



Windham Academy Public Charter School

March Meeting Minutes

Windham Academy Public Charter School
Windham Town Hall N Lowell Rd. Windham, NH
Wednesday, March 13th, 2019
5:04pm

In Attendance:

Jim Fricchione (Chairman)	Karl Dubay (Vice chairman)	Melinda Labo (Director)
Meg Bedrick (Secretary)	Caitlin Blundell (CPA)	Trixy Gardner (PTO)
Chris Baker (Treasurer)	Jennifer Bragg (Teacher)	Deanne Adaschik (Teacher)
Patty Simard (Special Ed Coord.)	Rebecca Pomet (Teacher)	Jennifer Morneau (Teacher)
Kim Golden (Assistant Director)		
Vinny Del Signore (Board member -by phone)		

Parents: Zawaydeh family, Alessandro family, Cartwright family, and Brengola family.

Absent:

Sean Donahue (Board Member)

I. WELCOME / CALL TO ORDER

Jim Fricchione (Chairman) called the meeting to order on Wednesday, March 13th, 2019 at 5:04pm.

II. PUBLIC OPENING

a) Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

b) Approval of previous minutes

Approval of meeting minutes from February 13th, 2019.

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

On a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously. 3-3

III. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE (Fricchione)

- Building Negotiations (LOI and lease drafting)
 - We have an offer from someone who is looking to invest and help with the growth of school. There needs to be a new lease drafted to move forward- this discussion is happening now and negotiations are underway. Our attorneys are looking at these documents. Timing is going perfectly and we look forward to this partnership.



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- Baker is meeting with the plumbing, septic, and sprinkler companies and Dubai has been in contact with the fire marshal's office. All the designs for building have been done and those plans have been sent to the fire marshall. Our new owner will be ready to execute those plans immediately. Everything has been sent to the state and necessary parties. Fricchione and Baker will talk with the State to expedite things. Our new owner understands our urgency and timing challenge and wants to help work with board/ companies and help speed up the process.
- The grant we received for \$100,000 has an expiration date (this money will go towards school security). We may need to extend this.

- **Recognition and thanks**

Fricchione: This is a formal thank you to someone who has been doing an above and beyond job. This month it goes to the teachers and staff. The response from the community has been stellar. We are a new school, a new experiment, and everything you [staff] are doing is making a difference in our community. We, as a board, want to formally thank them for everything they have done and are doing.

- **Committee Development**

- We need a fundraising committee, more parents on our fabulous PTO, and facilities committee. We put out a call to parents through email to reach out to start up these committees. Fundraising committee is our first to start to build out. There are grants and events that we can do to raise money for our school, we just need to bring it together. We are looking for parents who are interested in chairing this committee (this could include a pancake breakfast, selling candy etc).
- Dubai: In our community there are lots of people who have stepped up. We need parents to step up and to have fun doing it. PTO is having fun uniting teachers and students and showing appreciation for staff, but we need a fundraising committee to have fun making money for our school. We can utilize teacher and students to help.
- If you are interested, please reach out to the board or director. Spring is here and this is a good time to start these new ideas. It should be something fun to raise money for the school. Baker can be the board liaison for that fundraising committee. This is important to get the resources to help make this school succeed. Without it, it would be hard to reach our potential. There needs to be a committee and a chair (they will be interviewed by the board). We are providing quality education for free, but think of what we can do with more money to help with the school. This can start with the parents. We are hopeful/optimistic that there are people out there to help, we are just waiting for those people to contact us.

IV. **TREASURERS UPDATE (Baker)**

February Financial Statements

- 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).



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- Fricchione suggests that since we are a 'non profit,' change the verbiage from "profit" to "surplus" instead. He compliments Baker and Blundell; this school is doing so well because them and the amount of detail and expertise they bring.
- Blundell goes over Financial highlights. No public comment.

