

THETFORD ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Tuesday, May 22, 2018
Thetford Academy Library

**JOINT MEETING OF THE THETFORD ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
AND THE THETFORD SCHOOL BOARD**

MINUTES

Cameron Cudhea (President of TA Board of Trustees) convened the meeting at 6:38 p.m. In attendance were the following:

TA Trustees: Cameron Cudhea, Giovanni Bosco, Peter Boyd (Alumni Representative), Ann Bumpus (Vice-President), Melody Burkins, Bob Christensen, Shannon Darrah (Thetford Town Representative), Karl Furstenberg (Lyme Town Representative), Kate Hesser, Zoe Keller, Lindsey Klecan, Suzanna Liepmann, Therese Linehan, Jeff Solsaa (new Strafford Town Representative, pending vote of TA Board), Jonathan Stableford, Donna Steinberg, Ben Williams, Jim Wilson

Thetford School Board Members: Shannon Darrah (Chair of Thetford School Board), Kristen Downey (Vice-Chair), Julie Acker, Charlie Buttrey, Scott MacPhee

TA Administration: Bill Bugg (Head of School), Linda Lanteigne-Magoon (CFO)

Thetford Elementary School Administration: Kevin Petrone (Principal)

Absent: Carrie Wells (TA Trustee)

1. Public Comment Period

There was no public comment.

2. Approval and Awarding of Diplomas (TA)

Motion: That a state-certified academic high-school graduation diploma be conferred on the students recommended by the faculty at their meeting on June 7, 2018.

Moved: Cameron Cudhea

Seconded: Shannon Darrah

The motion was passed unanimously by the TA Board.

The Thetford School Board also expressed enthusiasm, and both boards offered their congratulations to the TA Class of 2018.

3. TA & TES Collaboration on Math Program

Melissa Perry (TA Math Teacher) and Laura Sharpless (TES Math Specialist) gave a presentation about the aligning of the math curriculum of the two schools. TA and TES are

collaborating on a 6th-, 7th-, and 8th-grade math program called "College Prep Math" (CPM), which students will start in 6th grade at TES and continue at TA. CPM is currently being used at the Newton School in Strafford and at Lyme Elementary School as well. TA piloted the program this year, and both schools have now decided to adopt it. CPM is a team-based and problem-based curriculum in which the students work together in small groups. The schools are excited about the increased communication that will result from this common curriculum. Students entering TA in the 7th grade will be assigned to one of three different math sections, based on the results of their math placement test.

Gio asked how long it might take to gauge the effectiveness of the new curriculum. Laura answered that changes in the SBAC (standardized-testing) scores could be an indicator, but that it will probably take a few years to be able to evaluate the full impact of the new curriculum.

Jon asked about integrating students from other towns whose elementary schools don't use this curriculum. Melissa explained that this would not be an issue, since kids from every town are placed in the proper math section based on their math placement test results.

Karl asked for more details about the team-based problem-solving. Melissa shared that group-based problem-solving has worked great in her classes, and has resulted in a more collaborative classroom atmosphere. She also balances time for group work with time for individual work. Laura added details of CPM's "prescription" for how to spend the class period: 10 minutes of introduction, most of the class period working in groups with the teacher circulating, and 10 minutes of wrap-up.

Cameron thanked Melissa and Laura for their presentation.

4. Collecting Information on Student School Choices

Shannon suggested that the two boards could benefit from collaboration in collecting and sharing information about Thetford students' school choices. The consensus of the group was that it would be a great idea to share data, but that student confidentiality must be protected. Bill is working on developing a survey instrument for this purpose. Shannon suggested the possibility of sharing information on an annual basis, and restated her belief that the two boards could be of help to each other in this regard.

5. Update on Special Education Services

Cameron explained that this topic was on the agenda as a follow-up to last year's joint board discussion. Bill reported that the Agency of Education evaluated TA as part of the special-ed approval process, and TA received strong accolades for its special-ed program. The AOE said that TA's program serves as a model for other schools: Although the AOE usually makes recommendations for improvement to schools following the evaluation process, they had none for TA. Bill also explained that the every-ten-years NEASC reaccreditation process has just ended. Final reports from both of these processes will be forthcoming in the next couple of months.

Kevin Petrone added that lots of credit is due to Deb Sanders-Dame (TA Director of Special Education) for coordinating services, scheduling meetings, and much-improved communication.

