Board Meeting Minutes

Date: Aug, 18, 2020

Time: 6:15

**LJA Promise: Laura Jeffrey Academy provides an environment where students are free – to explore their potential, discover their brilliance and develop their intellect.**

**In Attendance:** Sarah Carter

**Virtual Attendance through Interactive TV:** Angi Faiks, Amanda Moon, Brenna Barrett, Sarah Carter, Sonia Feder-Lewis, Morgan Williams, Kate Agnew, Sean Quinn

**Ex officio:** Anna Robinson, Leadership Representative

**Secretary:** Angi Faiks,

**Guests:** Jacob Bonde, Leadership Team

**Absent:**

**Board Practices:** Duty of Care, Duty of Loyalty, Duty of Obedience

**Agenda**

1. Welcome 6:15
   1. Welcome Kate, Sean, Brenna and Amanda
   2. Roll call and introductions of all board members.
2. Public Comment 6:26
   1. No comments
3. Approval of Agenda 6:27
   1. Morgan moved to approve.
   2. Kate seconded.
   3. No objections or abstentions
   4. Agenda approved unanimously by 8 votes.
4. Approval of June 2020 Minutes 6:28
   1. Question from Amanda, financials section. Board agreed to make an update to share that a staff member being treasurer has been seen before.
   2. Morgan moves to approve with the change.
   3. Sonia seconded.
   4. 6 yes votes, 2 abstentions.
   5. Minutes were approved by 8 votes, abstentions are counted as yes.
5. Approval of August 2020 Special Meeting Minutes 6:32
   1. Verified a few details in the minutes together as a board.
   2. Kate moved to approve.
   3. Morgan seconded.
   4. No objections or abstentions.
   5. Agenda approved unanimously by 8 votes.
6. Financials – Robert and Morgan 6:36
   1. Regarding approvals of financials, Morgan shared that financials are looking good.
      1. Revenue projections are normal. Enrollment is at 84 which is normal for LJA.
      2. LJA can pay the bills.
      3. Nothing has been borrowed in line of credit.
      4. Cash flow is good.
   2. Robert introduced himself
      1. Agreed that financials are good.
      2. Audit improved fund balance significantly, by $116,000
         1. Some donations and grants.
         2. Spent less money than budgeted.
      3. Biggest concern is for special education to meet the maintenance of effort.
      4. Sonia asked for explanation of maintenance of effort. We are required to spend at least as much as we did from the previous year. We may need to explain our current status to the Minnesota Department of Education. Robert is working with LJA SPED director on this.
      5. PPP loan is $209,000. We can ask to have it “forgiven” towards payroll, rent and facilities. We cannot get it forgiven for things we are being reimbursed for. We have 24 instead of 8 weeks to get it forgiven. We will do all we can to get the maximum amount reimbursed.
      6. Amanda asked how Maintenance of Effort is calculated and Robert explained.
      7. Sarah asked what happens beyond the 24 weeks?
         1. Robert answered that we can treat it as a 1% loan if not forgiven
         2. LJA may like to have that loan. We can discuss that option if we wish.
         3. But the goal is to get it forgiven.
         4. Our understanding is that anything that is not used will be sent back but our goal is to get some forgiven and the remaining amount would be a loan.
      8. Anna asked about our fund balance.
         1. Robert shared that LJA was struggling financially the last couple of years. We made significant changes and that changed our bottom line:
            1. Using Saint Paul Public School bussing.
            2. Teacher led model with no executive director salary costs.
            3. Low interest loans.
            4. Responsible internal operations.
            5. Renegotiation of our lease with Macalester which we will need to do again soon.
         2. Anna thanks everyone for their efforts, especially Robert and Fahima.
         3. Robert shared that authorizer wants 20-25% of your budget in your fund balance, ideally. We are still not there but we have made great strides.
         4. Sean shared that at his recent board training, 20% is what they stated as the goal.
      9. Approval of July financials
         1. Sonia moved to approve.
         2. Amanda seconded.
         3. No objections or abstentions
         4. Financials approved unanimously by 8 votes.
      10. Kate asked, how often do we look at financials?
          1. Sarah said monthly and Robert shared that there is a financial committee that reviews in more detail.
7. Lease Aid Application 6:58
   1. Robert shared that this is something we apply for every year.
   2. Each board member needs to sign a conflict of interest form and the chair also signs some additional forms. Please read it carefully.
   3. Anna will email the form to everyone to sign. Electronically is fine. Return to Anna and she will forward to Robert.
   4. Sean asked who we apply to for the Lease Aid Application
      1. Robert answered MDE
      2. 90% of the lease should be reimbursed due to our lower negotiated amount.
   5. Sean asked about the sequence of payment and reimbursement.
      1. Robert shared that we pay Macalester and get reimbursed by MDE. The hold back is 10%. It used to be closer to 40% years ago. Legislation has changed in ways that are more supportive to charter schools.
8. Leadership update – Anna 7:05
   1. Enrollment update
      1. Jacob shared that the enrollment is at 84, which is good.
      2. We have about 5 pending applications.
      3. A few remaining questions about a few returning students.
      4. Kate asked about students who are leaving.
         1. Kate asked if the records request was the official way of determining who had moved on/enrolled..
            1. Jacob answered we yes
         2. Kate asked if Is there an exit interview about why students are leaving
            1. Jacob and Anna answered yes, in more informal ways. It is an area of growth to further develop this process.
            2. Brenna shared that in her experience she was not asked about some transition plans that her family was considering.
      5. Sonia asked about enrollment in 5th grade
         1. Jacob shared we have 9 confirmed and 2 pending.
   2. Distance learning update (Anna)
      1. No new updates since last week’s meeting
      2. Generally positive feedback, no negative feedback.
      3. Staff working on professional development plans and strategy for distance learning.
      4. Approval of 2020-21 Personnel Manual (document attached; changes highlighted/comments)
         1. Board members shared they did not have access to the document.
         2. Access was provided during the meeting and the document was reviewed.
         3. Sarah asked if there were areas where we should particularly focus.
            1. Anna shared:

