

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

Attendance: Trustees President Lori Clements, Treasurer Anna dos Santos, Thomas Viveiros, John Neas, Donald Tappin, Gail Trotin, HOS Dr. Kevin O'Malley, Nav Chander, Poh-Lin, Tim Tracy, Cheryl O'Donnell (7:24), Stephan Katinas (7:55pm), Vice President Rich Frongillo (8:22)

Absent: NONE

Vote to approve minutes from September 10 meeting: Approved by all members

Recognition of the Month (7:06pm):

The Mathletes are recognized for their efforts during the St. John's Math Invitational on October 15.

Faculty Representative Report (7:12pm):

Gail mentions that she received a question on whether or not we have a plan for hiring someone to fill the HR position. Dr O'Malley mentions that the HR position is in its formative stage because of funding issues.

Treasurer's Report (7:14pm):

Anna mentions that the school finances are currently on schedule. She notes that we now listing our depreciation expense. She mentions that we are all hoping that state funding remains the same.

HOS report given by Asst. HOS Heather Zolnowski (7:16pm):

Heather reviews highlights from the Education Reform Act of 2009 with the board. She mentions that the Red Brick School (RBS) building is now up and running. Anna comments that she noticed pieces of wood in the closets at RBS and asks if we should remove them.

Heather mentions that BFCCPS has been in close contact with the Town of Franklin and mentions that the H1N1 flu vaccine will first be given to children from 6 months to 2 years old and pregnant women.

She mentions that the school's Heifer project is now up and running and that the 8th grade talent show will be held tomorrow night (November 13) with 20 acts scheduled to perform.

Heather discusses how the parent-teacher conferences went well. She also mentions that she has gotten positive feedback from people during several of the recent field trips about how well behaved our students are. She informs us that she will attend the November 19th Charter School Leadership Summit with Dr. O'Malley and Director of School Operations and Student Activities Joe Perna.

Lori introduces Bob Harrington from Educational Facilities Solutions Associates (also the former Superintendent of the Abby Kelley Foster Public Charter School in Worcester) (7:22 pm):

Bob's Team: *Mark Regent; Irwin Regent; Tim Bonfatti; Rob Nahigian; Michelle Grove; Bob Harrington*

Bob mentions he will talk for about 20 minutes and take 25 minutes for questions. He starts by commenting that he sees BFCCPS as one of the best schools in the United States and he thanks Lori and Anna for meeting with him over lunch.

Bob talks briefly about how he financed the new Abby Kelley Foster Public Charter School (AKFPCS) in Worcester. He mentioned that all of the money was borrowed with none of it coming from fundraising efforts.

Bob spends a few minutes introducing himself and sharing his credentials with the board. Bob is a Harvard Fulbright Scholar who has worked for 41 years in Education; part of that work was in Boston and Newton (where he was a principal). He has also worked in the publishing business and co-authored 16 text books. Part of his career was spent in Clinton, NJ. He mentions that he has been involved in facilities and finance during most of his career.

Bob starts his talk by mentioning that he feels Trustee members have three main roles: to manage curriculum, personnel, and facilities and finance.

Bob explains to the board that facilities are characterized into classes. He gives us a few examples: A Class A facility would be considered the best condition. An example would be a new school or a renovated warehouse. A Class B facility is still in reasonable condition but needs minor updates. A Class C facility is outdated all the way through (e.g., outdated electrical, heating, windows, etc.) He characterizes the BFCCPS facility as a Class C facility.

Bob then begins to discuss what he feels are our options. He believes that we definitely need to look at our facility. He also suggests we consider investigating our enrollment and begin asking questions such as: "should there be a K-12 school"? He suggested we develop a 30-year projection as a negotiation tactic. He also suggests that we make a decision in a timely fashion since construction costs are the lowest they've been in 15 years and capital is also very inexpensive.

Michelle Grove Introduces Herself (7:45pm):

Michelle is a Suffolk University Law School graduate who started practicing law in Boston and later switched to the real estate business. A couple of years ago, she went to work with Bob. She talked about the difference between business and finance expertise. She feels there is an inherent mismatch in a charter school from an investor point of view – a school’s charter is for 5 years and we need loan for 30 years.

