

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
**THE WOODSTOCK ACADEMY**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
February 17, 2026



These minutes are for  
informational purposes only.

**PRESENT:** Beckwith, Martha; Bentley, Cary; Blackmer, Robert; Brown, Lauren; Duvall, Nancy (7:36); Jessurun, Barry; Larrow, Jeff; Low, Julia; Lusa, Peter; McGinn, Walter; Munroe, Heather; Paquette, Philippa; Rich, Matthew; Swenson, Christine; Young, Scott

**ADMINISTRATION:** Filippelli, Larry; Harten, Michael; Hughes, Karin; Rhynhart, Hans; Singleton, Holly; Sturdevant, Jon; VanderSwaagh, Shannon; Woodland, Julie

**ABSENT WITH NOTIFICATION:** Ellsworth, Robert (E); Higgins, Edwin; Keser, Adam (W); Langevin, Leisl; Morse, David; Perkins-Banas, Melissa (B); Quinn, Eric

**1. Call to Order**

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

**2. Community Participation – None.**

**3. Secretary's Report—Minutes of October 21, 2025**

**MOTION:** (Beckwith/Blackmer) To approve the minutes of October 21, 2025.

Unanimous

**4. Nominating Committee Report and Recommendation**

Nominating Committee Co-Chair Matthew Rich introduced all the candidates his committee was recommending to the Board and recapped the Nominating Committee's selection process. Each candidate offered a bit of information about themselves.

**MOTION:** (Blackmer/McGinn) To accept the recommendation of the Nominating Committee to appoint Peter Lusa to represent the Pomfret Board of Education as a Trustee of the Sending Towns.

Unanimous

**MOTION:** (Rich/McGinn) To accept the recommendation of the Nominating Committee to appoint Julia Low '13 as a Trustee of the Corporation for a six-year term that shall expire in 2031.

Unanimous

**MOTION:** (Rich/Paquette) To accept the recommendation of the Nominating Committee to appoint Barry Jessurun '80 as a Trustee of the Corporation for a six-year term that shall expire in 2031.

Unanimous

**5. Board Reports**

**a. President's Report**

**i. New Trustees Welcome**

President Swenson welcomed the new members to the Board.

**ii. Correspondence**

Head of School Filippelli reviewed the correspondence included in the packet, highlighting letters of congratulations to Isabel D'Alleva-Bochain (class of 2026 valedictorian) and Ivar McDonald (class of 2026 salutatorian), Eagle Scout Anthony Genna, a large group of Head of School Award and Academy Champion Award recipients, along with various letters of condolence and resignation/retirement.

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

There were no questions or comments.

## **6. Woodstock Academy Administration Reports**

### **a. Chief Finance and Operating Officer Report**

#### **i. 2025-2026 Budget Update**

Chief Finance and Operating Officer Hans Rhynhart reviewed the Profit and Loss Report, reminding the group of the initial structural shortfall in private tuition revenue, saying that the previous expected gap of about \$2.4M has been reduced to approximately \$1.1M through budget cuts, reduced spending, and other adjustments.

#### **ii. Facilities Updates**

Chief Finance and Operating Officer Hans Rhynhart shared the following:

- The dining hall on South Campus has been repainted, and chandeliers will be installed over April vacation.
- Winter weather challenges have included snow removal and feeding the boarding students.
- The capital improvement plan for South Campus is in the early stages.
- The athletic facilities capital improvement plan is underway, being organized into short-term and long-term projects.
- A summer projects list is growing,
- The Loos parking lot project is scheduled to begin right after graduation.

iii. Other – None.

iv. Board questions/discussion – None.

### **b. Associate Head of School Report**

#### **i. Academy Activities and Achievements Update**

Associate Head of School Holly Singleton provided an overview of the many achievements of Academy students, faculty, and staff. The entire report is available at the conclusion of these meeting minutes.

ii. Other – None.

iii. Board questions/discussion – None.

### **c. Associate Head of School for External Affairs**

#### **i. Enrollment Update**

Associate Head of School for External Affairs Jon Sturdevant shared that year-to-date enrollment figures are trending ahead for this time of the school year. He is optimistic about the relationships being built with several agency partners, looks forward to some direct school partnerships in Mexico, and is starting to see some success from an ad campaign that targets local, non-sending town private tuition students.

#### **ii. Fundraising and Events Update**

Associate Head of School for External Affairs Jon Sturdevant reported that:

- Several donor meetings are in the works with a focus on athletic facility priorities.
- Plans are underway to celebrate the school's 225<sup>th</sup> year.
- Alumni events are being planned for at least six large cities.
- The Loos Center has already hosted 12 events, with another 14 from now through the end of school.
- More than 100 people attended the "Business After Hours" event held in the Loos Center last week.

iii. Other – None.

iv. Board questions/discussion – None.

### **d. Head of School Report**

#### **i. 2026-2027 Calendars**

Head of School Filippelli included the 2026-2027 Academic and Board of Trustees calendars in the packet.

**MOTION:** (Blackmer/Bentley) To approve the 2026-2027 calendars as amended.

ii. **2026-2027 Budget and Tuition Rates**

Head of School Filippelli presented the background information to accompany a table with a variety of tuition rates proposed for 2026-2027. There were no additional questions.

