



Endeavor Board Meeting Minutes: September 22, 2020

7:00 PM in the Multipurpose Room and via Zoom:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/73541219442?pwd=YzdJcXpyaTQwVE45ODA3RTM2czRmdz09>

Present:

Board Member	Position	Term Start	Term Ending	Present
Amy Tharrington Start: July 1, 2016	Member	July 1, 2019	June 30, 2022	Yes (via Zoom)
Jaelyn Parks Start: April 8, 2019	Member	July 1, 2019	June 30, 2022	Yes (via Zoom)
Bill Kroll Start: May 19, 2016	Chair	July 1, 2019	June 30, 2022	Yes
Tracy DeMarco Start: June 15, 2017	Secretary	July 1, 2020	June 30, 2023	Yes
Ashley Hicks Start: June 15, 2017	Member	July 1, 2010	June 30, 2023	Yes (via Zoom)
Kim Keith Start: May 25, 2017	Vice-Chair	July 1, 2010	June 30, 2023	Yes (via Zoom)
Nick Cerullo Start: March 19, 2018	Member	July 1, 2018	June 30, 2021	Yes
Israa Kanfoud Start: July 12, 2018	Treasurer	July 1, 2018	June 30, 2021	Yes (via Zoom)
Start: July 12, 2018	Member	July 1, 2018	June 30, 2021	

Call to Order:

Bill Kroll

- Bill Kroll called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.
- Mission Statement: Endeavor Charter School’s mission is to engage K-8 students by integrating a challenging, hands-on academic program with multi-faceted fine arts courses in a familial environment.
- Vision 2018: Endeavor Charter School’s vision is a community of educators and families working together to graduate students who are motivated and curious, capable and confident, and prepared to make a positive impact on the world around them.

Approval of Agenda:

Tracy DeMarco

- Tracy DeMarco moved to approve the September 22, 2020 Agenda. Nick Cerullo seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes:

Tracy DeMarco

- Tracy DeMarco moved to approve the September 1, 2020 Minutes. Nick Cerullo seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Foundation Board Update:

Michael Reinhardt

- Michael Reinhardt stated that the Foundation Board did not have much to report. The Foundation Board participated in its regularly scheduled bi-weekly meeting with BC Construction Group last Thursday. The School expansion project is still progressing on track, and BCCG is currently working on securing necessary permitting from the Town of Wake Forest. The Foundation Board is planning to schedule an official groundbreaking ceremony sometime near the end of November.

PAWS Update:

Allison Blatz

- Allison Blatz reported that PAWS is beginning its first virtual fall book fair. The book fair will run until October 2nd, and the link to access it and purchase books is shared with families on the ECS weekly update. Books will ship free with any order over \$15-16.

Committee Updates:

- **Finance Committee**

Israa Kanfoud

- Michael Juby, the School’s financial advisor from First Tryon, gave a presentation regarding proposed financing for the expansion project. He explained that to ensure best pricing for Endeavor, First Tryon solicited proposals for an interim loan solution from a number of banks, including BBVA, the School’s current bank partner and the existing lender for the School’s 2016 loan (the “2016 Loan”). BBVA responded with an offer to finance \$11.5 million of the new project’s total estimated cost of \$12.4 million. BBVA’s proposal does not require refinancing the 2016 Loan or modifying the associated swap, which will remain untouched, saving the School approximately \$250,000 in swap termination costs. BBVA’s proposal would also eliminate the need for a two-step financing process (i.e. if the School were to pursue an interim construction loan), reducing costs and interest rate risk, and would not require funding a debt service reserve fund, reducing the School’s total borrowing need. As part of BBVA’s proposed structure, the School will contribute approximately \$1.2 million of equity to fund, including (1) \$900,000 of project costs (reflecting the difference between \$12.4 million in project costs and the \$11.5 million loan); and (2) \$300,000 of costs of issuance associated with the financing. The \$11.5 million loan allows for a 25-year amortization, eliminating 5 to 10 years of debt service payments for the new project when compared to a publicly sold bond financing. While BBVA is committing to holding the loan for only 10 years, the indicative fixed rate of 3% from the anticipated swap produces significant debt service savings compared to the public market transaction, allowing the School to amortize its debt more quickly and build reserves to hedge against future interest rate risk. The 2020 Loan will be “wrapped” around the School’s debt service obligation for the 2016 Loan so that the School’s total annual debt service obligation—taking into account both loans—will remain approximately level over the 25-year term. Based on the School’s current budget and latest projection, the School expects to have a healthy cushion to meet the 2020

Loan's two primary financial covenants: (1) debt service coverage ratio not less than 1.15x; and (2) days cash on hand not less than 60 days (the School is not projected to fall below 100 days, despite the \$1.2 million equity contribution).

