

Salem Academy Charter School
Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Wednesday, September 28, 2016 at 6:00 pm, Room 124

Members Present: Peter Copelas, Leslie Tuttle, Paige Nalipinski, Thomas Monroe, Joshua Biber, Nina Cohen, Rick Jones, David Pabich, Steve Palmer

Members Absent: Karen Cady, Ana Nuncio

Guests: Alfonso Perillo, Pam Boardway, Fawaz Abusharkh, Stephanie Callahan, Sean Gass, Sean O'Neil

I. Call to Order

The monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of Salem Academy Charter School, 45 Congress St., Salem, MA was called to order on September 28, 2016 at 6:17 PM in room 124 by Chair, Peter Copelas.

II. Approval of the minutes

Motion: the minutes of the July 27, 2016 meeting shall be approved as written.

Resolved: The motion carried unanimously.

III. Public comment

Thomas Monroe introduced Alfonso Perillo as a potential candidate for Board membership.

IV. New Business

A. Ballot Initiative

Sean O'Neil reviewed Ballot Initiative 2 which will be on the ballot in the November 8 election. The initiative would raise the charter cap. It would allow for 12 new charters per year as long as they met DESE standards. Potentially could add up to 10,000 new students per year to charter school rosters. The plan is for charters to be added to the 25th lowest percentile of districts. The argument against Ballot 2 is that it's taking money from districts and taking the best students thereby damaging public-school education. Students and faculty at Salem Academy attended and spoke at the Salem School Committee meeting.

At the Salem School Committee meeting two draft resolutions were put forward.

1. Dr. Brendan Walsh proposed that the ballot be opposed. This failed.

2. Mayor Driscoll proposed a resolution that "values all schools in the city and district and sets better ways to support the relationships." This resolution passed.

Board members made comments reflecting on the school committee meeting and Ballot 2. Peter Copelas reported that he would hate to jeopardize all of the work that has been done between Salem Academy and district schools by putting forth an initiative in conflict with the resolution that passed at the School Committee meeting. Nina Cohen reflected that the quality of the children's speeches and educational

success speaks more loudly than any resolution or initiative that we could put forward. She also reported that there is a regional office in Salem for the Ballot 2 group and encouraged members to visit if they had questions. Stephanie Callahan reported that she felt it was important that staff and board members not be so neutral that stakeholders get confused about our feelings regarding charter schools.

With permission of the chair, Fawaz Abusharkh reported on Great Schools Massachusetts meetings and discussed suggestions for moving vote forward with educating voters.

B. Board leadership transition-

Sean O'Neil reminded the board that the nominating committee for trustees is a committee of the whole. Peter Copelas (Board Chair), Leslie Tuttle (Board Vice Chair), and Paige Nalipinski (Secretary), will be leaving after the December meeting. It's important that the new Chair of the Board and the new ED work well together.

Anyone on the board interested in Board Chair, Vice Chair or Secretary should reach out informally to Peter Copelas.

C. HR and Education committee chairs-

Peter Copelas informed board members that Karen Cady has agreed to be the HR chair and the education committee is still very much searching for board representation.

V. SFC report

Pam Boardway reported that at their last meeting approximately 25 people attended. They have changed the format and they will have four meetings per year for business and three workshops (November, February and May). In the background, committee work will be ongoing. With regard to fundraising, the same successful campaigns will be utilized including Yankee Candle, Food for Thought raffle and Box Tops. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 7.

VI. Head of School and Principal report –

A. Stephanie Callahan and Sean Gass reviewed academic programs including the transition to Rediker, which has included some growing pains but overall has been working well and the company has been very responsive. MCAS and PARCC results were reviewed. Our students are outperforming their peers across the city and state with increased math scores (at the high school level) and increases science and ELA across all grades. Nine students have been nominated for the Posse Scholars award. Eight decided to move forward and all eight have gotten through the first level and are now moving on to formal interviews.

B. Human Resources update – six of our eleven new teachers are first year teachers. Professional development for the school year will focus on *classroom management* for the lower school teachers and *parent engagement* for the upper school teachers.

C. A complete list of quarter one school events was provided to all board members.

VII. Executive director report

A. Sean O'Neil reviewed enrollment data, highlighting that we currently have 445 students, down from 460. We are budgeted for 446. We have been unable to replace the children who have left at the 10th and 11th grade per our charter policy. Sixty five ninth graders were on the waitlist and have all been exhausted. Thirty six students have declined the offer for admission. The waitlist for sixth grade enrollment continues to be quite robust.

B. Staffing issues were a big push at the end of the summer. There are currently 9 new classroom teachers, two new special-education teachers, three new special education paraprofessional's and one new ELL paraprofessional. Additionally there is a new Director of Academic Operations. Ratio of students to teachers is 9.8 : 1, up from 9.2 : 1 during the last school year.

VIII. Committee reports

A. Development committee – Nina Cohen –

First fundraiser was Reach the Beach which raised \$16,500. The Second Decade Fund is currently at \$400,220 with pledges and gifts combined. The next meeting is on October 6.

B. Trusteeship committee – Nina Cohen-

Currently there will not be community lunches, but staff and board members will be happy to give tours at any time. There are several strong possibilities for new board membership.

C. Finance committee – Thomas Monroe –

Thomas reviewed current profit and loss sheets highlighting the overall positive nature of the budget to date. Several areas were highlighted including the need for triplicate database systems until Rediker is fully up and running, and a possible loss of tuition with some high school students leaving that cannot be replaced.

D. Facilities committee – David Pabich-

The Arts Complex is moving forward at a glacial pace, with HVAC issues being the most recent roadblock. The hope is that by October 31 the space will be usable with the exception of the theater. Hopefully the theater will be completed in January (lights, seating, sound and curtains all are quite time consuming with regard to installation). The ramp is being proposed by JJ Welch and may cost upwards of \$51,000. Sean O'Neil has initiated discussion with Mr. Lappin on this issue.

With regard to the gym, Shetland is awaiting a permit and the hope is for site preparation to begin November 1 toward occupancy in May.

IX. ED Search committee report – Steve Palmer –

Steve reviewed the status of the Committee's work. Our consultant, Allison Wyatt, Edgility Consulting, was able to come into the meeting briefly to introduce herself. Allison is currently interviewing all constituents including students, faculty, board members and parents to get a real feel for what they envision in the next ED.

X. Vote to adjourn regular meeting

Peter Copelas moved for a motion to adjourn the regular board meeting. With the motion seconded by Thomas Monroe, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM.

XI. I. Call to Order Executive Session

An Executive Session of the Board of Trustees of Salem Academy Charter School, 45 Congress St., Salem, MA was called to order on September 28, 2016 at 8:26PM in room 124 by Chair, Peter Copelas.

Sean O'Neil was asked to stay and HR issues were discussed with board members and Mr. O'Neil.

At 9:28 a motion was made by Thomas Monroe to adjourn the Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Rick Jones and the meeting was adjourned at 9:28 PM