

**THETFORD ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
Monthly Board Meeting — January 6, 2022  
Via Google Meet  
**MINUTES**

Donna Steinberg (Board President) called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m. In attendance (all virtually) were the following:

Trustees: Donna Steinberg, John Ziegler, Harry Kinne, Paul Mutone, Gio Bosco, Katie Saunders, Sheilagh Smith, Dana Grossman, Robin Junker-Boyce, Lindsey Klecan, Sarah Adams, Karl Furstenberg, Marisa Donovan (joined at 7:00 p.m.), Cara Ray (left at 8:15 p.m.), Shannon Darrah (left at 8:20 p.m.)

Absent: Mary Dan Pomeroy, Sam Perry

Employees: Carrie Brennan (Head of School), Patty McIlvaine (Director of Advancement)

Members of the public: Leif LaWhite (Recording Clerk)

### **1. Welcome & President's Report (Donna)**

Donna reflected on the fact that the meeting was being held on the first anniversary of the January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol, and on the sense of gratitude that event makes her feel for her board colleagues, the teachers and staff of TA, and the neighborliness of the towns we all live in.

She also read aloud a letter (archived separately) that Harry and Karl wrote on the board's behalf to the New Hampshire Agency of Transportation, expressing concern about the impact on the school of the closing of the Lyme-East Thetford bridge during its scheduled repairs. The letter asked the AOT to seek some means by which one lane of the bridge could be kept open to essential travel during the repairs. Carrie asked Donna to send everyone included on email threads about the issue a copy of the letter.

### **2. Public Comment**

Gio commented that he was recently on campus for the 10th-grade anthology readings, as a reminder that inspiring events like that are continuing to take place, even if members of the public aren't able to attend due to COVID protocols. He recognized English teacher Emily Silver for her work with the students on their anthologies, as well as TA's 31-year tradition of 10th-graders producing anthologies.

### **3. Consent Agenda**

- Policy Updates: Adopt Amended B8 (Electronic Communications between Employees and Students)
- Meeting Minutes — December 9, 2021, BOT regular monthly meeting

Motion: To approve the Consent Agenda.

Moved: Lindsey

Seconded: John

The motion passed unanimously.

#### **4. Head of School Report (Carrie)**

Carrie presented a slideshow (archived separately). The topics she covered included:

- The Winter Concert was held for the first time since 2019 (with COVID modifications)
- Various events during a week of holiday cheer to keep spirits buoyed before the break
- The monthly opt-in Teaching & Learning Cafés, being piloted this school year
- TA's partnership with Vermont colleges through the dual enrollment and early college programs
- An update on the Annual Fund, which had raised \$31,290 as of January 4
- Mention of several recent noteworthy targeted donations
- A query to trustees of how they'd like to help engage with donors
- An update on the Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Council and the Barrett Campus Task Force

There were several questions from board members, including about the status of the program through which area high school students have in the past been able to take courses at Dartmouth. Carrie responded that it went on hold at the beginning of the pandemic and hasn't resumed. Gio suggested that we be proactive about asking that the program be restarted. Paul, Karl, and Kate offered to help with that effort.

#### **5. Financial Update**

This agenda item was postponed to a future board meeting, to allow the Resources Committee more time to conduct further review and discussion about funding received through the federal PPP (Paycheck Protection Program) and other COVID relief efforts.

#### **6. Task Force & Town Reports**

##### **a. Barrett Property (Karl)**

The group's work is in full swing. Their focus is on balancing what the school needs with what is possible and practical.

##### **b. Lyme (Karl)**

The Lyme school budget for 2022-2023 is taking shape; the board is anticipating a 3.09% increase. Some current unknowns include how the structure of the administrative staff for the Barnes School. Like all other schools, they've had increased absences due to COVID.

##### **c. Thetford (Shannon)**

She expects that at its next meeting, the school board will authorize her to sign a three-year maintenance agreement between Thetford Elementary School and TA. They, too, are working on a 2022-2023 budget and expect it to drop by 1%. But due to the fact that Thetford's equalized student count and common level of appraisal have both declined (according to current figures from the state), and that the town exceeded its allowable excess spending threshold this year, the tax rate may rise as much as 11%. But it appears there will be a budget surplus this year, and although the board had hoped to apply it to some capital projects, Shannon expects they will probably instead use it to partially offset the tax increase.

##### **d. Strafford (Sarah)**

Their budget process is also underway; they're expecting it to increase between 5% and 7%. Sarah also mentioned that the board of Strafford's Newton School, along with all the other schools in their

supervisory union, is look at adding student representation to its board. She also added that the community is stepping up to offer more enrichment activities for Newton 7th- and 8th-graders, now that the town has decided to keep middle-schoolers at in town.

### **7. Personnel Committee Report (Dana)**

The committee is in the final stages of conducting a thorough language review, with the faculty negotiators, of the Faculty Master Agreement and they expect within a couple of weeks to be able to start discussing the fiscal issues included in the agreement — notably the salary grid, but also matters such as reimbursement for professional development activities and other issues with monetary implications. It was also noted that the negotiations process has been proceeding with considerable mutual collegiality and respect between the board negotiators and the faculty negotiators.

### **8. Action Item: Tuition Proposal for FY 2022-2023 (John)**

John said there had been no change in the numbers since the presentation he made in December, when the vote got postponed till January. The presentation (archived separately) offered three scenarios based on a rough, preliminary budget: tuition increases of 3%, 5%, or 7%. The Resource Committee had recommended a 5% increase.

A substantive discussion ensued, focusing on an analysis of the pros and cons of increases at the 4.5%, 4.75%, and 5% levels, as well as greater than 5%. The factors brought up included the long-term impact on the school's finances, as well as the need to be sensitive to the pandemic's effect on the communities sending students to TA.

Motion: To raise tuition 5%.

Moved: Dana

Seconded: Karl

The motion passed unanimously.

### **9. Other Business / Future Board Meeting Agenda Items**

None.

### **10. Adjournment**

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved: John

Seconded: Katie

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Drafted by Leif LaWhite (Recording Clerk)

Respectfully submitted by Dana Grossman (Clerk)