

**Old Sturbridge Academy Charter Public School
Meeting Minutes**

Meeting Date: Wednesday, November 28, 2018

Meeting Location: Fuller Conference Center,

Members present: Reed Hillman, Keith Blanchette, Louis Fazen, Richard McGrath, Pamela Boisvert, Jasmin Rivas, Dan Soucy, Christine Tieri, Jessica Miller

Members absent: Dan Pear

In Attendance: Jim Donahue, Tina Krasnecky, James Connally

Order of Business:

*Public Access 1*On docketed item*

Convene open session

1. Approval of Minutes – November 28, 2018 Meeting
2. Discussion of the Resignation of Trustee Daniel Pear
3. Review of Year to Date Financial Performance Through October 31
4. Approval of the Revised Academic Calendar 2018-2019
5. Development Committee Report
6. Governance Committee Report
7. Report of the Executive Director

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Meeting called to order at 5:21 p.m.

Quorum established.

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No Comments

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – November 28, 2018

1. Minutes were reviewed; Dr. Fazen requested one amendment on Page 7 to say that the “pending review of the Director will occur awaiting the approval of the Governance Committee.” Committee fully agreed on those edits.

Mr. Hillman entertained a motion to approve minutes with revisions.

MOTION: Dr. Fazen made a motion for approval.

SECONDED: Mr. Soucy seconded the motion

VOTE: ALL IN FAVOR

2. Discussion of the Resignation of Trustee Daniel Pear

Mr. Hillman discussed the resignation of Trustee Daniel Pear. Even with the departure of Mr. Pear, the Committee still meets the minimum required number of trustees.

Mr. Donahue suggested looking for a replacement that brings a background in Expeditionary Learning (E.L.) to the Committee, and brainstorming with Ms. DeTora about potential candidates. Mr. Pear explained in his resignation letter that while he is very passionate about Old Sturbridge Academy, it was difficult to commit the required time for the Committee with his other engagements. He will continue to be involved.

Ms. Krasnecky explained that DESE has been notified of Mr. Pear's resignation. His resignation is official.

Mr. Hillman discussed that the letter of resignation was addressed to the Executive Director, but should have been addressed to the Chairman of the Board. He will have Mr. Pear resubmit the resignation to be addressed to the Board, so that it could be a matter of public record.

3. Review of Year to Date Financial Performance Through October 31

Ms. Krasnecky discussed the year to date financial performance of the Academy. Overall, the Academy is performing on plan. All of the individual lines are where they are to be expected at this point. At this point in time, there are no concerns. Total revenues are at \$991,000 compared to a plan of \$988,000, slightly above. Expenses are also running slightly above, but nothing to be overly concerned about at this time. The tuition is coming in from the state as expected on time. Grants, distributions are ahead of plan because we can request funding as we spend money against the line. So if we have the opportunity to request more money, we take it. A reminder that the distribution of \$119,000 is very large because it is still the CSP Grant that the Academy consumes its entirety of its three years this year, going forward in the budget for next year, we will not see a grant of this size. Nutrition funding for this year, students are either free, reduced, or will pay for their lunches, when you look at Nutrition Funding you will see Federal and State Reimbursements, and Student Fees. Federal and State Reimbursements are where we expected them to be, while Student Fees is a little below plan. We are working on having parents be up to date; this is something new to us this year: having parents pay for student meals. This is a matter of timing, nothing significant to raise serious concern. Another source of revenue is Student Program Revenues, which is primarily the Extended Daycare Program. These revenues are ahead of plan, which are offset by the costs of the Program. The Village is contracted to provide this program.

Mr. McGrath asked about future plans to offset no longer having the CSP planning grant.

Ms. Krasnecky commented that the purpose of the grant was primarily to aid in startup expenses, purchasing furniture, equipment, etc...These expenses will decrease in future budgets. The impact will not be that significant as we will only be adding one grade per year, not four like when we began.

Mr. Donahue commented that after the planning grant ends, the additional students coming in each year will spread out the fixed costs. That will be the model in the following years. We will have to look into the increases in staff compensation and salaries. In the future, we as the Board will pursue a long-term staffing strategy.

Ms. Krasnecky added that in terms of expense costs, personnel costs are below plan due in part to fringe benefits. Administrative costs are on plan. The majority of Administrative costs is the

Management Contract with OSV. Instructional Services expenses (textbooks, curriculum, etc...) are slightly above plan. Other Student Services are also above plan, bussing has been higher than originally over.

Mr. Donahue mentioned that if the Academy became inundated with A-typical Special Education expenses, DESE would work out some arrangement.

Ms. Krasnecky commented that Operational Expenses are slightly ahead of plan, rent at \$107,000 is the majority of the expense. The water bill has been larger than expected, and the addition of July and August has had an impact.

Dr. Fazen asked where in the income statement would we find gifts and contributions made to the Academy?

Ms. Krasnecky mentioned that on page three, it would show under "Direct Income Support" if it came from an individual, or under "Private Support" if the money came from a foundation. Those are the lines under which we would book grants, gifts, and contributions.

Ms. Krasnecky commented that in comparison to last year, the Academy is running a profit of \$160,000 compared to \$65,000. That number is the result of increased tuition, and the elimination of startup costs. The Academy is not having a cash issue, he have a line of credit, but have not needed to tap into it this year. We would need that account if tuition ran late. It is beneficial to have that line as a safety net.

Mr. Blanchette remarked that there is no downside to having that line of credit.

4. Approval of the Revised Academic Calendar 2018-2019

Mr. Donahue mentioned that the Calendar was revised on Monday, November 12th to reflect closing for Veteran's Day as it is a federally recognized holiday. We are still at the previously stated number of school days.

