

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
THE WOODSTOCK ACADEMY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
May 7, 2025



These minutes are for informational purposes only.

PRESENT: Bessette, Andy (C); Blackmer, Robert (7:28); Keser, Adam (W); Paquette, Philippa; Perkins-Banas, Melissa (B); Rhynhart, Hans; Rich, Matthew; Swenson, Christine; Tuttle, Brent (P); Favreau, Amy; Harten, Michael; Hughes, Karin; Sandford, Chris; Singleton, Holly; Sturdevant, Jon; Susi, Michael; Woodland, Julie
ABSENT WITH NOTIFICATION: Ellsworth, Robert (E); Higgins, Edwin; Langevin, Leisl; McGinn, Walter

1. Call to Order

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

2. Community Participation – None.

3. Secretary's Report— Minutes of April 4, 2025

MOTION: (Tuttle/Paquette) To approve the minutes of April 4, 2025, as presented.
Unanimous

4. Correspondence

Head of School Sandford reviewed the correspondence that was included in the packet. Highlighted correspondence included letters of resignation from Associate Head of School for Finance and Operations Michael Susi and math teacher Adam Child. Also of note was a letter from the CT State Dept. of Education confirming the eligibility of Dr. Lawrence Filippelli to be appointed as The Academy's Head of School on July 1, 2025.

5. HOS Transition Update

Head of School Sandford reported that Dr. Lawrence Filippelli's transition is going well so far. He recently met with all department heads and spent time learning about the Loos Center and our various special education programs. Jon Sturdevant has been introducing him to long-time Academy supporters and is making plans for some travel next year. So far, he plans to meet with two sending towns in May and July. He recently met with President Swenson and Vice President Higgins to begin planning the fall BOT Retreat on the topic of creating the Board's strategic plan for the next 10 years. The date and time for the fall retreat are yet to be determined.

6. Nominating Committee Update

Nominating Committee Chair Matt Rich shared that both Christine Swenson and Hans Rhynhart plan to renew their terms on the Board. In an effort to provide greater opportunities for newer members to take on leadership roles, the Nominating Committee and President Swenson are recommending that Lauren Brown and Heather Munroe join Ed Higgins as co-Vice Presidents in the 2025-2026 school year.

7. Staff Hiring Update

Head of School Sandford provided a broad overview of the staffing levels planned for the 2025-2026 school year, beginning by saying that the decision was made in February to end our agreement between Effective School Solutions (ESS) and the Woodstock Therapeutic Academy (WTA). That work will now be done with in-house personnel. It is thought that the new teacher contract with fewer steps and better pay has resulted in a greater quantity of quality applicants for recently posted positions. The Board was thanked for their support during the negotiating process.

8. Chief Financial/Operations Officer Position

Head of School Sandford reported that Mike Susi's job has been posted, and interviews have been scheduled for May 19. Interviews will be conducted with both Head of School Sandford and Dr. Filippelli, with the final decision

to be made by Dr. Filippelli under the authority of Head of School Sandford. Associate Head of School for Finance and Operations Mike Susi was thanked for years of hard work and wished much happiness on his next adventures.

9. June BOT Meeting:

- a. Policy #8331 WA Employees Emeritus**
Head of School Sandford shared that he hoped the Board will add Human Resource Director Lori Carminati to the list of people honored as Employees Emeritus. She has served The Academy for over 40 years.
- b. September Retreat Planning**
More discussion on the strategic planning topic is planned for the June meeting.
- c. “Reframing the Work” Whitepaper**
Associate Head of School Holly Singleton will present this white paper at the June BOT meeting.
- d. Attendance Recovery Interventions**
Dean of Student Affairs Karin Hughes will share some encouraging data about this program at the June meeting. There are plans in place to expand this program next year.
- e. Advancement and Enrollment Update**
Associate Head of School for External Affairs Jon Sturdevant reported that conversations have occurred with a new Saudi investment company regarding a school projected to open in fall 2027. A plan of action is being developed. Any contracts would be brought to the Board for consideration.
- f. South Campus Improvements and Naming**
With the generosity of two donors secured, work on expanding the Loos Center parking lot will begin this summer, with the bulk of the work occurring during the summer of 2026. A suggestion to provide a naming opportunity to one of the donors will be proposed at the June meeting.
- g. College Acceptance Report**
It is expected that this report will be shared at the June meeting.

10. Other Items

SAVE THE DATE

Christopher Sandford’s Retirement Celebration

Thursday, May 29, 2025

6:00 p.m.

11. Executive Session—Personnel and Legal

12. Possible Action Based on Executive Session

An executive session was no longer needed.

13. Adjournment

MOTION: (Paquette/Tuttle) To adjourn the meeting at 7:44 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.