reopening planning committee is developing and presenting unified support to families.

Question from Ben Kramer: Are there things we have adopted that are leveraging what other people/schools are doing? We are all making this up as we go. Joanna shares that she's reading extensively and what she is seeing is that best practices are things that are already core Fiddlehead values and programs. "We are on the cutting edge and other places will be emulating what we are already doing. It's a difficult, confusing time but there's also some exciting benefits coming out of this for education as a whole. We are a small organization and we can be nimble and flexible so we have a head start."

Liz Harrington addresses and shares teacher thoughts and feedback on the idea of supporting and incorporating online learning, but part time and full time. "Regardless of parent preference, there will likely be times next year where will all be forced to be home. It feels inevitable. The teachers are worried about how to get it all done but we have a really good team at Fiddlehead."

Bill Doughty thanks the staff for attending and for their contributions to the school.

Facilities

Sally moves to go forward with needed repairs to the building ahead of closing. Seconded by Doug.

Discussion: None

Passed 6-0.

Finance Committee Report Approval: Current Budget (2019-2020)

Update on current year's budget by Ben Kramer: Current performance to this year's budget has an estimated bottom line closure of approximately \$50,000. Awaiting final closures to get the official numbers. There is a pool of money we are approved for through the CARES Act that would go towards items such as sneeze guards, HVAC improvements, etc. This grant money is approximately \$16,000. There is some money already spent this past year that can be recouped through the closure of the USDA loan. Ben points out that this is likely to be a good place to draw staff salary increases from.

Ben moves to accept Finance Committee Report. Seconded by Melanie.

Passed 6-0.

Board Calendar: Upcoming meetings

Proposal to move July meeting to Saturday, July 25 at 8:30 am. Agreed upon by group. Will move policy approvals to July meeting.

Personnel

Jacinda introduces the concept of Remote Learning Coordinator. This role does not take full responsibility for all online learning, but someone who helps to fill gaps, look at technology, communicate between staff, and to have an eye on the program overall. Question from Jacinda is timing on the hiring depending on Board approval. Inquires of Commission visitors (Bob and Fern) as to whether other schools are adding this position.

Question from Doug: What would the salary be and what level would this position be? Jacinda is not sure but believes that it would be at the level of a lead teacher salary. Would be ideal to have a strong candidate with tech skills. Jacinda feels it may be an advancement opportunity for a TA with a teaching certificate. Sally feels it is an important idea and questions if some of the CARES money would help contribute. Question from Ben: How long term are we thinking for this position? Is it a one year position or a permanent position? Ben points out that we need to find heavy IT skills as that is an area we are lacking in. Current thinking that this is a one year commitment. IT skills are important but also value existing understanding of our staff and students and our philosophy. Melanie - To the IT thought, we have some money earmarked for IT improvements, which we could include. How many hours? Jacinda says it depends on how many families use the online option. Penny speaks to the fact that the draft job description is extremely broad and detailed and should be honed to areas that the person could realistically be responsible for. Who does this position report to? How can we make this meaningful? Jacinda indicates that all primary ideas were captured here to keep the ideas on the table and the job will be honed further.

Motion to approve concept of position for one year Online Learning Coordinator with referral to Finance Committee to source the funding of this position by Sally. Seconded by Melaine.

Discussion: Melanie - if we can have delineation between the existing COTL roles and this new role. Need clarity on who does what and when.

Approved 6-0.

Comments from Fern before departing: "Kudos to school and how well you are functioning!"

Executive Session

To discuss hiring and personnel

*Motion to enter Executive Session(s): 405.6.A to discuss personnel issues at 11:18 AM by Sally
Seconded: Melanie*

Motion passed: 6:0

Motion to exit Executive Session(s): 405.6.A at 11:33 AM by Penny seconded by Ben

Motion passed: 6:0

Motion to approve candidate for Special Education Teacher by Doug. Seconded by Melanie.

Discussion: None

Passed 6-0

Other Items/Closing

Jacinda shared the school purchased a gazebo/pavilion for outside use. The item was funded by grant money. Additional conversations going on with local land owners for use of space, yurts, etc. Continue to look for opportunities to get kids outside.

Next Scheduled Meeting: July 25 at 8:30 am

Motion to adjourn: Sally

Seconded: Ben

Passed 6-0

Meeting adjourned at 11:38 AM