

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
THE WOODSTOCK ACADEMY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
February 15, 2022



These minutes are for
informational purposes only.

PRESENT: Asikainen, Samantha; Beckwith, Martha; Bentley, Cary; Blackmer, Robert; Carabeau, Garry; Duvall, Nancy (C); Ellsworth, Robert (E); Higgins, Edwin; Kelly, Paul; Larrow, Jeff; Livernois, Jay (Ex-Officio); McGinn, Walter; Morse, David; Paquette, Philippa; Quinn, Eric; Rhynhart, Hans; Rich, Matthew; Samborowski, Leonard; Tuttle, Brent (P); Young, Scott

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

ABSENT WITH NOTIFICATION: Perkins-Banas, Melissa (B); Swenson, Christine; Trivella, Joan

GUESTS: Mia Ruggeri, Melany Gronska, Haley McDonald

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Higgins at 7:00 p.m.

2. Student Council Report

President of Student Council, Haley McDonald described various recent and upcoming Student Council events, including several fundraisers, a color bubble run, and a winter dance.

3. Community Participation – None.

4. Secretary's Report

Approval of the minutes of October 19, 2021 was tabled until the next meeting.

MOTION: (Morse/Paquette) To approve the minutes of November 15, 2021.

Unanimous

5. Board Reports

a. President's Report

i. Correspondence

Head of School Sandford highlighted various letters for employees whose status changed as they retired, resigned, or reduced their hours. Also included were letters congratulating award winners, many letters of condolence, a letter from a student at Woodstock Middle School who would like to take an American Sign Language class when at WA, a letter to the WBOE Negotiating committee about future negotiations, a letter to the assessor for the Town of Woodstock, and a letter which listed capital projects at The Academy which was sent to the WBOE.

ii. March Retreat

Governance Committee Chair Ed Higgins stated it was the consensus of the committee to wait until the fall before meeting again.

iii. CABE Recap

CABE Representative Jay Livernois plans to write a report about his convention experience and submit it to the Board.

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

There were no questions about the minutes which were included in the packet.

6. Woodstock Academy Administration Reports

a. Associate Head of School for Finance and Operations Report

i. 2021-2022—Budget Update

Associate Head of School for Finance and Operations Mike Susi reviewed the Profit and Loss Report, saying he was watching the food service, transportation, and utility line items, but doesn't expect to see a huge spike in the next four months. He anticipates another \$1.1M in grants to come in and believes the year will end on a positive. Inflation is pushing fuel, electricity, and food costs up dramatically. He thanked Bill Guillot for creating the format of the handout.

ii. Academy Building Restoration Update

Head of School Sandford said that although a contract was awarded, both lawyers were still tweaking the exact language of the agreement. Thanks to the efforts of the Executive, Finance, and B&G Committees, he expects the contract to be signed on Friday. The goal is to have all the funding and signed agreements in place by March 15. Associate Head of School Holly Singleton was thanked for her hard work organizing the emptying of the Academy Building along with the maintenance department.

iii. 2020-2021 Audit

Associate Head of School for Finance and Operations Susi shared that the Finance Committee has endorsed the 20-21 audit; it will be sent to the full Board for review later this week. Finance Committee Chair Paul Kelly noted that we have been pleased with the auditors for the last five years and that the audit went well.

iv. Other – None.

v. Board questions/discussion – None.

b. Associate Head of School Report

i. February Update

Associate Head of School Holly Singleton reviewed her comprehensive February Updates handout with the Board. Her entire report is attached below the minutes. The Board was thanked for their recent gift of cider donuts and coffee for the staff. Board members were encouraged to reach out to Julie for tickets if they want to attend any of the performances listed.

ii. Aquaponics Proposal Presentation

Grade 12 student, Mia Ruggeri, was assisted by science teacher, Melany Gronska, as an Aquaponics proposal was provided to the Board both through handouts and a PowerPoint presentation. The hydroponics program involves building a greenhouse to create a learning lab which will serve a multitude of curricular and extra-curricular programs through food production and the problem-solving elements of engineering and design. Discussion included sustainability, summer gardens, inclusion, greenhouse placement, cost, project scale, and life-long learning.

MOTION: (Morse/Paquette) To move the project forward by endorsing the program.

