

APPROVED BOARD MINUTES

ASD Board Meeting July 11, 2012

Board Members Present: William Bonner, Thomas Frischknecht, Kent Glossop, Karen Graham, Idina Holden, Patty Humphrey, Kim Lavallee, Heather MacDonald and Michael White.

Board Members Absent: Matt Collins and Brandon Jackson.

Non-voting Members Present: Jennifer Cava, Dominique Dadekian and Andrew Myers

Others in Attendance: Linda Marquis, Kym Harmon, Heather Bobbitt, Dale Reddington

The meeting was called to order at 6:36 p.m. at 486 Amherst Street. Mr. Frischknecht clarified this is not the school's official location, but the meeting has been held here to give the Board members a chance to see the building.

1. Public Comments

Linda Marquis saw only one area labeled "lab" as she was walking around the site and expressed concern about whether that was enough. Ms. Cava explained that the school has four prospective labs that will be partitioned off in the open space. The lab that Ms. Marquis saw is just the easiest lab to build out first. The school will build out additional labs as quickly as possible, dependent on available funding. Ms. Cava is working on an "adopt" a lab with corporate partners. In the meantime, President Jordan of the Nashua Community College across the street has offered assistance with facilities. Ms. Cava feels confident that the labs will be filled out, although they may not be available Day 1.

Mr. Frischknecht added that the goal is to get the school into the space as expediently as possible because of financial and permit implications. There are plans for more labs, but these are not requirements for getting the occupancy permit from the city. Mr. Myers added that one lab at the old space had worked, especially with the flipped classroom approach, and the faculty could get this to work as well.

2. Approval of Board Minutes from the Prior Meeting

Mr. Glossop moved to approve the minutes from the June meeting. Ms. Humphrey seconded. All voted in favor.

3. Items of Board Business

a. Board Chairman

- (1) A preliminary budget was approved by email by a majority of Board members since the last meeting. Mr. Frischknecht will share the information for the public record. Ms. MacDonald commented that a line item called out for "late rent fee" be replaced with a "miscellaneous" category, as we don't intend to be late. Ms. Harmon explained this acknowledges that we don't always receive the first payment from the state in time to make the September rent. A bridge loan is intended to cover that difference, and will allow for better financing of the summer months. Ms. Lavallee and Ms. Harmon will review how to name the line item in question.

Ms. Lavallee moved that the preliminary budget be ratified. Mr. Glossop seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

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- (2) Two individuals have offered their services as external Board members. Heather Bobbitt moved here in 1994 and runs a dental practice with her husband. She has a 9 year-old son who is interested in attending the school when he is older. As a small business manager, she is used to wearing a number of hats. She is also active in fundraising at her son's school and teaching the students about stewardship. She is a project person, an organizer and an accountant. She and her husband have supported job-shadowing days and week-long observation opportunities in the dental practice.

Dale Reddington has been a professional in the high-tech arena for 35 years. He recently became an entrepreneur in the health training business. He has a lot of connections in the high tech community that might be of service to the school. He has managed strategic alliances across multiple organizations across the globe. He is married with two grown sons. His wife works with special needs students in the Amherst Middle School. He hopes to bring a combination of business, high tech and educational experience to the school. He has considered the Strategic Planning & Finance committee as a good place for his skill set. Mr. Frischknecht also suggested the Outreach committee.

Mr. Frischknecht explained the requirements of Board membership to both individuals.

Ms. Humphrey thanked both for their interest in the school and said the Board is very lucky that they are interested in serving.

Ms. Humphrey moved that Ms. Bobbitt and Mr. Reddington be invited to join the Board. Ms. Lavalley seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Glossop suggested that the Board hold the remaining seat for Nashua Community College. Ms. Cava confirmed that President Jordan has expressed an interest in rejoining the Board.

b. Board Treasurer

Mr. White met with Ms. Lavalley today to transition the role of Treasurer. Thanks to Kym Harmon and Barbara Tierney, the business office is running extremely well.

Mr. White and Ms. Lavalley met with the auditors several weeks ago. They have completed most of their work and reviewed preliminary results. The results were good and should be finalized by the end of the month. This puts the school in the position of having four years of completed audits.

Mr. White has been working with First Colebrook Bank to set up a line of credit. The bank is sympathetic to the school and its mission. The final documents were sent over today. The interest rate would be Prime + 1%, adjusted daily, with a minimum rate 4.95% and no maximum. The line would be available for 1 year. Payment is interest only until the principal can be paid off. The fees are nominal. This line of credit would help the school with its recurring cash flow crunch in the summer while waiting for payment from the state. The bank will re-evaluate at the end of 12 months (the banker suggested initially the loan be 14 months). Mr. White and Ms. Harmon anticipate paying off the loan by November. Ms. Harmon budgeted for interest of up to \$10,000.

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Ms. MacDonald moved that the Board authorize the Treasurer and the Chair to commit the school to the terms discussed tonight. Ms. Holden seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Glossop thanked Mr. White for his efforts in closing out the audits, which have been hanging for a long time. Mr. Frischknecht also expressed his appreciation.

