

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
THE WOODSTOCK ACADEMY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
June 20, 2023



These minutes are for informational purposes only.

PRESENT: Asikainen, Samantha; Beckwith, Martha; Bentley, Cary; Blackmer, Robert; Carabeau, Garry; Duvall, Nancy (C); Higgins, Edwin; Larrow, Jeff; McGinn, Walter; Morse, David; Paquette, Philippa; Quinn, Eric; Rhynhart, Hans; Rich, Matthew; Samborowski, Leonard; Swenson, Christine; Tuttle, Brent (P)

ADMINISTRATION: Favreau, Amy; Harten, Michael; Hughes, Karin; Rigney, John; Sandford, Chris; Singleton, Holly; Sturdevant, Jon; Susi, Michael; Woodland, Julie

ABSENT WITH NOTIFICATION: Cording, Leisl; Ellsworth, Robert (E); Frankhouser, Hans (W); Livernois, Jay (Ex-Officio); Perkins-Banas, Melissa (B); Young, Scott

GUESTS: Joe Musumeci and Heather Munroe

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President Swenson at 7:01 p.m.

2. **Community Participation** – None.

3. Secretary's Report—Minutes of February 21, 2023

MOTION: (Paquette/Higgins) To approve the minutes of February 21, 2023. All voted Yes except Brent Tuttle, Hans Rhynhart, Nancy Duvall, and David Morse, who abstained. Motion passes.

4. Board Reports

a. President's Report

i. Correspondence

Head of School Sandford reviewed the correspondence included in the packet. Highlights included a letter to the State Department of Education suggesting it deny NFA's request for intervention in a contractual dispute with one of its sending towns; letters of gratitude to Trustees Perkins-Banas, Frankhouser & Morse; end-of-year letters to our sending town partners; letters of appreciation to our guidance counseling department; various letters acknowledging retirements & resignations; a letter to the Town of Union offering to set dates to negotiate a new contract; a letter to the Woodstock Historic District Commission offering to support an initiative to identify places of historical significance with signs; a letter to Woodstock's Board of Selectman requesting to continue discussion about a sidewalk project and requesting more equitable library funding; a letter of gratitude to Representative Pat Boyd for his assistance in securing the grant that funds Project Courage's work with students struggling with substance use; a grouping of information, charts and links externally submitted for Board review about the COVID-19 vaccine; and several handouts listing the various award winners named in 2022-2023. A brief, multi-topic discussion ensued.

ii. 2023-2024—Board of Trustees Meeting Calendar

A 2023-2024 Board of Trustees Meeting Calendar was enclosed for the convenience of the Trustees.

iii. Nominating Committee Report

Nominating Committee Co-Chair Matthew Rich introduced Heather Munroe '87, saying the Nominating Committee has endorsed her to become a Trustee of the Community at the Annual Meeting in August. Additionally, the committee has agreed to put the same slate of officers forward in 2023-2024. Trustees are asked to contact Mr. Rich or Mrs. Woodland if they might be willing to mentor new Trustees.

b. **Committee Reports**—questions/discussion on reports provided in the packet

There were no questions or comments.

5. Woodstock Academy Administration Reports

a. Associate Head of School for Finance and Operations Report

i. 2022-2023—Budget Update

Associate Head of School for Finance and Operations Mike Susi reviewed the Profit and Loss Report, which captured data through May, saying that even with the balloon payment looming and pending bills, this year is predicted to end at a breakeven.

ii. 2023-2024—Budget Update

Mr. Susi presented the proposed 2023-2024 budget, highlighting increased revenue from the STRIVE Program, the greater accuracy of historical data used to prepare the budget, and good enrollment numbers from the admissions team.

iii. Academy Building Restoration Project Update

Associate Head of School for Finance and Operations Mike Susi reported that the Academy Building Restoration project is going well, and as issues arise, they are being fixed correctly. Buildings and Grounds Committee Chair Bob Blackmer agreed and said a mid-October completion date was likely. Although the project is currently coming in under budget, the increased number of shuttles required while the Academy Building classrooms are not in use adds cost.

iv. Endorse the 2021-2022 Audit

The management letter from the 2021-2022 audit was reviewed both written concerns were addressed. Finance Committee Chair Hans Rhynhart shared that his committee endorsed the audit at a previous meeting.

MOTION: (Tuttle/Paquette) That the Board endorse the 2021-2022 audit and recommend the Corporation accept it at its annual meeting on August 15, 2023.