Unanimous

iii. Graduation Rate Update

Dean of Academics Dr. Harten provided a graduation rate update which compared Academy data with information provided by the state. Over the last ten years, The Academy's graduation rate has remained fairly consistent over time, which is a testament to the efforts of many. Administration has been working hard to support at-risk seniors, particularly this year.

iv. Other – None.

v. Board questions/discussion – None.

c. Associate Head of School for Advancement

i. End-of-the-Year Giving

Associate Head of School for Advancement Jon Sturdevant encouraged all Trustees to help reach our 100% participation goal for the school year.

ii. Inspire150 Update

Associate Head of School for Advancement Sturdevant discussed efforts to make steady progress on fundraising for the Academy Building to date. He hopes to meet his minimum goal by June.

iii. Upcoming Events

Alumni events have been planned for NYC, Boston, and possibly Washington, DC. A local event in the spring is also planned. The alumni and advancement teams are trying to organize 3-4 events every 6 or 7 months.

iv. Other – None.

v. Board questions/discussion – None.

d. Head of School Report

i. Approve Policies

Head of School Sandford provided background information about each policy included in the packet. The Policy Committee approved them as edited.

- 0523 – Equity and Diversity
- 1100.1 – Parent Guardian Involvement
- 4118.231 – Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco Use
- 5131.6 – Alcohol Use, Drugs, and Tobacco (Including Performance Enhancing Substances)
- 4118.11 Non-discrimination

MOTION: (Carabeau/Livernois) To approve the Policies listed above as recommended by the Policy Committee.
Unanimous

ii. 2022-2023 Tuition Rate

Discussion ensued about the tuition rate for 2022-2023. Topics included total budget numbers, special education, last year's 0% increase, contractual salary obligations, tuition rates in surrounding high schools, and a sensitivity to the limits of sending town budgets. The Finance Committee has already reviewed and recommended this increase. The regular education tuition rate was proposed at \$16,368.

MOTION: (Morse/Rhyhart) To accept the tuition rates for 2022-2023 as proposed.
Unanimous

iii. 2022-2023 Calendars

The Academic, Residential Life, and Board of Trustees calendars were included in the packet. The Buildings and Grounds Committee may need to add additional meetings to oversee the Academy Building project.

iv. Other – None.

v. Board questions/discussion – None.

7. Other Items

Head of School Sandford reminded the Board that the date of graduation has been changed to June 18 because of snow days. A brief discussion ensued about counting eLearning days toward the 182 school days each year.

8. Executive Session—Personnel and Legal

9. Possible Action Based on Executive Session

An Executive Session was not needed at this meeting.

10. Adjournment

MOTION: (Beckwith/Bentley) To adjourn the meeting at 8:21 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.



February Updates from the Associate Head of School

School Updates

- Masking in schools will continue until the end of February. At that point, The Academy will follow the CDC's language of recommending but not requiring universal masking. Masking on public transportation has been extended until March 18, 2022.
- In November, the girls' cross-country team qualified for the State Open Championship – the first time in school history.
- The music department received a grant from Horns for Kids to purchase, with additional funds from WAMPA, a new baritone saxophone case, a new tenor saxophone, and an electric upright 5-string base.
- The Football team concluded its fall season as ECC Division 2 Champions – the first time in the history of the program!
- The Hockey team, during the holiday season, collected Toys for Tots. They were the largest donating group to the Willimantic distribution center this year.
- The Academy received a \$2,500 grant from the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut to support various student wellness initiatives.
- The WA gymnastic dynasty continues its domination; the team won its 12th straight ECC championship!
- The Woodstock Academy is a 2020-2021 CIAC Michaels Cup in recognition of its “class act” sportsmanship.

