Board Meeting Minutes

December 17, 2019

Time: 6:15 pm

**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:** Danielle Jones-Glaser, Bryant Noice , Angi Faiks, Morgan Williams, Sarah Carter, Sonia Feder-Lewis, Anna Robinson, Jason Fritts, Anna Veit-Carter, Fahima Aziz

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

**Secretary:** Danielle Jones-Glaser

**Guests:** Robert Procaccini, Dieci School Finance

Lizzie Forshee, Leadership Team

Sarah Drake - Parent 1

Nicole Stills - Parent 2

James (Jim) Eichten, Malloy Montague Karnowski, Radosevich & Co, Public Accountants

**Absent:** Mimi Mohamud

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

1. **Welcome/Introductions**

* Conversation duration: 6:15 - 6:15
* Anna Veit-Carter announces that the meeting will be delayed by a few minutes to allow for late arrivals

1. **Approval of December agenda**

* Conversation duration: 6:18-6:20 pm
* Lizzie would like to modify the agenda to include adjustments to the size of the leadership committee
* Also need to include approval of revised budget
* Sonia motions to approve the modified agenda
  + - Fahima seconds
      * No objections or abstentions
      * December agenda approved unanimously by voice vote

1. **Public Comment**

* Conversation duration: 6:20-7:11 pm
* Two parents from one grade level are present and share their families' experiences at LJA:
  + First parent said their child loved last year and described her experience as amazing. She loved the teachers and the community and the support provided for kids who needed it.
  + This year has been different including regular stories of classroom disruption Parent believes that it may be that the move away from a year round schedule has resulted in less time during the day and year for education
  + Other concerns are that the extra-curricular math program is fee-based instead of being open to all and that because of the compacted schedule, scholars now need to choose between club activities.
  + Parent also has concerns about sharing busses with Ramsey Middle School
  + Their ask of the board is to 1) review and assess bussing schedule, 2) reconsider year round schedule, 3) review discipline policy and enforcement
  + Both of their daughters have asked to look at other schools
* Leadership Team and teachers who are present respond to the parent's concerns:
  + Advisors and leadership team members review the policies and processes that are in place or being developed to address the disciplinary issue. Restorative justice involves a long term process of trying to help the student work with their family to resolve the situation. Minnesota state law has specific requirements that must be adhered to in situations such as these
* Extended discussion of LJA policies and how they are working to meet the needs of all scholars.
* Safe spaces are provided for students to step out of any situation during the day.
* The discipline and restorative justice policies will be addressed later in the meeting as time allows

1. **Approval of November Minutes**

* Conversation duration: 7:11-7:18 pm
* Fahima requests correction to details of Macalester conversation:
  + Conversations were with the Vice President of Finance (David Wheaton) and not the president
  + Macalester sent amendment to lease via regular mail (not email)
  + Lease reduction amount should be shown as ~50% instead of 50%
* Bryant motions to approve November meeting minutes after the issues are addressed
  + - Morgan seconds
      * No objections or abstentions
      * November minutes are approved unanimously by voice vote

1. **Presentation of Audit**

* Conversation duration: 7:18 - 7:33
* Annual audit is required by law to be completed by 12/31
* Jim has been part of the auditing team since the school's founding
* The results of the audit show no deficiencies in internal controls for financial reporting and no issues of noncompliance with Minnesota laws and regulations.
  + Per Jim, the audit report for charter schools usually includes findings of non-compliance or organizational deficiencies so it is notable that LJA had no findings in the audit.
* Board and Jim discuss the building company write offs and the impact of that on overall fund balance.
* Actual revenue and expenditures were close to budget in FY2019. This shows that we're getting good information and have the right processes and procedures in place (this is the main objective of the audit)
* Jason moves to accept the audit findings
  + - Sarah seconds
    - No objections or abstentions
    - Audit is formally accepted by the board

1. **Budget Review and Approval**

* FY2020 Revised Budget
  + Conversation duration: 7:34 - 7:46
  + The budget has been updated to reflect a more conservative estimate of fewer students than actual to ensure that revenues are sufficient to cover expenses
  + Donations / grants only reflect actual dollars that have been received this FY
  + Building write off is included in this revised budget as well
  + The lease reduction for FY2020 is also included
  + Net result of the new budget is a positive nominal contribution to the fund balance
  + ADM is the basis for the majority of revenue and this is updated several times during the year
  + Bryant motions to approve
    - Fahima seconds
    - No objections or abstentions
    - The revised FY2020 budget is approved
* Financial Dashboard
* Conversation duration: 7:46-7:50 pm
* Current document for board review does not include lease adjustments
* LJA revenue is currently behind target (36% vs 42%)
* LOC application will need to be updated to address the upcoming cash shortfall due to standard 10% holdback policy by the state and the low fund balance
* Current enrollment is 84.
* Fahima motions to approve financials
  + Bryant seconds
  + No objections
  + No abstentions
  + Financials are unanimously approved by voice vote
* Line of Credit Application
  + Conversation duration: 7:50 pm-7:54
  + Robert advises the LJA board to consider a borrowing resolution to address possible timing issues with cash flow and expenses
  + Sonia motions to approve
    - Fahima seconds
    - No objections
    - No abstentions
    - Corporate borrowing resolution of up to $150K is approved
  + Lizzie asks about the logic of keeping the building company in existence as a corporate entity. Jason explains that this will continue because of the additional flexibility it gives the school.

