

THETFORD ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Monthly Board Meeting — February 9, 2023
Hybrid (some attendees in person at TA, some remote via Zoom)
MINUTES

Donna Steinberg (Board President) called the meeting to order at 6:48 p.m. Attendance was as follows:

Trustees present: Donna Steinberg, Paul Mutone, Dana Grossman, Harry Kinne, Sarah Adams, Julie Acker, Lucy Wagner, Marisa Donovan, Cara Ray, Erin Boyd, Ashley Woo, Rebecca Hanissian

Trustees absent: Blythe Keane, Katie Saunders, Sheilagh Smith, Sam Perry

Others present: Carrie Brennan (Head of School), Casey Huling (Teacher and Parent), Leif LaWhite (Recording Clerk)

1. Welcome & President's Report

Board President Donna Steinberg welcomed everyone in attendance. She opened by mentioning the upcoming showing of a new PBS documentary titled *Driving While Black: Race, Space, and Mobility in America*, sponsored by TA's Student Alliance for Racial Justice and Tony Strat-Cortez, the school's diversity, equity, and inclusion coordinator. She encouraged trustees to attend the screening, scheduled for Friday, February 10, at 6:00 p.m. in the Martha Jane Rich Theater.

2. Public Comment

None.

3. Consent Agenda

- Meeting Minutes — January 12, 2023, Board of Trustees monthly meeting
- Education Records Policy (C01)
- Transportation Policy (C03)
- Students who are Homeless Policy (C13)
- Policy on Section 504 and ADA Grievance Procedure for Students and Staff (C14)

Donna recommended removing Policies C13 and C14 from the Consent Agenda for further discussion and edits.

Motion: To approve the Consent Agenda without those two policies.

Moved: Paul Mutone

Seconded: Marisa Donovan

The motion passed unanimously.

In Policy C13, Rebecca suggested replacing the phrase “students who are homeless” with the more respectful wording “students who are experiencing homelessness.” Marisa added that the Haven has adopted similar wording. Julie noted that it would be good to make sure that any changes are in agreement with the language in the relevant Vermont statutes. Carrie recommended that Policy C13 be

sent back to the Board Management Committee, so they be sure the change is made thoughtfully and appropriately. There was agreement on this course without a vote.

4. Head of School Report

Head of School Carrie Brennan presented a slide show (archived separately); the topics she covered included:

- The history and purpose of the school's Founder's Day and some photos of this year's event.
- TA's close partnership with the Thetford Police Department, including during a recent statewide spate of school shooting hoaxes.
- Recent recruitment and enrollment activity.
- Recent and upcoming community events hosted by the school's DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) program.

There was follow-up discussion on several of the matters — including virtual versus in-person recruitment events; how similar today's Founder's Day activities are to those in the past; and student and staff reactions to the school shooting hoaxes. Carrie commented, on the latter point, that because the school is small and students "aren't anonymous," TA's ability to address such situations can be very personalized.

5. Select Town and Committee Reports

a. Lyme

Rebecca Hanissian, the Lyme representative to the TA board, said this has been an especially contentious budget season in Lyme, with differences of opinion between the school board and the administration about whether and how to make cuts to the budget. They are also dealing with some challenging building issues, including the discovery of asbestos and lead paint in the cafeteria.

b. Advancement Committee

Marisa Donovan, chair of the Advancement Committee, gave an update on Annual Fund results so far. To date this year, 98 donors have given \$21,629, compared to 90 donors and \$29,697 last year. The dollar difference is due to a drop in board giving and a specific foundation gift. But the Advancement Office anticipates being able to make additional asks. Marisa also mentioned that Director of Advancement Patty McIlvaine has hired a new development assistant, Kiki Robbirds, who previously worked as a graphics and communications specialist for a high school in Fort Worth, Tex.

c. Board Management Committee

Erin Boyd, interim chair of the Board Management Committee, gave an update on the board recruitment process, including the areas of professional expertise it would be beneficial to add to the board. She said the hope is to add three new trustees this year, and she asked current trustees to share names of any potential new board members with her.

d. Resources Committee

Paul Mutone, chair of the Resources Committee, shared the breakdown of the school's current endowment portfolio and trends in recent returns. The endowment currently stands at \$5.1 million. He suggested having the managers of our endowment, at Merrill Lynch, give a somewhat more detailed tutorial on the endowment at a future meeting, and there was agreement that might be helpful.

6. Action Item: Acceptance of FY22 Audited Financial Statement

Paul summarized the findings of the final auditor's report, which now has been completely closed out, noting once again that it offers an "unqualified opinion," meaning it was a clean audit.

Motion: To accept the FY22 audited financial statement.

Moved: Paul Mutone

Second: Dana Grossman

The motion passed unanimously.

7. Town Meeting Presentation Preview and Discussion

Board President Donna Steinberg ran through the presentation and accompanying slides she intends to present at Town Meeting and asked for feedback from the rest of the board. A few minor suggestions were offered.

8. Other Business / Future Board Meeting Agenda Items

None.

9. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved: Harry Kinne

Seconded: Ashley Woo

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Drafted by Leif LaWhite (Recording Clerk)

Respectfully submitted by Dana Grossman (Clerk)