Approved minutes. Approved on Feb. 15, 2024 Fiddlehead School Board meeting Jan. 18, 2024 Fiddlehead School and via Zoom

- **1.** The meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm by Bill Doughty who noted that the meeting is being recorded.
- **2.** Attendees:
  - a. Board members present: Jamie Dickson, Ben Kramer, Susan Doughty, Marie Reimensnyder, Roger Preston (via Zoom), Bill Doughty
  - b. Staff present: <u>Jacinda Cotton-Castro</u>, ED; Jason Manjourides, principal
  - c. Public or other staff present: Mandy Medrano, Alison Curwin, Diane Baker. Joanne D'Arcangelo, consultant.Others were present via Zoom
- 3. Opening: What do we like about Jacinda's work?
  - a. Still cares enough to lose sleep
  - **b.** Enthusiasm and sparkle
  - **c.** Makes each person feel important
  - d. 22 years of children+; not afraid of imperfection
  - e. At heart she is an educator; her ethics and morals are solid
  - f. Great job of passing the torch yet keeping the culture.
  - **g.** Her passion for Fiddlehead is great.
- **4.** Special note: Fiddlehead center started 22 years ago; Fiddlehead School was approved in Feb. 2013.
- 5. Public comment:
  - a. Members of the staff were present to advocate for the addition of a grade <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> special education TA to assist at those grade levels.
  - **b.** Comments included:
    - i. Grade 8 has changed since Sept. in staffing and student needs
    - ii. Enrollment was increased from 20 to 22
    - iii. Outdoor Ed. position only PK-4
    - iv. A letter with concerns was sent 3 weeks after school

started

- v. 8 students with IEP, 6 with 504 plans
- vi. Confident and capable teachers also need support.
- vii. Great school for neurodivergent students, but requires support
- viii. Experienced at another school that failed due to a similar story.
- ix. Has applied for other jobs.
- x. Gd 5% has 9 IEPS, 6 are behavioral
- xi. Not serving them well enough
- xii. Other referrals are in process.
- xiii. Executive Function minutes not being provided
- xiv. Some behavioral minutes not met also
- xv. 33 IEP meetings were needed
- xvi. To keep staff and help kids, add support
- xvii. Kids feel safe here
- **c.** Bill asked Jacinda to communicate the outcome of the vote the next morning.
  - i. Jason suggests asking any online participants for comments.
  - ii. On dress code proposal:
    - 1. Love Fiddlehead; game changes for kids
    - 2. Curious about enforcement of breast coverage
      - a. Would like cleavage not covered by the policy.
    - 3. Costumes or portions
      - a. Concerned about the definition of costume.
        - i. Example: A wig
    - 4. Suggests looking at purpose of the policy
    - 5. Seems to hinge on definition of "a distraction"
      - a. Suggests that items used to distract will be confiscated until the end of the school day.
    - 6. Concerned that enforcement will impact school culture.
- **6.** Approval of Minutes from Dec. 14, 2024
  - a. Ben moved and Jamie seconded approval. Motion carried 6

to 0

- 7. Introduction of re-visioning with Joanne D'Arcangelo
  - **a.** Bill noted the age of the school as an organization and growing special education needs are two factors driving the need to revision.
  - **b.** Joanne summarized her experience and current outlook
    - i. A good time to re-vision and re-visit because older norms, systems, policies don't align with new demands and intentions.
    - ii. More like a strategic framework; re-visioning; not full blown strategic planning but one or two years forward.
    - iii. Collaborative process with the community to determine where we want to go.
    - iv. Two asks:
      - 1. Consider adopting the purposes and results section of the proposal
      - 2. Select generative questions to use for us and the community.
        - a. She reviewed the questions and the key ideas behind them.
      - 3. Questions or Thoughts
        - a. Really excited. Can we do this with difficulties expressed tonight. How can we dream big if we can't take care of what we have right now?
        - b. Can you assist with helping ideas about how to go forward?
          - i. Yes, I see these issues as part of the same process.
        - c. What can a Board member influence in this process?
          - Bill responded that re-visioning will help us build the next budget that is consistent with our mutual vision. Our situation has changed and so must our vision.

- ii. Another benefit is collaboration and attentive listening.
- 4. Funding: A large part of our work with Joanne has been funded by a substantial anonymous gift.
- 5. Change may be more possible when things are in flux because we know we must change.
- c. Roger moved and Ben seconded to adopt the purpose and results section of the proposal as presented. Motion passed 6 to 0.
- **d.** The Board agreed informally to give their suggested questions to Bill for circulation and response by Monday, Jan. 22, 2024
- **e.** The Board thanked Joanne for her positive presence.
- 8. Executive Director's report:
  - **a.** Submitted another grant for outdoor education. For kids at risk and we fit that description. Includes projects for 6-7-8
    - i. Key issue: complete curriculum in upper grades
  - **b.** Looking healthy on enrichment income. Expenses are down.
  - c. Feeling good, busy, looking forward to budget process
  - **d.** Will not add more students to upper grades next year.
  - **e.** Fiddlehead is in the top 10 of Maine schools for percentage of special education students.
  - **f.** Actual enrollment is 186. We lost 10 since the start of the year.
- **9.** Principal's report:
  - **a.** Education Committee continues to work on comprehensive curriculum documents in all areas
  - b. So much already exists and the players have moved on. Ed.
    Comm. is mining these treasures to keep what's valuable.
  - c. Shades and blinds have been installed.
  - **d.** Looking forward to open houses for the first time.
  - **e.** Attendance: 33% of the school are chronically absent. Have identified who to work with and are doing that work.
    - i. Using Anytime/Anywhere learning is being discussed
    - ii. Chronic absenteeism is absent for any reason for more than 10% of the school years.
  - f. Our staff is excellent, even with recent hires.

- **g.** Question: When might the Board see something in writing from the Education Committee?
  - i. A working draft of what we have can be shared at the February meeting.
- **10.** Executive session to discuss personnel matters
  - a. Marie moved and Roger seconded to enter executive session. Motion carried 6 to 0. Executive session started at 7:45.
  - **b.** The Board came out of executive session at 8:05.
- 11. Bill moved approval to add a full time special ed. TA to grades 7 and 8 for the balance of this school year. Roger seconded.
  - a. Motion carried 6 to 0.
- **12.** Financial Reports: Ben Kramer
  - **a.** Last year we overspent and looked to recover this year. We wanted to fix this and still support students and staff.
  - **b.** We think we will have \$110,000 at the end of the year.
  - **c.** Assumes our operating cost will break even over the next 6 months.
  - d. The Finance Committee may ask in Feb. to move the cost of one TA from Spec. Ed. reserve into the general reserve. We await the numbers about this.
  - e. Motion by Jamie moved and Susan seconded to accept the Treasurer's report. Motion carried 6 to 0.
- **13.** Board policy work: Dress Code policy
  - **a.** Jacinda recommended returning the policy to the school for further review, especially of letters A and F. The Board agreed informally with this plan.
- **14.** Education Committee: A full update is coming next month.
  - **a.** Looking for time for MS staff to complete curriculum development.
- **15.** Wellness Committee:
  - **a.** Looking for strategies to get muffins/cookies to faculty on the Friday after a Board meeting.

- **b.** Four Board members will bring muffins/goodies before the next meeting. Marie will make gluten free. Jacinda, Marie, Bill, and one other will bring muffins/or better on Feb. 15.
- c. Hoping for a full day wellness retreat before the end of the year.
  Still working on how this might work. Might use a venue like Smith Farm or others.
- 16. Adjournment: Ben moved, Marie seconded to adjourn at 8:25. Motion carried 6 to 0.