PVPA Charter Public School

Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes

# **February 13, 2018**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Present: | Mary Ahlstrom, Donovan Arthen, Ian Bard, James Barnhill, Claire Bennett, Rachel Dionne, Noah Hornick, Gary Huggett, Deborah Jacobson, Marc Kenen, Marcus McLaurin, Sean Moore, Alison Noyes, Jorge Rodriguez, Zevey Steinitz, Stephen Therrien, Melinda Winter |
| Absent: | Keith Black, Shubhada Rella-Brooks |
| Staff Present: | Marcy Conner, Brent Nielsen |
| Next meeting: | February 26, 2018; 5:30pm; Library |

Meeting called to order at 6:01pm with quorum.

**Mission Statement:**

Read by James Barnhill

**Public Comment:**

Several members of the school community spoke about the speed in which the Head of School resigned. Community members are concerned about the health of the school.

**Approval of Minutes:**

* Minutes of the January 9, 2018 meeting approved (9 in favor; no opposed; no abstentions)
* Minutes of the January 9, 2017 Executive Session approved by Board Chair

**President’s Business:** (presented by Melinda Winter)

* Proposal to approve Expulsion Policy.

The Expulsion Policy was revised in 2015 but never approved by the Board. The policy must be voted on by the Board in order to obtain the Commissioner’s approval. A motion was made and approved to accept the Expulsion Policy as presented (6 in favor; no opposed; 5 abstentions).

* By-Law Amendment

According to section 2.9 of the By-Laws, members may serve up to three consecutive terms, at which time they must leave the Board for at least one year. This may pose an issue for continuity of leadership and/or to maintain needed expertise in particular areas.

A motion was made and approved by consensus that the last sentence within section 2.9 of the By-Laws be amended as follows – Members of the Board of Trustees may serve up to three consecutive terms, at which time they must leave the Board for at least one year, except as follows: A Trustee may serve four consecutive terms if two-thirds of the voting Trustees present at a duly called and held meeting vote to do so as follows: (1) to promote continuity of leadership; (2) to maintain needed expertise in particular areas; (3) to overcome difficulty in recruiting appropriate members of the Board; or (4) for any other reason at the discretion of the Trustees voting to extend the term in question. Notwithstanding the previous two paragraphs, the Board may not extend the terms of any Trustee if one fourth or more of the members of the Board already are serving a fourth term. At the end of a Trustee’s extended fourth term, the Trustee must leave the Board for at least one year. (13 in favor; no opposed, no abstentions)

* Nomination of Vice President of the Board of Trustees

A motion was made and approved by consensus to nominate Donovan Arthen to serve as Vice President of the Board of Trustees (12 in favor; no opposed, 1 abstention – Donovan Arthen)

* Discussion of Interim Leadership Proposal

Melinda, Marcy Conner, and Brent Nielsen are working on devising an interim leadership proposal that entails hiring an interim Head of School, preferably from the PVPA community, who will lead the school through June 30, 2019. This will allow enough time for a proper search to be conducted to find a permanent Head of School for Fall 2019. The interim Head of School will undergo the same interview and selection process as any other prospective hire at PVPA. This proposal will be discussed with faculty on Wednesday, February 14. The administrative team will meet with faculty again on Friday, February 16 to obtain their feedback on this proposed plan. The Board will then reconvene at a special meeting to be held on February 20 to finalize and vote on the interim HoS proposal. It should be noted that any member of the Board who might be interested in applying for the interim HoS position must be resigned from the Board for 30 days prior to applying for the position. The interim HoS will only be posted externally should no qualified candidates be found internally. An acting Head of School must be voted upon to temporarily serve in said capacity until an Interim Head of School is appointed.

A motion was made and approved by consensus to nominate Brent Nielsen as acting Head of School until a new Interim Head of School is appointed (13 in favor, no opposed, no abstentions)

**Finance:** (presented by Marcy Conner)

The Finance committee met on February 6, 2018

* The Collaborative Bargaining process was discussed. The Department of Labor Relations encouraged the UAW to re-submit their application with two bargaining units for which they did. The Department of Labor accepted the UAW as two bargaining units on February 8, 2018
* Salary matrix was discussed.
* Discussions began on the FY2019 Capital Budget. Many submissions to the Capital Budget have been received.
* FY18 YTD financial reporting was also discussed.
* The Finance Committee also met this morning to discuss the allocation of funds for Board on Track. The Finance Committee approved funding of six months of expenses, from contracted date, for the Board on Track trial period program, based upon Board Approval of Board on Track.