Mr. Hillman entertained a motion to approve the revised Academic Calendar 2018-2019.

MOTION: Ms. Rivas made a motion for approval.

SECONDED: Mr. McGrath seconded the motion

VOTE: ALL IN FAVOR

5. Development Committee Report

Dr. Fazen mentioned that Mr. Connally and Ms. Rivas have planned to attend L.T.E. sessions to familiarize themselves with the program.

Ms. Rivas reached out to the parent advisory group to coordinate with their programs.

Mr. Connally mentioned that a Needs Assessment was conducted for both the Learning Through Experience (L.T.E.) team and the team at the Academy. Items for the Academy include a bus, playground equipment, and storage equipment. The L.T. E. team would like to eventually have a

fulltime staff person coordinating the program. In addition, the Committee would like to build awareness of the Academy, bringing individuals to the L.T.E. program to see how the Academy works with the Village.

Mr. Donahue mentioned that the L.T.E. equipment would be for the Academy, so that they can use the items for other OSA programs.

Mr. Blanchette expressed comingling with the Village. That the Academy should be stepping towards independence from the Village. At the end of the day, the Academy should stand on its own.

Ms. Rivas agreed that the Academy should own the equipment and that is actually a step towards independence.

Mr. Blanchette compares regularly services offered by the Village, to ensure the cost is competitive.

Mr. McGrath commented that the Academy is likely more dependent on the Village since the Academy is only in its second year. As the Academy matures it will be less dependent on the Village. There will be some overlap with the Village, as the Academy is a unique institution. We have a clear line of demarcation between the two organizations.

Mr. Donahue mentioned that the goal of the Academy is to leverage the resources at the Village to assist the school. For instance, increased security has come from Village security. The department expects us to have synergy with the Village.

Ms. Krasnecky mentioned that under the Management Contract the Academy is afforded some leeway for services provided by the Village. Security is included in the rent.

Ms. Tieri mentioned that the Academy should look for in-kind donations from large companies for supplies, like wheelbarrows and gardening equipment.

Ms. Rivas discussed that the Committee would like to have students become involved in community events to promote exposure.

6. Governance Committee Report

Mr. Soucy discussed the assessment tool for the Executive Director's evaluation. The document has a number of categories with a score rubric. Comments will be added for each section.

Mr. Donahue mentioned that this tool is very similar to the one used by the Village of its Executive Director's evaluation. There is a section that discusses the Management Contract. Every year, the Management Contract must be evaluated as well. This is an elegant solution, that also keeps the feedback anonymous.

Mr. Hillman wants to protect the anonymity of the evaluation.

Mr. Donahue mentioned he would like to submit a self-evaluation as well. This document is a start of the process.

Mr. Hillman entertained a motion to approve the evaluation document as submitted by the Governance Committee.

MOTION: Dr. Fazen made a motion for approval.

SECONDED: Ms. Tieri seconded the motion.

VOTE: ALL IN FAVOR

7. Report of the Executive Director

Mr. Donahue discussed Special Education at the Academy. One of the most difficult programs for a new school is Special Education, mostly in regards to personnel. The Academy model is fully inclusive. We have had some staffing changes, our Special Education coordinator stepped down. We now have two full-time Special Educators, as well as contracted service. We want more individuals for support in the classroom. The transition was handled beautifully, and we feel good about the direction of Special Education. We may lose a student who is in custody of the State, because they may need a self-contained therapeutic placement that the Academy simply cannot provide at this time. DCYF is driving the bus on this, and we are being kept in the loop. The Village is an excellent learning environment for students with learning disabilities. Secondly, at the end of last year, the Village is in charge of the Extended day program. We did this to allow the faculty at OSA to plan curriculum, and develop skills. The program at the Village has been a big success, especially with culinary lessons. We see this as a beginning of an extra-curricular program that could bring in children from the surrounding communities. This would also provide catchup and remediation opportunities to students. At this point, it is available to just Academy students. This has allowed the Village to use a space that was not being used, and use it for a program that the children are really passionate about.

Ms. Krasnecky added that this is a great leveraging of museum resources, as the Academy could not afford this sort of program at this point. There is a great benefit to students, and attendance has grown because the students are interested in doing these activities. Academy students would receive preferential admission. The latest pickup is around 5:30 to 6:00

Dr. Fazen mentioned that this is potentially a community service.

Mr. Hillman discussed individuals that he would be interested in reaching out to, that would help with professional board development. A collaborative effort with other charter schools is another possibility. Board development is an important commitment to DESE. There is not a Massachusetts Association of Charter School trustees, he would be willing to reach out to other Trustees about maybe organizing.

Mr. McGrath mentioned that the Academy could one day benefit from offering a swimming program in the future.

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Ms. Rosani mentioned that Parent's Advisory Council voted on \$1,000 to be spent on garden expenses. \$621.69 of that is remaining if the Development Committee is looking for garden funds, that money is available. Additionally, the Council will be working on recruitment, including having a table set up at the Christmas by Candlelight event at the Village. Is the Development Committee conducting student recruitment?

Ms. Rivas commented that the Development Committee is not engaging in student recruitment and that as a Southbridge school system employee, she cannot participate in that piece.

Mr. Donahue mentioned that on Thursday, December 20th it will be Academy Night at Christmas by Candlelight, with free admission for students and two adult tickets. Trustees are welcome as guests.

Mr. Hillman thanked members of the public.

Next OSA Board meeting will be December 19, 2018, at 5:15 p.m.

Motion: Mr. Hillman asked for a motion to adjourn.

Seconded: Ms. Rivas seconded the motion.

Vote: ALL IN FAVOR.

Meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

James A. Connally on behalf of Reed Hillman
Secretary, OSA Board

OSA Board