

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
**THE WOODSTOCK ACADEMY**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
June 12, 2024



These minutes are for informational purposes only.

**PRESENT:** Asikainen, Samantha (7:21); Beckwith, Martha; Bentley, Cary; Blackmer, Robert; Duvall, Nancy (C); Higgins, Edwin; Keser, Adam (W); Langevin, Leisl; Larrow, Jeff; Livernois, Jay (Ex-Officio); McGinn, Walter; Munroe, Heather; Paquette, Philippa; Quinn, Eric; Rhynhart, Hans; Rich, Matthew; Swenson, Christine; Tuttle, Brent (P); Young, Scott

**ADMINISTRATION:** Favreau, Amy; Harten, Michael; Hughes, Karin; Rigney, John; Sandford, Chris; Singleton, Holly; Sturdevant, Jon; Susi, Michael; Ten Eyck, Beth; VanderSwaagh, Shannon; Woodland, Julie

**ABSENT WITH NOTIFICATION:** Bessette, Andrew; Carabeau, Garry; Ellsworth, Robert (E); Morse, David; Perkins-Banas, Melissa (B); Samborowski, Leonard

**GUESTS:** Joe Musumeci

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by President Swenson at 7:02 p.m.

**2. Community Participation – None.**

**3. Secretary’s Report—Minutes of February 20, 2024**

**MOTION:** (Beckwith/Larrow) To approve the minutes of February 20, 2024. All voted Yes except Martha Beckwith, who abstained. Motion passes.

**4. Board Reports**

**a. President’s Report**

**i. Correspondence**

Head of School Sandford highlighted letters of resignation, a letter thanking the WAMPA president for her leadership and support, several letters of condolence, letters to the Union Board of Education, and assorted letters of gratitude and congratulations.

**ii. Policy Discussion: WA Employee Emeritus**

Head of School Sandford informed the Board that, per Policy 8331, recent retirees Nancy Chase and Gregory Smith both met the criteria for Staff Emeritus/a status.

**MOTION:** (McGinn/Paquette) To accept the recommendation of Head of School Sandford and confer the titles of Employee Emeritus/a to both Nancy Chase and Gregory Smith.

**iii. Policy #7551: Naming of Facilities**

President Swenson asked that discussion about this topic be delayed until the executive session portion of the meeting.

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

There were no questions.

**5. Woodstock Academy Administration Reports**

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

**i. 2023-2024—Budget Update**

Associate Head of School for Finance and Operations Mike Susi said that with the changes already made, things seem to be going relatively well for this time of the year. Between the three payrolls of May, healthcare costs, and food service costs, everyone is looking forward to submitting the tax credit paperwork. Some revenue amounts are still pending. He is optimistic about next year’s budget.

**ii. Academy Building Restoration Project Update**

Associate Head of School for Finance and Operations Mike Susi discussed the ongoing challenges with getting the elevator operational, having a buyer in place to purchase the tax credits, and the approximately \$40k project overage being possibly offset by similarly sized delay-of-use penalties.

iii. Approve 2023-2024 Auditor

The Finance Committee has already approved selecting Maletta and Company to perform the 2023-2024 audit.

iv. Other – None.

v. Board questions/discussion – None.

**b. Associate Head of School Report**

i. June Update

Associate Head of School Holly Singleton shared her June update, saying this amazing year ended with a bang when the baseball team won the state championship—the first state championship for baseball in the school’s history. Mrs. Singleton shared The Academy’s 99.2% graduation rate, multiple academic and athletic accolades for students, long lists of faculty and staff achievements, and summer travel plans. Please see her June Update handout (pasted below) for all the details.

ii. Other – None.

iii. Board questions/discussion – None.

**c. Associate Head of School for Advancement**

i. Advancement Update

Associate Head of School for Advancement Jon Sturdevant provided a PowerPoint presentation for the group, saying the overarching goal in his department is to financially support athletic facilities and grow the endowment for further growth. Key initiatives include planning for future board composition, increasing advancement staff, enhancing constituent engagement, researching and hiring campaign counsel, and executing a campaign for athletic facilities.

ii. Upcoming Events

Associate Head of School for Advancement Jon Sturdevant invited the group to participate in these upcoming events: the Centaur Golf Tournament on August 7, NYC area gatherings on August 20-22, area gatherings in CO and CA in fall 2024, Alumni Weekend on October 4-5, and much more.

iii. Other – None.

iv. Board questions/discussion – None.

**d. Head of School Report**

i. Approve Policies

Head of School Sandford provided an overview of all proposed changes to the policies in the packet.

**MOTION:** (Tuttle/Larrow) With the endorsement of the Policy and Executive Committees, to accept Policies 4117.5, 5131.911, and 6146 as presented. Unanimous

ii. 2024-2025 Budget Update

Head of School Sandford reviewed the 2024-2025 budget, highlighting special education revenue, decreased sending town enrollment (birth rate), increased recruitment efforts, and a trend toward higher boarding admissions numbers in the coming year. Overall, it is a very balanced budget, and adjustments will still be made on an ongoing basis.

iii. College Acceptance Report

Head of School Sandford’s annual college acceptance report led to a brief discussion about the class of 2024’s hard work and many successes.

iv. Annual Meeting Preview—August 13, 2024

Head of School Sandford looks forward to the annual meetings being held on Tuesday, August 13.

v. Other – None.

vi. Board questions/discussion – None.

