

Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School
Board of Trustees Meeting
APPROVED Minutes
Thursday, January 8, 2009 7:00pm
School Library

Attendance: Trustees President John Neas, Treasurer Anna dos Santos (7:46), Clerk Richard Frongillo (8:30), Faculty Representative Gail Trotin, Lisa Buchholz, Nav Chander, Chuck Mayo (7:20), Cathy Tomaso, Thom Viveiros, Poh-Lin Yeoh; HOS Dr. Kevin O'Malley, Asst. HOS Heather Zolnowski, Joe Perna

Absent: Vice President Lori Clements, Cheryl O'Donnell, Tim Tracy

Call to order (7:05)

Recognition of the Month (7:10)

Laurie Owens and Tina Haas with Kailyn Hughes and Julia Meredith (fifth-graders) present a podcast done through library class. Laurie talks about the technology students are being taught. She directed the Board to a website where visitors can download children's stories onto MP3 players: underneath Beyond the Chalkboard on the BFCCPS website.

Clerk's Report (7:20)

MOTION: By Lisa/Thom to approve minutes of the 12/4 Board meeting.

RESULT: Pass (unanimous)

MOTION: By Thom/Lisa to approve minutes of the 12/9 Board meeting.

RESULT: Pass (unanimous)

Kathy mentions that reminders should go out to Board members about "key events" to increase Board attendance at those events.

Treasurer's Report (7:30)

Anna highlights the key item discussed by the Finance Committee: the budget had predicted a 5% over last year but the numbers from the state indicate a decrease of \$140,000 instead. The picture of the state's finances is still unclear according to the Charter School Office. Kevin offers praise for the FinCom for their slow, steady strategy of dealing with cuts. Several ask questions. Anna confirms that we must have a balanced budget at fiscal year end which may include taking funds from reserves. John reiterates that we are financially fine.

MOTION: By Anna/Nav to retain 403b program and pursue implementing it at the next level.

RESULT: Pass (unanimous)

Head of School Report (7:45)

Kevin notes the smooth transition of students returning after vacation. He highlights the recent and successful use of AlertNow for school delay and trip cancellation notices due to inclement weather. He states that the recent Enrollment Night was full with over 75 people in attendance. The next enrollment night is January 29. Kevin mentions new legislation about parents being Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) that requires public schools to teach. The state has put out a rubric mandating this new curriculum which will impact how teachers teach and what is being tested. Kevin described a professional development seminar offered by Norm Bossio which was highly regarded. Kevin has met with Town of Franklin's Mr. Nutting regarding safety issues. Junior Achievement will begin in our school during advising time when students will be taught how to start a small business. This program will last one month. DARE will start in the next three weeks with fifth graders. Upcoming events include a PCO meeting on the 12th, an Internet safety meeting for families on the 13th, and the Mid-Winter Concert on the 14th.

Kevin notes that they were 56 responses to the midyear survey distributed by the staff, 21% of the school. The feedback will be handed to state visitors in February. Heather reports the positives of

the survey: overwhelming support for the school, teachers caring and nurturing, strong academics, rigorous curriculum, presentation skills for students are strong, and parental involvement. Joe reports the negative feedback from the survey: House services are delivered through student services, Latin curriculum, lunch and recess, facility, and communication related to EdLine improvements. Lisa wonders whether an anonymous survey might increase participation or have participants identify the grade level of their children.

John mentions that the Board will revisit the dress code after a state visit. John suggests that sound equipment always be available for evening events so that the audience and speakers could be heard (e.g. Enrollment Night).

Discussion and Motion to Approve the BFCCPS ‘Identity Campaign’ (8:15)

Lisa presents a packet from the Public Relations Committee. She explains how graphic guidelines would spell out the specifics about covers and size of fonts so that copiers would be consistent. She explains the process that PR Committee used to come up with tagline options.

MOTION: By Lisa/Thom to approve the tagline and graphic layout of our revised school logo as presented by the PR Committee.