4. Director's Report

a. Operations & Personnel Report

- Ms. Cava has re-initiated discussions with Nashua about busing charter school students in light of a recent development in Manchester.
- Ms. Cava is focused on planning for the school's growth. An initial letter was sent to parents for "Bring Your Own Device," discussed at the last Board meeting. So far, responses have been favorable. Primary concerns seem to be how to handle families that have financial hardship, which Ms. Cava has addressed to ASDEF.
- Summer schools and camps are in session.
- Ms. Cava is in negotiation with an after school program that provides after school tutoring for students. This would address the persistent issue of parents who don't pick up their children on time. The program would be at the school 4-6 p.m. and would offer the children a supervised homework environment.
- Ms. Cava has hired all the English teachers needed for the new Humanities program. She has hired a very strong research scientist who can also teach math and other subjects. She has hired an IBC teacher to replace Dr. MacDonald who has taken a position in Hollis-Brookline. David Plantiere has been hired for Conceptual Physics and to create support for an aviation program. 2 new teachers have been hired for the 6th grade. Jill Cane has developed a program for the 6th grade. The only positions remaining to be filled are 1 guidance counselor and 1 math teacher.

b. Moving Update

- About 50% packed and moved from the Merrimack facility. 5 trucks of donations from St. Mary's have been moved. There has been a dedicated group of volunteers and parents.
- Construction will begin once the building permit is issued. Northpoint Construction will be doing the work.
- First day of school is August 28.
- The school is planning an open house to invite parents, media, the community and dignitaries to display the new location. This is planned for Sunday, August 26, 4-7 p.m.
- A provider has been identified to provide school lunches. The details are still being worked out with the city to make sure the provider can work.

5. Faculty & Student Affairs Report

a. *Faculty* – Mr. Myers reiterated that the school has been a hive of activity every day. He is astounded by the work that Mr. Overman is doing to move the school. Mr. Myers also explained that Ms. MacDonald did not want to leave the school, but she was offered a deal she couldn't turn down with higher salary, better benefits and much more preparation time. Mr. Frischknecht agreed with the concern that the school needs to be competitive for the faculty.

b. *Student Affairs* – Ms. Dadekian requested that a Spanish 4 class be offered. She and about 5 other students would take it if it was offered. Ms. Cava acknowledged the concern and explained that she supports the course but has

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to verify that she has the resources for it. She is looking at some different options with the hope of making something work. Ms. Humphrey suggested that the students be given the option of paying for it. Ms. Cava is waiting to see how many students are in Spanish 1, 2 or 3.

Ms. Dadekian added that the building is really cool.

6. Committee Organizational Review

- a. *Admissions* – Admissions were re-opened. Currently we have 78 completed applications, and a lottery will be held on Wednesday for 6 openings in 6th grade and 26 openings in grades 7-12. Students will take placement tests after the lottery.
- b. *Communication* – No meeting yet. There are still only two members. Mr. Glossop volunteered to help.
- c. *Outreach* – Mr. Collins was not in attendance.
- d. *Personnel* – No meeting yet.
- e. *Policy* – No meeting this month.
- f. *Strategic Planning & Finance* – Mr. Jackson is planning a meeting for the first or second week of August.

A special project is underway, headed by Mr. Glossop, to assess the school's requirements and identify school management software for the future. The committee is considering the concerns raised about FOCUS and decide whether different software should be purchased or FOCUS should be adjusted to better meet the school's needs. Mr. Glossop will share the list of concerns and will survey the parents and staff to obtain their feedback as well.

7. Policy Review/Approvals

Originally there was a long list of financial policies to be considered. In some cases they reference RSAs that do not apply to ASD. Ms. MacDonald will take more time to review the RSAs and is only bringing forward two policies.

DZA – Capitalization of Assets: The change is at the request of the auditors, because they felt the thresholds and useful life were too high. The capitalization threshold for "Buildings/ Infrastructure" should be \$25,000.

Ms. Holden moved that DZA be moved forward for a vote at a subsequent meeting. Ms. Lavallee seconded. All voted in favor.

DIH – Fraud Prevention and Fiscal Management: The suggestion was made that the policy be referenced in the employee handbook with a strong recommendation that the Director ensure the policy be presented at the beginning of the school year to all staff and faculty. Mr. Glossop asked about having two signatures on a payment or three. Ms. Harmon said the auditors felt two was sufficient and the prior process that called for three separate signatures was excessive. The policy calls for the Board to vote on who can sign the checks. Mr. Frischknecht will change the process for the annual meeting to include this.

Ms. Holden moved that DIH be moved forward for a vote at a subsequent meeting. Mr. Glossop seconded. All voted in favor.

8. Other Agenda Items

Mr. Frischknecht asked Ms. MacDonald as Vice Chair to train the two new Board members on expectations and history. Ms. Lavallee will follow up on available training through the insurance company.

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9. Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, August 8, at 6:30 p.m. and should include policy review and amending the charter to allow for additional students. The location will be in Merrimack unless an occupancy permit has been obtained for the new location by that time.

The Board meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Idina Holden
Secretary