**6. Other Items – None.**

Academic Committee Chair Paquette performed a quick straw poll for her committee, asking trustees about their attendance at sports, plays, shows, and other events during the 2023-2024 school year.

Joe Musumeci exited the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

**7. Executive Session—Personnel**

**MOTION:** (McGinn/Tuttle) To enter into Executive Session to consider Personnel matters, inviting all remaining administration/staff to attend at 8:00 p.m.

Unanimous

Head of School Sandford exited the meeting at 8:09 p.m.

Holly Singleton, Mike Susi, Jon Sturdevant, Karin Hughes, Mike Harten, Amy Favreau, John Rigney, Beth TenEyck, and Shannon VanderSwaagh exited the meeting at 8:16 p.m.

The meeting returned to regular session at 8:20 p.m.

**8. Possible Action Based on Executive Session**

**MOTION:** (Tuttle/Larrow) In accordance with Policy 7551, and with the recommendation of Head of School Sandford, to name the house as discussed in executive session.

Unanimous

**9. Adjournment**

**MOTION:** (Larrow/Keser) 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.*



## June Updates from the Associate Head of School

### School Updates

- Graduation statistics: 240 seniors; 2 non-graduates; 1 senior will graduate this summer; 1 senior will return for the fall semester.
- Teachers leaving: Nancy Chase (retirement), Caroline Chute (retirement), Jason Wiggin (RIF), Lauren Churchill (new job), Mackenzie LeBlanc (RIF), John Rigney (new job).
- The Academy was named one of the *Top 10 U.S. Boarding Schools for the Most Unique Students*. We are officially [ranked fourth in this article](#).
- The World Language Department inducted over 77 members into the four world language honor societies.
- The Model UN National Competition Team won an Award of Distinction for Research and Preparation, and an Award of Excellence for Overall Performance.
- The B Club was recognized as a state winner in the *2024 Challenge to Educational Citizenship*. (This is the 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year they have won the award!)
- The Woodstock Academy won the 2024 President's E Award. The U.S. Secretary of Commerce gives E Awards to those who make a significant contribution to the expansion of U.S. exports (in our case, secondary education)!
- Students in Mr. Eric Collelo's class were selected to participate in Pixicade's debut on an episode of *America's Real Deal* season 2. Pixicade is an app that turns drawings into video games.
- WA received a \$40,700 PEGPETIA grant to support the purchase of classroom technology.
- The baseball team had a great season, winning the State Championship, the ECC regular season, the ECC tournament, and the Connecticut Umpire's Association Sportsmanship Award. This is the first baseball state championship in the school's history.
- The music department participated in the 2024 NYC Fantastic Music Festival and won several awards: first place to chorale, first place to Hill Singers, first place to jazz band, first place to symphonic band, best overall choir, best overall band, best overall jazz band, AND the Dr. Tim Award for the best spirit and professionalism!
- The Girls Track team clinched the regular season ECC Division 1 Championship Title.

### Student Achievements

- Evan Rhault (W) won an Award of Excellence at the National Model UN Conference.
- David Abbamonte (E) won the inaugural WA Raising Voices Oratorical Contest.
- Chandler Folkerts (W) was selected out of 400 applicants for an exclusive summer internship opportunity with Rochester Institute of Technology's groundbreaking cancer research program located at Yale University. The computational biology internship through the Army Educational Outreach Program (AEOP) focuses on coding and modeling the intricate mechanisms of cancer invasion into fat tissue, a vital area in understanding and combating cancer.
- Emily Smock (W), a rising senior, was named the 2023-2024 WA Poet Laureate.



### Faculty & Staff Achievements

- The 2024-2025 Teacher of the Year, nominated by the community and voted on by the WA employees, is Deb Sharpe (librarian).
- The 2024-2025 Staff of the Year, nominated by the community and voted on by the WA employees, is Deb Campbell (nurses' office administrative assistant and transportation coordinator).
- Rachael Budd and Denzel Washington presented at the *Dismantling Systematic Racism 2024: 8<sup>th</sup> Conference on Race, Education, and Success*. They shared strategies for incorporating DEI into the classroom.
- Laura Maher and Denzel Washington initiated the Raising Voices Oratorical contest this year.
- Amiah Jackson-Ward finished the TEAM certification program.
- Willie Fleeton was named the ECC Girls Basketball Coach of the Year.
- Kelly Danielson & Mike Harten, whose proposal, "Ensuring Student Voices through Discussion," was accepted for the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Conference in November 2024.
- Jason Pannone received the Outstanding Master's Project Award from Sacred Heart University.
- Michelle Luciano graduated with her Master's in education and a concentration in special education from Springfield College.
- Melany Gronski presented virtually at the China International Education's Scientific Education Leadership ThinkTank.
- Valerie May has been named an AP Consultant and will be doing AP Biology professional development sessions for the College Board this summer.

### Upcoming Events

August 7<sup>th</sup> – Centaur Classic Golf Tournament