- Nick Cerullo asked whether this cash flow proposal locks the School into anything that we weren't planning on? He also asked whether there would be a penalty for paying early if, for example, the School began to generate additional revenue from renting the gym or auditorium. Michael Juby explained that it could be expensive to pay off the loan more than 10 years early, but that the School could establish a reserve for the purpose of paying down the loan after the initial 10-year period. Michael offered that First Tryon could create a reserve model if the School is interested in that approach. A complete copy of Michael's presentation is attached as **Exhibit A**.
- Israa Kanfoud stated that the School's bond counsel, Mary Nash Rusher, prepared a Borrowing Resolution for the Board to review and approve so that the School may move forward with this financing for the School expansion project. Israa circulated the document to Board members in advance of the meeting for review. No Board members had any questions on the document which is attached as **Exhibit B**.
 - **Accordingly, Israa Kanfoud moved to approve the Borrowing Resolution. Bill Kroll seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**
- Next, Israa introduced an insurance statement that required Board approval for payment. He explained that this was an expected expense. Accordingly, Bill Kroll moved to approve payment of \$10,288.20 to [insert name of insurance co.]. Bill Kroll seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
- Finally, Israa explained that the Board needed to approve a variety of recurring expenses from various vendors, including: [insert recurring expenses]. Israa Kanfoud moved to approve the above-listed recurring expenses. Tracy DeMarco seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

- **Governance Committee**

Tracy DeMarco

- Tracy DeMarco announced that the Board is currently accepting applications to fill the open Board seat. Interested parties should email their resume and a cover letter to board@endeavorcharter.com. Further instructions on topics to include in the cover letter will be posted to the Board page on the ECS website. The Board anticipates conducting interviews in January and February 2021.

- **Resource Development Committee**

Nick Cerullo

- Nick Cerullo reported that the Resource Development Committee has been looking for ways to keep the community engaged while the School is operating on the current restricted schedule.
- Lauren Manfreda reported that the School initiated a soft launch of the Annual Fund a few weeks ago that has been very successful. Lauren explained that the Annual Fund is important to support the school financially as the School receives less funding from the State than a traditional public school. ECS greatly appreciates families who have donated already this year. Lauren next expressed appreciation for the community's participation in Fun Fridays. It has been a great way to keep the community engaged while many of us are still remote. Finally, Lauren noted that the Development Committee is working on a top secret mission that will be announced the first week back after track out.

Additional Items

- Bill Kroll explained that the YMCA has asked the School to sign a contract so that it can continue hosting ECS student at its learning centers. Kim Keith explained that the Y has been supporting the community by offering learning centers to support students participating in virtual learning during the work day. Because the Y is not a license child care center, North Carolina law requires it to execute a contract with every school with one or more student enrolled in one of the Y's learning centers. Christi Whiteside clarified that the School does not pay any fee to the Y related to this service, and it is not conducted onsite at the ECS campus.
- Accordingly, Bill Kroll moved to approve the [insert name of Y contract]. Nick Cerullo seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Director's Update:

Christi Whiteside

- We have begun Step 2 of our Return to Normal School plan.
 - Last week 16 A-week kindergarteners returned to campus.
 - Yesterday 35 B-week K and 1st grade students returned.
 - Next week 50 K, 1 and 2 A-week students will be on campus.
- Our morning carpool symptom screening and temperature check has been smooth but slow. We will move toward providing each family the screening questions to speed up the process and just do a quick verbal check with temp check.
- We will be emailing K-2 families about this change as well as to encourage a quicker movement through carpool.
- We are supporting 22 students through Student Support Team - 3 new referrals, 19 followed from last year. Meetings regarding all of these students by grade level were held within the first 6 weeks of the year. There are 15 parent meetings scheduled through the end of Q1
- We have 84 students who have been identified as not thriving under remote learning most often evidenced by poor work completion, attendance, minimal effort, lack of home support). We are also monitoring new students on this list. IEP students are included if their issues are specific to remote learning. Teachers submit a report regarding these students weekly. Students are added and subtracted as needed. We are putting sample interventions in place such as: parent/ student/teacher/SAP conference, daily or weekly check in with student or family, remediation with teacher via zoom, parent support and assistance in connecting with learning centers, consult with SAP coordinator (student/parent)
 - 8th grade: 8 students
 - 7th grade: 11 students
 - 6th grade: 7 students
 - 5th grade: 14 students
 - 4th grade: 9 students
 - 3rd grade: 13 students
 - 2nd grade: 12 students
 - 1st grade: 7 students
 - K- 3 students

- Mrs White hosted lunches for new students in grades 3-4 and 5-6 last week and will meet 7-8 this week. She included a few returning staff kids to help provide student insight into questions they might have.
- Fun Fridays have been a success and will continue through this quarter. This week is Pets of ECS week and next week is Staycation week.
- K-2 is wrapping up their Fine Arts and Fitness Choice Board Challenge. Students will have until the end of track out to turn in their completed boards.
- We are preparing for the first wave of construction on campus and relocating a temporary front door. More details to come next quarter.
- We held interviews for our new first grade teacher who will join the team as a sub next quarter and then stay in a co-teaching role next semester.
- We are still seeking 50% subs to supervise students in classrooms with teachers on medical leaves who will be live-streaming lessons into the rooms