6. TA & TES Salaries

Shannon explained that she had asked for this agenda item because she wanted us all to be more comfortable in our conversations about TA and TES salaries. She asked whether we ought to look at them side by side, and whether this information would even be relevant when each group is making its decisions. Discussion ensued as to whether salary comparisons were appropriate and whether this data would be useful in decision-making. Several people advocated for having the data, saying that more information leads to better decisions. Jon reminded the group that the two boards cannot collude on salaries. He said that the data is a start, but what you do with it can be complicated. The discussion concluded with Donna pointing out the importance of fairness, and Melody emphasizing the importance of data to any joint discussion of how best to recruit, retain, and serve students and retain great teachers.

7. TES Strategic Plan & TA Involvement

Shannon reported that the Agency of Education is supposed to propose a final statewide plan for the realignment of districts under Act 46 by June 1st. Blue Mountain Union has been temporarily reassigned to OESU.

TES is going to charge ahead in developing its Strategic Plan, with a working group composed of teachers, staff, community members, and hopefully a TA board member as well. The group will get up to full speed in late summer or early fall, and it may seek help from the VSBA during the process.

8. Other Business

Kate announced that this was Cameron's last Board meeting. On behalf of everyone, she expressed gratitude for the "treasure of time" that Cameron gave to TA during his tenure as president, with so many hours spent working behind the scenes. She also presented Cameron with the gift of "a chair for the chair." Cameron thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve and said that he was especially grateful for the friendships.

Cameron expressed thanks to the Thetford School Board for their participation in this joint meeting.

Motion: Adjourn the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

Moved: Donna Steinberg

Seconded: Melody Burkins

The motion passed unanimously.

Shannon, Kristen, Julie, Charlie, Scott, and Kevin departed.

MEETING OF THE THETFORD ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MINUTES

Cameron convened the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

1. Appointment of Strafford Town Representative

Motion: Appoint Jeff Solsaa as Strafford Town Representative to the TA Board of Trustees.

Moved: Therese Linehan

Seconded: Suzanna Liepmann

The motion passed unanimously.

2. Approval of April 12, 2018, Meeting Minutes

Motion: Accept the minutes of April 12, 2018, with three minor corrections.

Moved: Karl Furstenberg

Seconded: Ann Bumpus

Abstained: Gio Bosco, Bob Christensen, Zoe Keller, Suzanna Liepmann, Jeff Solsaa

The motion passed.

3. Public Comment Period

There was no public comment.

4. Committee & Task Force Updates

As had been indicated in the agenda, regular committee updates were postponed until the June meeting.

Head of School Search Committee: Constitution of Committee & Hiring of Consultant

Gio, the chair of the Head of School Search Committee, recommended that the committee be comprised of approximately 7 to 9 people: 3 trustees, 2 faculty members, 1 staff member, 1 administrator, 1 alumnus/a, and one or more community members. Suzanna suggested that a student be added to the list. Gio requested ideas from the Board on how best to solicit interest in serving on the committee from non-trustees. Suggestions included announcements in TES electronic mailings and on the listservs of all towns where TA students live. Ann advised letting people know that there will be other opportunities to provide input, for those who are interested but unable to serve on the committee.

Gio reported that he hopes to have the committee together in the next 1-2 weeks. The consultant will be hired by July, the advertisement for the open position will be placed in August, the application-review process will start in the fall, and interviews will commence in January. The plan is for the committee to meet with different groups in the community to hear their thoughts about ideal qualities for the next Head of School.

The next step after the committee is formed is to select a consultant. Gio asked whether the committee should be empowered to both interview consultants and decide which one to hire.

Suzanna clarified that, since the Board is hiring the consultant, the full Board must give the final approval. It was decided that the committee would seek the Board's approval for a budget for the search process, and the committee would vet several consultants and bring a hiring recommendation to the Board at the July meeting.

Head of School Review Committee: Retrospective

Gio spoke briefly about a document that had been distributed to Board members prior to the meeting, which contained recommendations for the TA Head of School review process. Gio explained that future Head of School Review Committees will have the benefit of this document to help them conduct reviews as efficiently and effectively as possible. In response to a question, he also confirmed that the Head of School job description will be reviewed before the HOS Search Committee places its ad.

Strategic Plan Task Force

Melody reported that the Strategic Plan Task Force has had four meetings so far, with the next scheduled for May 31. Most recently, the task force has been considering academic life, tackling questions such as how to measure certain intangibles, and how best to utilize the school's resources to meet the needs of all students in a changing demographic and Act 46 landscape. The task force is trying to stay broad while also including some metrics and some specific priorities.