Anna expresses her concern about the the word “responsibility” not fitting, as it is not directly connected with the virtues of our mission. Gail states that responsibility is a word, however, that is pervasive in our community. Kevin believes that it helps to make the message more personal.

RESULT: Pass

Discussion of a Parent Newsletter (or other items) and the Implementation Through the Coordinated Effort of the Board of Trustees and the Head of School (8:34)

Rich discusses the interest in the reinstating a newsletter for parents by parents in the spirit of the character education newsletter from years previous. the interest was expressed by the faculty through the Research Action Team last spring and visited recently at a Mission Committee meeting. Rich highlights the concern raised by Chuck that the Board had explicitly indicated that it was not in favor of Board involvement in the production of such a newsletter as it was thought to be two closely associated with the operations (versus strategic direction) of the school. Rich believes that this newsletter and, in fact, any project could be done with Board involvement as long as it was undertaken with the approval and coordination of the Head of School. This newsletter project is just an example of a way to involve more volunteers and will be pursued only with the approval of the HOS.

Much discussion ensues. Kevin observes that there is potential for conflict and that we must look at that potential carefully. He feels the HOS must have veto power but, on the other hand, must be reasonable. He believes that it would and could work. Anna would like to see a mechanism in the school to allow parents to be involved. Such a mechanism would fall on their the oversight of the HOS. Nav agrees that there should be a programmatic way so that new parents can get involved. Gail observes that it was the school-internal RAT/FIT that got this started.

MOTION: By Gail/Poh-Lin to authorize the Mission Committee to move forward with the development of a parent oriented newsletter with the approval of the Head of School.

RESULT: Pass (8-3, Anna, Thom, Lisa)

Kevin is pleased with the discussion about the newsletter and believes that it reflects well on the strength and capability of the Board.

Charter Renewal Visit (9:15)

Kevin has the initial information related to the upcoming visit by the state for the charter renewal. The state has delegated a private group called School Works led by Spencer Blaisdell to make the visit and produce a report. The visit will be from 2/2 to 2/4. Kevin requests that Board members prioritize their focus group scheduled for 2/3 at 8:30 AM. He expects that initial findings will be given on Wednesday afternoon to the HOS and Board President. School Works presents to the state who will then rule based on the report. A parent focus group will be held from one to 2:30

PM so that parents can then leave with their children.

Committee Reports (9:24)

Annual Appeal: Thom thanks all for their input with the letter that was distributed. Time will tell how it worked out. John adds that he believes the letter was good and that they try to incorporate all comments but couldn't. Perhaps next year some additional changes can be made.

Election Task Force: Nav and Poh-Lin have been talking to people to see about getting involvement. They are looking to schedule a meeting in the third week of January.

Facilities: John notes that the feasibility study was received for the Pond Street property. Anna states that nothing new has been discussed since the meeting of 12/9. A group is meeting on 1/9 to see other properties.

Faculty Representative: No report.

Governance: No report.

Human Resources: No report.

Lease Negotiation: 2/25 meeting to continued discussion. John wonders about the estimates for capital improvements.

Legislative Liaison: Thom is looking for an opportunity to speak to parents about the 5/4 event.

Mission Committee: a group met and discussed the creation of a vision statement. The next meeting is on 2/2 (rescheduled to 2/9).

Nominating: John reports that he has heard from Anna and Cathy and needs to hear from the other three Board members whose term is ending this year.

Public Relations: Meeting monthly.

Special Education Liaison: Chuck reports that the next meeting is on 1/29. He is looking at issues of accessibility which relates to lease negotiations. John requests a report for the Board. Cathy wonders whether there is a place for parents to get involved. Not at this point.

Strategic Plan: No report.

Adjournment (9:37)

Next meeting, 2/12, 7pm in BFCCPS Library.

MOTION: By Thom/Lisa to adjourn

RESULT: Pass (unanimous)