

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
THE WOODSTOCK ACADEMY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
February 20, 2024



These minutes are for
informational purposes only.

PRESENT: Asikainen, Samantha; Bessette, Andrew; Blackmer, Robert; Carabeau, Garry; Duvall, Nancy (C); Ellsworth, Robert (E); Higgins, Edwin; Keser, Adam (W); Langevin, Leisl; Larrow, Jeff; McGinn, Walter; Morse, David; Munroe, Heather; Paquette, Philippa; Quinn, Eric; Rhynhart, Hans; Rich, Matthew; Samborowski, Leonard; Swenson, Christine; Tuttle, Brent (P)

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

ABSENT WITH NOTIFICATION: Beckwith, Martha; Bentley, Cary; Livernois, Jay (Ex-Officio); Perkins-Banas, Melissa (B); Young, Scott

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 October 17, 2023

MOTION: (Paquette/Larrow) To approve the minutes of October 17, 2023. All voted Yes except Eric Quinn and Hans Rhynhart. Motion passes.

4. Nominating Committee Report

Nominating Committee Co-Chair Matt Rich provided a memo with his committee’s recommendations to the Board. Questions were asked and answered.

MOTION: (Tuttle/Quinn) To appoint Nancy Duvall as a Trustee of the Community, whose term will end in August 2030. Unanimous

MOTION: (Carabeau/McGinn) To appoint/renew Melissa Perkins-Banas (B), Robert Ellsworth (E), and Brent Tuttle (P) as Trustees of the Sending Towns, whose terms will end when their Boards of Education are reconstituted. Unanimous

MOTION: (Carabeau/Quinn) To appoint Adam Keser (W) and Andrew Bessette (C) as Trustees of the Sending Towns, whose terms will end when their Boards of Education are reconstituted. Unanimous

MOTION: (Rich/McGinn) To accept the recommendation of the Woodstock Academy Foundation to appoint Christine Kromer as a Foundation Director. Unanimous

5. Board Reports

a. President’s Report

i. Correspondence

Head of School Sandford provided an overview of the correspondence in the packet. Highlights included letters of bereavement, retirement/resignation/staff reduction, and letters to award winners. Also included was a letter to the Assessor in the Town of Woodstock and a letter from Chelsea Groton Bank extending the start date for loan payments on the Academy Building Project.

ii. Governance Committee Report

Governance Committee Chair Ed Higgins announced that a Board Retreat would not be held in March.

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

There were no questions or comments.

6. 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 reviewed the Profit and Loss Report, drawing attention to the STRIVE Program tuition and Utilities line items. We are still waiting for a nearly \$2M grant check.

ii. Academy Building Restoration Project Update

Mr. Susi shared that the elevator parts, as well as pieces of tempered glass and shutters, should arrive next week. The project is going well, and everything seems to be working as it should.

iii. Tennis Court Project Update

Mr. Susi stated the engineers have presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission, and after follow-up issues have been addressed, the project should move forward. We still must decide on the surface material to create the RFP and set the financing. Target completion is hoped to be in the fall.

iv. 2022-2023 Audit

Presented by Finance Committee Chair Hans Rhyhart, a brief discussion ensued about the management letter within the audit.

MOTION: (Rhyhart/Larrow) With the endorsement of the Finance and Executive Committees, I move to recommend the 2022-2023 Audit for approval by the Corporation at the Annual Meeting in August.

Unanimous

v. Voluntary Corrective Action Plan

Associate Head of School for Finance and Operations Mike Susi shared the circumstances around the need to create and submit a Voluntary Corrective Action Plan to the State. The plan was provided.

vi. Other – None.

vii. Board questions/discussion – None.

b. **Associate Head of School Report**

i. Winter Update

Associate Head of School Holly Singleton shared her Winter Updates handout, grouped by School Updates, Student Achievements, Faculty/Staff Achievements, and Upcoming Events. She congratulated Girls Basketball Coach Willie Fleeton, who was named today as ECC Coach of the Year. Her handout is attached below.

ii. Increasing Educator Diversity Plan

Associate Head of School Holly Singleton and Dean of Academics Dr. Michael Harten reviewed the detailed Increasing Educator Diversity Plan being submitted to the State. Questions were asked and answered.