Michelle then begins to elaborate on the things that investors look for when investing in a charter school. **She states that we must prove that we have a strong vision!!** Another goal of the school would be to increase our waitlists. Since customers (parents and students) are always leaving – the school must prove that there would be a market for future customers. We need to start thinking about strategic issues – how do we move people during construction, etc. She mentions that we have a distinct advantage: we are small, flexible, and there are lots of people who want to finance us. Michelle talked about bond financing and the fact that there is a whole industry that does nothing but charter school financing.

Rob Nahigian Introduces Himself (7:50pm):

Rob has 29 years of experience in commercial industrial real estate. Most of his work is in “one-of-a-kind” type work. He mentioned that he has also been an advisor to the Archdiocese. He has three times been named Massachusetts Real Estate advisor of the year. He has been a Boston University professor and the National Real Estate Advisor of the year for the Abbey Kelly Foster Charter School.

Rob was a city planner in Bowie, Maryland and named national instructor of the year 3 times. He mentions that in all his previous work, the school staff has always been involved every step of the way.

Tim Bonfatti Introduces Himself (7:58pm):

Tim specializes in project delivery management which is devoted to educational facilities. His academic background is that he is trained as an engineer and is also an attorney. He elaborates on the linkages between facility and curriculum and mentions that the team would come to us with several options about how to address these.

Irwin and Mark Regent Introduce Themselves (8:01pm):

Irwin and Mark both have degrees from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Mark graduated in 1981. Mark mentions that there are water table issues on the current land owned by the foundation. He talks about the downsides of our current building and mentions that if a child

with a wheelchair wanted to use this building, we could be open to a law suit. He mentions that a further disadvantage to our school is that there are no athletic fields.

The floor is now opened for questions (8:05pm):

John Neas mentions that we have in the past worked with the church and made an offer on the building and tried to investigate different options. He wants to understand more about Bob's experience in the financing piece of the renovation. Bob mentions that Abbey Kelly Foster (AKF) cost about \$17M for renovation. He had to put \$2M in surplus on top of the \$37M loan. AKF currently has 94,000 square feet of usable space.

John Neas then asks about the Putnam building. Rob mentions that he did look at Putnam and found out that it was owned by the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS). John Neas then asks about fundraising and Bob mentioned that didn't want to elaborate on what he did with his building. John Neas then asks about the cost of the services of Bob and his team. Bob mentioned that the cost would be about \$110,000 for the delivery of a report with as many options as possible. This fee does NOT include the implementation of any of the options but for a feasibility study.

Bob suggests that we pass a motion that this cost would be part of the bond. We MUST use Mass Development for the bond. Bob reiterates that we should get our waitlist even higher than it is now. He mentions that we are the #1 charter school in the state. He also says that he will NOT talk about teacher salaries in his report.

Bob recommends to the board that the next stage would be to hire someone like himself to work with Dr. O'Malley. Then we would need to go out and hire people with skills similar to those of Mark and Irwin Regent (architecture), Tim Bonfatti (project management), Rob Nahigian (real estate advisor), Michelle Grove (financing).

John Neas asks about green initiatives. Irwin says that their team would get involved during the design stage but that this would not be part of the initial delivered study. Bob mentions that we need to consider the costs of being "green-certified" and weight them against the long-term benefits before we decide to go ahead.

Nav asks about the strategy and whether or not we want to go to K-12. He suspects that bankers would prefer to see a regional school as well since they prefer a larger size. Rob mentions that we should give his team some choices to help narrow their field of discovery.

Gail talks about whether Bob's team would suggest expanding K-8 itself as opposed to considering K-12. She mentions that she believes our facility is actually Class C-. She wonders if the team would work with us to develop a hybrid solution. That is, maybe suggest ways for us to move to a Class B facility with the potential to move to a Class A once we stabilize ourselves. Bob mentions that at the Abby Kelley Foster Public Charter School (AKFPCS) he had the same

issues as well. He had to push some of the more conservative people within the AKFPCS community to move beyond a solution with which they felt comfortable.

Thom asks about the group's ability to apply their unique skills and knowledge to address issues that are distinctive to the Town of Franklin. Rob mentions that he has had significant experience in working with communities throughout Metro West and that he has worked in Franklin before. He mentioned that this concern would not be an issue and that his team understands the issues that are unique to Franklin.

Anna asks who would get the \$110K fee, and brought up this going out to bid. Bob mentions that the money would go to him and he would work with the other members of his team to finalize the report.

Action Register (9:10pm):

No items discussed.

Motion to adjourn (9:11pm):

Nav initiated the motion. Tim seconded the motion. The vote is unanimous.