**Governance**: (presented by Donovan Arthen)

* Governance discussed how to proceed with legal counsel with regards to the UAW unionization. Governance recommends that the Board adopt a soft bargaining style with regards to legal representation during the UAW collective bargain negotiations. Governance will submit additional information on legal counsel candidates at the next Board meeting.
* Board on Track came to the last meeting to present their product. Governance recommends that the Board adopt Board on Track for their initial six month trial period. The Board requested that Donovan obtain a contract with Board on Track that outlines what the trial period will encompass to present to the Board at their next Board meeting.
* James Barnhill announced that he is temporarily rescinding his resignation from the Board until further notice.

**Head of School**: (presented by Brent Nielsen)

* Overall, there has been much work done to keep open lines of communication regularly. The strength of PVPA has really shown itself over the last few days through actions of the staff, students, and community.
* Another successful Paideia has just wrapped up. A Chorus Line, with its sold out shows was also quite successful as well as Unite Fest that took place over the weekend.

**Students:** (presented by Mary Ahlstrom, Claire Bennett, Ian Bard, and Noah Hornick)

* Student council members took part in a conference where student council members from various schools came together to collaborate on ideas. The conference was interesting but not completely relevant as PVPA is so unique from other traditional high schools.
* Some members of Student Council will be attending a Restorative Justice Conference on March 1.
* Feminine products are now available in the restrooms.
* Graduation is in the air for Seniors. Prom will take place on May 4.
* The 9/10 dance is slated to take place in four weeks. The theme will be masquerade.

**Staff:** (presented by Gary Huggett and Jorge Rodriguez)

* The union is certified and faculty members are now looking forward to collective bargaining and hopefully smoother waters for the school. With the leadership shift, faculty seems to be working together as a community. Hopefully this will be an opportunity to turn the page for new and better.

**Open Session:**

* None

**Public Comment**:

* Public in attendance are concerned that there is not enough transparency between administration and students and their parents. Taking one and one half years to find a new Head of School feels too long. Many were shocked to hear of the Head of School’s resignation and would like to know what happened. Perhaps there should be a forum with the community to disclose whatever can be stated regarding the resignation.

Melinda Winter requested that an executive session be convened for the following reasons:

*To discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual, and 21(a)(2) to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct contract negotiations with nonunion personnel (Head of School, George Simpson).*

The president announced that the board would reconvene in Public Session following Executive Session.

**Roll Call Vote to convene in Executive Session**

Donovan Arthen (aye), James Barnhill (aye), Rachel Dionne (aye), Noah Hornick (aye), Deborah Jacobson (aye), Marc Kenen (aye), Sean Moore (aye), Alison Noyes (aye), Jorge Rodriguez (aye), Zevey Steinitz (aye), Stephen Therrien (aye), Melinda Winter (aye)

Marcy Conner, Brent Nielsen, Marcus McLaurin, and Attorney James Donnelly were asked to attend Executive Session

**Adjournment:**

Public session adjourned at 7:40pm and Executive Session called to order at 7:48pm.

**Open Session:**

Public session reconvened at 9:05pm.

Motion was made and approved by consensus to amend the agenda to add an additional open session, based on information discovered in the last 24 hours, to discuss George Simpson’s Employment. (12 in favor; no opposed, no abstentions)

Board Chair asked Attorney James Donnelly to present his findings. According to a police report, George Simpson was arrested in Reading, MA on January 27, 2018 and charged with illegal possession of a Class A substance – a hypodermic needle that contained a dark brown substance believed to be heroine and illegal possession of a Class B substance – three baggies of methamphetamine. Charges are pending.

A motion was made and approved by consensus to reject the separation agreement with George Simpson as it is currently written and signed on February 9, 2018. (12 in favor; no opposed, no abstentions)

A motion was made and approved by consensus to place George Simpson on paid administrative leave, effective immediately, and to ban him from entering any property under control of PVPA and from attending any PVPA event, with respect to which PVPA has the power to exclude him, unless otherwise invited by the Board to do so. (12 in favor; no opposed, no abstentions)

A motion was made and approved by consensus to create a task force to begin termination proceedings. (12 in favor; no opposed, no abstentions)

Board Chair, Melinda Winter, appoints Donovan Arthen, James Barnhill and herself to the task force.

A motion was made and approved by consensus to authorize COBRA payments on behalf of George Simpson for up to eighteen (18) months as part of a new separation agreement. (12 in favor; no opposed, no abstentions)

**Adjournment:**

A motion to adjourn was made and approved by consensus at 9:10pm. (12 in favor; no opposed; no abstentions)

Respectfully submitted by,

Rachel D. Dionne, Board Secretary