

Baxter Academy for Technology and Science

Board of Directors Meeting

5:30 to 7 p.m., Tuesday, November 9, 2021

185 Lancaster Street, Portland, Maine

Present: Patti Oldmixon (chair), Peter Montano (treasurer), Nik Charov (secretary), Thorn Dickinson, Jana Lapoint, Ruth Dean, Kelli Pryor (executive director), Cicy Po (head of school)

Absent: Simon McGurk

Agenda item

I. Opening Items

Chair Patti Oldmixon called the meeting to order in-person and on Zoom at 5:32pm.

A. Approval of minutes

Secretary Nik Charov made a motion to accept the minutes of the October 12, 2021, meeting minutes as presented, Jana Lapoint seconded, all in favor.

B. Policies

ED Kelli Pryor explained that BA is currently undergoing a policy audit with a consultant, in collaboration with an attorney. The school is using a list of required policies identified by the Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC). Today Kelli is submitting for a first reading the updated Lau plan, which addresses policy for serving English Language Learners (ELL). The board will need to vote to approve it at the next meeting. Further required policies will be updated and approved in the coming months.

II. Finance

A. First quarter financial statements

Treasurer Peter Montano presented the profit & loss through the first quarter of the fiscal year, September 30. Peter reports that the school continues to be in a good shape. Summer payroll has begun accruing for 2022; it stands at \$32k and will grow. Net assets include a debt service account that still stands at \$600k, in addition to \$778k of undesignated assets. Net income through the first quarter is \$329k, and the school just received in the first week of October an account receivable of \$507k from the State. The annual financial audit is now in progress; final drafts are expected for approval at the December board meeting. **Chair Patti Oldmixon motioned to accept the first quarter of FY22 financial report as presented, Thorn Dickinson seconded, all in favor.**

B. FY22 Budget Amendment

Peter Montano continued with a presentation of a proposed budget amendment for the current fiscal year. With the Collective Bargaining Agreement now finalized, accurate compensation figures can now be included. Faculty salaries over the three-year contract were negotiated in alignment with funding levels that will likely continue to be constrained by pandemic impacts. In the near term, salary and benefits costs did not increase as sharply as projected, accounting for a \$114k decrease in budgeted expenses. In addition, new federal grants totaling \$41k were received. Therefore, tapping the FY21 surplus of \$154k is no longer necessary; those funds will be reserved for next year, which will be leaner due to the enrollment drop discussed at the October meeting.

Other amendments to the budget include adding \$25k in instructional supplies, \$22k in Other Contracted Services (for special education, which the new federal grants are supporting), and \$5k in Nursing (for pooled covid testing administration and contact tracing support).

Maintenance costs are increasing with the full-time in-school population. Field trips and their attendant transportation costs may also increase. The budget continues to be balanced and, upon reviewing and approving the Collective Bargaining Agreement in Executive Session at this meeting, the board will subsequently approve this proposed amended FY22 budget.

III. School program

A. SY 2021 monitoring

Kelli Pryor provided an update on BA's challenge to the SY21 monitoring report drafted by the MCSC. The MCSC canceled its meeting this week; BA leadership is still trying to convince them to remove 2021 testing data from the report, as no other public schools must report results from the first pandemic year. There is also a legal question over whether the MCSC's unilateral amendment of the charter contract is permissible. Kelli will continue discussions with the MCSC and hopes for an opportunity to move forward equitably.

B. Head of School report

Head of School Cicy Po shared updates on a gender workshop for faculty and students; parent/teacher conferences underway this week (student-led conferences will be held in the spring); and Flex Friday (FF) projects. Field trips continue to be to destinations within walking distance, but a recent plastic litter survey has BA looking for connections to the larger network of litter surveyors and marine debris trackers. An alumni survey of STEM persistence is under development. Cicy also hopes to establish, with the Science-Society-Ethics classes, an Institutional Review Board at BA to establish guidelines for ethical research and FF projects.

C. Strategic Rebuilding

Kelli Pryor returned to discuss the beginning of a strategic-rebuilding process to think about coming out of the pandemic in a way that is sustainable for the school. It will take time to get back up above 400 students, and there are also lessons to learn about what worked and didn't during the school's first years and during remote schooling. "It's an opportunity to recalibrate the school." Therefore, Dr. Linda Nathan, a founder of the Perrone-Sizer Institute for Creative Leadership and a lecturer at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, is being brought in as a consultant. Dr. Nathan is working with organizational transformation coach Juan Mora y Araujo and doctoral student James Jack. BA's Title II funding will support this collaboration.

IV. Public Comment

Parent Lisa Backman thanked teachers for the illuminating parent/teacher conferences this week.

There were no further comments or questions.

V. Executive Session*

Patti Oldmixon motioned to enter executive session* at 6:24pm, Jana Lapoint seconded, all in favor.

Patti declared an end to the executive session at 6:55pm. Returning to public session, Patti motioned to approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement as amended and presented, Peter seconded, all in favor.

Patti then motioned to approve the amended FY22 budget as presented earlier in the meeting, Jana seconded, all in favor.

Nik Charov motioned to adjourn the board meeting at 7:00pm, Jana seconded, all in favor.

Next regular meeting: December 12, 2021

** Executive session for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining pursuant to Section 405(6)(D) of Title 1 of the Maine Revised Statutes.*