Student Achievements

- Sophomores Evan Rhault (W) and Claire Beck (W) have been selected as The Academy's 2022 CT HOBY Leaders.
- In November, Tri-M Music Honor Society inducted 16 new members.
- The Model UN competition team won the Outstanding Small Delegation award at the William and Mary conference. Students winning individual awards included: Isabella Miller (W) – Best Delegate, Thomas Musumeci (W) – Outstanding Delegate, Olivia Grant (W) – Honorable Mention, and Mia Krzic (T) – Verbal Commendation.
- 5 students won awards at the McGill University Model UN Conference. The winning students were: Baden Eaton (W) – Peacekeeping Award, Sydney Haskins (W) – Peacekeeping Award, Fiona Rigney (W) – Honorable Mention, Owen Bland (W) – Diplomatic Finesse Award, and Vincent Tocci (W) – Outstanding Delegate
- Owen Bland (W) won The Woodstock Academy Oratorical Speech Contest and was second in the District 4 American Legion Oratorical Speech Contest.
- The MUN team won 5 individual awards at the Columbia University conference. Baden Eaton (W) – Outstanding Delegate, Isabella Miller (W) – Outstanding Delegate, Fiona Rigney (W) – Outstanding Delegate, Dominick Tocci (W) – Verbal Commendation, and Vincent Tocci (W) – Verbal Commendation.
- Scholastic Writing Awards were earned by the following students: Aleena Jafar-DeCesare (W): Honorable Mention in the Critical Essay category (*The Damage of Forced Heterosexual Relationships in Disney Movies*), Ricky Jessurun (P): Honorable Mention in Short Story (*Welcome to Nowhere*), and Olivia Saraidarian (W): Honorable Mention in Novel Writing (*Average: Chapter Three*).
- 3 students earned Connecticut Regional Scholastic Art awards. Han Zheng (T) received a Gold Key and Hartford Art School Scholarship for his Art Portfolio (*Metal Fish*). Han Zheng (T) won an Honorable Mention in Mixed Media (*Fresh Banana Shake Industry*). Kason Kelly (P) won a Gold Key in printmaking (*Inside the Hive*).

- The Model UN competition team won the Best Small Delegation at the Boston University MUN Conference. Each participant received an individual award (the second time this has happened in the history of the program)! Winners included: Leila MacKinnon (U) – Best Delegate, Sydney Haskins (W) – Best Delegate, Thomas Musumeci (W) – Best Delegate, Owen Bland (W) – Outstanding Delegate, Isabella Miller (W) – Outstanding Delegate, Fiona Rigney (W) – Verbal Commendation, Baden Eaton (W) – Verbal Commendation, and Aly Niemiec (B) – Best Position Paper.
- The following people auditioned for and were accepted into the New England Music Festival Association festival for 2022! They will be participating in the festival to be held in Burlington, CT in March 2022. Zoe Botta (W), Gabby Couture (W), Nick Dahl (W), Carolina DaSilva (W), Sam Hagan (W), Olivia Mawson (P), Gianna Nichols (W), Cormac Nielsen (W) who scored the highest on saxophone in the festival, and Katie Ritzau (T).
- Cormac Nielsen (W) tied for first place in the 35th Annual Young Artists Music Competition sponsored by the Windham Regional Arts Council.
- The following students auditioned and were accepted to the CMEA Eastern Region Music Festival. Zoe Botta (W), Anna Kellermann (E), Sarah Lucas (W), Olivia Mawson (P), Thomas Musumeci (W), Cormac Neilson (W), Savannah Olson (B), Vincent Tocci (W), Nicholas Webster (W), and Violet Young (W).

Faculty & Staff Accomplishments

- Jordan Monts ran the 2021 New York City Marathon, raising over \$4000 for Team for Kids.
- Maddy Millar, Eric Chalupka, and Joel Tretheway won the 2021 Outstanding Website Award given by the Web Marketing Association for the redesign of the WA website.
- Rachael Budd has been awarded the Royal Dragonfly Book Award, Honorable Mention for *Jig Gets Lost*, the book she illustrated.
- Val May received her UConn ECE certification in Environmental Science (NRE1000E)!
- The Woodstock Academy Historian, Dr. Robert Smith, was recently published in *Today in Connecticut History*. If you have not read it yet, here is the link: <https://todayinthehistory.com/2022/02/04/february-4-a-new-nation-creates-a-new-kind-of-education/>

Upcoming Events

03/10 – College Fair, 9:00 AM, the Alumni Fieldhouse

03/10 – Winter Athletic Award Night, 6:00 PM, The Loos

03/18 – Devon Allman Project & Samantha Fish Band, 7:00 PM, The Loos,

<https://www.showclix.com/event/looscfa-allman-project>

03/29 – Spring Concert, part 1, 6:00 PM, The Loos

03/30 – Spring Concert, part 2, 6:00 PM, The Loos