1. **Leadership Team Update**
   1. Conversation duration is 7:54 - 8:00pm
   2. Enrollment Update
      * Enrollment is currently at 84. Two new students are scheduled to begin in January
      * LJA will have a booth at the January Charter School Fair to promote the school
      * Additional promotional opportunities are also being evaluated
      * Terrence has been giving 1-2 tours a day for the last few weeks so interest has increased
      * FY21 enrollment will officially open in January so at that time we'll be able to quantify the impact of current promotional strategy on enrollment applications
      * Leadership team is also planning to send out suggestions to the community on ways to help get the word out on enrollment
   3. New leadership team members
      * Would like new team members to start in April
      * This would mean that new potentials will need to be approved in March after initial presentation in February
      * LT team requests 2 additional teacher representatives to help share the work load
2. **Recruitment and Development Committee Update**
   * Conversation duration: 8:00-8:17 pm
   1. Give to the Max Day
      * There was confusion with initially discussed final fundraising totals because Give To The Max included the board match totals in their reported totals.
        + Jason mentions that his match was also matched by his company through Benevity
        + Totals will need to be recalculated based on this new information but may be close to $9K
      * Leadership team will attend a board match presentation by the Give To The Max organizers to help plan better for next year
      * Board match policy for 2020 Give To The Max day needs to be discussed at a meeting 2-3 months before the November 2020 campaign
      * All Give To The Max thank you notes have been sent out by Cassandra.
   2. Other Fundraising/Marketing
      * Lizzie will consult with Cassandra on how the board can help contribute to Facebook ads
      * Cassandra is also beginning conversations with Oracle to see if there are opportunities to target families with 8-12 year old girls through online marketing. more details to come.
      * Lizzie is also talking to 3M about three different plans for makers space layouts. 3M's giving team was also at those meetings and may still be potential donors
      * Sonia is reviewing Department of Homeland Security grant options for a new school security system. The process is complicated so she is getting additional assistance from friends who are more knowledgeable about the process.
      * Security system financing options are also discussed
3. **Election of New Chair**

Conversation duration: 8:17-8:29 pm

* Today is Anna Veit-Carter's last board meeting
* Bryant has expressed interest in being the new board chair but he will be moving out of the country in March to begin a new position with his company
* Bryant feels that his role would be best as a co-chair to help navigate the transition
  + Angi also discloses that she has accepted a promotion at work and will not be able to take on many additional responsibilities
  + Jason and Danielle are also leaving the board in June
* A parent board member will need to be recruited to replace Bryant mid-year. Bryant has begun conversations with several other parents at the school to try to spur interest.
* Legal and Financial expertise is also a skill that will be needed on the board as we move forward with recruiting.
* Board discussion on the recruiting process, approaches, and outreach efforts to attract new board members.
* Fahima motions for Bryant to become the temporary chair
  + Sonia seconds
  + No objections
  + One abstention (since he feels it is in appropriate to vote for himself)
  + The motion to appoint Bryant Noice as temporary chair passes
* Co-chair topic will be added to January agenda to revisit when other board members are present
* Sarah is also interested in becoming co-chair but is unsure of her capacity at this time

1. **Adjournment**

Conversation duration: 8:29-9:15 pm

* + Before adjournment, the question is asked of what the board can do to address the issues raised by parents in the beginning of the meeting
    - Staff will attend Safe Schools training to help identify other options for how to resolve the situation
    - Board discusses the need to also develop and refine the public comment period to better ensure that all parents/students are heard but that the board has a time to deliberate on and process their concerns.
    - Board requests that the leadership team include these issues in their updates before parents need to bring them directly to the board
    - All discuss inclusion policy at LJA and what is required morally and ethically to ensure equity
    - There is additional discussion on what can be legally discussed with parents of other students in disciplinary settings
    - Anna Veit-Carter will send a letter to the parents to thank them for coming and sharing their experiences
  + Jason motions to adjourn
    - Fahima seconds
    - No objections
    - No abstentions
    - Meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm