

**PVPA Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**Tuesday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015**  
**PVPA Library**

**Present:** Jim Barnhill, Mary Cantler, Will Decherd, Rachel Dionne, Scott Goldman, Kim Hicks, Noah Hornick, Gary Huggett, Rachel Huggett, Berri Jacque, Janet Rivera, Geoff Sumi, Gary Smith.

- Meeting called to order at 6:01pm by Kim Hicks
- SG recites the mission statement
- Discussion over the minutes from last meeting. Clarification of notes on "Space" were accepted at 6:08pm

**Finance**

Finance Committee recommended that Board approves Audit. The audit needs to be approved by the State by November 1st. The auditors are giving a clean opinion; they didn't have any findings. The Board needs to vote the approval the FY16 audit and then Board President, Kim Hicks, needs to sign it.

- JB- There is no way for us to know if the audit is correct, and then the Board is on the hook for saying it was true. The last sentence in the acceptance letter is unsettling.
- We could amend the language by saying "have been correctly and completely disclosed as required by accounting principles." Robert can clarify where the language comes from with the auditors.
- RD: the language is boiler plate that you see in any audit
- KH: We can certify that the audit has taken place, that the Finance committee has reported out to us about the audit, and that the Board has had the opportunity to review and sees no reason to disagree with the findings.
- RB: If the Board can agree to language that we would certify, we can go back to the auditors and see what they say.
- RD: If you are on the Finance committee, you should understand GAAP. As a board member, you should feel confident that the members of the finance committee and the CFO know what they are doing.
- JB: We could state that we have no reason to believe that the representations are not accurate, etc.

*(Below is the language being discussed)*

We, the Board of Trustees of Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School, have voted to accept the representations of management and the expression of the opinions made by Moriarty & Primack, P.C. as embodied in the financial statements, supplemental schedules, and independent auditors' reports for the year ended June 30, 2015 and 2014.

We also certify that the representations made by management and the disclosures in the financial statements are accurate and have been correctly and completely disclosed as required by accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Charter School Audit Guide for the period ended June 30, 2015 and 2014.

- RB: We have to submit this to the state before November 1st, and we have to follow what the state is going to expect.
- JB: If the auditors give us a hard time about this, we should get new auditors.
- RD: I do not believe it is the auditors; all auditors have boiler plate language they have to use.
- JB: Let's vote with the language we added "we have no reason to believe." That way it will be approved before the next Board Meeting and before the November 1 deadline.
- KH: How much would it delay the process to change the language?
- RB: I don't know honestly. Kim needs to sign the letter before November 1.
- KH: Do you think we can do this before November 1?
- RB: I can call the state tomorrow morning.
- GH: We are accepting the audit and saying that we cannot ensure that it is accurate.
- RB: Robert has to send the letter back to the auditors because they send the audit to the state. They sign off at the completion of the audit, which is the approval by the Board. They presented at the Finance committee meeting. The Finance committee recommended it to be voted on by the Board of Trustees.
- G.Sumi: As the full Board, how can we not approve what our own committee came up with?
- SG: On the DOE website, I found some language that was approved in FY15.
- KH: Are we voting to accept the audit, and then voting to change the language on the letter?
- RB: Motion to accept financial audit
- Geoff Sumi seconds. Gary Smith abstains. All others say yes.
- KH: I feel comfortable saying to the best of my knowledge, it is true.
- JB: Saying something is true and saying to the best of your knowledge are two different statements.
- Motion to direct Board President to sign letter for accepting audit

**VOTE: 6 yes, 2 no, 1 abstention**

### **Development**

- South Hadley and Granby Chamber of Commerce "After 5pm" event at PVPA on Tuesday, October 20th.
- Arts for All Campaign- identified key prospects
- We are working with the Financial Development Agency. We have identified 20 organizations and individuals that are prospective donors. The #1 foundation we are reaching out to is Florence Bank, because of our relationship with them. After that comes the general outreach to the community. The Friends of PVPA is meeting on 10/26 and will also talk about the Arts for All Campaign. We have two PVPA parents attending that meeting who are interesting in joining that Board.
- Annual fund will be going out this month

### **Governance**

Geoff Sumi

- Nomination of Rachel Dionne to serve as Board Clerk
- Rachel has graciously offered to serve as clerk on the Board. She was thoroughly vetted and the Governance Committee would like to nominate her for a three year term. **VOTE: Unanimous approval**
- Proposed amendments to Board bylaws: Include the position of Vice President. A draft of the updated amendments was passed around. The Vice President would join a committee, lead a meeting if the President was out, and succeed the President once their term is up.

- JB: Since we have two different proposals to amend the bylaws, we could send them at the same time to the state.
- Motion to accept the changes to the bylaws. **VOTE: Unanimous approval**
- Orientation for student reps happened tonight
- Update on recruiting new members: Regina Tollona was here at the last meeting. She has declined to continue her candidacy. G. Sumi will pursue PVPA parent Cate Damon as a candidate.
- We are pursuing new candidates for Board members. Mary Cantler offered some names of community members. Feel free to offer any parent names to the Governance Committee.

### **Strategic Action Plan Update**

The SAP sub-committee has had a few meetings. A parent survey was sent out in Friday notes. The committee is hoping to have at least 25% of the parents complete the survey before looking at the data. If it is below that, we'll have to rethink how we are going to gather this information. We are considering a robocall to parents about the survey.

At our last meeting, the committee drafted a student survey. We sifted through and wrote questions that address the issues that specifically impact students. The surveys will go out in grade meetings this month. We are using scantron to make data collection easy. We will look for trends and see where people want new goals, or things that need to stay. We are on target to have a rough draft of goals for the December Board meeting.