MOTION: (Larrow/McGinn) Conferring authority to the Head of School to administer any changes, adjustments, modifications, or revisions, I move to endorse the Increasing Educator Diversity Plan as presented. All voted Yes except Adam Keser, who abstained. Motion passes.

iii. Professional Request

Mrs. Singleton provided background information about a letter from Dean of Student Affairs Karin Hughes requesting a professional service bonus for Deb Sharpe, a teacher and our school librarian. The request is in alignment with the WAEA contract.

MOTION: (Samborowski/Quinn) To approve the professional service bonus of \$1,000 for Ms. Deb Sharpe with the Board's appreciation for her exceptional contributions on Veteran's Day.

Unanimous

iv. Other – None.

v. Board questions/discussion – None.

c. Associate Head of School for Advancement

i. Current Fundraising Priorities

Associate Head of School for Advancement Jon Sturdevant reviewed an updated list of fundraising priorities that help guide the advancement team's efforts. A brief discussion ensued.

MOTION: (Rich/Tuttle) To endorse the Current Fundraising Priorities list as presented.

Unanimous

ii. Alumni Advisory Council

Mr. Sturdevant provided an overview of a handout that detailed the concept of the Alumni Advisory Council. Its charge is to advise, support, and engage with the WA advancement staff, alumni, and others. This concept and action has the support of Alumni Association President and ex-officio Trustee Jay Livernois.

MOTION: (Larrow/Asikainen) At the request of the Alumni Association, I move that the Board of Trustees recognize the Alumni Advisory Council as the official alumni organization of The Academy.

Unanimous

iii. Academy Building Celebration—May 17

Mr. Sturdevant shared a copy of the invitation to the grand reopening of The Academy Building on Friday, May 17, encouraging all to attend.

iv. Other – None.

v. Board questions/discussion – None.

d. Head of School Report

i. Approve Policies

MOTION: (Paquette/McGinn) To table this item until the next meeting.

Unanimous

ii. 2024-2025 Budget Report

Given expected drops in student enrollment, Head of School Sandford discussed the need to make broad cuts in order to preserve core offerings and balance the 2024-2025 budget. The Board affirmed that the Executive Committee was empowered to approve any necessary teacher reductions on its behalf.

iii. Annual Compensation Package

Head of School Sandford shared a handout given to employees annually that details their total compensation, which may include academic stipends, medical/dental/vision/LT disability/life insurance coverage, as well as retirement contributions.

iv. 2024-2025 Calendars

Copies of the Academic, Residential Life, and Board of Trustees calendars were provided.

v. Other – None.

vi. Board questions/discussion – None.

7. Other Items – None.

8. Executive Session—Personnel

9. Possible Action Based on Executive Session

An Executive Session was not needed.

President Swenson commended Head of School Sandford and the administrative team for doing this difficult work with student needs at the forefront.

10. Adjournment

MOTION: (Paquette/Larrow) To adjourn the meeting at 8:56 p.m.

Unanimous

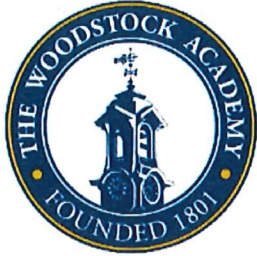
Respectfully submitted,

Julie Woodland

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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.



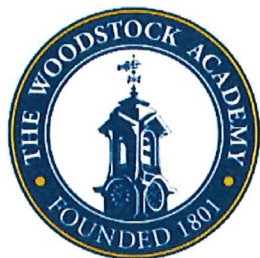
Winter Updates from the Associate Head of School

School Updates

- The Woodstock Academy received an award from the Putnam Rotary Interact Club for giving the most volunteer hours of any school for the holiday Salvation Army Bell Ringing.
- The 2023 4-year Cohort Graduation Rate is 98.1%. Of the 6 students that did not graduate in 4 years, 1 student graduated a few months late, and 3 students, as special education students, will remain in school until age 22.
- Lots of visits to WA this month and upcoming! Apple Distinguished School selection committee visited on 2/1. Connecticut Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) sent a teacher delegation to WA as part of their POV program. Principals from Kazakhstan will be visiting in April. And, students from Japan will also be visiting in April.