Melody said that the group is working wonderfully together, even when there are significant differences of opinion. She also noted that Robin Junker-Boyce is keeping great minutes for the group. Donna added that Melody is doing an amazing job, the process is going great, and she is certain that we will end up with a great document. Ben commented that the group has a good mix of people and that the task force is getting lots of practical input. Peter informed the Board that Gene Kadish (a former TA trustee) had started a metric measurement program that could serve as a good outline if it could be located, to which Bill replied that he had a copy and had been utilizing it already to some extent.

Faculty Representation Task Force

Ann reported that Donna will chair this task force, Kate will serve on it, and others are invited and encouraged to join as well. Donna shared that the plan is to talk with TA faculty, to interview schools that both have and don't have faculty representation on their boards, to investigate the recommendations of the National Association of Independent Schools on this topic, and to interview the chair of TA's NEASC reaccreditation committee (who is also the Head of School at Burr & Burton Academy) because he had shared some specific thoughts on this subject during the reaccreditation process.

Linda said that the task force could pose its questions to the listserv of the Independent Schools Association of Northern New England (ISANNE) and get a lot of feedback quickly. Zoe suggested also asking schools whether they include faculty members on committees.

5. Quarterly Financial Report

Suzanna briefly went over the financial statements. Peter inquired about busing, and Linda said that she is working on that right now.

Suzanna then presented the budget for each of the three ancillary programs for the Board's approval:

International Student Program

Suzanna reported that the budget has been changed to reflect the changes in the applicant pool. She said that the Resources Committee recommended approval of the ISP budget. In response to a question from Zoe about the status of the program, Suzanna described the recent expansion of the geographic pool, and Linda reported that the school is also exploring additional ways of bringing international students to campus.

Motion: Adopt the proposed budget for the International Student Program for FY2019.

Moved: Suzanna Liepmann

Seconded: Cameron Cudhea

The motion passed unanimously.

Woods Trail

Suzanna explained that the Woods Trail race is self-supporting, and that the Resources Committee recommended approval of the Woods Trail budget. Linda added that the current Woods Trail committee is doing great work in bringing more structure to its operations, which will make things easier for future committee members.

Motion: Adopt the proposed budget for the Woods Trail for FY2019.

Moved: Kate Hesser

Seconded: Jonathan Stableford

The motion passed unanimously.

Food Service Program

Suzanna reported that an enormous amount of work had been done on this budget by the administration, and that the Resources Committee recommended approval of the Food Service budget.

Driver's Education

Suzanna reported that there is nothing in the budget yet for Driver's Education. The recommendation of the Resources Committee is a payment of \$650 per student (the same dollar amount as this year), which the student can put toward the cost of any Driver's Ed program.

Gio asked for clarification as to who is responsible, by law, for paying for Driver's Ed for a student. Bill explained that Vermont law says that the superintendent of a school district has to ensure that every student has the opportunity to take Driver's Ed, but it doesn't say that the school district has to pay for it. The conclusion of both the Vermont Agency of Education and the OESU is that the school district is not responsible for the cost.

Jon added that Driver's Ed is good for kids, and for the rest of us who share the road with them.

Motion: Thetford Academy will offer \$650 vouchers for Driver's Education in FY2019.

Moved: Suzanna Liepmann

Seconded: Jim Wilson

The motion passed unanimously.

Line of Credit

Suzanna explained that TA's line of credit is up for renewal every two years at Mascoma Bank. She asked the Board to authorize Linda to renew the line of credit. There will be no changes in the terms: \$600,000 limit at 0.75% over the prime rate.

Motion: Authorize Linda Lanteigne-Magoon to renew TA's line of credit at Mascoma Bank at the terms previously described.

Moved: Suzanna Liepmann

Seconded: Jonathan Stableford

The motion passed unanimously.

Cost-Savings Measure

Suzanna described a net metering contract, where the school would hold a credit on solar arrays to be built at another location (not on TA property). TA could expect to save at least \$6,500 annually on its electric bill, but there is a 20-year contract commitment. Suzanna asked the Board to authorize Linda to do due diligence and then enter into this contract. Linda reported that she had checked references on two companies that have worked with a lot of schools. Bill added that this contract wouldn't preclude TA from installing its own solar panels later. Linda explained that the owner of the solar array gets the tax credits and TA gets the net metering on its electric bill which would shelter TA from Green Mountain Power rate increases. Jon clarified that TA does not pay for the infrastructure. There is no cash outlay for TA. Linda confirmed that the only risk to TA is that something even better might come along in the future for which TA might consider paying to break the contract.

