

**Salem Academy Charter School
Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Wednesday, February 24th, 2016 at 6:00 pm, Room 124**

Members Present: Peter Copelas, Amy Slate, Rick Jones, Steve Palmer, Paige Nalipinski, Josh Biber, David Pabich, Thomas Monroe

Members Absent: Leslie Tuttle, Ana Nuncio, Nina Cohen, Karen Cady

Guests: Sean O'Neil, Stephanie Callahan, Sean Gass, Fawaz Abusharkh, Karen Corbett, Pam Rochna, Erik Sayce, Mark Meche

I. Call to Order

The monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Salem Academy Charter School, 45 Congress Street, Salem, Massachusetts was called to order on February 24th, 2016 at 6:15 pm, in Room 124 by Chair, Peter Copelas.

II. Approval of the Minutes

MOTION: The minutes of the January 27th, 2016 meeting were presented for review. Rick Jones made a motion to accept the revised minutes. With the motion seconded by Paige Nalipinski, it was

RESOLVED: to accept the January 27th, 2016 monthly meeting minutes as written. The motion carried unanimously.

III. Public Comment

Last Wednesday Fawaz Abusharkh and 4 students went to meet with Paul Tucker at the Massachusetts Statehouse to support the Great Schools MA initiative that is trying to lift the charter school cap. The group is trying to meet with all State Representatives and Senators who are involved in education issues.

IV. New Business

A. Presentation of Arts Complex Design Mark Meche

Mark Meche presented the initial drawings for the proposed Arts complex. There was discussion about the design and particulars between Mark Meche and the Trustees.

Rick Jones asked Mark Meche to outline our next steps and explain how we can ensure that we start construction. Mark Meche explained that his experience in the past with similar projects has been positive, and his expectation is the same now. He added that we need to be very clear and as specific as possible about our needs and plans before we hand off the drawings to the architect who will work with Shetland Park.

Peter Copelas asked how we negotiate specifics regarding lighting or seating, for example. Mark Meche said that we will work with the contractor on those specifics.

B. Committee on Trustees Nomination Paige Nalipinski

MOTION: Paige Nalipinski made a motion to elect David Pabich for a first term on the Board of Trustees retroactive to January 1, 2016 through December 2018. With the motion seconded by Steve Palmer, it was:

RESOLVED: to elect David Pabich to his first term on the Board of Trustees. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. SFC Report

Pam Rochna

Pam Rochna gave the report. The last SFC meeting was on February 2nd. The goal of the group is to continue to support school events. They discussed the budget and looked at the calendar raffle, the Yankee Candle fundraiser, grade 8 and 12 support for end of year activities, the family picnic and the teacher appreciation luncheon.

The committee is still looking for more parent involvement. In the past, the SFC has supported the NOLA service trip, however they decided that this year financial support will need to be more limited and are hoping that parents involved with the trip will increase their fundraising efforts. The SFC typically offers a Scholarship to a graduating senior, but they are looking for support for funding that scholarship.

The SFC account started that year at \$240. Now, they are hoping to reach \$2,000 to support many initiatives and events. For the Yankee Candle Fundraiser, the SFC thought a cause would help increase sales so they decided to offer 20% of sales to student accounts and 20% to the Amelia Peabody matching grant drive. Their goal is to raise \$10,000 in sales. Incentives for connections and individuals have been included.

Finally, the group discussed upcoming events. In addition, they are hoping to increase parent participation and discussed new ways to communicate to parents such as a billboard to hang on the vans during drop off and pick up.

The next SFC meeting is March 1st.

Peter Copelas remarked on the great new energy of the SFC.

VI. Head of School / Principal Report

Stephanie Callahan / Sean Gass

Q2 Academic Achievement

There was an increase in students earning honor roles, especially in grade 6. There was also a small increase in grade 7 of students who are struggling. A few of those students actually attended February vacation school.

Sean Gass reported that in the Upper School there have been some increases in students receiving academic honors in grades 9 and 11, but they saw a drop in grade 12.

The number of at-risk students increased in grades 10 and 11; 37% of students in 10th grade and 38% of students in 11th grade are at risk. This is a significant concern. We are looking at whether or not mid-term exams could be a contributing factor. We are anticipating improvements in Quarter 3. Moreover, we are also looking at grading across curriculum and at additional interventions and supports. 33 students attended February vacation school.