Throughout the document many logicistial things previously handled by Cassandra were handed to Leadership team.

Page 12, updates to dress code.

Page 15, had to write an e-learning policy and update. So, if there is a snow day we go to distance learning.

Page 17, removed a link to a form.

Incorporated the Safe Time language into the document.

Date change staff for relicensure.

Updated percentage on retirement fund to reflect accuracy.

* + - 1. Sonia asked if we should delay this conversation until there was time for more thorough review.
         1. Anna said ideally we need it for new staff.
      2. Amanda asked if we could vote by email?
         1. Sarah answered no.
      3. Morgan moves to approve the changes in the manual.
      4. Sonia seconds.
      5. 6 yes votes, 1 abstention, lost Brenna on Zoom during vote.
      6. Manual was approved by 7 votes, abstentions are counted as yes.
  1. Approval of 2020-21 Student/Family Handbook (document attached; additional change(s) may occur)
     1. Board members did have access to this document. Sarah will make sure all the permissions in all LJA files are accurate.
     2. Anna shared the document and walked us through it.
     3. Sarah asked if LJA scholars need to wear the uniform during distance learning.
        1. Anna said no.
     4. Sonia asked about other policies about on screen appearance.
        1. Anna said those will be addressed as they come up. Not many concerns. Will continue to help students and families navigate Zoom, etc.
     5. Amanda asked about the device policy? Is it a problem and how do you manage it?
        1. Anna answered that was not a significant problem for her and Morgan shared that in 5th and 6th grade they worked with families to address this as best as they can.
     6. Anna shared that when in person, students will carry backpacks to minimize moving back and forth the lockers.
     7. Amanda asked about school personnel policy and we updated the wrong word from “day” to “time.”
     8. Anna shared that they updated uniform policies to be more flexible and inclusive.
        1. Morgan asked if we are going away from black and khaki bottoms?
           1. Anna and Jacob said yes, they are offering more flexibility.
        2. Kate asked about the goal for the regulation “4 fingers above the knee” guideline.
           1. Jacob shared that the goal is to provide useful guidelines and to be supportive of the scholars.
           2. Kate shared that some of her independent reading on this subject discusses not over-sexualizing students by focusing on things like skirt length.
           3. Anna shared that this is a remnant of a policy that has been there for a long time that has been discussed and debated repeatedly. Anna shared that any policing of girls dressing is problematic. Trying to strike a balance in the policy.
           4. Morgan shared that as teachers, they spend a good deal of their day focusing on uniforms and the goal is to not do this.
           5. Kate shared she would like to spend more time thinking about this in the future.
           6. Amanda shared that as a mother, this change in policy is a good transition for the scholars and she sees it as helpful language, if not perfect.
           7. Sonia shared that in some liberal private schools policise for “no underwear showing” for everyone, regardless of gender.
           8. Anna shared that our uniform tops help with managing some of this. Bottoms become more problematic.
           9. Anna shared that Lizzie was going to add graphic to the handbook that explains MDH decision making tree related to staying home for Covid.
        3. Morgan moved to approve the updates.
        4. Amanda seconded.
        5. 7 yes votes and one abstention.
        6. Handbook was approved by 8 votes, abstentions are counted as yes.

