

Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School
Board of Trustees Meeting
APPROVED Minutes
Thursday, September 11, 2008 7:30pm
BFCCPS Library

Attendance: Trustees President John Neas, Vice President Lori Clements, Treasurer Anna dos Santos, Clerk Richard Frongillo, Faculty Representative Gail Trotin, Lisa Buchholz, Nav Chander, Chuck Mayo, Cheryl O'Donnell (8:05), Cathy Tomaso, Tim Tracy, Thom Viveiros; HOS Dr. Kevin O'Malley, Asst. HOS (acting) Joe Perna

Absent: Poh-Lin Yeoh (ill)

Call to order, Comments by the Chair (7:32)

John welcomes the group and thanks all for attending. New trustees Lisa, Nav, and Gail have been approved by the state and are voting members. John distributes a revised list of Board meeting dates (December 11 moves to 4). If anyone has Board goals, they should be sent to John by 9/20. John highlights the upcoming Annual Convention for Charter Schools on 10/16/2008. He announces that BFCCPS will have a page in the Town of Franklin's annual report. Regarding Board meetings, John is interested in having one meeting a month, 7:30-9:30 (there had been discussion of possibly meeting additional times). In order to meet the goal, we must stay on task and he has asked Lori to be the unofficial timekeeper to help keep things moving.

Recognition of the Month (7:36)

Kevin recognizes 4th-grade student Surabhi Iyer who participated in a competition at MIT over the summer for Indian-Americans. Ms. Iyer captured two national trophies for finishing first place in spelling and in vocabulary! The competition also included a \$2000 college scholarship. Ms. Iyer told the Board of the challenge of the competition and the satisfaction of having won.

Open Comment (7:41)

Cathy notes that the 9/10 fair was fantastic and acknowledges Kate Edgar as the key contributor.

Clerk's Report (7:42)

Lisa had sent a suggestion to correct a misspelling and to add language that new trustees would not be voting members until having received state approval. Rich accepts these amendments.

MOTION: By Rich/Anna to approve minutes of the 6/11 and 6/16 Board meetings as amended.

RESULT: Pass (unanimous)

Action Register (7:44)

Lori distributes a new version of the register. She notes that outside consultant Tom Johnson will be utilized to improve the HOS performance evaluation process. John and Lori will work together to produce a handout for curriculum night. Lori recommends all committee chairs review the register for applicable items. Lori thinks the work on teacher websites is largely complete.

Review and Approval of Annual Audit (7:51)

Anna introduces John Buckley of Alexander, Aronson, Finning & Co., P.C. who distributes new copies of the auditor's report. Mr. Buckley reviews the report: a \$52K discrepancy was found to be related to a check for insurance that was improperly reconciled. Mr. Buckley had observed that lots of checks were returned for "insufficient funds" while going through bank statements looking for cash inaccuracy. Mr. Buckley reviews the profit & loss statement and highlights the lack of a written agreement between the Foundation and the bank holding its note.

Mr. Buckley distributes a report on ratios showing comparisons with other similar schools. The report indicates that BFCCPS has \$2.3M in net assets representing a very healthy 7.89 months of operating expenses. He wonders what is the strategic plan for this money and believes there should be such a plan if it does not exist.

Mr. Buckley distributes the required “management letter” and points to page 2 with “Significant Deficiencies”. The main deficiency is in the accounting of the school; there is no oversight of one person doing all the work. Mr. Buckley recommends a Board response to these deficiencies, at least. He then distributes a boilerplate document which required communication to the Board. Finally, he highlights that significant changes to the Form 990 are coming next year.

MOTION: By Anna/Tim to accept auditor’s report, as presented.

RESULT: Pass (unanimous)

Treasurer’s Report (8:27)

The school currently has 417 students and had budgeted based on 400. Currently, due to our estimate of 404, we are in line for funding for 404. Anna is interested in adjusting the budget to reflect the additional four students (i.e. \$38K). Kevin has appealed for an aide in 6th grade (\$23K) due to the large number of students. Anna reports that construction projects -- storage shed, additional space for music area, sound proofing requires additional funding (\$30K). She wants to add a line item for “capital expenditures”.

MOTION: By Anna/Tim to increase tuition line by \$38.6 based on 404 students enrolled.

RESULT: Pass (unanimous)

MOTION: By Anna/Cathy to increase personnel line item by \$23K for 6th grade aide.

RESULT: Pass (unanimous)

MOTION: By Anna/Nav to increase “transfer from reserves” by \$30K to \$100K.

