Meeting Date: August 16, 2016

Time: 6:45 PM

Location: 7 Henry Clay Drive, Merrimack, NH

Voting Board Members in Attendance:

Bill Spinelli (Chairman)

Peter Bonaccorsi (Acting Vice Chairman)

Jenny Hitzeman (Parent Representative)

John Keicher (Treasurer)

Kim Rivers (Director)

Rebecca Fredrickson (Director)

Tom Tyler (Secretary)

Absent:

None.

Attending Gate City Staff:

Karin Cevasco (School Director)

Stephanie Fritz (Teacher)

Amy Savoie (Teacher)

Attending Public:

Jenny Hitzeman (joined the board early in the meeting).

Mary Sparks

Hillary Henderson

Colleen Rice

Amoy Peno

Donald Lambert

Adam Fredrickson

Rebecca Fredrickson (joined the board early in the meeting).

Stacey LaVaelley Lambert

Charisa Martin

Stephen Martin

Kim Luongo

Andrea Srinivas

Sonya Cullen

Geoff Skelton

Elizabeth Clark

Sue Sullivan

**Quorum**: 5 of 5 voting members were in attendance at the start of the meeting.

Meeting called to order at 6:53 PM.

Public Comments

Hillary Henderson read a letter that she had sent to the BoT by email.

Bill Spinelli read a letter sent by email to Daniele Preston.

Bill Spinelli mentioned that he had responded to Daniele’s

Colleen Rice spoke to echo the concerns voiced in the

Jenny Hitzeman relayed further concerns from parents.

Stephen Martin asked if the Board felt this kind of turnover is “normal.” He said it seems “the train is heading somewhere, maybe off the tracks,” and described people as being “on the fence” and “not sure if they wanted to continue this journey” [with the school]. He wanted assurance that “things are going to change.” If we don’t understand what’s being done.

Peter Bonaccorsi acknowledged discussed challenges

Jack Cullen spoke requested that we speak in generalities.

Peter Bonaccorsi “I have an open mind as to what we have to do to move forward.”

Stephen Martin: The consensus is that it is the leadership. “Karin, I Love your vision. We are here because of your vision. There is too much responsibility on your shoulders … You [Karin] deserve props. You can be the visionary, but someone else needs to be the implementer.”

Adam Fredrickson spoke up in disagreement. “Nobody has worked harder then Karin, for four years before this was a school … This is not going to fail, and she’s not going to be stepping away.” He spoke of the nature, passion and effort that goes into starting a public charter school.

Bill Spinelli.

Andrea Srinivas wanted to add “a positive energy” to the board, asking people on the fence to reconsider, citing the board’s support to change to a single-grade classroom.

Donald Lambert made an analogy of Fuller Oil, citing how it was brought down “causing a spin.”

Jack Cullen indicated that he understood the need for confidentiality, but noted that not saying anything.

Colleen Rice acknowledge that problems don’t have an easy, automatic fix.

Hillary Henderson noted that “We’ve been trying to get parents to attend the meeting,” and noted that a teacher resigning.”

Kim Luongo said the extreme caring of teachers at this school has been encouraging. She noted getting inconsistent bits of communication from different teachers, noting a need to streamline communications coming from the school itself, rather than relying on teachers.

Stephanie Fritz (Teacher) spoke about the challenges of selecting a teaching job, balancing pay vs. passion. She noted, “I pride myself on knowing that integrating arts into the curriculum is something I can do well.” I like the mission of the school, and I like the people I teach with, and I love the kids.

Rebecca Fredrickson said she appreciated the passion of the parents that are here. She noted the school does try to “do more with less,” and that it is challenging.

Elizabeth Clark spoke in defense of the Facebook page, saying it is more positive then negative.

Approval of Minutes

8:01 PM

MOTION (Bonaccorsi/Rivers): Motion to approve the minutes as amended with two minor corrections. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

John Keicher presented the financials. He noted, “To say it’s been busy would be an understatement,” citing an ongoing audit, budget turbulence, etc. We have $11,000 in the bank. “Financially we are still good, but we are watching it real close. We’re in the black but a shade of gray relating to comfort zone.”

Bill noted we balanced the budget, assuming a worst-case scenario of losing 15 students.

Stephen Martin suggested we do another “letter of intent” to parents, because he was aware of parents who had decided they were not returning but had not notified the school. He noted, “I’m on your side.”

MOTION (Bonaccorsi/Tyler): Motion to approve the financials as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION (Tyler/Bonaccorsi): Motion to approve the assignment of Jenny Hitzeman to the Board of Directors as the Parent. Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION (Tyler/Bonaccorsi): Motion to re-appoint Rebecca Fredrickson to the Board as a Director. Motion passed unanimously.

Friends Committee Update

Jenny Hitzeman got right to work, announcing the start of the Friends Committee, which is the PTO for our school

Curriculum Committee

Kim Rivers discussed the Curriculum Committee getting started.

Karin Cevasco (School Director) noted that a the position of special education case manager, funded by the Nashua school district, should help meet special education needs. She noted that the law forces a collaboration

Nashua has funded this position.

Employee Handbook Updates

Tom Tyler summarized the Board of Trustees Self Evaluation.

It was decided to defer voting on Policy Manual updates to give new board members time to review them.

MOTION (Bonaccorsi/Hitzeman): Motion to accept the resignations of Nicole Jones and Linda Vaudreuil, with regrets. Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION (Bonaccorsi/Hitzeman): Motion to confirm the hiring of Jennifer Berube for the position of 3rd grade teacher. Motion passed unanimously.

Employee Handbook Updates

Karin discussed updates to the Employee Handbook, fielding questions and noting clarifications requested by Peter Bonaccorsi.

MOTION (Bonaccorsi/Rivers): Motion to accept the updated Employee Handbook as amended during the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Director’s Report

Karin Cevasco delivered the Director’s Report.

MOTION (Bonaccorsi/Rivers): Motion to accept the resignation of Denyelle Klayton. Motion passed unanimously.

Andrea Srinivas suggested the board establish a protocol to receive parent feedback, and the need to capture rich information (not just).

MOTION: (Bonaccorsi/Tyler): Motion to enter Non-Public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (c) Personnel. Motion passed by roll call vote. Entered Non-Public session at 9:28 PM.

Exited Non-Public Session at 10:21 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 10:23 PM.