1. Board Member Assurances (Anna) 7:44
   1. Exhibit L did not get shared before the meeting. Anna shared on screen and will share via email with the other form.
   2. Board members need to sign it and return to Anna, signed. Electronic signature is fine.
2. Building Company Board (Anna) 7:46
   1. The LJA building company has a board and we need to update information about it.
   2. Robert shared that the Building Company has been around since the school started.
      1. It was created to get a loan for building renovations.
      2. We had a 10 year loan that has been paid off.
      3. No current reason for the Building Company to do anything.
      4. Current thought is to keep it open, just in case it is needed. Robert can do the tax filing. And, the Building Company board should have an annual meeting.
   3. Sarah shared that uncertainty of Macalester and our lease regarding our building, it is wise to keep this going.
      1. Anna and Robert shared that we need 3 board members, and perhaps ex-officio.
      2. We need to add info to our audit.
      3. Bylaws say at least 2 of the elected members should be LJA board members. One member has 1 year, others 2 years, and successors 2 years.
      4. Some discussion about who votes and how for board members for the (currently inactive) Building Company. We do need to elect new members.
      5. Sarah wondered if we need to have a full LJA vote on these members.
      6. Sean suggested that we consider disbanding this corp and start again with new bylaws.
      7. Robert said that could work, if worth it. No need on Robert’s part to keep it going.
      8. Sarah wondered if we should bring it to Osprey Wild for consultation before making a decision.
      9. Decided to not disband at this time and spend some time thinking about it and learning more.
      10. Sarah proposed that we reach out to Osprey Wild about our interpretation of the bylaws and bring it back to the board for further conversation. Anna Viet-Carter, Jason Fritts and Anna Robinson will be listed for the Building Company for last year’s audit.
      11. Morgan moved to approve this plan.
      12. Sean seconded
      13. 7 yes votes.
      14. Plan was unanimously approved by 7 votes.
3. Board Retreat Scheduling & Topics (Sarah) 8:11
   1. Sarah will send a Doodle poll for possible dates.
   2. Financial training will be led by Robert.
   3. Will look at areas our authorizer suggested we improve upon as a board.
   4. Please send ideas for other topics.
      1. Kate asked for some previous retreats for inspiration.
      2. Kate wondered about strategic planning
         1. Anna shared that this is currently in the hands of the Leadership Team and George Sands.
         2. Covid has slowed this process down.
4. Board Self-Evaluation (Sarah) 8:14
   1. Sara asked if people interested in this?
   2. Sonia suggested that if we do this, have it before the retreat.
   3. Angi wondered if there are people out there who might be good guests to bring to help us assess ourselves for self-improvement.
   4. Sarah would like help in finding a tool.
   5. Kate wondered if Osprey Wild might have some suggestions. Sarah will find out.
5. Adjournment of the meeting 8:25
   1. Morgan moved to adjourn the meeting.
   2. Kate seconded.
   3. 7 yes votes.
   4. Meeting adjournment approved unanimously by 7 votes.
   5. Meeting is adjourned at 8:28pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by Angi Faiks