



Windham Academy Public Charter School

May Meeting Minutes

Windham Academy Public Charter School
Windham Town Hall N Lowell Rd. Windham, NH
Wednesday, May 8th, 2019
5:04pm

In Attendance:

Jim Fricchione (Chairman)	Melinda Labo (Director)	Vinny Del Signore (Board)
Meg Bedrick (Secretary)	Caitlin Blundell (CPA)	Trixy Gardner (PTO)
Chris Baker (Treasurer)	Jennifer Bragg (Teacher)	Deanne Adaschik (Teacher)
Jennifer Morneau (Teacher)	Rebecca Pommet (Teacher/Fundraising)	
Kim Golden (Assistant Director)	Patty Miloro (Teacher)	
Christie Cartwright (Communications Chair)		

Others: Peterson family, Mahoney family, Cartwright family, and Brengola family. Hoogendyke family, Digan family, Riviera family, Rob Hannon, Sfeir family, Rebecca Bouchard, Betsy Noel, Lisa Pleat, Dick Gregory, Sfeir family

Absent:

Sean Donahue (Board Member) Karl Dubay (Vice Chair) Patty Simard (Special Ed Coordinator)

I. WELCOME / CALL TO ORDER

Jim Fricchione (Chairman) called the meeting to order on Wednesday, May 8th, 2019 at 5:00pm.

II. PUBLIC OPENING

a) Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

b) Approval of previous minutes

Approval of meeting minutes from April 10th, 2019.

- Del signore makes a motion to approve.
- Baker seconds the motion.
- Discussion. *none*

On a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously. 4-0

III. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE (Fricchione)

- **Building Transition Status**
 - In the next few months, we will be moving from our modulars into the building. We are happy to announce, Al Sfeir has bought the building and is our landlord and now have a 15 yr lease in that location/building. In exchange, we have a friend



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and partner to Windham Academy and he will make major investments into our building and into our community to assist in our success. The plan is to have the entire building completed by the fall. We want to publicly say thank you to him.

• **Committee Roles and Expectations**

We have started to build out our committees as our charter states. For now, three have formed, but we will be looking to build out more in the future.

- Communications Committee Christie Cartwright has just been voted by the board of trustees to chair this committee. Christie is a parent at WA and she runs a marketing business and knows all about communications. This committee will be geared towards messaging, steering our website, and communications towards our families and the community. She is looking for volunteers to assist her.
- PTO Trixy Gardner and Amanda Etheridge co-lead this committee. The PTO was created to enhance the parent and teacher connection. This committee brings support to our families and staff by raising money during events for our classrooms and students, donations, and putting on activities to unify the school. It does not raise funds for the school. There is a difference between this and fundraising.
- Fundraising Committee: Currently run by our WA staff with parental volunteers, this committee is geared towards raising money for the school. More information to follow.

• **Recognition and thanks**

This is our tradition we do at every board meeting to spotlight a person or team that has gone above and beyond for the school. We would like to recognize a few individuals that helped a family of a student from Windham Academy through some recent tough times. These individuals spent five hours outside in the rain on a weekend putting together a swing set to bring some joy to this family. We would like to thank Walter Cartwright, Karl Ramsey, and Rich Alessandro.

IV. COMMITTEE UPDATES

Communications (Christie Cartwright)

- Christie lives in Windham and her son is in Kindergarten. She has offered to help out with communications. So far, she has updated our website (made changes in the design, updated bios/pictures, and she will add any new events as they come up). She has created a WA instagram account: WindhamAcademy. There will be news and photos the instagram page. Feel free to follow it. She is working on improving our social media and she would like to send a flyer home most weeks to communicate to the parents the happenings of the school. This committee is looking for new members. If you love social media, taking pictures, or reaching out to the community to share the news of the school, please consider joining this committee. Email mailforchristie@gmail.com if you have photos (all pictures will be screened by teachers to make sure those students have



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permission to be on social media) or if you are interested in assisting on this committee.

Fundraising (Rebecca Pommet)

- A few teachers and parents are in the early stages in starting up this committee. There are two fundraisers currently going on: Art to Remember and the Raffle Calendar. The next meeting is June 17th 3:15pm in the middle modular (they will set goals for next year, look into events for the next school year, and reflect on how the calendar fundraising went). Anyone can attend this meeting.
- Fricchione adds an extra thank you to those taking this on to their busy day. Fundraising is very important for any charter school and we are proud of the teachers who took this on and we are thankful for the positive remarks from the community.
- Baker adds that so far this committee has raised almost enough money to outfit cubbies for the first floor with just these two fundraisers. That is amazing. Also, there was someone who reached out to us that has offered to run a golf tournament for the school. Now that we have this started, people will continue to donate and be involved. Every year will get better and better.

