

Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School
Board of Trustees Meeting
APPROVED Minutes
Thursday, March 12, 2009 7:00pm
School Library

Attendance: Trustees President John Neas, Vice President Lori Clements, Treasurer Anna dos Santos, Clerk Richard Frongillo, Faculty Representative Gail Trotin, Cheryl O'Donnell (7:23), Cathy Tomaso, Tim Tracy, Thom Viveiros, Poh-Lin Yeoh; HOS Dr. Kevin O'Malley, Asst. HOS Heather Zolnowski

Absent: Nav Chander, Chuck Mayo

Call to order, Comments by the Chair (7:03)

John reports his conversation with Jeff Nutting in which Nutting relayed that keeping the Red Brick School open is a plus for the town and that if the relationship can be maintained with the RBS Committee it would be positive. John notes that a former student and son of a former trustee spoke with Rep. McGovern about the positive characteristics of charter schools. John notes that our next meeting is on a Wednesday, April 8.

Recognition of the Month (7:07)

Kevin applauds the outrageously successful school play which drew tremendous crowds. He recognizes the "Unsung Heroes" of the play, the behind-the-scenes staff working backstage. Ben Benjamin introduces five of the twelve crew members who had to learn everything about their job in the ten days prior to the show: Bradley Clements (spotlight), Michael (backstage crew), Alison Tardif (lightboard), Bria Adams (soundboard), Jake Tomaso (spotlight).

John and Kevin continue the recognition by highlighting a few other accomplishments: Public Relations produced new stationary, Gail was recognized with a Traveler's Tails publisher award, and Deb Schwab led a terrific tour for parents.

Open Comment (7:16)

No comments offered.

Clerk's Report (7:16)

MOTION: By Tim/Poh-Lin to approve minutes of the 1/8 Board meetings.

RESULT: Pass (Lori abstains)

Action Register (7:17)

Lori reviews the Action Register handout. The Mission Committee needs a charter approved and meeting schedules need to be submitted to the state office.

Treasurer's Report (7:21)

Anna distributes information and begins with a review of the current budget. The FinCom and administration have identified areas to "save" money to help reduce the projected deficit. The budget process for next year has begun with a collection of assumptions distributed. The initial budget meeting will be on 3/18 and next month a draft budget will be offered.

Head of School Report (7:33)

Kevin notes that two new reports from the state arrived after the HOS report information had been distributed to the Board. In all, three reports received:

- BFCCPS Federal Programs Inspection Report
Federal special needs report by local DESE group after 2-day visit. The report was commendatory, warm, and very positive.
- DESE report

This report indicates how well we are doing towards meeting our needs in special education; includes MCAS improvement and data review. We got the best score (1, meet requirements). Kevin states that the special needs department has been doing an excellent job. Thanks to Pat Fairbanks and her staff.

- School Works report

This report reflects the three day visit to BFCCPS which is given to DESE and is used to decide about charter renewal. This is intentionally not an opinionated report. Overall, the effect is very positive, is factual, and appears accurate. The school will use the report as a basis for how to make ours a better school; may look at how BFCCPS presents itself in Accountability Plan and Annual Reports in future. Some factual corrections were submitted. Some were accepted, others not.

We are still awaiting news about the official word on charter renewal.

Recruitment: We just completed the most successful recruitment: 300+ applications; staff members want to bring their children here (good indication); looking at 429(!) students in 2009-10; wait lists in all grades (10+ students) except 8th; only 4 openings in 8th grade; no other openings. John observes that the school has worked consistently to retain current students which he believes is the difference in application numbers.

School Calendar: Kevin presents a calendar that the staff has discussed but the Boards is to approve. The calendar aligns well with the Franklin district calendar (2nd of 2-year calendar). Kevin notes that June is not kind to BFCCPS students with the heat. Other recommendations: 9/4 off, 4 half-days of professional development, half day before Thanksgiving, half day on 12/23, finish on 6/17 without snow (180th day). Kevin notes that the calendar exceeds states requirements for hours of education per grade (30 extra for K-4; 90 extra for 5-8.)

MOTION: By Rich/Anna to approve the school calendar for 2009-10 as presented

RESULT: Pass (unanimous)

Dress Code: The dress code remains a difficult topic. Kevin has taken another long look at dress code and recommends: leave next year alone, appoint small committee early in next year consider options of: no dress code, keep current, look at "uniformity" (e.g. collared shirt), or-uniforms to be decided by February 2010. Thom asks about the current issues: small amount of discomfort continues with regulations. Kevin states that it is difficult to have discussions about dress with children and with parents. John feels the process needs to be less rushed in this review of the dress code. Rich wonders if a committee could be formed earlier (i.e. this year). That seems okay. Kevin recommends choosing an "even-handed" membership on the small committee. John will put the issue on the agenda for April.

John offers a few comments: Thom brought refreshments that he did not make. John circulated a sign up sheet to trustees for Field Day shirts. He notes the last day of school is currently 6/19.

Heather discusses the 51A Protocol written in a new format. She presents ERB testing results from November testing. Individual results are forthcoming. Heather presents the summer class program which includes a better organization of offerings. The program will be distributed through Alert Now on 3/13 and through other channels. Kevin notes that this program is a massive undertaking that Heather has handled very well.