Unanimous

v. Other – None.

vi. Board questions/discussion – None.

b. Associate Head of School Report

i. Year-End Update

Associate Head of School Holly Singleton shared her June updates with the Board, highlighting a 98.1% graduation rate which will shift to 98.7% when two additional students complete their requirements in the next several months. The school updates, student achievements, and faculty and staff achievements were too many to list and are attached below. Discussion ensued about teacher retention, the number of qualified teachers available, and an alarming nationwide trend where teachers are leaving the profession completely. Plans in 2023-2024 include creating an environment with fewer new initiatives and where students and adults are supported.

ii. Academic Report

Dean of Academics Dr. Michael Harten provided his annual Academic Report, which captured data about Advanced Placement (AP) classes and scores, Early College Experience (ECE) classes, SAT scores/averages/comparisons for the graduating class, Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (EBRW) scores, four-year trends for the CT SAT along with a 2024 SAT Cohort Analysis Growth Report, and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) trends/comparisons. Based on the information, the Data Team (1) shifted fall math and English assessments from grade 9 to grade 8; (2) will continue daily SAT practice in core classes for grades 9-11; (3) will continue conducting NGSS assessments in February for fall science students; (4) and will evaluate final NGSS and SAT results as soon as they are available in order to make any additional curricular adjustments. The members of the Data Team were thanked.

iii. Other – None.

iv. Board questions/discussion – None.

c. Associate Head of School for Advancement

i. South Campus Presentation

Associate Head of School for Advancement Jon Sturdevant provided a comprehensive plan overview of the status and future of South Campus. Facility updates include the Annhurst Hall lobby, Barbara Child Board Room, music studio, strength & conditioning rooms, Loos Center

Theater, The Gallery, TV studio, new WiFi system, renovated staff apartments, renovated Warren Hall wing, security enhancements, and Centaur Plaza. The vision for South Campus includes building a tennis court facility, replacing the turf field & track, building a greenhouse, constructing a new cafeteria, adding parking lots, reconfiguring the quad, upgrading the dormitories, and adding air conditioning. Pictures and drawings were shared. Discussion ensued about securing funding and the interconnectedness of certain projects. The priority list right now is tennis (#1) and track and turf (#2). The Share the Love campaign to fund the tennis court project has already begun, and approximately \$325K has been committed so far. Discussion ensued on a wide variety of topics, including public access, mixed-use courts, the future of the “round building” (to be discussed at the September BOT Retreat), building design aesthetics, USDA loan requirements, and how best to honor former Trustee Paul Kelly.

MOTION: (Bentley/Carabeau) That the turf field facility at South Campus should be named in honor of Paul Kelly '69 and that he should be an honorary trustee.

Unanimous

ii. Advancement Update

Associate Head of School for Advancement Jon Sturdevant announced the retirement of Doreen Holt and welcomed her replacement, Sarah Andrews '16, to his team. Exciting news included being awarded a \$143K PEGPETIA grant, receiving a donated LED monitor wall from ESPN, and accepting a gift distribution from Henry Bowen's grandson, Gardner Richardson. Trustees were asked to make a gift before the end of the 2022-2023 school year so that the Board can achieve 100% trustee participation this year.

iii. Other – None.

iv. Board questions/discussion – None.

d. Head of School Report

i. NFA Petition Update

This topic was addressed in the Correspondence section of the meeting.

ii. College Acceptance Report

Head of School Sandford presented his annual College Acceptance Report, featuring the self-reported data that 87 out of roughly 300 seniors provided about the colleges they were accepted, rejected, waitlisted, and ultimately enrolled in. Comments included an interesting trend where the number of applications submitted has increased, and it was noted that thanks to our flight training class, two of these students would become pilots.

iii. Enrollment Update

Assistant Head of School for Enrollment Amy Favreau provided her Spring 2023 Enrollment Update, listing the many international and domestic trips she and her team have taken, the number/location of high school fairs they have participated in, the number of campus tours and job shadowing opportunities they provided, and the various advertising methods, social media avenues and websites they used to reach potential new students. As of today, she has received 92 deposits from boarding students from at least four different states and over 18 countries. Discussion continued about plans to welcome new students, the roles members of her admissions team play, and the many contributions of the communications team. A follow-up report is planned for the Annual Meeting in August.

iv. Other – None.

v. Board questions/discussion – None.

6. Other Items – None.

7. Executive Session—Personnel and Legal (Including the Head of School's Review)

MOTION: (Tuttle/Carabeau) To enter into Executive Session to consider Personnel and Legal matters, inviting Heather Munroe and Julie Woodland to attend at 8:39 p.m.

Unanimous

The meeting returned to regular session at 9:16 p.m.

8. Possible Action Based on Executive Session

MOTION: (Paquette/Larrow) To approve the one-year extension of the Head of School's contract as discussed in Executive Session.

Unanimous

President Swenson wished everyone a great summer.

9. Adjournment

MOTION: (Samborowski/Asikainen) To adjourn the meeting at 9:17 p.m.

Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Woodland

Julie Woodland

Board Clerk

The Woodstock Academy prepares all students by providing diverse opportunities through a rigorous curriculum and a variety of programs in order to cultivate the necessary skills to become lifelong learners and global citizens.



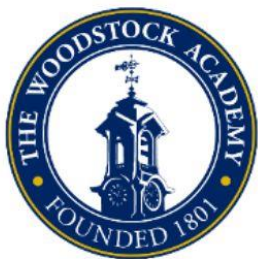
June Updates from the Associate Head of School

School Updates

- Graduation statistics: Of 320 seniors, 6 were non-graduates. 98.1% on-time graduation. Two completed their requirements late making it 98.7% graduation as of 6/19/23. Two of the remaining four students are currently enrolled in programs to complete graduation requirements.
- Teachers leaving: Melita Monahan, Italian (new career); Ian Jackson, music (RIF); Helen Collins, Mandarin (RIF); Alex Gates, English (LTS); Katie Burns, English (new career).
- Lilah Jafer-DeCesare, rising sophomore, was named the 2023-2024 WA Poet Laureate.
- The school received a \$143,527 grant from PEGPETIA to support video and broadcast technology classes.
- The WA Chemistry Olympiad came in first place out of 17 schools at the region quiz bowl competition hosted by UConn.
- The Model U.N. National Team won an Award of Distinction (1st place) and the national competition in March.
- The WA Student Council collected 88 pints of blood at their April donation campaign.
- The softball and the baseball teams both won the ECC Division 2 Title.
- The girls track team won its first ever ECC Division 1 Title AND the ECE Division 1 Championship Meet!
- The World Language department inducted over 60 members into the four world language honor societies.
- Woodstock Academy was approved to offer a Chapter of the National Technical Honor Society starting next school year.
- The B Club was recognized as a state winner in the *2023 Challenge to Educational Citizenship*. (This club raises money to support local youth in the community that face high medical costs due to medical fragility.)

Student Achievements

- Owen Bland came in 2nd place in the State Voice of Democracy competition and won \$1,000.
- Rising senior, Danielle Cabassa (P) was the runner up in the 23rd Annual James W. Cooper Fellows Quintin Johnstone Statewide High School Essay Contest. Her winning essay, “Out with the Books,” received a \$1,000 prize.
- The boys’ hockey team raised over \$450 at their military appreciation night which was donated to the Danielson Veterans Coffeehouse.
- Coach Bob Donahue secured his 100th win this season!
- 5 students won individual awards at the National Model U.N. competition this last March: Baden Eaton (W), Best Delegate; Owen Bland (W), Best Delegate; Davis Simpson (B), Outstanding Delegate; Maggie Hart (W), Outstanding Delegate; and John Murray (W), Outstanding Delegate. The following students were then asked to speak at the United Nations Building: Leila McKinnon (W), Fiona Rigney (W), Davis Simpson (B), and Baden Eaton (W).



Student Achievements, continued

- The Drone Team, which consists of David Sumner (B), Songxuan Jimmy Wu (T), Evan Anderson (B), and Beck Gritzner (P), won the Tournament Champions of the Regional Aerial Drone Competition. They also received additional awards for Excellence and for Inspiration! They also travelled to the national competition and made it to the quarterfinals. They ended up being ranked 9th out of 62 teams, and they placed 5th in the Coding part of the competition.
- Paige Owens (W) won the Aspirations in Computing Award, given by NCWIT.
- Jaydon Deras (C) was selected as a Gates Scholar and a member of The Gates Scholarship Class of 2023.

Faculty & Staff Achievements

- The 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year, nominated by the community and voted on by the WA employees, is Ian Jackson (music).
- The 2023-2024 Staff of the Year, nominated by the community and voted on by the WA employees, is Erin Canty (main office administrative assistant).
- Sara Dziejczak and John Rigney received a UConn ECE Course Enhancement Award to support the Human Rights Conference.
- Sharon Geyer received a \$2,000 ECE Course Enhancement Award to purchase Go Direct Tris Conductivity Sensors for her chemistry classes.
- Denzel Washington and the Diversity Council secured a \$5,000 grant from RESC Alliance for increasing educator diversity.
- Michael Bourgeois completed his TEAM and Mentor certification.
- Sharon Geyer was selected to be an AP Chemistry reader this June.
- Mark Smolak was selected as the Division II hockey coach of the year!
- Mikko Koivisto became an approved ECE instructor for UConn's SPSS 3230 Biotechnology.
- Rich Telford became an approved ECE instructor for UConn's NRE 1000E Environmental Science.
- Tyler McCarthy received the President's Award from the Connecticut Athletic Trainers Association for his heroic work this last fall.
- Michael Bove completed his TEAM program for certification.
- Val May was selected for AP Biology consultant training, which will allow her to lead one-day workshops and multi-way AP summer institutes!