PTO (Trixy Gardner)

- Trixy is a co chair to the PTO and a parent of a student at WA. We invite all parents and staff to be active in this committee. The PTO plans events to bring families together and to recognize our teachers. Last month we had our meeting off site (at the Coach Stop in Londonderry) and we had a fun time reflecting on the year while having appetizers.
- The PTO released our 4 Mini Grants (\$75 for each classroom) that have been awarded to each classroom towards various classroom activities (2 Science Units, 1 Measurement Unit, 1 Field Trip Sponsorships). 2019-2020 Mini Grant Process is currently under review with more information to be released by the end of the school year.
- The PTO will supply each teacher with 1 folder per student for the coming Fall . These folders can be used by the teachers as take home folders, reading folders, math folders etc . Thank you to Lindsay Baker for doing the research to make this happen. This will be ready to go by this summer.
- We ask the board and the fundraising committee for all of us to be on the same page with our event calendars to prevent conflicting schedules. We want to be considerate when asking parents to donate money (avoid overlapping events).
- Next PTO meeting is set for Tuesday, May 14, 2019 at 6:30pm in Mrs. Miloro's Classroom (middle modular). New faces are always welcome especially since we only have about five parents active right now. Refreshments will be offered.
- Fricchione adds another thank you to this committee. They have done some amazing things so far and we appreciate it immensely.

vii. DIRECTORS UPDATE (Melinda Labo)



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- Classroom totals and waitlist

There will be 179 students enrolled for next year and we still have a waitlist. The office is still having daily tours and taking phone calls answering enrollment questions. We are excited parents want to learn all about the school and are showing their enthusiasm. Staff enjoys showing off the school especially since we have lots of noise coming from the construction of the building. In preparing for next year, since we will have more classrooms, we will need new teachers. The first interviewing team made up of parents and teachers met with many candidates. Those individuals who passed went on to round two made up of the board, director, and assistant director. We are happy to announce Rebecca Bouchard (here tonight) is officially hired as well as our teaching assistant Samantha Lemay both as first grade teachers.

- HR policy/on boarding discussion

We are happy to have HR mentoring WA. They met with Labo and Baker and they will be able to help us organize everything we already have in place.

- Uniform Update (Labo and Bedrick)

- After much research and talking with the staff and board at Windham Academy, we have officially decided on Land's End as the company we will use for next year's uniforms. Bedrick and Labo met with a local Land's End uniform representative, Cindy Turkington, and she was able to show off many styles, color options, and materials that the company has to offer. Land's End is already an established and trustworthy company that is used to provide uniforms to schools around the nation. The school will also get a small percentage of money that will go back to the school.
- The board has offered to "adopt a student in need" to help out a family that may need financial assistance when purchasing these uniforms.
- In short, students will be required to wear a top that has the Windham Academy logo on it (ie. t-shirt, polo, sweater, sweatshirt, jumper) with either tan khakis or black bottoms (leggings, skirt, pants). Students can wear anything for shoes/sneakers.
- Land's End will provide free hemming, repair clothes if there is a rip or tear, and parents can use any Land End's coupons or promotions when purchasing uniforms.

iv. TREASURERS UPDATE (Chris Baker)

March Summary

- Caitlin sent out detailed Financial Statements prior to this meeting for the board to review. To save on paper, she only printed out a summary, but if someone wants a copy, she will provide it to them. If you were not able to attend the meeting and would like to know the financials, please email a board member.
- A bulk of the money went towards modulars and making sure they were running. Also money went to supplies for teachers in the classrooms. Overall, WA is doing really well on a very limited budget. According to our statement, we will be getting through this first fiscal year on a surplus. We are still in good standing with **NHHEFA** and they will continue be a long term partner and will help us in the future.

Public Comment:



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Fricchione: We are very happy to announce that Al Sfeir and his wife are here today. Al Sfeir is our new friend and landlord of the school and he is just as excited as we are to get this building finished by the fall. He was introduced to us by J'aime Slocum (she helped us in creating our website and organizing our student enrollment and applications). Sfeir lives in Bedford with six children and he is happy to be working with us getting this building up and running in the short time frame and on our limited budget. He hopes to maybe expand our Windham Academy campus for the future.

v. BUILDING DESIGN OVERVIEW (Robert Hannon)

(Fricchione) When we started up this school, we knew we would need to start with the modulares. People said it couldn't be done, but we did it. The process to get a school approved can be extremely lengthy, but we were lucky that the process went very quickly. We enlisted in professionals, a talented architect, police and fire department etc. to make sure this could be the best school it could be. We had sent all of the plans off to the state for approval and there were only a few things we needed to change/move and we were able to get them fixed quickly so we could move on with the process. We introduce Robert Hannon. Hannon runs his own business, has 15-20 years experience of designing education buildings, and he has just started a family of his own. We are thankful that he's working with our school and working within our budget.