Re-Opening Discussion

- Nick Cerullo asked for further information on what the kindergarten teachers have learned managing students both in person and remote? Christi explained that it is challenging to run two separate programs for each classroom. However, the kids are very excited to be in school, to have everything in their backpack. Bill Kroll asked how the kids responded to being home after a week of in-person instruction. Christi responded that there was a variety of different responses. One child was upset to see another student in his desk; another class thought the students were more independent at home after a week in person.
- She noted that, at the beginning of the school year, she expected that families with students who struggled with remote learning in the spring would elect to send their students back to in-person school in the fall, but that was not the case. The students identified as not thriving in a remote setting are split almost evenly between those who plan to return to in-person learning and those who will stay remote. This could be due to a variety of factors, including a family's comfort level with in person learning and/or the challenges of transportation and child care when the School is not providing after care.
- Nick Cerullo asked whether the School has sought feedback from parents regarding remote instruction. Christi stated that there has been no formal attempt to collect parent feedback, but thought it would be a great idea to get that input going forward. That said, Christi noted that several kindergarten parents who selected 100% remote learning for the semester have contacted her to ask whether they could change their selection and send their child back to the classroom.
- Bill Kroll noted that Governor Cooper's recent announcement allows all students in grades K-5 to be back in the classroom under Plan A guidelines and suggested the Board discuss a plan to bring more students back to campus. Nick Cerullo acknowledged this would not be an easy task and asked how the staff have been coping. Christi noted that the staff response is varied, just like it is in our parent community. She acknowledged that things are getting easier for teacher teams as they get used to having more students in person and balancing those students with remote students.
- Christi stated that she would prefer to continue bringing students back on a rolling basis, rather than jumping immediately to Plan A for k-5. She proposed the following schedule for second quarter:
 - Week of October 19: K-2 B week on campus;
 - Week of October 26: K-2, 3 & 6 A week on campus;

- Week of November 2: K-2, 3, 4, 6, & 7 B on campus;
 - Week of November 9: K-8 A week on campus.
- Using this schedule, every grade level will have been on campus at least one week before the survey goes out for second semester.
- Tracy DeMarco stated that she liked the plan of continuing to roll grades back on campus. She also pointed out that the school does not need to move to a full Plan A because the current numbers allow us to have almost every student who elected to be in-person on campus every week. With the exception of K, 1, and 6, all students could be on campus each week while still maintaining the distancing requirements of Plan B. For grades 1 & 6, we would have a few classrooms of 11 students, as opposed to 10 (which was the maximum the school could fit under Plan B requirements). Tracy urged the Board to consider offering more regular in-person instruction given the ability to do so under even more stringent requirements than what the law currently requires.
- Amy Tharrington agreed with the plan to roll more students back, but noted the difficulties facing parents who have students in multiple grades. Where one sibling can return to school, but the other cannot, the remote child may have to stay home alone or miss a portion of class to accommodate drop-off for the sibling who is in school. Christi responded that many families are dealing with that right now and have made the decision for one child to miss morning meeting to accommodate drop off.
- Bill Kroll asked whether Christi had heard any news from other schools that already have more students back in the classroom. Franklin Academy, for example, has had students in the classroom 2 days per week since August.
- Christi Whiteside noted that the concern adding more students to the classroom is managing younger students who may not always follow rules. Bill Kroll pointed out that older students likely would be better able to follow social distancing guidelines. Christi agreed, but suggested that the older age group is more at risk to spread. Tracy DeMarco noted that we are talking about bringing those students back with full social distancing in place, which should neutralize any risk of spread. She also noted that former Board member Jon Fowler raised the concern in July that the School is potentially at risk of greater exposure on the rotating week schedule even if students are more distanced in that setting since many will be in other care settings during the off week.
- Nick Cerullo stated that the School needs to be nimble enough to adjust if we are seeing widespread issues with whatever plan the School adopts. Amy Tharrington noted that many people have raised a concern about making sure remote students get the same amount of attention as in person students. Under the current rotating week system, most classes have just 5 students in person at one time and 20 remote students, and it followed that teachers would likely have to pay more attention to remote students. She asked whether a more balanced approach of 10 in person and 10 remote would help the teachers balance both groups.
- Return to Campus
 - Bill Kroll moved to approve the following return to campus plan:
 - Week of October 19: K-2 B week on campus;
 - Week of October 26: K-2, 3 & 6 A week on campus;
 - Week of November 2: K-2, 3, 4, 6, & 7 B on campus;
 - Week of November 9: K-8 A week on campus.
 - Tracy DeMarco seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The Board agreed that it would take up returning at least k-2 students on a non-rotating basis at its October 22nd Board meeting.

- Bill Kroll moved to approve the start of fall athletics on October 19 and subject to review and comment on the draft protocols. Nick Cerullo seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
- Nick Cerullo praised all groups in the ECS community—students, teachers, administration, and parents. The community is pulling together, and the Board is so impressed with how everyone has risen to the occasion.

Public Comment

- One written comment expressed appreciation to the Board for all the hard work.

Closed Session

- Bill Kroll moved to go into closed session pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143.318.11(a)(1), (6) & (8) at 8:38 p.m.
- Bill Kroll moved to go into open session at 9:11 p.m. Tracy DeMarco seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment:

Bill Kroll adjourned the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

Bill Kroll