

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
THE WOODSTOCK ACADEMY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
January 19, 2021



These minutes are for
informational purposes only.

PRESENT: Beckwith, Martha; Bellerose, James; Bentley, Cary; Blackmer, Robert; Carabeau, Garry (7:17); Duvall, Nancy (C); Frankhouser, Hans (W); Higgins, Edwin; Kelly, Paul; Larrow, Jeff; McGinn, Walter; Morse, David; Paquette, Philippa; Rhyhart, Hans; Samborowski, Len; Swenson, Christine; Trivella, Joan; Tuttle, Brent (P); Young, Scott

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

ABSENT WITH NOTIFICATION: Asikainen, Samantha; Atchinson, Keith (B); Child, Barbara; Johnston, Kevin; Livernois, Jay (Ex-Officio)

GUESTS: Robert Ellsworth and Noah Salsich

1. Call to Order

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

2. Student Council Report

President of Student Council, Noah Salsich described a recent successful blood drive and upcoming Student Council events such as a cultural festival in March along with a carnival and additional blood drive in April. Student Council has been reaching out to students in order to offer extra support by partnering with clubs, setting up an advice column, fundraising for a Senegal trip, helping students apply to colleges alongside guidance, and asking for general suggestions via a recent survey.

3. Community Participation – None.

4. Secretary's Report

MOTION: (Trivella/Tuttle) To approve the minutes of October 20, 2020.

Unanimous

5. Board Reports

a. President's Report

i. Correspondence

Head of School Sandford reviewed the various pieces of correspondence in the packet including many letters of sympathy for staff and community members, many letters of congratulations for award winners, a letter to the assessor of the Town of Woodstock updating the status of Academy-owned properties, three letters accepting staff resignations, two letters to banks updating Academy check signing procedures, a no-trespass letter, and a copy of a thank you letter from Barbara Child to the Board of Trustees.

ii. Discuss February Retreat

President Swenson reminded the group about the upcoming Board Retreat scheduled for Tuesday, February 16.

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

There were no questions or comments about the committee reports included in the packet.

6. Woodstock Academy Administration Reports

a. **Associate Head of School for Finance and Operations Report**

i. 2020-2021—Budget Update

Associate Head of School for Finance and Operations Mike Susi provided revenue and expense report summaries to the Board. He noted about 50% of expected revenue has been received to date and expenses continue to hold steady under pandemic conditions. Ongoing cost-saving measures have been on pace to effectively manage the annual balloon payment anticipated toward the end of the school year. Questions were asked and answered about the status of the PPE grant/loan and interest earned from funds in the money market account.

ii. Academy Building Update

Associate Head of School for Finance and Operations Mike Susi shared that Valley Restoration had been selected to begin work in April on the tower project. The Board thanked Mr. Susi for his hard work on this project.

iii. 2019-2020 Audit—First Read

The 2019-2020 audit was made available to the Board for review as a first read. Finance Chair Paul Kelly summarized the findings, saying there were no significant concerns from the auditors, rather many positive statements about progress made. The administration responded to recommendations from the auditors in red font. Any further discussion about the audit will continue at the next meeting.

iv. Other

v. Board questions/discussion

b. Associate Head of School Report

i. Academy Updates

Associate Head of School Holly Singleton presented a comprehensive handout detailing accomplishments by students, faculty, staff, and the Academy as a whole (attached below).

ii. eLearning Update

Associate Head of School Holly Singleton is planning the details of a full return of students from the hybrid learning model, noting in-person student attendance increased after it was required for participation in extra-curricular activities. There is a concern about the number of students who may not return to campus after a full reopening for a variety of reasons. Excitement is growing as year-end activities are explored. The administration was thanked for the ongoing focus on student mental health. Discussion ensued about innovations, synergy, flexibility and necessary pivots during the pandemic. The Academy is willing to share lessons learned with the educational community if asked.

iii. Other

iv. Board questions/discussion

c. Associate Head of School for Advancement

i. Development Update

Associate Head of School for Advancement Jon Sturdevant provided an overview of plans related to the InSpire150 fundraising campaign for the Academy Building restoration project. The *Gleaner*, scheduled for release in one month, will highlight many project details and plans. A nine-minute video was shared with the group, featuring present/former students, members of the administration/staff, alumni, and community members who shared their memories of and passion for the iconic Academy Building. Mr. Sturdevant thanked the communications team for their work on the video and asked for wide support on this project which will be on the forefront for the next several years.