College Report

87 % of seniors have been accepted to 4 year colleges. All have applied for financial aid as well. Some students are still waiting to hear from their for top tier schools. 35 students applied to Salem State University and 31 have been accepted. This month, the seniors are going through verification - providing financial info for the FASFA. 35% of applicants are generally asked to verify data, but for us it is close to 50% - possibly because of the Pell Grant qualification.

Activities

The school play, Alice in Wonderland is next week.

Stephanie Callahan reported that the Ideal Job Survey is due back from staff next week. This form asks teachers about their plans to stay at SACS or leave, or to change roles here. It is due this Friday. Currently, we know we are seeking a 9th grade math teacher. We are hoping to be able to expand choice blocks, and will need to add a .5 or full time Spanish teacher position.

The Lesley University course on trauma sensitive practices started for our teachers.

Thomas Monroe asked if there is a drop-out prevention plan. What are the alternative solutions? Sean Gass relied that looking at trauma history may help. Steve Palmer asked if there will there be April vacation school too. Stephanie Callahan assured the Board that there would be.

VII. Executive Director Report

Sean O'Neil

Enrollment

Our enrollment numbers are strong. 50 people attended our 3rd information session this month. There are 175 candidates for 6th grade, of which 23 are siblings. There will be 50 spaces available after siblings are accepted. 50% of 5th graders in Salem are applying for 6th grade at SACS.

In the 9th grade, we will have a class 80 students. We are anticipating 8th grade attrition, with 50 students staying at SACS, so we are accepting 30 new 9th graders. March 9th is the lottery.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. Finance Committee

Thomas Monroe, Chair

Review of the Profit and Loss statement suggests there is no real change from last year last month's projections. The tuition rate will have a slight adjustment for year end. A workers compensation premium was added. The contingency fund is in good shape and we are adjusting it down monthly.

Steve Palmer asked about the food projection change. Thomas Munroe explained that it is a carry forward from the January meeting, which is due to increase in participation.

B. Facilities Committee

Leslie Tuttle, Chair

Sean updated the Board on the arts complex and gymnasium plans.

1. Proposed Lease on Building Two Arts Complex
After conversations with Mr. Lappin, we have decided to go ahead with arts complex and go forward with gymnasium when those negotiations are complete.

We have opened up good communication. Two leases arrived today with a letter from Mr. Lappin. Both leases are for 15 year terms at a cost of \$16.98 per ft sq.

There are two leases, one for arts center and one for gymnasium and building 3 space. The gymnasium will be built on the Lynch Street parking lot and will take 6-8 months to build. A legal review is currently taking place on both parts right now.

Peter Copelas expressed his optimism and is pleased with these positive steps. Sean O'Neil explained that we are still negotiating rent options.

Steve Palmer suggested that Sean O'Neil and Peter Copelas continue with negotiations.

Paige Nalipinski asked what is the possibility of a drop in income again as happened in 2011. Sean O'Neil referred to the error that Salem Public Schools made that year, which reduced our tuition rate. The DESE has since made corrections to the process so this won't happen again. Also, we receive tuition statements monthly now, not quarterly. It is highly unlikely that anything like this would happen - but we have a contingency fund for that reason.

MOTION: Paige Nalipinski made a motion to authorize Sean O'Neil and Peter Copelas to continue negotiations, and be co-signators on the lease, if it is a responsible and sustainable plan. If the negotiators have reservations, they will bring the details back to the Board of Trustees in March. With the motion seconded by Steve Palmer, it was:

RESOLVED: authorize Sean O'Neil and Peter Copelas to continue negotiations on the lease and to sign it at their discretion. The motion carried unanimously.

C. Development Committee
Karen Cady

No report

IX. Transition Planning / Search Committee
Steve Palmer

Peter Copelas explained that Stephanie Callahan, Karen McLaughlin, Sarah Morrill, and Steve Palmer would join the Search Committee for a new Executive Director. Leni De los Santos has agreed to be the administrative assistant for the committee. We are also looking for additional community membership, 1-2 faculty members, and another experienced human resources representative, as well as input from Rachel Hunt.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday.

Josh Biber asked about the timeline. Steve Palmer explained that ideally, we would have someone under agreement by next March.

Thomas Monroe asked if we would be using a search firm. Steve Palmer explained that we are going to seek some kind of consultant input, but are still discussing options and budget.

X. Adjourn

Peter Copelas made a motion to adjourn the meeting. With the motion duly seconded by Thomas Monroe and unanimously approved, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.