- GH: The presentation to the students I think will be key to whether or not we get valuable data. I have seen tremendously well-run meetings and the opposite.
- WD: Class reps are going to tell students this is how we can make change in the school and how student voices can be heard. We also want to make sure it doesn't overlap too much with the Climate Survey. I think that students responded well to the Climate Survey and that the results were heard. We had an idea to have a member of the SAP visit each of the grade meetings.
- GH: I am happy to help coordinate that.
- WD: Sam Brody is going to be joining our group to bring the voice and perspective of guidance to the group.
- SG: Erica Foley, chair of the SAP, was granted Paideia leave to work on this document.
- NH: How will students' responses be received and used?
- WD: One topic is student support. The feedback we want to get is: are students feeling prepared for college? Is there a perception among students that they are going to be prepared for college? We are not asking students about faculty salaries, for example. We are asking students about things that only they know. Students are the reason we are here and what this school is all about.

### **Head of School**

- Charter School site visit on October 29 and 30. We have sent documents to Board members that could be helpful in advance of the meeting. The site review team will meet with the Board on 10/30/15 between 8:30-9:30am. Last week we discussed the site visit at the curriculum day and focused on how teachers could prepare for it, and what is going to happen at the site visit. We had a great response from our parent community about wanting to be a part of our focus groups. At this moment there are no concerns about where we are in our preparation for this visit.

- October 24th- Party for Charter Schools in Boston. Would like to know by Thursday if any Board member would want a ticket; if none are interested, tickets will be offered to staff.
- Four drop-in meetings for parents to meet with the Head of School have taken place (two in the morning and two in the afternoon). A total of twelve parents attended, some new to PVPA. Some questions were around charter schools, what's the difference between a Board of Trustees and a school committees, etc. We had one meeting about standards based grading as well. We may do something after the renewal vote to allow parents to process and question the decision from the DESE.
- Faculty submitted their Paideia Proposals and it felt great to have the process happening in timelines that allowed people to get feedback. Most of the new Paideia courses that were proposed were good matches to the criteria we proposed for what we want to have happen with Paideia. We should be able to have a really well informed discussion about making any changes to Paideia in the future.
- DATES: This weekend, Jaz Blain has a show opening "Scaramouche Jones" It is not recommended for small children.
- Latino Heritage Showcase on October 23rd. We only have small spaces available, so there are going to be multiple performances in different rooms.

## Space

Building Project: All of the materials were delivered to the building; the shell of the building is almost fully erected as well as the linkage vestibule. Friends of PVPA owns the whole construction process, but PVPA is entering into that contract with Pook, Diemont & Ohl, Inc. and Sonix Pro. We sent 10 proposals out and got three back. PDO subcontracts out to local companies to get the work done. They had very positive references. We have also awarded a contract that was not a part of the original proposal for the sound installation and rigging. We are about to place the order for the chairs for the theater. The most significant news is the revised timeline for completion. Based on the last meeting, Allegrone adjusted their schedule and are looking at December 23rd as their completion date. The building is up and they are close to being water tight, which is when they will begin electrical work and next the rigging will start. The Paideia Showcase will be the first performance in the new theater. The Music Showcase has been scheduled for the Academy of Music.

- KH: Does getting back on time obviate the worst case scenario of going over budget?
- SG: I brought a copy of the contract between Friends of PVPA and Allegrone, but I don't have anything to present at this time.

## Students

Student Council has focused on Spirit Week leading up to Octoberfest. Most of the students have had a positive response to it. Grade meetings followed up on the social justice workshops that happened at the last grade meetings. We also had a table in the lobby on Friday about cultural appropriation in regards to costumes.

A subcommittee of student council met with Scott about their desire to see a microwave placed back in the junior senior lounge. They have proposed a four week pilot to see if the students would step up and keep the space clean. This should be happening sometime this week.

- NH: It should be enforced that only juniors and seniors are allowed in the lounge.

## **Staff**

- GH: We are getting ready for the site visit.
- WD: Teachers are remarkably calm about the site visit. We are ready.
- SG: The person who is chairing this site visit was here at the last site visit five years ago. I have tried in the past to get the DESE out here to visit our school. I think it is a great opportunity for us to be ourselves.

## **Open Session**

- Gary Smith: I recently read the MCAS report. When did that become public?
- SG: A day or two before it was sent out; two weeks ago.
- Gary Smith: I was impressed with the results, but I wanted to ask your assessment of the math results.
- SG: It is almost impossible to compare us to other schools now unless we are looking at tenth grade scores. I thought our high school results were fantastic. I wanted to send information about sending districts as well for comparison. The state has been heavily focused on our middle school growth percentiles. This year, the growth percentile was below expectations. The tenth grade report shows what happens when students progress through PVPA.
- In 2014, our HS student growth percentage for math was high. If you look at 2015, we did not meet the targets.

There are three possible outcomes of a charter renewal:

1. renewed without conditions
2. renewed with conditions
3. not renewed

My sense is that we are going to be renewed with conditions in place.

- WD: When the school expanded into its present location, why did they add two grades and not three? (Grades 6-8 versus just Grades 7-8)
- GH: I believe the founders were thinking, "We will set a base for the school and we will get a little extra money we can put towards the high school." The state changed this the year after we added the middle school. It started small.
- SG: I think it was a good thing; many local public schools are K-6, which allows for a good transition time for applying to other school, like ours, for seventh grade.

## **Public Comment**

### **Adjourn**

Gary Smith makes motion to adjourn meeting, seconded by Jim Barnhill.  
Meeting adjourns at 7:29 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Melamed