Motion: Authorize Linda Lanteigne-Magoon to research options and enter into a net metering contract on behalf of TA.

Moved: Giovanni Bosco

Seconded: Karl Furstenberg

Abstained: Jeff Solsaa

The motion passed.

Endowment Fund

Suzanna reported that the management of TA's endowment fund is passive, which is good because it doesn't cost TA much. However, in the interest of evaluating other options that are available, Bob is going to request proposals from various other fund managers and also look at index funds as an option.

6. Board Management Committee: Policies

Participation of Home Study Students [C6]

Lindsey presented a revised version of this policy which addressed questions the Board had raised when the policy previously had been presented in December.

Motion: Adopt the policy on Participation of Home Study Students.

Moved: Lindsey Klecan

Seconded: Cameron Cudhea
The motion passed unanimously.

Donna then presented four policies for adoption.

Substitute Teachers [B1]

Motion: Adopt the policy on Substitute Teachers with one minor edit.
Moved: Therese Linehan
Seconded: Ann Bumpus
The motion passed unanimously.

Volunteers and Work-Study Students [B2]

Motion: Adopt the policy on Volunteers and Work-Study Students.
Moved: Therese Linehan
Seconded: Jonathan Stableford
The motion passed unanimously.

Student Freedom of Expression in School-Sponsored Media [C11]

Motion: Adopt the policy on Student Freedom of Expression in School-Sponsored Media.
Moved: Therese Linehan
Seconded: Jonathan Stableford
The motion passed unanimously.

Professional Licensure [B42]

Donna expressed thanks to Jonathan who worked closely with the faculty and Marc Chabot (Dean of Academics) and then with the BMC to craft this policy. The Board had questions about the exception for inter-disciplinary programs, where credit may span two or more traditional subjects and licensure in every area of credit may be unreasonable for a single faculty member. Jon explained that the Outdoor Program is only in its first year. If the program grows as envisioned, then eventually all teachers in the program would be licensed.

Shannon rejoined the Board meeting at 9:15 p.m.

Linda proposed making clear in which of several files a teacher's licensing plan would be kept. She also asked whether the consequences for lack of licensure are included in the Master Agreement, and Jon affirmed that this licensure policy is referenced in the contract. Ann also suggested a clarifying edit regarding the failure of a teacher to meet licensing expectations.

Peter asked whether the policy would put faculty in jeopardy, and Jon replied in the negative. He said that Marc C. has been working hard to get faculty licensed in recent years, and additionally it's something that the state will be requiring. Bill added that teachers licensed only in elementary/middle school will be given time to get a high-school license. Jon said that he would be able to communicate the policy to the teachers the following morning.

Motion: Adopt the policy on Professional Licensure with two minor changes.

Moved: Donna Steinberg

Seconded: Therese Linehan

The motion passed unanimously.

7. Town Reports

Lyme

Karl had no town report. However, on behalf of the Advancement Committee, he reported on the extremely successful TA Day of Giving, which raised \$15,480 against a target of \$10,000. The participation was broad-based, and there was much enthusiasm among everyone during the day. Also, TA has received a grant of \$17,600 from the Vermont Community Foundation for the Thetford Outdoor Program.

Strafford

Jeff had no report.

8. Executive Session: Personnel

At 9:35 p.m., the Board chose to go into executive session.

Motion: Move into executive session to discuss personnel issues.

Moved: Cameron Cudhea

Seconded: Donna Steinberg

The motion passed unanimously.

Out of executive session at 11:10 p.m.

Motion: In light of the projected enrollment for FY2019, the Board approves necessary reductions in force.

Moved: Therese Linehan

Seconded: Donna Steinberg

Abstained: Kate Hesser

The motion passed.

Motion: Adopt the proposed budget for the Food Service Program for FY2019.

Moved: Suzanna Liepmann

Seconded: Melody Burkins

The motion passed unanimously.

Motion: Adjourn the meeting at 11:15 p.m.

Moved: Cameron Cudhea

Seconded: Kate Hesser

The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Lindsey Klecan (Clerk)