Student Achievements

- WAMUN won the Best Small Delegation award at Brown University's MUN Conference. Four Students won individual awards: Filip Nemcek (T), Best Delegate; Owen Rigney (W), Best Delegate; Maggie McHugh (W), Outstanding Delegate; and Tanner Graham (W), Honorable Mention.
- Two teams won awards at the REC Aerial Drone Competition – Teamwork Competition, Think Award, and Flight Operations Award. Team members are Abigail Converse (W), Heath White (P), Maria Castaneda Banderas (W), Anthony Beaudreault (W), Diya Patel (W), David Sumner (B), and Evan Anderson (B).
- The WA Debate team came in 2nd place at the Plainfield Regional Debate Competition. Each participant also won individual awards: Julia Coyle (P) and Cade Jones (U) received Most Valuable Debater, Aiden Finch (W) received the 3rd Highest Individual Scorer, and Charlie Caggiano (W) received the 4th Highest Individual Scorer and the Teamwork Award.
- Several members of the Prep Soccer Program have been invited to try out, and some to join the Under 20 National Teams of their respective countries. Enoch Joseph and Xahvi DeRoza will play for Bermuda. Ahir Dixon will play for Jamaica. Ajani Banton will play for Barbados. Alvaro Medrano Jr. will play for Guatemala.
- Carlos Rodriguez (T) was selected to attend the Winter Youth Olympic Games in his country, South Korea.
- 17 students were accepted into the NEMFA Festival. Emma Costa (P), Olivia Dahl (W), Lilah Jafar-DeCesare (W), Madison LaVallee (B), Kayleigh Murray (B), and Giulia Musumeci (W) will participate in the band. Kate Ritzau (T) will play in the orchestra. Emily Cournoyer (W), Nathan Couture, (W), Ben Cross (W), Chandler Folkerts (W), Judah Gagnon (P), Lilah Lily Mercier (W), Xander Miller (W), Apollo Ruoppo (B), Michael Susi (W), and Sadie Wood (W) will sing in the chorus.
- 4 students were named Scholastic Art Competition winners: Jillian Wiggin (B) in ceramics and glass, Finley Couture (B) in mixed media, Audrey MacPherson (P) in drawing and illustration, and Chandler Folkerts (W) in digital art for 4 different pieces.
- 3 students won individual awards at Columbia's MUN Conference in January: Filip Nemcek (T) and Evelyn Young (T) received Honorable Mention awards. Owen Rigney (W) received an Outstanding Delegate award.
- 2 students won individual awards at St. John's Prep School Model UN Conference: Filip Nemcek (T) won Best Orator and Evan Rhault (W) won Best Delegate.
- Last weekend, the Aerial Drone Team qualified for the New England Competition with a Judges' Award. Team members were Tristan Serating (P), David Sumner (B), Riley Mathews (P), and Ivar McDonald (W).



February Updates from the Associate Head of School

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Student Achievements (continued)

- Freshmen Reagan Scheck (B) won the 2024 NCWIT Aspirations in Computing High School Award Connecticut Affiliate Rising Star award. This is the 3rd year in a row that a student in Josh Welch's computer programming class has won this award.
- The MUN team won the Best Delegation Award at the University of Toronto's Model UN Conference. Students winning individual awards were Peyton Bentley (W), Outstanding Delegate; Tanner Graham (W), Best Delegate; Evan Rhault (W), Honorable Mention; Owen Rigney (W), Honorable Mention.

Faculty & Staff Achievements

- Peter Sumner was selected as the 2023-2024 Connecticut Technology & Engineering Education High School Teacher of the Year.
- Val May, Cara Mizak, and Sharon Geyer have been selected as AP readers in the spring.
- Val May's Crash Course Biology Video was released last month. You can view the material at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62cN8Z5Velo>
- Andrew Morehouse has been selected to present at the Classical Association of New England in March.
- Val May has been selected to present at the National Science Teaching Association's conference in March.
- Jason Musko has been approved for ECE certification in German.

Upcoming Events

- Now in The Gallery: Emerge – A Women's Collection by Katie Fogg
- 03/05 – College Planning Night, Bates Auditorium, 6:30 PM
- 03/07 – Centaur Challenge: Volleyball, 2:30 PM, The Alumni Field House
- 03/08 – Unified Olympics, 2:30 PM, The Alumni Field House
- 03/13 – Kazakhstan School visit
- 03/25 – Spring Music Concert (part 1), The Loos, 6:00 PM
- 03/36 – Spring Music Concert (part 2), The Loos, 6:00 PM