

THETFORD ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Monthly Board Meeting — Sept 10, 2020

Via Zoom

MINUTES

Gio Bosco (Board President) called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. In attendance (all virtually) were the following:

Trustees: Gio Bosco, Melody Burkins, Harry Kinne, Dana Grossman, Donna Steinberg, Robin Junker, Karl Furstenberg, Shannon Darrah, Mary Dan Pomeroy, Marisa Donovan, Lindsey Klecan

Absent: Ann Bumpus, John Ziegler

Employees: Carrie Brennan (Head of School), Linda Lanteigne Magoon (CFO)

Members of the public: None

Recording Clerk: Leif LaWhite

1. Welcome & President's Report

Gio:

- Expressed thanks to all TA employees for launching the new school year so well.
- Noted the passing of two recent graduates and a rising ninth-grader. Expressed sincere condolences on behalf of the Board.
- Thanked everyone present for their patience with Zoom and shared some reminders about Zoom etiquette.

2. Public Comment Period

There was no public comment.

3. Consent Agenda

Meeting Minutes – August 13, 2020 Board of Trustees regular meeting

Meeting Minutes – August 24, 2020 Board of Trustees special meeting

- Edits from John Brown (Director of Buildings and Grounds) about HVAC filters
- Edits from Gio about FTE for Sue Farrell (School Nurse)
- Discussion about whether the Board's note-taker is properly termed a Recording Clerk per bylaws. Carrie asked whether we have Secretary, Treasurer, and other titles? Lindsey answered that we have a Clerk who can delegate to a Recording Clerk per bylaws.

Motion: Approve the consent agenda, with the edits to the August 13 minutes.

Moved: Dana Grossman

Seconded: Donna Steinberg

The motion passed unanimously.

4. Head of School Report

Carrie shared her screen with slides:

- Highlights: this week's launch of school + last two weeks of in-service
 - 10 days of faculty on campus before school started
 - Reconnected, became informed about practices & procedures
 - Developed skills
 - Prepared for the semester
 - Provided input on program design
 - Practiced a variety of ways to convene (on campus, from home, hybrid)
 - So far, students have had 3 days of school, with the following initial goals:
 - Feel safe & connected
 - Meet pod leader and classmates
 - Practice protocols
 - Check out textbooks, laptops, & get prepared
 - Launch synchronous remote learning for high-schoolers on Wednesday
- Enrollment Report
 - Presented September numbers from '15 to '20
 - Presently at 292 total, 183 from Thetford
 - Decline in international students; increase in private-pay students from non-sending Upper Valley towns
 - Vocational programs slightly down, but proportional
- Community Engagement
 - Highlighted "TA Reopening Handbook," a dynamic document which will continue to be developed
 - Available on TA website
 - Sections on "Academic Program" and "Health & Safety"
- Strategic Plan
 - Academic Engagement
 - Looking to outdoor campus as a resource during Covid
 - Tech has become a critical part of successful re-opening
 - Student well-being
 - Aligns with pod
 - Educator Excellence
 - Lead decision-making in ways that model collaboration & transparency with thoughtful use of data and employee input
 - Got great feedback from a faculty member about how well employee input was being included in plans
 - A Community Campus
 - Using outdoors as a huge resource, getting kids outside for pod walks & lunch, etc.
 - NH Woodlands and NHPTV are interviewing Scott Ellis (Environmental Studies & Outdoor Education Teacher and Coordinator of TA's Outdoor Program)
- Upcoming Events
 - Woods Trail Run is cancelled for this year
 - How to do Back-to-School Night (and other events) is still in question.
 - Other plans will be developing over the next few weeks

Lindsey: Had a question on enrollment portion of the report. Discussion ensued about factors driving the increase in private-pay students. Some of those families chose TA because they were impressed by how TA has responded to the Covid situation.

5. Anti-Racism Task Force Update

Donna:

- At last meeting, Donna, Gio, & Ann had met with prospective consultants.
- Now we have a proposed contract from Theresa Hernandez, who works with students at Dartmouth on equity issues.
- Forming and starting the Anti-Racism Task Force (ARTF) was delayed until the work of reopening school was complete. Now that the schoolyear is underway, Donna will send out a request for task-force volunteers.

Karl: We might be able to get foundation support for this initiative. Unsure of sources, but should look into it.

Gio: Following up on the *Valley News* op-ed by Raphie Orleck-Jetter & Emma Glazer, Gio & Carrie reached out and invited them to talk. Raphie described the formation of a group of alumni and current students who have been gathering this summer to discuss how to effect change. They would like to meet with trustees next Wednesday.

Melody: Asked about ARTF composition. Might that connect to the new alumni/student group? Donna: Yes.

Carrie: Asked permission to put the ARTF info in her slides. She noted that this effort is also a key goal in TA's Strategic Plan.

6. Personnel: Faculty & Staff Master Agreement Update

Harry:

- We have tentative agreement on a 3-year contract with the faculty. The faculty reps are forwarding it to the full faculty for a vote, and everyone is optimistic that it will pass.
- Sincere thanks to all the participants in the process.

Dana: Cheers all around for Harry and committee.

Gio: The staff contracts are done. Have we ever had a 3-year faculty contract? Linda: No. The longest was two years. Robin: The stability that a 3-year contract provides was a major goal for all involved in the negotiations.

7. Town Reports

Lyme, NH

Karl:

- Lyme is open, full-on, 5 days with a full-remote option
- Majority of kids will be in pods, rotating teachers every week
- Still not sure of final numbers of in-school vs private-school vs home-school

Thetford, VT

Shannon:

- TES opened on Tuesday: 5 days with ½ day on Wednesday, with fully-remote option
- Two teachers are dedicated to "digital schoolhouse," which required additional hiring
- The biggest hiccups have been with drop-off and pick-up; still working out kinks
- TES was able to cancel desk order, saving \$16k, by following some of TA's creative ideas and offering of plexiglass
- TES is continuing free lunch through end of year or until money runs out; also free lunch at TA
- Support-staff negotiations are settled and done
- Teacher negotiations are not wrapped up; they are at impasse. It's frustrating, but all involved have been courteous.

Shannon shared a vignette about her son who is doing very well in his first year at college and received high praise for his writing from his history professor; she feels that TA prepared him very well for college.

8. Committee Reports

Board Management

Donna:

- There is no Strafford Rep yet.
- BMC would like to add bio paragraphs about board members to the TA website
- Are trustees amenable to last-minute invites (like this Sat. AM) for small meet & greets? Google signups will be emailed to the Board.

Personnel

Harry:

- The faculty reps and the Personnel Committee are looking forward to working together to fix the ambiguities in the Master Agreement. Should know the faculty vote by Monday.

Resources

John was absent so Linda stepped in:

- Resources is starting to work with the new investment manager.
- Also starting to work on a tuition-rate recommendation for next year.

Advancement

Karl:

- Gio, Donna, and Karl have been considering the question of financial aid for private-pay students. A ten-minute discussion ensued. Gio suggested devoting a retreat or major meeting-agenda item to this topic. Karl invited trustees to send him their ideas.
- On the committee's agenda is how to build alumni participation in the Annual Fund. A discussion ensued about new ways to engage alums, including using Zoom and the Panther.

9. Other Business / Future Board-Meeting Agenda Items

None.

Motion: Adjourn the meeting at 8:36 p.m.

Moved: Dana Grossman

Seconded: Lindsey Klecan

The motion passed unanimously

Recorded by Leif LaWhite (*Recording Clerk*)

Respectfully submitted,
Lindsey Klecan (Clerk)