Vote on 2019/2020 operating budget

Baker and Blundell went through the entire budget and tweaked it and once finished the document will become public. The good news, we are showing a surplus. We built this using the state funding and not relying on parent involvement (donations etc), but anything we can get will be helpful. They worked hard to add a special benefits package for the teachers/staff. Charter schools do not typically offer benefits, but we would like to offer our teachers something. It is important to us as a board to differentiate ourselves from the rest on how we are able to help our staff. The board got quotes from different insurance places, but where we ended, it was not responsible to offer those insurance benefits -it would take our surplus to be negative. The board has decided to include a QHRA (Qualified Health Reimbursement Account). Instead of offering a health plan, we will have a health reimbursement account that is tax free. To offer this in our second year is something to be proud of. There is another option that trying to exhaust and continue to look at all options to benefit the school. This is not something that a lot of charters do (this would go towards health for teachers). We are doing something more than other charter schools because our teachers deserve this. We wish we could do more!

If we vote on the budget, this money to teachers is already in place even if we find something better.

- Chris Baker makes motion to approve the Windham Academy fiscal year of 2020 proposed Operating Budget in its current form.
- Motion is seconded by Del Signore.
- Discussion: Dubay- There is a separate tab for employee savings account. The reason we [the board] are doing this, is to make sure we allocate for teachers to spend money within guidelines. If the staff wanted to buy something "stem" for the school, they can since it's in the budget. Dubay is impressed with this detail of the budget. It's clean, done to standards, and everything we need for the school is in there.

On a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously. 5-0

Grant strategy/ discussion

- We asked our grant writer to go out and find all the different types of grants and bring them to the board. If we get the right people on the fundraising committee, they can help our grant writer to do research on grants. Any grants we get is incredible and we are very thankful. There are many out there, we just need to apply for them.

V. PTO UPDATE (Trixy Gardner)

- The Tall and small dance was a success. Thank you to the Salem Boys and Girls Club; we could not have this event without their donation to the space. Their staff stepped in to dance with our kids and start up games- it was great! PTO put this on for fun and we were not looking to make any money, but we walked away with \$400 from the concession stand and the 50/50 raffle. All extra food went to the local fire department. We have lots of



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pictures and we would like to share them. PTO would like to thank the Boys and Girls club with a picture from the event.

- Teacher Luncheon. “We are so lucky to have our teachers/staff!” and it was themed with St. Patrick’s day decorations and lots of various foods. It was fun and amazing how many parents wanted to help and step in. Everyone came above and beyond to let teachers know how much we appreciate them. It was just one special lunch, but every day we appreciate them!
- April/May we are looking to go to the Alpaca farm. All teachers, students, and parents are invited and the thought is to pair it with an ice cream social.
- Raise Craze- This is a community service event. It is a platform to help us raise money. The students will commit to a community service (either one large one or a few smaller events) and anyone can donate. Afterwards, the kids go out and do the service they promised. Other schools have done this and we just need to read more about it before we commit to this. We will use this to help raise money for next year.
- PTO might help sponsor the ice cream social during the summer where students meet their teacher and classmates.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Patty Simard, Rebecca Pommet and Jen Morneau- They offer to start the fundraising committee. Maybe they’ll start with the 5k pair/ kids fun run (including water stops, concession stand, etc). They have other ideas such as a talent show, BBQ, movie nights, and bingo. They can get together and talk about it in detail to come up with ideas and send it over to the board. Dubay suggests a mini golf tournament idea for fundraising. Fricchione says “yes,” and “thank you.” They will start a text thread or private facebook group to get the communication started. They are hoping other parents will join in.
2. Deanne Adaschik and Patty Simard reached out to Girls On The Run. This is a program for 3rd and 4th graders. It is a non profit program in which reinforces team players, positivity, exercise, and self respect.

VII. DIRECTORS UPDATE (Labo)

- **Curriculum Committee Update**

Del Signore, Donahue, and Miloro have taken on learning a new curriculum and eventually they will need parents on committee to help research it. Labo was sick and was unable to coordinate the last scheduled meeting, but it will be rescheduled.

- **Positive budgeted changes for 2019**

- Kim Golden has been amazing and we need to thank you. We are so happy to be able to offer a promotion to her. Instead of ‘business manager,’ her new title is ‘assistant director.’ Golden is a Superwoman and we are so proud to have you. You deserve this!
- Labo originally thought she could also be the special ed coordinator along with being the director. In a charter school, that coordinator needs to reach out to each town that has a student on a plan. They have many meetings in many towns. Patty Simard has not only taken on this huge responsibility, but she, like Golden, is running around and taking on multiple tasks. We are offering a promotion to Patty



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Simard and changing her title to Special Education Director. Labo is proud of our school and very happy to offer these two promotions.

