

# THETFORD ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Monthly Board Meeting — August 11, 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, Katie Saunders, Harry Kinne, Ashley Woo, Erin Boyd, Paul Mutone, Sarah Adams, Dana Grossman, Julie Acker, Sam Perry, Cara Ray, Blythe Keane (joined at 7:00 p.m.), Sheilagh Smith (joined at 7:50 p.m. and left at 8:29 p.m.)

Absent: Marisa Donovan, Lucy Wagner

Employees: Carrie Brennan (Head of School)

Members of the public: Rebecca Hanissian, Leif LaWhite (Recording Clerk)

### 1. Welcome & President's Report

Donna welcomed everyone in attendance, especially the four trustees who are new to the board within the past two months. She noted that today is the fifth anniversary of the deadly Unite the Right white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Va. But, on a more hopeful note, she pointed out that today also marked the public announcement of the hiring of the Academy's first diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) coordinator — TA alum Tony Strat-Cortez '09.

### 2. Public Comment

None.

### 3. Introduction of Trustee Candidate: Rebecca Perkins Hanissian

Donna noted that Rebecca was nominated by the Lyme School Board as Lyme's representative to the TA board and invited Rebecca to introduce herself, which she did, briefly describing her background teaching both science and English at the high school and college levels. In addition, she's served on the boards of several Upper Valley organizations. She also noted that her stepdaughter graduated from TA in 2021 and said she'd been impressed by the school.

Then all present introduced themselves to Rebecca.

### 4. Head of School Report

Carrie noted that she has just started the Upper Valley Educator Institute's principal certification program. She said she has found the program's approach very simpatico with her educational philosophy and she is confident it will be a worthwhile endeavor. She expects to be a certified Vermont principal by June 2023.

She then presented a slide show (archived separately). The topics she covered included:

- New hires for the 2022-23 school year, including seven faculty, three staff, three administrators, and one consultant.

- The revised graduation requirements outlined in the new D1 Policy (which is on the agenda for adoption this evening), including an overview of the transferable skills and portfolio processes.
- The revival of TAPA, the Thetford Academy Parent Association, under the leadership of parent volunteer Roseann Emerson. TAPA is the official host of the back-to-school potluck to be held on August 21.
- An enrollment update for the 2022-23 school year.
- An overview of the school-wide composting program.

Brief discussion about some of these initiatives followed.

Rebecca Hanissian left the meeting at 7:37 p.m.

## 5. Consent Agenda

- Meeting Minutes — June 9, 2022, Board of Trustee monthly meeting
- Nomination: Rebecca Perkins Hanissian to serve as the Lyme representative to the board
- Nomination: Paul Mutone to serve as treasurer of the board
- Act on Revised Policy D1 (Graduation Requirements)

Motion: To approve the Consent Agenda.

Moved: Katie

Seconded: Dana

The motion passed unanimously.

## 6. Select Committee Reports

### a. Board Management Committee (Katie)

Katie reminded the board that the annual retreat has been scheduled for September 16 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. She said that the agenda will include a session on DEI led by TA's new DEI coordinator, Tony Strat-Cortez, and a session on the school's ropes course.

### b. Advancement Committee

In Marisa's absence, Carrie noted that the new advancement associate position has just been filled.

### c. Resources Committee (Paul)

Paul noted that the committee met in July and August. At the July meeting, they reviewed the endowment's performance under Merrill Lynch's management. The overall portfolio is down, but to a degree in line with the performance of the stock market and with expected benchmarks for portfolios of similar size and asset mix. He noted that Merrill Lynch's management fee of 0.9% is very fair. At the August meeting, the committee met with the firm hired by TA to help satisfy its fiduciary responsibility to the employee retirement plan that TA manages. The firm's recommendation was to continue to monitor the fund's managers but to make no changes at this time.

Sheilagh joined the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

## 7. Resources Committee Financial Overview

Paul then presented a slide show (archived separately) explaining how the school's budget is structured.

There was some follow-up discussion about how tuition is set and the fact that all students (whether town-tuitioned, private pay, or international) pay the same tuition, though for some international students there are additional fees associated with their attendance at TA.

#### **8. Executive Session (Personnel Committee update — Dana)**

Motion: To enter executive session to update the board on labor relations matters.

Moved: Dana

Seconded: Harry

The motion passed unanimously.

The board entered executive session at 8:09 p.m. and came out of executive session at 8:30 p.m. No action was taken during the executive session.

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

Donna announced that the next monthly board meeting, on September 8, would be hybrid, with participation either in person at TA (with board members unmasked, to aid the recording clerk in taking notes) or remotely over Zoom.

Katie reminded trustees that the board retreat will include a session on TA's ropes course and asked any members of the board with accommodation requests to let her know.

#### **10. Adjournment**

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved: Katie

Seconded: Harry

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Drafted by Leif LaWhite (Recording Clerk)

Respectfully submitted by Dana Grossman (Clerk)