

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
**THE WOODSTOCK ACADEMY**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
**February 5, 2025**



These minutes are for  
informational purposes only.

**PRESENT:** Bessette, Andy (C); Blackmer, Robert; Ellsworth, Robert (E)(7:04); Higgins, Edwin; Keser, Adam (W); Langevin, Leisl; McGinn, Walter; Paquette, Philippa; Perkins-Banas, Melissa (B); Rich, Matthew; Swenson, Christine (7:10); Tuttle, Brent (P); Favreau, Amy (7:19); Harten, Michael; Sandford, Chris; Singleton, Holly; Sturdevant, Jon; Susi, Michael; Woodland, Julie

**ABSENT WITH NOTIFICATION:** Rhynhart, Hans

**1. Call to Order**

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

**2. Community Participation – None.**

**3. Secretary's Report—Minutes of December 4, 2024**

**MOTION:** (Perkins-Banas/Blackmer) To approve the minutes of December 4, 2024, as presented.  
Unanimous

**4. Correspondence**

Head of School Sandford reviewed the correspondence included in the packet. He began with a letter from NEAS&C, which approved our five-year report, requested an update about the therapeutic academy and international virtual academy, and looked forward to their next visit in the spring of 2029. Other correspondence of interest included letters to student CAPSS award winners, various letters of resignation and retirement, and a letter from Board Secretary Philippa Paquette that thanked former Trustee Jay Livernois for his long service to the Board.

Also discussed was a letter from the CIAC requesting reimbursement for their legal fees after The Academy made a CHRO discrimination complaint when one of our students was forced to sit out a season because the CIAC refused to recognize participation in unified sports as a “sport.” Since it was determined that The Academy did not have standing to make the complaint rather than saying a discriminatory act had not occurred or that the case had no merit, there are no plans to reimburse the CIAC at this time.

**5. Head of School Search Update**

President Swenson shared that the head of school search is progressing well. The full Board will receive a comprehensive update at the next regular Board meeting on February 18, when TAG will participate in the planned executive session.

**6. Logging Update**

Associate Head of School for Finance and Operations Mike Susi and Buildings and Grounds Committee Chair Bob Blackmer shared that Forrester Chris Casadei's presentation to the B&G Committee answered all the Board's previously stated questions and concerns. Mr. Casadei used maps and charts to detail the condition and composition of the various properties, listing trails and types of trees while explaining best practices for forest management. Trustee David Morse checked his references, and the B&G Committee unanimously supported moving forward with this work. The proceeds from the lumber sales are planned to be used for landscaping projects on North and South Campuses.

**7. Second Read Policies**

Head of School Sandford shared that the Board can expect a second read on a group of policies at the next full Board meeting on February 18. With the recent state and national changes, the only policy not moving forward for consideration will be the one addressing Title IX.

## **8. 2025-2026 Calendars**

Head of School Sandford stated that the 2025-2026 draft academic calendar has already been shared with our sending town partners. The Board is urged to review the BOT calendar and offer any feedback to Julie as soon as possible.

## **9. 2025-2026 Tuition**

Head of School Sandford said a robust discussion about the various tuition rates is expected at Monday's Finance Committee meeting. Nearly every available bed in the residential life program is now full.

## **10. Saudi Update**

Associate Head of School for Finance and Operations Mike Susi and Associate Head of School for External Affairs Jon Sturdevant haven't heard much about this opportunity since the last meeting. They have met with another investor and have been discussing this concept with a U.S. school that has already successfully opened. It is moving more slowly than was hoped.

## **11. Technology Plan 2024-2029**

Head of School Sandford reviewed The Academy's Technology Plan with the group, thanking Associate Head of School Holly Singleton for leading the Technology Committee as this document was crafted. While a more comprehensive overview will be provided at the next full Board meeting, the plan includes a vision statement, mission statement, specific ways to use technology in teaching and learning, professional development, training resources, responsible use of AI, best ways to provide an effective infrastructure, and developing partnerships that support this mission. Specific examples were discussed, including the need to replace our fifteen-year-old network server over the summer.

## **12. WAEA Contract**

While the new agreement is not yet ready to be shared or signed, Head of School Sandford provided an overview of the newly negotiated WAEA contract, saying the administration's main objective was to focus on teacher hiring, recruitment, and retention in this very competitive employment landscape. President Swenson thanked the Negotiating Committee and the administration for their efforts.

## **13. Other Items**

Trustee Brent Tuttle shared how much he enjoyed the Tusk concert at the Loos Center recently.

Amy Favreau, Michael Harten, Holly Singleton, Jon Sturdevant, and Mike Susi exited the meeting at 7:43 p.m.

## **14. Executive Session—Legal and Personnel**

**MOTION:** (McGinn/Paquette) To enter into an Executive Session to discuss Legal and Personnel matters, inviting Head of School Sandford and Julie Woodland to attend at 7:44 p.m.

Unanimous

The meeting returned to regular session at 7:50 p.m.

## **15. Possible Action Based on Executive Session**

**MOTION:** (McGinn/Tuttle) To approve the administrative contracts as discussed in the executive session.

Unanimous

## **16. Adjournment**

**MOTION:** (Blackmer/Paquette) To adjourn the meeting at 7:51 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.*