Other notes: MCAS for social studies has been eliminated for 2009 (5th, 7th, high school) as the test is revamped; a new MCAS schedule is distributed; Read Across America was re-scheduled due to weather but went very well. Attendees included Police officers Cusson, Spillane, Mucciaroni; Paul Molla (F&P Molla Co and Random Smiles Program); Isabel and Karen from CCD office; Joe Perna, Pat Fairbanks, Becca Harrington; Board Members Chuck Mayo and Anna dos Santos.; New Family Night is coming on 4/2; Cathy and Lori will represent the Board; the ticket price of Seusical Jr. was reduced to \$10 and the event yielded a profit.

John: Nav could not be here tonight due to another commitment. Lisa Buchholz could not come due to her father's illness. She submitted her resignation from the Board effective immediately.

Liaison to Special Education Department (8:23)

Chuck is absent tonight. Kevin notes that the state officials were very impressed that BFCCPS has a direct liaison and may have an interest in expanding such a program statewide. Anna wonders what we will do as Chuck is not continuing on the Board. Lori offers that the role could still exist even if not a Board role. Perhaps the Board formation committee could undertake this question, too. Cathy offers that the position need not have specific knowledge to act as liaison.

Selection of Nominating Committee (8:29)

Names are chosen at random. Board members in order of selection: Thom, Chuck, Rich, Nav, Cathy, Cheryl; Staff: Sue Weidman, Cindy Sarapas, Kathy Urkevic, Heather Zolnowski; Parents: Carolyn Fernandes, Anne Gilberti, Mary McKenzie, Michele Pearl

Much discussion was had on how to fill the vacancy from Lisa's resignation.

MOTION: By Rich/Anna to charge the newly-formed Nominating Committee to fill the Board vacancy according to current policy.

RESULT: Pass (unanimous)

Thom wonders about having a second faculty representative. John quotes policy that says that one faculty member is approved at a specific time. John requests that Lori communicate with Chuck and Thom to get the process going.

Committee Reports (8:50)

John thanks all involved in committees as it represents a lot of work outside of the regular Board meetings. He asked Poh-Lin to move from PR to Annual Appeal and she has agreed.

Annual Appeal: Thom reviewed a comparison of this year to last and feels we are "better than I thought we were"; we need to be careful how we ask for additional donations; thermometer on website is a possibility; could use AlertNow e-mail; Anna suggests making it easy to donate later; Cathy suggests highlighting success in 2nd mailing. John wonders about relationship with PCO and Foundation to be better coordinated for best support of school.

Election Task Force: Poh-Lin reports that the group had its third meeting -- 5 members working on different tasks; Poh-Lin met with Mark Kenen; Thoughts under consideration: others have been surprised by BFCCPS Board is made up of PARENTS (versus committee reps); do we need all the individual committees? what do we need to have? should we have a "developmental" committee to be strategic? what about asking candidates about leadership abilities?

Enrollment Task Force: The efforts are on hold for the time being.

Facilities: Anna distributes charter description for approval.

MOTION: By Anna/Lori to approve committee description (noting Michael Tomaso).

RESULT: Pass (unanimous)

No meetings were held. John is asking Facilities to intensify its search for an alternate facility. He wants the committee to meet with the Town to get answers to questions on Pond Street property, meet with Country Day Camp to see if they might be willing to sell sliver of land.

Faculty Representative: Gail observes some discussion and slight unease about whether promised raises are in jeopardy. John offers his opinion that he would not vote to go back on a promise, but all needs to be on the table. Anna notes that the FinCom is starting with an assumption that includes the promised 7% increase. We cannot put the school in peril. Lori believes increase is "sacred". Kevin observes that the state target numbers have never come out so late and that this is the most cloudy picture ever. He notes that the Board has been very supportive and that the staff should be optimistic. Gail reports that there is lots of excitement related to PCO grant applications. Gail states that the summer workshops were well attended, appreciated, and productive and she hopes they can be continued this summer. Gail and Joe wrote a Character Ed grant proposal for \$5K to enhance our program; they hope to hear in July.

Governance: Tim distributes charter for the committee:

MOTION: By Anna/Lori to approve charter.

RESULT: Pass (unanimous)

Human Resources: Lori distributes HOS Performance and goals; get back to Lori before April meeting. She hands out financial disclosure form for 2008.

Lease Negotiation: Next meeting is 4/29. John has produced a list of improvements for the building and a cost estimate.

Legislative Liaison: Thom: contacted offices of Vallee, Brown, Spilka, 4/29 10am-1pm; Spilka not sure about 4/29, willing to meet with us; haven't heard from others yet. He wonders how to recruit parents? perhaps talk at New Parent Night. Kevin suggests considering a bus; need to show numbers.

Mission Committee: Next meeting is 3/16, 7:15. February newsletter was produced.

Nominating: Lori expresses thanks to outgoing committee. Anna and Lori have expressed interest in officer positions for next year, so far.

Public Relations: The group is looking for a new Chair; Kevin highlights the new stationary and that electronic files have been passed to the school.

MOTION: By Tim/Thom to continue the meeting past 10pm.

RESULT: Pass (unanimous)

Special Education Liaison: No report.

Strategic Plan: Progress reviewed.

Adjournment (10:08)

MOTION: By Lori/Thom to adjourn

RESULT: Pass (unanimous)