

Baxter Academy for Technology and Science

Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, August 24, 2022, at Baxter Academy and via Zoom

Present: Thorn Dickinson (chair), Peter Montano (treasurer), Nik Charov (secretary), Jana Lapoint, Simon McGurk, Tristan Oldmixon

Absent: Ruth Dean (vice chair)

Board consultants: Patti Oldmixon, Wendy Betts, Dan Stockford (BA attorney)

Staff: outgoing Executive Director Kelli Pryor, incoming Executive Director Anna Klein-Christie, Head of School Cicy Po, Vice Principal Mary King, Director of Special Education Laura Parks, CFO Kerry Bush, IT Director Amos Cooper, Compliance Coordinator Tyler Beaulieu, Operations Director Michael Thorp, Outreach Coordinator Jonathan Delorme

Agenda item

I. General items

Chair Thorn Dickinson called the meeting to order at 5:38pm, in-person and online via Zoom.

A. Approval of minutes

Secretary Nik Charov motioned that the draft minutes from the June 14, 2022, board meeting and July 25, 2022, special meeting be approved as presented. Jana Lapoint seconded, all in favor with Peter Montano abstaining.

Nik motioned that the draft minutes from the August 9, 2022, special meeting be approved as presented. Jana seconded, all in favor with Thorn and Simon McGurk abstaining.

Patti Oldmixon, past board chair and head of the Executive Director Search Committee, introduced the new Executive Director, Anna Klein-Christie. Anna will start this week and be in the school by September 1. Anna introduced herself and spoke about the recent teacher trainings and meetings she has already attended with the excited, ambitious, creative faculty and staff of BA.

II. Finance updates

Treasurer Peter Montano presented the year-end financials to the board. SY22 finished with a \$21k surplus. BA's assets to liabilities ratio was 1.8, with \$538k of cash on hand and \$182k of revenue (from mid-year student withdrawals) deferred to SY23. Revenues were short by \$85k in the \$4.6M budget, but expenses were \$107k under projections. Facilities costs were down by 10% due to a property tax rebate. Peter: "We have a strong balance sheet going into next year, but SY23 will still be a challenge due to the lower student count taken on October 1, 2021."

Thorn Dickinson motioned to approve the SY22 year-end financials as presented. Nik Charov seconded, all in favor.

III. School updates

BA outgoing Executive Director Kelli Pryor and new ED Anna Klein-Christie presented the following information:

A. Enrollment

After a hopeful surge in applications last spring, the BA administration reports that, as of today, BA will enroll only ~370 students this September, down from the expected 390 earlier this year. This student body count, if it holds through October 1, will have significant budget implications for the 2023-2024 school year. The team is considering more open houses, a press release about Anna's hire and the enrollment opportunity, and more pushes on social media. Board members are asked to share the application information on their social media and through channels as well. BA has room for ~30 more students; there is no waitlist.

B. Maine Charter School Commission monitoring report

The data for the year-end report to the Charter Commission was submitted on July 8 and the report is included in tonight's board packet for review.

C. Head of School report

BA Head of School Cicy Po gave an update on school progress, focusing on Structure, Stability, Storytelling, and Family Engagement. Student leaders have been helping to orient and welcome new families. New teachers and staff are also acclimating. They are: Heather Giese (special ed); Thomas Daneault (chemistry); Chris Bertelsen, Leah Douglas, John

Wensman (all humanities); Elisa Cano (Spanish); Billy Wall (design); Wiley Muller (engineering), and Denise Witham (front office). Teacher Sarah Sherr is joining the Leadership Team as Dean of Faculty. Flex Friday now has a manual, a 40-page guide to this unique program at BA. The new guide is NOT a framework for accountability or a rubric for grading; it is a public-facing document that explains the concepts and flow of the FF program.

D. MCSC Contractual Performance Framework

BA's suggestions for the Charter Commission's revision to the evaluation framework in our charter contract have so far not been incorporated. The new framework represents a substantial expansion of the current framework. The school administration and Board raised concerns about the proposed changes through May and June, but the MCSC adopted the new framework nevertheless on June 23. The BA Board is now asked to approve the new framework before the start of the school year. Executive Director Kelli Pryor states that "district schools have HALF the reporting requirements we do now," and that the BA administration is already overburdened with reporting. This is an increase in mandated monitoring, data collection, and analysis that will only increase the workload. School attorney Dan Stockford offers that the school's charter contract states that "the performance framework can only be amended by a change in state or federal law, or other impracticalities." The Commission does not have unlimited discretion to make changes but seems to have gone ahead with this unilateral move. MCSC has not given a reason for these changes, but for "continued development of the framework." Nik Charov disagrees with the Charter Commission's reasoning and with a number of the framework's new metrics. Jana Lapoint states that, in the future, we must ask for more time to review proposed changes, and that all of the charter school heads "must band together to avoid future surprises."

Thorn Dickinson motions to approve the new Performance Framework as presented by the Maine Charter School Commission. Jana seconds, and the motion passes 5-1, with Nik Charov voting in the negative.

E. Consultant agreement with outgoing Executive Director Kelli Pryor

Thorn Dickinson and past board chair Patti Oldmixon thanked Kelli Pryor for her ten years of service (see attached) and expressed the school's need for her continued input on current projects conceived during her tenure.

Jana Lapoint motioned for BA to sign a paid consulting contract with Kelli Pryor for advice and counsel, as needed, through the remainder of the calendar year. Thorn Dickinson seconded, all in favor.

IV. Public Comment

There were no comments or questions from the public.

V. Executive Session

Thorn Dickinson motioned to enter Executive Session at 6:59pm for the purposes of meeting with the school attorney pursuant to Section 405(6)(e) of Title 1 of the Maine Revised Statutes. Nik seconded, all in favor.

The board exited Executive Session at 8:19pm.

Thorn motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:20pm. Nik seconded, all in favor.

Next regular meeting: [September 13, 2022](#)