

## Baxter Academy for Technology and Science

### Board of Directors Meeting

5:30 to 7 p.m., Wednesday, August 25, 2021 (summer schedule)

185 Lancaster Street, Portland, Maine

via Zoom:

<https://baxter-academy-org.zoom.us/j/87864736965?pwd=S1pxbXJLbzdBRlE4SWtjU1ZlZURHZz09>

**Present in person:** Christian Sparling (vice chair), Nik Charov (secretary), Thorn Dickinson

Present via Zoom: Patti Oldmixon (chair), Peter Montano (treasurer)

#### Agenda item

##### I. Opening Items

Christian Sparling called the meeting to order at 5:34pm with a quorum of three in-person members.

##### A. Approval of minutes

Thorn Dickinson made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 8, 2021, meeting as presented. Nik Charov seconded. All present in the room voted in favor, 3-0.

##### B. Policy on remote meetings

Christian Sparling introduced via the Zoom chat and hard copy a new policy on remote meetings, allowing remote participation by board members in extraordinary circumstances or absence from the State of Maine. Christian noted there was a quorum of the Board present in person at the meeting (3 out of 5 of the current Board members). Only Board members physically present at the meeting would be voting to approve the minutes and to consider adoption of the remote participation policy. Two current Board members, Patti Oldmixon and Peter Montano, were unable to be physically present tonight because of absence from the State of Maine.

Christian motioned to approve the policy as presented, Thorn Dickinson seconded. All present in favor, 3-0.

With this unanimous vote by those physically present, the remote-participation policy took effect immediately. Patti Oldmixon (chair) and Peter Montano (treasurer) joined via Zoom and were counted as present.

##### C. Board development

Chair Patti Oldmixon reviewed the criteria for ideal Baxter Academy board candidates: STEM experience; financial and/or fundraising experience; organizational design and management of complex systems experience; a child at or alumna of the school; institutional knowledge of BA for continuity. In 2021, two candidates stepped forward for consideration and were vetted through interviews. Patti motioned to accept for board membership Simon McGurk, Baxter parent and executive at a global pharmaceutical corporation,

and Jana LaPoint, most recently of the Maine Charter School Commission and the state Board of Education, to initial three-year terms expiring in June 2024. Peter Montano seconded. All present in favor, 5-0.

Simon McGurk and Jana LaPoint were added to the board and counted as present.

## **II. Finance**

### **A. Q4 Financials, 2021**

Treasurer Peter Montano presented the fourth quarter, school year-end, unaudited financials. BA ended the year with its mandated surplus, this year totaling \$221,434, a result of cost saving measures and budgeting a 10% cut in State support in SY21 that did not occur. Wages were higher than budgeted, due to hires and a performance bonus given by the Board to the faculty.

Reimbursement of more than \$500,000 from Covid Relief Funds is still due to the school. BA has collected \$200k to date and should receive the rest of the reimbursement by September 30.

The current assets-to-liabilities ratio is 1.8, with enough cash on hand to fund three months' worth of expenses. The SY21 surplus will be used for debt service and may also be useful as a "rainy day fund" for SY22, should the enrollment count drop in October 2021 due to the surging pandemic.

Funds accumulated for debt service now equal \$500k, with the building debt coming due in 2024. The goal is to have \$700k saved by that point, to bring down the outstanding debt to \$1.5M for refinancing.

BA cannot participate in the latest round of federal Covid Relief Funding because it is not a Title I school. While BA may have the socioeconomic and free/reduced lunch profile that would qualify the school for Title I, there currently is no staffing available to handle Title I compliance.

### **B. MCSC financial summary report, 2021**

This report was included within the report presented by Peter.

Patti Olmixon motioned to accept the SY21 unaudited year-end budgeted-to-actual report as presented, Thorn Dickinson seconded. All in favor, 7-0.

## **III. School program**

### **A. SY 2022 planning & Covid-19**

BA Executive Director Kelli Pryor presented the expectations for the 2022 school year. The goal is to open this September as scheduled, with safe, full-time, in-person instruction. As of today, 95% of the faculty are fully vaccinated, and all students are eligible for the vaccine. BA administration does not know the percentage of students vaccinated, however. Kelli is working with the Charter Commission to ascertain whether vaccination status can be requested of students or volunteered by parents and is awaiting guidance. The Delta variant seems to be twice as contagious as previous variants; younger unvaccinated are beginning to fill Maine's hospitals. Maine is either 3rd or 4th in case rates in the under 20 years old population. Therefore, BA will

mandate universal masking in school, regardless of vaccination status. BA is also planning to participate in pooled testing. Testing will be by advisory group, and tests will be sent to the Concentra lab. The state will offer some financial support for the additional staff time needed to administer pooled testing.

**B. Head of School report**

Head of School Cicy Po reviewed a recent faculty retreat in August to the Schoodic Institute and a student leadership retreat to Preble Street Resource Center to learn about the BA neighborhood. The Teacher Academy also commenced today. BA is working on adding research components to all classes and Flex Friday projects. New student orientation will be next week; 9th and 10th grades will start with a tour of the school and local lunch spots, along with an Old Port scavenger hunt. Advisories will meet in the first week of school.

BA spent the spring and summer hiring. New faculty and staff this school year include: Shauna Dunn (special ed); Rory Lowe, Katie Strait, Andrew Ritter, Brigid Smith-Franey (science); Jonathan DeLorme, Sarah Sherr, Hallie Herz (humanities); Melanie Rubaru, Alicia Lopez (languages); Jorge Rodriguez (math); Andrew Fumarola (front office); Belinda Frye (registrar); and Michael Thorpe (operations manager). The board welcomed these new professionals to the BA community.

**C. Robotics**

Peter Montano presented a new approach to the US FIRST robotics team hosted by BA. The team started in 2015; Peter has been an adult mentor from the beginning. Over the past six years, the number of FIRST robotics teams in Maine decreased from 25 to 18, due to a lack of mentors and the pandemic. Peter proposes to create a 501c3-nonprofit “community team,” with BA to continue as the host and hub. Students from other Portland-area schools could join; the team would represent Southern Maine communities. Questions were raised about the status and feasibility of the standalone nonprofit approach and Peter would bring further details back to the board in the future.

**IV. Public Comment**

A parent asked whether BA had a school nurse on site. Kelli Pryor answered that BA has never had a nurse on site, but as of this school year, Baxter alumnus Gabe Miriam is serving as a nurse for the school. BA has also formed a new partnership with a neighborhood urgent care center.

A parent asked about enrollment numbers. Kelli shared that enrollment was still in flux, hour to hour, but that 100 students per grade was still the goal for the October 1 enrollment count day.

There were no further questions.

#### **V. Executive Session\***

Patti Oldmixon motioned to enter Executive Session at 7:14pm, Christian Sparling seconded, all in favor 7-0.

The board exited Executive Session and Patti motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:21pm. Thorn Dickinson seconded, all in favor 7-0.

**Next regular meeting: September 14, 2021**

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