

**Baxter Academy for Technology and Science**

**Board of Directors Meeting**

**5:30 to 7 p.m., Tuesday, December 10, 2019**

**185 Lancaster Street, Portland, Maine**

Present: Board Chair Patti Oldmixon, Vice Chair Christian Sparling, Treasurer Peter Montano, Secretary Ruth Dean, Executive Director Kelli Pryor

Absent: Thorn Dickinson

Guests: Director of Special Education Laura Parks, Operations Manager Tyler Beaulieu, Accounting Manager Kerry Bush, Attorney Dan Amory, Attorney Dan Stockford

Agenda item

**I. Board**

A. Minutes

Secretary Ruth Dean moved to accept the minutes as amended. Vice Chair Christian Sparling seconded. All directors voted in favor.

**II. Finance**

A. Financial reports

Treasurer Peter Montano brought before the board the quarter one reports that were submitted to Maine DOE. Peter motioned to approve financial statements. Christian seconded. All directors voted in favor.

The board also reviewed the October 31 statements, which showed a surplus of \$320,000 related to accruals for summer salaries and to personnel vacancies. Hiring is under way for the vacancies. Expenses for facilities and maintenance are slated for later in the year. Legal expenses are significant and ongoing. Spending for supplies has slowed as the school year settles in, but it will pick up again as the end of the year approaches.

B. Annual appeal

Executive Director Kelli Pryor shared that the annual appeal is progressing with strong collaboration from the Baxter Parent Organization.

BPO representative Karen Fream shared that BPO participants have already brought in \$5,700. In first parent meeting of the year, parents pledged to raise \$23,000. Parents plan to stage a phone-a-thon to encourage broad participation.

### **III. Organizational**

#### **A. Hiring**

ED Kelli Pryor introduced new Baxter hires: Laura Parks is the new Director of Special Education. She was chosen through a hiring process that included the entire Special Education team, the Head of School, and the Special Education consultants who have been leading the transition from the past director to the new. Laura Parks brings thirty years of experience in teaching Special Education. She was a team leader at Elm Street School and Renaissance School.

Kerry Bush is Baxter's new Accounting Manager. Kerry is taking on much of the work previously handled by a contracted CFO through Finn Accounting. Kerry comes from MaineHealth and has worked in accounting for nonprofits for 10 years with 25 years experience overall.

Tyler Beaulieu is the new Operations Manager handling facilities, transportation, and new systems for communications from front office to the rest of the school. Tyler comes out of operations management for political campaigns.

Kelli explained that the school has used hiring as an opportunity to solve persistent organizational challenges stemming from the school's rapid growth. Tasks have been analyzed across the organization and sorted into job roles that are consistent. The operations team is charged with taking the pressure off the instructional team by creating solid, predictable systems and support.

The online grading platform, Slate, is a good representation of that ongoing work. Through a federal grant, Slate was built by Baxter teachers and administrators to represent the school's proficiency-based program in a student-facing format. After implementation, it was basically maintained by one employee. That created challenges for the school when that employee transitioned out of the school. The goal now is to assess how all systems, such as the grading platform, can be updated to serve student needs while also being easily maintained by the year-round operations team in support of the instructional team. The administrative team is also looking at better approaches for transcripts, scheduling, student information systems, enrollment, and communication.

### **IV. Parent Engagement**

#### **A. Baxter Parent Organization**

BPO representative Karen Fream reported that the group has met three times. The first time, there were 40 parents. The organization has four goals: Fundraising, board meeting attendance and minutes, community building, legislative advocacy.

## **VI. Public Comment**

Conversation centered around ongoing issues with scheduling. Kelli explained that scheduling is being designed around what seniors and juniors need to graduate. The school is doing a reset that will be backward designed from what students' graduation requirements. In response to questions about ongoing challenges with vandalism and vaping in the restrooms, Kelli shared plans to take action other local schools have taken and to monitor hallways with cameras.

Board Chair Patti Oldmixon moved to go into Executive Session. Secretary Ruth Dean seconded. The vote was unanimous.

## **VII. Board**

A. Executive session\*

The board adjourned.

**Next regular meeting: 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, January 14, 2019**

185 Lancaster Street, Portland, Maine

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