RESULT: Pass (unanimous)

MOTION: By Anna/Chuck to create new expense line “Capital Improvements” with \$30K.

RESULT: Pass (unanimous)

John notes that the church did ask BFCCPS for a list of capital improvements in the previous lease negotiation. Anna distributes change pages of Policy #25. John declares that the Finance Committee is doing an outstanding job for the school! At the next Finance Committee meeting there will be discussion on spending money related to the Pond Street property looking at feasibility issues.

Final Report on the Annual Appeal (8:46)

John had distributed the report and asks that Kevin present it to parents.

Consideration of Red Brick School (8:47)

John reviews that the school was closed by the Franklin School Committee and returned the building to the town. BFCCPS was approached to see if the building could be put to “continued public use.” John distributes a list of potential uses gleaned from administration and staff. He has asked that Lori (against) and Cathy (for) produce a position paper to given back to John by 9/20 to be reviewed for the 10/2 Board meeting with presentation, questions, and discussion.

Head of School Report (8:51)

Kevin observes that the opening of school was as good as he has seen. All seemed to hit the ground running. Notes of interest: At 417 students there are ten open slots (based on class size policy). He states that the potential for conflict is great with the church and its CCD presence, but it is being minimized at every turn. The best guess is “January to March” for our 3-4 day visit from the state pursuant to our charter renewal. Proud to be an American Day (9/11) was a successful effort to focus on upbeat view of 9/11. Technology and Music to be discussed next month. Alert Now will be in place when last 11 families get involved. “Website for curriculum” information and instructions were distributed on 9/11. All safety drills were done including lockdown, bus jump, and fire drills. Curriculum nights are scheduled for 9/18 (K-4) and 9/25 (5-8). The math program is fantastic and has required a huge change for teachers to use a different modality. Gail had brought back a “tip sheet” from her summer training that has helped.

The preliminary report on Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) has been received and will be

reviewed for discrepancies. AYP represents the ultimate challenge of the progress of a school and is tied directly to the No Child Left Behind Act. For BFCCPS, this was a spectacular report. All groups and subgroups advanced and BFCCPS has met its AYP.

Kevin recognizes Joe Perna as the able leader and great asset who is filling in for Heather while she is on maternity leave. Joe notes that it has been a pleasure to step into his new role. In the summer Kevin and Joe attend a meeting of charter school leaders and the new education chairman Mitchell. Joe distributes notes about the meeting. Their impression was that Mitchell was candid and wants the discussion to be more about education and less about politics.

Other notes: 21 courses offered by 9 teachers and attended by 159 students made the school lively all summer. Teacher workshops at the end of the summer were quite productive with 18 workshops and 33 faculty participating. Each workshop had a process and a product. Heather had initiated a program to assist an 8th grade student Susruthi Rajanala who had finished the 2nd level of 8th grade math as a 7th grader. The student is currently enrolled in the Franklin High School in honors geometry and is being considered to move further into Algebra II.

Kevin attended a recent PCO meeting and acknowledged the great efforts of the group to assist the school. The PCO helped by providing \$300 for bussing for field trips to address rising costs.

John notes that Kevin had sent a note to the Dept of Elementary and Secondary Education regarding the enrollment of 404 vs 417 but no response has been received.

Committee Reports (9:20)

John suggests contacting Deb Schwab if a key is needed for the building for meetings.

Strategic Plan: Anna notes there is lots of details in the plan. How do we track it? Rich suggests tracking it all together, every 2-3 months. Cathy suggests checking twice a year.

Elections Task Force: Nav will chair.

Enrollment Task Force: Cathy will chair.

Facilities: John is not chairing. Cathy will serve on the committee. Looking for a chairperson; letter to CRBE and Marsh-McClellan went to attorney with deadline of 10/24 for reply.

Faculty Representative: Gail notes that morale is very high among staff and that the school opening was very smooth.

Governance: Time distributes amended by-laws and policy #8 for updating trustee binders. A suggestion about enrollment was forwarded to the committee by John.

Human Resources: No report.

Legislative Liaison: Thom will lead. John suggests gathering a pool of potential attendees at state house.

Mission Committee: No report.

Nominating: No report.

Public Relations: Lisa and Poh-Lin will co-chair. John distributes a list of grants and charity organizations which may be sources for funding of field trips, etc. Lisa notes that all members of the committee have agreed to continue this year. She distributes copies of goals for the PR Committee for Strategic Plan; the committee has finalized boilerplate information and will send a copy for review by the Board.

Adjournment (9:42)

MOTION: By Lori/Tim to adjourn.

RESULT: Pass (unanimous)