**MOTION:** (McGinn/Bentley) To set the 2026-2027 Tuition Rates as follows:

|                                 |          |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| Sending Town Special Education: | \$20,772 |
| Sending Town Regular Education: | \$19,144 |
| STRIVE Tuition:                 | \$63,000 |
| Therapeutic Tuition:            | \$78,750 |

iii. **Approve Policies**

Along with Policy Committee members, a team comprised of Head of School Filippelli, Dean of Student Affairs Karin Hughes, and Director of Student Support Shannon VanderSwaagh explained and answered questions about the many policies listed below. Discussion ensued.

**MOTION:** (Rich/Larrow) To approve the Policies listed below as presented:

**Policies – New**

- 1312.3/6161.12 – Library Material Review and Reconsideration
- 1312.4/6161.13 – Library Collection Development and Maintenance
- 1312.5/6161.14 – Library Display and Program
- 5118.2 – Educational Opportunities for Military Children
- 6140 – Curriculum
- 6159 – Individualized Education Program (IEP)

**MOTION:** (McGinn/Jessurun) To approve the Policies listed below as presented:

**Policies – Revised/Updated**

- 1312 – Public Complaints
- 3292 – Investments
- 3515.5 – Alcohol Use on Campus
- 5114 – Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process
- 6171 – Special Education

iv. **Athletics Update**

Head of School Filippelli shared that, in response to significant community interest, Cheerleading would be returning in the fall as another sports offering.

v. **Strategic Plan Update and March Retreat on Tuesday, March 17, at 7:00 p.m.**

After hours spent compiling survey data and in listening sessions with department heads, prefects, and leadership teams, Head of School Filippelli said the finishing touches will be made to the Strategic Plan in time for the March Retreat.

vi. **Other**

Head of School Filippelli announced that the term “Pathway Programs” will be changed to “Academic Pathways” in the future.

vii. Board questions/discussion – None.

**7. Other Items – None.**

**8. Executive Session—Personnel**

**MOTION:** (Larrow/Duval) To enter into an Executive Session to discuss Personnel matters, inviting Head of School Filippelli and Julie Woodland to attend at 8:06 p.m.

Unanimous

Michael Harten, Karin Hughes, Hans Rhynhart, Holly Singleton, Jon Sturdevant, and Shannon VanderSwaagh exited the meeting by 8:07 p.m.

The meeting returned to regular session at 8:49 p.m.

**9. Possible Action Based on Executive Session – None.**

**10. Adjournment**

**MOTION:** (Beckwith/Paquette) To adjourn the meeting at 8:49 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.*



# February Updates from the Associate Head of School

## School Updates and Achievements

- Girls Basketball has won the ECC regular season title for division 1.
- 26 students have been inducted into the Scholar Athlete Honor Society.
- The Woodstock Academy made the AP Honor Roll at the Bronze Level for the second year in a row.
- The Jazz Band has been invited to participate in the Blackstone Valley Jazz Festival this month.

## Student Achievements

- Nathaniel Couture (W) and Lilah Jafar-DeCesare (W) have been selected at the Connecticut Association of Schools' Artist of the Year.
- Reagan Scheck (B) received an honorable mention award from NCWIT Connecticut Affiliate for Aspirations in Computing. This is her fourth year in a row receiving an award!
- 11 students have been accepted into the Connecticut Music Educators Association Eastern Regional Music Festival. Band: Carolina Ahearn (W), Nate Drake (W), Alexa Heersink (W), Benjamin Shamp (W), Madison Lavallee (B). Percussion Ensemble: Anthony Santos (B), Abigail Keser (W). Mixed Choir: Brianna Beck (W), Alexander DeCarli (W), Judah Gagnon (P). Treble Choir: Madison Sapp (P).
- David Sumner (B) and Anthony Beaudreault (W) took first place in the Gilbert School Drone Competition.
- 5 students won awards in the Scholastic Art Awards. Owen Budd (E) in ceramics & glass, Caroline Costa (C) in photography, Gianna DiCola-Keddy (I) in ceramics & glass, Sophie Jung (I) in graphic design, and Addison Tyler (P) won two awards in photography.
- The following students won awards at the MUN Columbia conference: Vaughn Buzak (W), Commendation; Lexi Beausoliel (P), Honorable Mention; Lara Ozgoz (W), Outstanding Delegate; Madilyne Ead (B), Outstanding Delegate; and Ivan Lin (P), Best Delegate.
- 3 students received awards at the Chicago MUN conference this month which had 2500 students in attendance. Campbell Favreau (W), Commendation; Kloe Pike (B), Commendation; and Miranda Miller (W), Honorable Mention.

## Faculty & Staff Achievements

- Sharon Geyer, Val May, and Tom Young have been invited to be AP readers this spring.
- Holly Singleton was selected as the Robert Bacewicz Lifetime Achievement Award recipient by the Southeastern Connecticut Chapter of the National Football Foundation and Hall of Fame.
- Bill Olson was selected to participate in a recent CAIS Technology Directors Roundtable.
- Mel Gronski was selected to host the EastConn Science Council this month.
- Al Briere published his book, *My Faiths*. It is available on Amazon.

## Community Collaborations

- Collaborative PD with participating sending towns in the 2026-27 school year.
- Academic presentation to Woodstock BOE's Academic Committee.
- Launching of a partnership with Woodstock Emergency Medical Services.
- AI Summer Conference, IMPACT, August 13, 2026.