ii. Other

iii. Board questions/discussion

d. Head of School Report

i. Enrollment Update and Presentation by Amy Favreau

Head of School Sandford wanted the Board to have an overview of where we are and where we're going with regard to enrollment and programs. Assistant Head of School for Enrollment Amy Favreau provided greater detail through a PowerPoint presentation. Overall, enrollment and recruiting went better than expected last spring, and increases to the numbers of expected students

increased from every sending town. Day, 5-day, and boarding tuition students enrolled from many surrounding (non-sending) towns—including students from MA and RI. Conflicting messages are still coming in regarding the ability of our international students to receive F-1 visas, and when borders may open. At no cost to The Academy, programs and partnerships are still being explored to expand enrollment from around the world which may include opening one or more international schools. Similar to how we recently launched our girls ice hockey program, prep-level boys soccer is planned for fall 2021 to be followed by prep-level girls soccer in fall 2022. Sterling and Plainfield continue to consider The Academy as an option for expanded school choice for their students. A renewed push to develop a stronger 5-day boarding program is planned for fall 2021 and fall 2022, as is ongoing recruiting to build a robust girls ice hockey program. The recent Jahn Ice Rink agreement will certainly help that effort. In addition, virtual learning may allow us to add to our academic program by expanding what we offer outside of the typical hours of the school day, offering tutoring, and offering enrichment programs to both domestic and international students. Mrs. Favreau shared her targeted recruiting numbers for the 2021-2022 school year and answered several questions. The Board thanked her for her comprehensive presentation.

ii. Approve Policies—Second Read

Head of School Sandford presented a packet of edited Board policies for review. One additional change was made by the Board.

MOTION: (Carabeau/Trivella) To approve all the policies as edited.

Unanimous

iii. Other

iv. Board questions/discussion

7. Other Items – None.

8. Executive Session—Legal and Personnel

MOTION: (Bentley/Carabeau) To enter into Executive Session to discuss Legal and Personnel matters, inviting Head of School Sandford, Holly Singleton, Jon Sturdevant, Mike Susi, Amy Favreau, Michael Harten, John Rigney and Julie Woodland to attend at 8:28 p.m. Unanimous

The meeting returned to regular session at 9:02 p.m.

9. Possible Action Based on Executive Session

MOTION: (Samborowski/Tuttle) To grant a leave of absence for the faculty member discussed during executive session. Unanimous

President Swenson thanked the administrative team for managing the pandemic in such a professional manner and for finding silver linings while doing so. She thanked her fellow trustees for weathering the (pandemic) storm during the toughest year she can remember, and thanked Philippa Paquette for her hard work as Board Secretary and Academic Committee Chair.

10. Adjournment

MOTION: (Paquette/Frankhouser) To adjourn the meeting at 9:06 p.m.

Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Woodland

Julie Woodland

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.



January Updates from the Associate Head of School

School Updates

- WA has initiated the Intensive Learning Lab (ILL) – an opportunity for at-risk students to attend in-person during virtual instruction day and received tutoring/support.

- The Woodstock Academy Athletic Department has partnered with Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) which provides a wealth of resources and workshops for athletes, coaches, and parents. The first coaching workshop WA offered was *Sports Can Battle Racism*.

School Achievements

- The athletic department has won the 2019-20 CIAC Michaels Cup. This award is given to schools that demonstrate the Class Act Sportsmanship standards, empower students to take an active role in the school climate, and support community service.
- The social studies department will be partnering with UConn as part of a curriculum building initiative for a new African American Studies course.
- The WAEA received a grant from the CEA to set up a new beverage station in the Bowen faculty workroom area.
- The Career & Technology Department secured a grant from Pratt & Whitney – a total of \$55,195 to support the expansion of the maker/manufacturing technology.
- Through a \$5000 mini-grant from SERAC, WA will be conducting a 2-day summer institute with diversity trainer, Kevin Booker, Jr., for 30 faculty and staff.

Student Achievements

- WA's Model UN team's semester one results include a Best Small Delegation award, an Outstanding Large Delegation, and 31 individual student awards.
- Kaily LaChapelle (W) and Eliza Dutson (W) were selected to the 2020 All State Field Hockey team! Huck Gelhaus (W) was selected to the All State Soccer Team; his sister, Grace Gelhaus (W) was also selected to the All State Soccer Team this fall.
- Jaydn LaFlamme (W), Sarah Lucas (W), Cormac Nielson (W), Vincent Tocci (W), and Rockwell Valentine (W) were accepted to the CMEA Eastern Religion Music Festival.
- MUN Club won 4 awards this fall at the one conference they attended (3 of which went to first-time competitors)!
- Ethan Aspiras (B) and Megan Preston (W) were selected as the Connecticut School Coaches Association Scholar Athlete recipients for The Academy. Gabriel Geyer (P) and Brynn Kusnarowis (W) were selected as the Connecticut Association of Schools Scholar-Athlete awards.
- The following students were selected to receive the CAPSS (Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents award: Ashley Guillot (C), Ciara MacKinnon (U), Joey Ignacio (B), Clayton Singleton (E), Riley Chapuis (W), Owen Ritzau (Tuition), Alexandra Vaida (P).

Faculty & Staff Achievements

- Tom Young was selected by PlayVS, the eSports organizer for CT, to be part of an online eSports conference, Virtual Gaming: Real Medicine 2020.
- Val May presented at the NABT Virtual Conference in November.