

**Minutes of the Meeting of the
Board of Trustees of Salem Academy Charter School
Wednesday, October 28, 2020, via Zoom**

Members present remotely due to Covid-19 guidelines:

Bill Henning, Susan Low, Dan McCaughey, Shelby Morrison, David Pabich,
Mekka Smith, Christine Wynne

Members absent:

Rick Winter, Alison Palmer

Staff present remotely:

Stephanie Callahan, Matt Chuchul, Diego Fellows, Alex Dean

Guests present remotely:

Amy Stewart (SFC)

Recorder present remotely:

Shelby Hypes

I. Call to Order, Welcome

The monthly meeting of the Salem Academy Charter School Board of Trustees was called to order by Chair David Pabich at 6:04 PM on October 28, 2020, via Zoom.

II. Minutes of the Meeting of September 23, 2020

Mekka Smith presented the minutes of the September 23, 2020, meeting. Bill Henning moved to accept them as submitted; Mekka Smith seconded the motion, which was passed by a roll call vote.

III. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

IV. SFC Report

The first meeting of the SFC was attended by 45 people via Zoom. Amy Stewart reported that Edgility presented an overview of the Executive Director search and that parents participated actively and honestly.

The first fundraiser, featuring Boon Supply, is getting underway. Information is being handed out to the Lower School this week; others will receive packets on picture day. There are packets for faculty and staff as well. It is also being promoted in *The Navigator* and there will be a Zoom event for the Lower School October 30th.

In response to a question from Bill Henning, Board members can order through the boonsupply.com; 40 percent will go to Salem Academy. Christine Wynne asked what typical SFC attendance is; Amy indicated that fewer than 15 people usually attend; high participation could be due to Zoom and/or the Edgility presentation, which included Spanish translation.

The next SFC meeting will be November 4.

V. Principals' Reports

Matt Chuchul and Drea Jacobs presented only brief reports as their written reports were detailed, allowing this discussion to focus on questions from Board members. Matt called this a year so far of many first days...for the different grades, cohorts and in-school learning. The Lower School is now in Phase 3 and focused on achieving stability and fine tuning our approaches.

The Upper School is still learning remotely and gearing up for Phase 2. The complexities of individual scheduling are challenging. Teachers are on top of remote learning and are thinking critically and with open minds on making the move to hybrid teaching. They are sharing clips, trying different things. and rising to the challenge of the many issues they must now navigate.

SATs were managed well, PSATs take place October 29th, and the college counseling team is hard at work managing this process. Overall, we are adjusting—parents, students, faculty and staff.

Bill Henning inquired about spacing issues in the Upper School. We are using the Learning Common and Albright, and have not had to use the gym

Although these are indeed challenging times, everyone is on board to be make learning in the time of Covid-19 successful. From listening tours to fun events to surprises at home, we strive to understand concerns and add joy to each day. Seeing kids in the building and seeing them make progress is energizing and boosts morale.

Stephanie Callahan indicated that all schools are experiencing similar issues. It's hard work to bring students on site, down to the number of people required to supervise mask breaks, much less asking teachers to teach both in person and remotely. Alex Dean agreed. Teaching remotely was difficult at first, as is the move back into the building, but he has felt supported. Some schools are allowing teachers to choose one or the other; some are teaching only remotely or in person. We don't have those options. We've never done this before; in effect, we've created two new schools.

VI. Interim Executive Director's Report

This was primarily an update of September report. Although the Commissioner of Education has just announced that schools in a red zoned area can continue to operate in person if there is no in-school disease transmission, Salem Academy will continue to follow its original plan of following three-week trends and evaluating weekly. This will promote needed consistency and allow for more nuanced judgment calls.

VII. Committee Reports

A. Finance Committee Report

Audit Review

The final draft indicates no major issues. Shelby Morrison pointed out that what might appear to be discrepancies between the audit and monthly reports is because the former uses only school statistics, whereas the latter combines school and foundation stats. Given that foundation monies go directly to the school, this is irrelevant from our perspective, but, going forward, the Finance Committee will provide school-only statistics periodically, as this is what DESE sees.

Shelby also pointed that our net position decreased over last year. This is due primarily to the significant decrease in tuition we experienced. Expense savings from operating remotely ameliorated this somewhat. Our charge now is to look at cash management from a broader perspective, which is particularly difficult as we are still operating without a State budget and may well experience additional surprises from the State in December. Accordingly, we remain very conservative, despite DESE's more optimistic tuition reimbursement projections.

Bill Henning move to accept the audit as presented and to submit it, as required, by November 1. Shelby Morrison seconded the motion, which passed unanimously via roll call vote.

Monthly Financials

Shelby Morrison reported that, although it appears we are behind on tuition, this is really a timing issue. If DESE's higher tuition projection holds true (\$15,490 per student vs. our projected \$15,300), we will be ahead by the end of the year. Things look good; this is only Q1. DESE's number reflects the Salem average; our number is more balanced and reflects differences in out-of-district tuition payments.

B. Development Committee Report

Christine Wynne reported that our Wellness Weekend was highly successful on multiple fronts. We exceeded our \$10,000 goal, raising \$11,440, and participation was excellent, including more than half of the staff and a total of 142 participants. Kudos to Diego Fellows and Stephanie Callahan.

Christine shared her screen showing that, although we're tracking well so far, we need at least \$10,000 in matching gifts before the Committee can establish a goal for the year. This is because these represent about a third of all giving. The Committee plans to have a goal by next month.

Funds raised so far include donations honoring Kathy Egmont—her team raised the most money for Wellness Weekend—as well as giving by a healthy mix of staff, parents and others. We are also tracking and reaching out to alumni/ae and seeing an increase in participation. Another good sign is that our biggest donors are increasing their gifts. Bill Henning noted the significant improvement in fundraising he has seen at Salem Academy.

C. Education Committee Report

This was included in Stephanie Callahan's report. Dan McCaughey called attention to the addition of students on the Committee as part of our diversity//equity/inclusion efforts.

D. Governance Committee Report

The Committee is continuing to interview potential board members.

VIII. Executive Director Search Presentation by Edgility

The remainder of the meeting comprised a presentation by Allison Wyatt and Ila Shah of Edgility, the consulting firm managing the search for a new executive director. This is the same firm that introduced us to Kathy Egmont, so they familiar with SACS. Since that time, Edgility's network has doubled to 40,000, a significant factor as outreach often uncovers the most and best candidates. The search will look for candidates locally, regionally and nationwide. Edgility's diversity, inclusivity and equitability standards are in tune with those of Salem Academy.

In brief, Edgility leads the recruiting effort, beginning with needs assessment, then moving to identifying and soliciting candidates. They conduct two rounds of interviews before passing their semi-finalist recommendations to the SACS Search Committee, with whom they will meet biweekly.

To date, Edgility has conducted focus groups and held discussions with parents and staff. They are now focused on priorities and key attributes in order to finalize and post a job description in early November and beginning active canvassing. After reviewing résumés and conducting screening interviews, the semi-finalists they recommend to the Search Committee will have interviews with different stakeholder groups (parents, students, board, faculty, staff). These will happen in February, along with strategic performance tests, with the goal of making an offer by mid-March and having an acceptance in hand by the end of that month.

The presentation was followed by a strategic visioning exercise and input session for Board members to clarify and express their thoughts about what kind of leader Salem Academy needs today and in the years ahead.

IX. Vote to Adjourn.

Dan McCaughey moved to adjourn, seconded by Mekka Smith. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote, and the meeting adjourned at 8:49 pm.

