

# THETFORD ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Monthly Board Meeting — April 14, 2022

Via Zoom

## MINUTES

Donna Steinberg (Board President) called the meeting to order at 6:47 p.m. In attendance (all virtually) were the following:

Trustees: Donna Steinberg, Dana Grossman, Katie Saunders, Karl Furstenberg, John Ziegler, Sarah Adams, Paul Mutone, Cara Ray, Harry Kinne, Sheilagh Smith, Marisa Donovan, Gio Boston, Lindsey Klecan (joined at 7:20 p.m.), and Sam Perry (joined at 7:25 p.m.)

Absent: Robin Junker-Boyce

Employees: Carrie Brennan (Head of School)

Members of the public: Julie Acker

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

Donna opened the meeting by mentioning a recent article by TA student Cecilia Luce about the history of the Academy's Founder's Day celebration that was published in the statewide online newspaper *VT Digger* (see <https://vtdigger.org/2022/04/10/a-sacred-space-founders-day-at-thetford-academy/>). Ceci wrote the article as part of a Challenge Course focusing on journalism. The article was roundly praised by the trustees who had read it already.

Donna added that Julie Acker was present at this meeting as a member of the public, but that she would soon be joining the TA Board as the Thetford School Board representative, replacing Shannon Darrah, whose term on the School Board ended in March.

### 2. Public Comment

None.

### 3. Consent Agenda

- Meeting Minutes — March 10, 2022

Motion: To approve the Consent Agenda.

Moved: Katie

Seconded: John

The motion passed unanimously, with Gio abstaining.

### 4. Head of School Report and 2022-2023 School Calendar Update (Carrie)

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

- The performance of the one-act play *The Insanity of Mary Girard*, the first such production since the onset of the pandemic. There was no statewide one-act festival this year, but the production won several group and individual awards at the regional

level. Carrie said the student-directed show was intense, mature, and creative.

- The 2022-2023 School Calendar, including the many factors that go into setting it.
- The Student Roundtables. The project's original implementation was halted by the pandemic, but this year's renewed pilot of the concept went well, on an opt-in basis, and Carrie expects to boost participation in the future.
- Cultivation of partnerships with sending schools. There are currently 13 schools in four supervisory unions that send students to TA.
- Current enrollment goals and projections.
- Summer programming, including several Thetford Outdoor Program offerings, including rock-climbing and canoeing trips; a new multisport GLOW (Girls, Ladies, Or Whoever) camp for female-identifying and nonbinary students; and a middle school gardening camp; plus the second year of the Summer Challenge academic program.

There was some follow-up discussion about the Roundtables, and Marisa noted that she was especially pleased to see the GLOW camp.

### **5. Barrett Property Task Force Update and Discussion (Karl)**

Karl said the group has been very busy and has started to draft its final report. He advised thinking about the work of the task force not so much as being focused on the Barrett Property as being a first step to set the stage for a future, deeper look at long-range facilities planning. The group does not plan to recommend any major or costly facilities projects at this time, he added, but instead will suggest some incremental, lower-cost steps that will improve the use of the Barrett Property by the entire school community.

There was also discussion about the process for factoring into the report the feedback from a survey of employees and students which was just sent out. Several members of the board also shared their own thoughts on the pace and focus of facilities improvements.

### **6. Select Committee Reports**

#### **a. Resources Committee (John)**

John updated the full Board on three matters:

- He noted that the Academy's IRS Form 990, which all nonprofit organizations are required to file, is ready to submit. He said the Board does not need to vote on it, but does need to be made aware of the submission.
- He said the 2022-2023 budget is coming together and will be ready to share with the full Board in May. Although the working budget shows a deficit, Carrie noted that the Administration will be sure the budget is balanced by the time it is finalized.
- He said the committee plans to put out an RFP to potential new auditing firms in the fall. There is no dissatisfaction with our current auditors, Tyler Simms and St. Sauveur, but it's a good idea to periodically put the process out to bid—partly to make sure the school continues to get good value and partly because a fresh set of eyes on the books is never a bad idea.

#### **b. Personnel Committee (Dana)**

Dana reminded the Board that because the negotiations process is confidential, she can't share any details until the agreement is finalized. But she noted that the discussions continue to

proceed productively and that the committee hopes to receive an initial salary grid proposal from the teachers on the negotiating team within a few weeks. She said the committee hopes to begin on the staff side of the negotiations process before too long, so it doesn't get shortchanged.

c. Advancement Committee (Marisa)

Marisa reminded Board members to check the spreadsheet of SYBUNT (Some Year But Not This Year) donors that she recently sent out, and choose a few of them to send thank-you/reminder notes to. She also mentioned several grants that are about to be submitted, including \$65,000 to the Woodbury Foundation for the Outdoor Program and \$15,000 to the Byrne Foundation for the Day of Giving and Alumni Challenge. She said the gardening program received two recent grants from Vital Communities and a three-year \$30,000 pledge from an individual alumni donor. The Annual Fund currently stands at \$37,500, she concluded—half of its \$75,000 goal.

Before the Board entered executive session, all the members briefly introduced themselves to Julie Acker. She left the meeting at 8:01 p.m.

Motion: To enter executive session (with Carrie included) to discuss board recruitment and succession planning.

Moved: Katie

Seconded: John

The motion passed unanimously.

The Board entered executive session at 8:02 p.m. and emerged from executive session at 8:31 p.m.

**7. Action Item: Vote on the Nomination to Julie Acker as the Thetford School Board Representative to the Thetford Academy Board of Trustees**

Motion: To invite Julie Acker to join the Thetford Academy Board of Trustees.

Moved: Dana

Seconded: Katie

The motion passed unanimously.

**8. Other Business / Future Board Meeting Agenda Items**

None.

**9. Adjournment**

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved: Gio

Seconded: Katie

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Dana Grossman (Clerk)