- Rob shows a sketch of what the building will look like (without modulares!) and describes in detail the new layout. He goes through layout of the interior of the building also noting that doors will automatically lock after school begins and that entrances will be secure. There is an administration (visitor) entrance and a separate one for students. The plan shows a new drop off path. Everything is up to code and everything is approved by the professionals. Hannon will make sure this happens and he will be on the site throughout the summer to help expedite process and answer any questions.
 - Nine classrooms are shown on the first floor which is 13,000 square feet. Cubbies will be located outside of the classroom downstairs. Six classrooms (not Kindergarten) will have smart boards in the room on the first floor for this coming year. The pink color is administration and blue color is classroom/student area. Administration will have separate locked bathrooms one for men and one for women that will require a key to open (not for students).
 - The second floor plan is finished and we will see how much of that will get done before the fall (keeping in mind the first floor needs to be completed for the school to open). There will be 8 classrooms upstairs. Cubbies will be inside on the second floor for our older students that may need a little more security with their personal belongings. Upstairs there is a large area that could be used for many purposes (theater, meetings etc).

Public Comment:

Question and Answer

How many students are approved for the entire building?

We are approved to have up to about 374. This will happen over time. If demand is what we think it is, we can revisit the state and look to expand and grow. If it is the right thing to do,



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parents are happy, community is on board, then we would love to expand. We average about 22 students per class. Our charter says about 23 per class, but we hope to keep our classrooms small. Every five years we get reviewed by the state and they will make sure we are on track and following our charter.

A family had just asked recently, what will be happening on the second floor when we are on the first floor and will this affect the learning of the students this coming fall.

We are going to demo and get all of the heavy lifting done this summer therefore large machines will not be around this coming fall. Framing will happen during the summer so it shouldn't be loud and will have a minimal effect on downstairs. Currently we are taking trees out for safety reasons (do not want trees to fall on the school and so no one can hide behind the trees).

Is there a space for a gymnasium?

No, not at this time, but upstairs there is a large enough space to run around and burn energy. We are still talking about how we can build a gymnasium (looking around at the property line). However, we have individuals coming in to help work with the kids to meet their physical education. Also, we need to focus on our charter which is being audited on being a stem school. We need to stay focused on our vision: Stem Prep and we want to make sure we have all of the amenities to follow what our charter is expected of us. YMCA came this year and took kids outside to meet physical education, we had an art program, we will continue music but next year we will be bringing in the choral piece. Mindfulness and Movement (strategies helping through stressful times) was a wonderful program this past year, but moving forward we will have robotics/coding instead. Our priority is stem and we need to focus on that. We are the only Elementary Stem school in New Hampshire, making us the best. We need to keep up the good work!

Will the walls be insulated so students can play musical instruments without distracting other students?

We will need to be creative when we have music classes as to have limited distraction. (For example, making sure classes aren't testing during practice times).

What kind of flooring in the building?

We are in the flooring evaluation stage. It might be carpet, tile, concrete, but we have not officially decided yet. We are exploring all of our options on materials to make sure it is cost effective.

One suggestion: create a pathway in the hallways for students to follow as they walk through the school.

What is our grades lineup?

We envisioned two classrooms per grade, but to meet demand we have modified this a bit. We need to determine how to move forward keeping in mind public demand. It all depends on filling up our classrooms. Our charter was approved k-8. If we have the space, that is the hope for our school. In this building, it is looking like we can fit k through 5th or 6th, but we are still looking at the possibility for expanding.

Classrooms for next year:

KKK,111,2,3,4



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What are we using our security grant on?

We will use it on cameras and giving teachers something (ID) to unlock doors. System for security for the doors and security cameras is first (very expensive). We are looking into all options for door handles as we want the latest technology. This is our first priority since safety is so important.

Is there a plan for the outside of the building?

We had a landscaper and we need to reconfigure the parking lot, put up a rock wall, change exterior to go with the color scheme of the school (Burgundy) and more lighting.

Baker- We want to send a big thank you to the parents for coming to these board of trustee meetings. Parent involvement is crucial. We would like all of our parents to be involved in one way or another. Please make an effort to come to these monthly board meetings and learn all about the latest of the school.

ix. ADJOURNMENT

Del Signore makes a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Baker.

Meeting adjourned at 6:44pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Meg Bedrick
Windham Academy Public Charter School Secretary