

THETFORD ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Thursday, January 9, 2020
Thetford Academy Library

DRAFT MINUTES

Gio Bosco (President) convened the meeting at 7:05 p.m. In attendance were the following:

Trustees: Gio Bosco, Donna Steinberg, Kate Hesser, Karl Furstenberg, Jon Ziegler, Ben Williams, Robin Junker-Boyce, Carrie Wells, Jeff Solsaa

Administration: Carrie Brennan (Head of School); Linda Lanteigne-Magoon (CFO)

Faculty: Karen Heinzmann

Absent: Lindsey Kleecan, Shannon Darrah, Melody Burkins, Ann Bumpus.

1. Public Comment Period

Chuck Cole expressed appreciation for the expanding excellence of the Academy. Mary Dan Pomeroy, a TA alumni, brought up her concerns about not having Thetford Academy Alumni Association (TAAA) representation on the current Thetford Academy Board. Gio Bosco informed her that the leaders of both TAAA and the Board have had recent conversations about the process, and that both parties agreed with the current plan to bring alumni representation to the board in the spring, giving adequate time to maximally fulfill the needs of both organizations.

2. Consent Agenda

Motion: Accept the minutes of December 12, 2019, with one minor edit.

Moved to approve with edit: John Ziegler

Seconded: Carrie Wells

The motion passed unanimously.

3. Head of School's Report

Carrie Brennan shared an update on the PFAS found in the school's drinking water. New water tests were completed to determine the source of contamination. TA's John Brown, along with Carrie, are working closely with State of Vermont and an environmental engineer to remedy the situation.

• **Teaching and Learning**

Update on changes in faculty office hours and improved student access to advisors.

Update on new double-block, interdisciplinary environmental studies course. Key component of Thetford Outdoor Program.

- **Partnerships**
Outline of major foundation support over the last five years. Discussed need to raise new funds to replace lapsed funding from multi-year grants.
- **Enrollment**
Discussion of media/marketing strategy for 2109-20. Earned media (e.g. Valley News and Vermont Standard) covering TA news and purchased media platforms that reach multiple audiences.
- **Community Engagement**
Highlight cross-country ski trail grooming effort and value to community.
- **TA Strategic Plan**
No new updates to Strategic Plan
- **Upcoming events**
Review of events at TA in January-February: exams, plays, college night, Founders Day, February recess 2/17-21, Town Meeting 2/29

4. Town Reports

- Lyme: (Karl Furstenberg) School budget for 2020-21 in preparation. Expect 2.3 percent increase. Increase high school tuition cost to be covered by trust fund. Possible class splits in next year's 3rd and 8th grade due to larger class size.
- Thetford: No report
- Strafford: (Jeff Solsaa) School budget budget for 2020-21 in preparation. Strafford School Board has suggested changes in Partnership Agreement. This led to a lengthy discussion of the meaning of high school designation and high school choice policies. It was agreed that these issues warranted further discussion between Thetford Academy Board and Strafford School Board. Thetford Head of School and Board Chair will initiate conversation with Strafford Board chair to pursue these matters. It was noted that the attendance of Newton School 7th and 8th graders at TA for afternoon language instruction has been very successful.

5. Committee and Task Force Reports

- Resources (John Ziegler): Student enrollment is running 2-3 students ahead of budget. The Committee is looking for ways to improve the efficiency and coordination of the purchasing process. Resources is compiling a list of possible investment managers and is working on writing and request for proposals (RFP); Trustees were invited to suggest possible investment firms and spread the word; Once a list and RFP is finalized bids will be sought for an investment advisor and CPA. Investment returns on the endowment will be coming in soon.

- Advancement (Karl Furstenberg): Giving results for the annual fund running a bit behind last year both in terms of dollars and donors. This largely due to a later solicitation in December and various changes in tax law dealing with charitable contributions. It is expected that annual giving will come in on budget by year's end. However, total giving is up several thousand dollars over last year. Trustees were reminded to fulfill their giving plans.
- Board Management (Donna Steinberg): BMC is looking to reschedule the February Board retreat due to schedule conflicts. When scheduled, the February meeting will expand to include some time for a short retreat. A full retreat will take place in June.
- Personnel (Kate Hesser): Discussion of the staff employee contract is underway and process is going well. Discussion of faculty contract has been focused on the evaluation process and health insurance. Consideration of compensation grids is moving along in conjunction with the overall Academy budget process.

Motion to Adjourn the meeting at 8:36 p.m.: Kate Hesser

Seconded: Donna Steinberg

The motion passed unanimously

After adjournment two ad hoc working groups convened to discuss budget process and timeline and Board nomination process for new members.

Respectfully submitted,
Karl Furstenberg