- **Teacher Workshop day**

Yesterday was a teacher workshop day. Normally in the past, teachers leave feeling beaten up and feeling exhausted. Instead she watched staff walk out feeling happy and that they got a lot done. The staff at WA is incredible. The PTO is great- they have the teachers feeling supported. That atmosphere is positive and you feel it in the air. It is a collective group of positive thinkers and believers. Thank you to PTO for today. It's not just a lunch, it is thrown together amazingly and it was better than expected.

- **Hiring**

- Start with hiring two full time first grade teachers and one fourth grade teacher. We will start an interview committee of teachers and parents to start the first round and then the second round is the board and director/ assistant director.
- Labo needs to fill our reading special tues/thurs hire 7 hrs a week. If they are part time and Labo interviews them and likes them, Labo can hire them without the approval of the board. If they are a full time employee, then the board will also interview them. As long as a member of the board is aware, part time employees do not need to be interviewed.
- Baker makes a motion to give Mindy Labo the flexibility to hire a part time teacher/staff member, but any full time (permanent) employee that has interaction with students on a daily basis, then they would need to be interviewed and approved by the majority of the board before the offer can be extended.
- Dubay seconds the motion.
- Discussion. Del Signore - the interviewee needs to understand after being interviewed by current staff, they will still need to meet and be approved by the board before they get the position. Fricchione- this is what we've been doing thus far and they have been met by Baker and Labo. Labo can email board if there is a new hire, but not need to be met by board if they are part time. (30hrs or more is full time)

On a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously. 5-0

- **Busing/ SAU updates (Dubay/ Labo)**

Someone actually designed the route and drove this to figure out timing to be brought up to the SAU. We want to improve bussing quality of service. We have issued the route map and have done statistics and we are trying to move from the existanting plan to a different more efficient one. The current plan could use some tweaks. We would like to have our own bus and not to transfer from Golden Brook. We would ask for two busses if possible. We want to be professional and take our bussing maps and propose two WA only busses dedicated to our students to the bus company. Having a WA only bus may eliminate or reduce the stress for our students, shorten bus ride times, and eliminate having children looking 'different' if WA students are wearing uniforms. This report will be sent out within a week or so. We need to schedule something as soon as possible. Meeting will happen before April vacation. Labo will reach out to the bussing company and the SAU. We just need our definitive proposal in order to approach the district and SAU.



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- **Uniforms- concepts, concerns and timing.**

Labo would like options on where to purchase the uniform from (instead of making every family pay a potentially high cost from one seller). If parents can find something affordable then parents can choose where to buy. One option is instead of uniforms, we have a dress code with choices of specific colors and styles. Fricchione wants to make sure our Logo is on the uniforms. It would be something wonderful for our parents to have and help unite our school even more. Dubay says, this is an academy of excellence and it is not forcing children to wear ties and skirts, instead maybe you can pick chinos one of two colors, shirts pick from the specific colors etc. This won't be formal and uncomfortable, instead there is strength and a bond in being a part of this academy. Fricchione says we can have a workshop to talk in more detail and parents can also voice their opinions. Bedrick sent out an email to board of some dress code options. Trixy Gardner adds in to keep in mind sensory concerns and make sure kids feel comfortable (no tags etc). Bedrick adds, we have tried to contact embroidme and they are not putting up the spirit wear that was discussed after multiple attempts. Maybe we find an alternative company and coordinate this with our uniform options.

The board recognizes that uniforms may be difficult for some to afford. Each board member could sponsor a student's uniforms for the 2019/2020 school year.

- **Calendar**

Labo has completed the calendar for next school year. She hands out a copy to all in attendance. The State needs this to be approved and read through, although the Color key did not come out on the copy that was printed. Labo followed the Windham School District Calendar this year to accommodate their schedule and keep busing consistent. Snow days are not included in this mainly because we have blizzard bags. Dubay suggests changing the word 'recess' to the word 'vacation' instead.

- Bedrick makes a motion to approve the 2019/2020 calendar seconded by Baker.
- Discussion: Karl would like to tweak the calendar verbiage and add in the color key. Fricchione adds this is the same calendar as local district except for one day in February.

On a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously. 5-0

VIII. Public Comment

NONE

IX. ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 6:54pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Meg Bedrick
Windham Academy Public Charter School Secretary



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