

Baxter Academy for Technology and Science

Board of Directors Meeting

5:30 to 7 p.m., Tuesday, May 11, 2021

Zoom link:

<https://baxter-academy-org.zoom.us/j/84191896944?pwd=dnpsSXI4Y2dqOStmYnNscjNjRklhZz09>

Present: Patti Oldmixon, Christian Sparling, Peter Montano, Thorn Dickinson, Nik Charov

Absent: none

Guests: BA School Administration, counsels Daniel Stockford and Dan Amory, physician Dr. Charles DeSieyes

Agenda item

I. Opening Items

Chair Patti Oldmixon called the meeting to order on Zoom at 5:34pm.

A. Approval of minutes

Secretary Nik Charov motioned to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2021, regular board meeting, Peter Montano seconded, no further discussion, all in favor. A motion to amend and approve the January 11, 2021, board meeting minutes with attendances was tabled until the next meeting.

B. Celebrations

BA Executive Director Kelli Pryor showcased a recent field trip to Scarborough Marsh, shared the latest US News & World Report rankings of high schools in Maine (BA was #5), noted that 3 out of the 6 awardees in the First Congressional District art competition were from BA (Elwen Bernard 1st, Fiona Jason 2nd, Della Huntley honorable mention), and updated the college acceptances slides.

II. Finance

A. Audit

Treasurer Peter Montano walked the meeting through the FY20 certified financial statement (audit), for the fiscal year ending 6/30/2020. Net assets increased by ~\$120k to \$1.3m. The auditors issued an unqualified opinion, which means that no deficiencies were found. General & Administrative expenses were 9.5% of the budget, and the cash burn rate was approximately \$370k per month. **Patti made a motion to accept the FY20 audit as presented, Peter seconded, no further discussion, all in favor.**

B. Q3 financial statements

Peter shared the budget performance through the third quarter ending 3/31/2021. \$400k for debt retirement will be paid by fiscal year-end. "There are no big surprises" in the profit and loss to date.

There is a \$518k surplus through the third quarter, due to: Covid Relief Funds supported remote learning and PPE, under-budgeting for potential State cuts that did not materialize, and deferred spending. Peter expects to carryover a surplus of \$154k from FY21 into FY22, which will be used to fill any budget holes caused by a smaller enrollment number calculated in the October of the pandemic. One additional expense is expected: because administrative staff have been working 50-60 hour weeks and have had no opportunity to take Paid Time Off during the pandemic, a one-time payment in lieu of accrued annual Paid Time Off is proposed. **Patti motioned to accept the third quarter numbers with PTO payout, Christian Sparling seconded, no further discussion, all in favor.**

C. School Year 2022 budget

Peter presented the proposed FY22 budget for discussion and approval. The budget is built around the ED279 Maine state schedule for secondary school rate reimbursement and uses an average rate of \$7988 per pupil. With BA's enrollment figured at 390 pupils in October 2020, this yields an FY22 student budget of \$3.115m. This is about an \$80k reduction from the FY21 amount. There are additions for special education and rescissions from the charter commission. The total proposed budget is \$4.794m for FY22, which includes the \$154k rolled over from FY21. "Ninety percent of the budget is in fixed costs. Of that, wages account for \$2.5m, benefits another \$680k." BA must refinance its debt within 3 years, which will reduce interest expenses in the future. BA is looking to fill two Administrative positions in FY22, because Administration/operations is significantly short staffed. **Patti motioned to approve the proposed FY22 budget, pending the results of collective bargaining, Thorn Dickinson seconded, no further discussion, all in favor.**

III. School program

A. Head of School report

Head of School Cicy Po presented an update on Accountability, Family Engagement, and Engaging Instruction efforts. Many thanks to Anna Gervais and advisors and the student care team for continuing their much needed work. New families are being welcomed with orientations to "learning journeys" that include Engineering, Maine Ecology, Biomedical tech and science, all contributing to STEM for Justice. Corporate and nonprofit program partners include JAX, Schoodic Institute, MEEA, iXplore, Maine Environmental Changemakers, and SMART Architecture. Field work has included browntail moth surveys in Deering Oaks Park and student journalism investigations into how Portland restaurants adapted to the pandemic. Faculty and staff recently held a retreat. Humanities teacher Katelyn Virmalo was named BA Teacher of the Year.

B. School Year 2022 planning

Executive Director Kelli Pryor shared an update on SY22 plans. The expectation is currently to resume full-day, 5-day, all-grade learning at 185 Lancaster Street in September. All students are vaccine-eligible, staff are fully vaccinated, and the HVAC system has been upgraded. To recap, BA progressed from Stage 1 (fully remote) through Stage 2 over the course of the past year. Contact tracing has increased since April

break, which has allowed more face-to-face (“mask-to-mask”) interactions. Graduation is set for June 6 at the Saco Drive-in.

C. COVID-19 response

School physician Dr. Charles Desieyes gave a brief update on BA’s pandemic response efforts. “The pace of phasing was appropriate and successful, best for the health and safety of students, faculty, and the community.” There is a national goal of 70% immunity by July 4, which should be close to herd immunity. A rapid antigen test will be available to schools that have the capacity for pooled testing, but as that will require a lab technician, BA may not participate. There is no vaccine threshold for returning to Phase 3; BA is moving ahead with the plans Kelli described earlier.

IV. Public Comment

Before opening up public comments, Patti thanked the BA community on behalf of the board for all who testified against LD 604 before the Joint Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, a committee of the Maine legislature. Parents, administrators, the Charter Commission, and particularly students helped to defeat this proposed law to impose further burdens on charter schools in Maine.

Questions from attendees included clarification requests on the September return plan, the budget surplus, teacher salary increases, budget line items. The admission lottery was completed; 26 students are on the waitlist, and ~100-student grades are expected for SY22. A nominating committee has been formed on the board to seek additional board members with the skills and resources the school needs. “STEM professionals are welcome.”

V. Executive Session*

Patti motioned to enter into Executive Session at 7:14pm, seconded by Thorn, all in favor.

Patti motion to exit Executive Session and adjourn at 7:51pm, seconded by Thorn, all in favor.

Next regular meeting: 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, June 8, 2021

**Executive session for the purpose of consulting with legal counsel pursuant to Section 405(6)(E) of Title 20-A of the Maine Revised Statutes.*