

Baxter Academy for Technology and Science

Board of Directors SPECIAL Meeting

5:30 to 7 p.m., Tuesday, June 2, 2020

185 Lancaster Street, Portland, Maine

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

Guests: Interim Head of School Cicy Po, Bob Kautz Executive Director of the Maine Charter Commission

Agenda item

I. Finance

A. SY 21 Budget Challenges

Board Chair Patti Oldmixon called for a moment of silence to recognize the 100,000+ the country has lost recently to COVID-19 and for George Floyd and to too many others like him, and for individuals hurt or killed while protesting needless violence.

Board Chair Patti Oldmixon then began her presentation on next year's budget challenges. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Maine economy is projected to be significant. State revenues are down and Baxter relies on state funding.

Patti introduced Bob Kautz, Executive Director of the Maine Charter Commission. He explained the current challenges facing schools. He pointed out that they have also been meeting with all the other charter schools as financial troubles are a common reason for charter schools to close.

The schools all received the ED 279 form in January, which outlines the predicted state allocation for the next school year. Since that allocation the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the state's revenue. Predictably this will affect the funding of charter schools as they are funded by the state based on enrollment. Regular school districts can raise more money in taxes if there is a shortfall but charter schools do not have this option.

Therefore the charter commission recommended schools look into different percentage reductions in their school budgets. Bob pointed out that the commission recommended 15% cuts, not the 10% cuts the board has chosen. This was not a command from the commission, it was a recommendation based on previous budget cut years.

Board Chair Patti Oldmixon thanks Bob Kautz for the additional context. She added that in the spirit of transparency the board shared the recommendation of the commission with the Union on May 7th. Two board meetings were held to disclose these budget cuts on May 12th and May 19th. May 15th was the teacher contract deadline when contracts for the next year need to be issued to staff. The school will continue to use attrition where possible to cut the positions that need to be cut.

Board Chair Patti Oldmixon clarified that these cuts were not an action taken by the board, but a reaction to this budgetary information. She welcomed input. Baxter is reliant on state funding. We cannot raise taxes or take on more debt. We cannot take advantage of current forms of COVID relief funds.

The process followed was based on legal guidance from counsel and existing documented policies. The board has heard feedback that we should have reduced the administrative team. All open administrative positions were eliminated, work was redistributed and roles were restructured. Going into September, we expect to have 9 people on the administrative side and 31 educators.

Board Chair Patti Oldmixon presented a slide shown last August outlining the roles of each administrative position. The board has heard suggestions that it eliminate the Executive Director position. It is the opinion of the Board and the Commission that managing a \$4 million budget of a non-profit requires an Executive Director.

B. Public Comment

Board chair Patti Oldmixon led a discussion with parents, teachers, students, administrators about the 2020-21 school budget, budget cuts, and impacts on the school and its community.

II. Closing

A. Executive session*

Board Chair Patti Oldmixon moves that the board go into executive session. Peter Montano seconded. All were in favor.

Next regular meeting: 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Via ZOOM

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