



# November 2023 Board Meeting Minutes

## LJA Board Agenda November 2023

Tuesday, November 21 6:15 – 8:15 PM, 1550 Summit Ave Saint Paul MN 55105

### Members

Ann Henderson

Paul Regan

Lisa Alter Capell

Anna Robinson, Leadership Rep., *ex officio*

Monica Brown

Heather Shore

Daniel Church

### Guests

Lizzie Forshee

Cece Watkins, LJA STEM Teacher; EE Coordinator

Amanda Dahlke, Dieci School Finance

Cindy Leines and Katie Fuller, CEL Marketing, PR, Design

### **Agenda**

1. Welcome
  - a. Meeting called to order at 6:15 p.m.
  - b. Saima needed to resign position on the Board due to a new job that requires her to travel during board meetings.
2. Public Comment
  - a. None.
3. Approval of Agenda
  - a. Motion to approve: Lisa
  - b. Second: Monica
  - c. Discussion: None.
  - d. 6 Yes Votes, Motion approved.
4. Approval of [October 2023 Meeting Minutes](#)
  - a. Motion to approve: Monica
  - b. Second: Lisa
  - c. Discussion: No changes.
  - d. 6 Yes Votes, Motion approved.
5. Financials- Dan and Amanda

■ October 2023 Financial Dashboard.pptx.pdf ■ LJA October 2023 Financial Packet.pdf

■ LJA October 2023 Detailed IS.pdf

- a. Dan gave the update. Revenue and expenses are both a little behind schedule. Fund balance up slightly. Revenue based on 115 students. Enrollment currently at 114.
  - b. LJA was overpaid by MDE last year. Have this factor included in the budget if requested back by MDE.
  - c. Still waiting on the employee retention credit.
  - d. Board members discussed the implications of meal forms being filled out less now that meals are free and how that might impact the budget.
  - e. Approval of October Financials
    - i. Motion to approve: Heather
    - ii. Second: Lisa
    - iii. Discussion: Provided above.
    - iv. 6 Yes Votes, Motion approved.
6. Board Education
- a. Annual Financial Training by Dieci School Finance provided by Amanda
    - i. Overview of UFARS codes.
    - ii. Schools use modified accrual accounting.
    - iii. Main source of revenue for LJA is state funding.
    - iv. Different funding rate for 5/6th graders and 7/8th graders (20% higher).
    - v. Lease aid overview.
    - vi. Special ed funding is driven by expenses.
    - vii. Federal funding
      1. Title Funds
      2. Special education funding
      3. Some remaining ESSER funds.
    - viii. Food service costs reimbursed by federal and state funds.
    - ix. Other local funding from grants, donations and miscellaneous revenue.
    - x. Internal controls to prevent fraud. Multiple people involved in the process.
    - xi. Use of public funds considerations. Common misuse: staff appreciation, conflicts of interest.
    - xii. Fund Balance Policy overview.
    - xiii. Fund balance target, for LJA it's 20%.
7. CEL update on marketing progress- Cindy and Katie provided the update.
- a. Started in 2021 with LJA.
  - b. Contract goals for 21-22 and 22-23 school years.
    - i. Increase awareness of LJA. CEL thinks this has been achieved.
    - ii. Position LJA as one of the top charter schools in the St. Paul area. This has improved, but CEL MDE Report Card and Online Reviews could still improve.
    - iii. Improve communications with internal and external audiences. Spark notes and Ambassador Communications.
    - iv. Increase Enrollment.
    - v. Retain 80% of scholars. Achieved.
    - vi. Increase social media following. Achieved by LJA staff.
    - vii. Increase search findability by appearing on page 1 of Google.
    - viii. Improve strategic communication.
  - c. Contract goals for 23-24
    - i. Onboarding of a new part time enrollment marketing hire.
    - ii. Update content or design of existing assets (up to 3). Waiting to be identified by LJA.
    - iii. Blog or SEO writing. 1 left to do.
    - iv. More digital advertising. Scaled back some to save for advertising during open enrollment.

- d. Social media.
    - i. FB and Instagram reach have both increased over 150%.
    - ii. Focus on starting in 5th grade.
    - iii. Recommendations. Add reels/video.
  - e. Competitive positioning.
    - i. Organic content management done by LJA not CEL.
    - ii. CEL developed editorial calendars and social media training.
    - iii. Look at online reviews of schools to compare.
    - iv. Look at the Minnesota Report Card to compare with other schools.
  - f. Website Traffic.
    - i. Up 5% in the last year.
    - ii. Bounce rate is down (good thing).
    - iii. Increase in unique visitors and page views.
    - iv. Direct traffic is the biggest source (probably current families), Google search next.
  - g. Comparing website leads with spending. Spending before open enrollment is the best use of funds.
  - h. Recommends tactics:
    - i. Continue organic social content.
    - ii. Consistent branding
    - iii. Maintain website accuracy and scrub outdated content.
    - iv. Continue with lead tracking, tours, enrollment. First engagement is key.
    - v. Continue building community partnerships
    - vi. Develop student/staff highlights
    - vii. Create video assets,
    - viii. Review surveys and make changes accordingly.
  - i. Questions
    - i. Did you create the Spark notes templates? Yes.
    - ii. Mobile view is not responsive for cell phones so the text is small.
    - iii. Can Spark Care be on our website?
    - iv. Videos, can we start using this more in our social media?
    - v. How can branding be communicated? What is our messaging? Think, Dream, Do. Sparks. "Scholar" instead of "student." What is the school culture? How do we show that for visitors as they walk in the door?
8. New policy review and approval; [w LJA Fundraising Policy.docx](#) [w LJA Gift Policy.docx](#)
- a. Motion to approve: Lisa
  - b. Second: Monica
  - c. Discussion: Paul provided background on drafting of policies. Osprey Wilds had identified the need for Fundraising and Gift Policies for LJA. Anna provided some examples of policies from other schools. Gift policy is needed to avoid any conflict of interest that could arise from gifts given to the school, staff, or board members. Fundraising policy provides guidelines for what types of fundraising that can occur.
  - d. 6 Yes Votes, Motion approved
9. Committee Reports
- a. Leadership Team Review Committee
    - i. The committee is finishing up the draft of the Leadership Team Review Report. Will work on scheduling a meeting with the Leadership Team in December to go over the report. Will then provide the report to the Board at the January meeting.
10. Leadership Update- Anna
- a. Enrollment at 115. One tour today.
  - b. Working on lease negotiations with Macalester.
  - c. Working on finding a location for the winter music concert.

- d. Working with SPPS on finding a solution to a potential busing issue next year due to the nearby SPPS middle school being relocated for next year during a construction project.
  - e. Working on next year's budget with Amanda.
  - f. Give to the Max collected over \$3000.
  - g. Leadership retreat planned for December 6th.
11. Environmental Learning Plan-Cece Watkins
- a. Plan is now in a spreadsheet version.
  - b. 5 indicators: Awareness, Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills and Action
  - c. Discussion about communicating work done under the ELP.
12. Heather reported that Spark Care is planning a fashion/art event for fundraising and to raise awareness of LJA. May be bringing this to the Leadership Team and Board.

Motion to adjourn: Lisa

Second: Monica

Discussion: None

6 Yes Votes, Motion approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.