

先锋中英双语学校

Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

May 7, 2020 at 6:00 PM

Location: PVCICS, 317 Russell Street, Hadley, MA 01035

This meeting was held via Zoom and Telephone access due to the current school closure from the Coronavirus pandemic. The school's IT Coordinator Mark LaLacheur set up the technical aspects and hosted the regular session of this meeting.

In attendance: Board Chair Dana Parsons, Roland Mandler, Aime DeGrenier, Faculty Representative Hannah Treworgy, Dan O'Shea, A. Juliet Larke, Peter Wood, Vice Chair Paula Quinn, Charles "Nick" Bagley, Student Representative Sebastian English, Executive Director Richard Alcorn, and, Principal Kathy Wang

Absent: Elizabeth "Betty" Larivee, Lian Duan, and Scott Livingstone

Others: Attorney Fred Dupere, Auditor Anita Maloney (left the meeting during Principal Kathy's report), and, candidates for the Board: Elaine Wang, Edison Santana, and Cynthia Farmer

Meeting was officially called to order by the Chair at 6:04 PM. Dana announced that the meeting would be recorded for use in transcribing the official minutes.

Public Comment: None

Administrative Items: Minutes of Previous Meeting(s):

Minutes of the March 5, 2020 Meeting were presented for review; no corrections were noted. Dan made a motion to approve the minutes; seconded by Aime; Roland and Paula abstained from the vote; motion passed.

Committee and Task Force Reports:

Finance Committee: Chair Dana indicated that the Annual Meeting, as scheduled per Board Bylaws for last month, had been cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic and State closure by the Governor. Therefore, the review of a proposed budget has not been done by the Finance Committee. However, ED Richard, Auditor Anita, and Committee Chair Roland were all present to review the current finances.

- ✓ ED Richard stated that finances were in "reasonable shape" with an anticipated year end surplus of about \$63,000.
- ✓ Financial statements have been e-mailed to Board members – no questions were asked. Ed Richard indicated that one expense was related to the 2019 Summer Trip to China. There was a delay in itemizing this expense because of the exchange rate. Anita stated that the Auditors were aware of this pending expense and knew it would be carried over to the 2020 budget expenses.
- ✓ Roland asked a question about tuition payments from the State. Richard stated that the school continues to receive the monthly payment – it has not been slowed or stopped.

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- ✓ Planning ahead for the next budget is a major challenge: Tuition payments are unknown; Federal and State reimbursements are highly speculative; anticipated increases in State education funding was expected to be about \$400,000 but may be delayed or cut; spending and costs in other local school districts will impact PVCICS tuition rates; re-opening school is uncertain and staffing is projected but unknown at this moment.
- ✓ It is anticipated that staff will remain at PVCICS so payroll is being calculated with the addition of one (possibly two) new hire/s; all staff salaries will be level funded to start the school year and then re-visited in late fall as finances are better understood; contracts with staff will be reviewed by June 15, 2020.
- ✓ Principal Kathy interjected that she was on a call with DESE and about 100 other school leaders yesterday. Financial concern was a common theme for all schools. State leaders indicated that Federal CARES money would be coming to the State and eventually to the schools – “Just Keep Steady” and “Do the Best You Can”.
- ✓ Paula asked about staff reaction to level funding of salaries. Edison said that he had no information. Hannah said that the staff seemed to have a pretty good understanding of the unknown -- just keep an open line of communication with them.
- ✓ Atty. Dupere said that he understood that many districts would be laying-off staff due to budget cuts and anticipated financial shortfalls.
- ✓ Richard said that a new expense to be included in the budget would be about \$100,000 related to re-opening costs such as temperature testing and expanded bus services for social distancing.
- ✓ It is anticipated that a proposed FY’21 budget would be ready for the June Board meeting. This budget would definitely be subject to review and adjustments as financial information is changed in the coming months.

Capital Improvement Plan: Ed Richard reviewed the proposed construction based on plans that had been emailed to Board members and previously discussed at the March meeting:

- ✓ Renovations inside the school estimated at \$87,000 to \$100,000 to (1) change a hallway and create classroom and office space, and (2) renovate a storage room in back of the building to become a classroom.
- ✓ Renovations outside the school: Add two-story storage shed and complete site preparation near the retention ditch on the side of school (estimated shed at \$40,000 to \$50,000 plus site work about \$50,000). This is being held up by the Hadley Conservation Committee as they determine if the ditch is a wetland area.
- ✓ Upgrading to the wireless system will also be completed. The costs for this upgrade will be primarily covered by an E-Rate (technology) grant.

Trusteeship Committee: Chairperson Betty was absent so Aime reported:

- ✓ The committee was in the midst of recruitment for new Board members with interviews of candidates scheduled and but then cancelled in March. These interviews need to be

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re-scheduled so the slate can be presented to the Board at the June meeting.

- ✓ Dana and Aime had a discussion about possibly moving the July meeting to later in the month so new Board members that need to be approved by DESE would be present and could participate in the selection of Board officers and committee members.
- ✓ Updates to the Bylaws were sent to all Board members. Current changes in the Bylaws relate to the move of the Annual Meeting from April to June. Questions were asked about Sections 4.02a and 5.02a but no changes were made. Roland made a motion to approve the Bylaw revisions and allow ED Richard to submit the necessary paperwork to DESE, seconded by Peter; unanimous roll call vote to approve.

Personnel and Grievance Committee: Chairperson Peter reported:

- ✓ The five year contract for ED Richard expires in two years but does not have salary listed for the final two years. The committee will be negotiating with Richard to complete this portion of his current contract.
- ✓ Dana stated that there is still one Board member that has not completed the evaluation for ED Richard. Dana has directed this person to complete the paperwork within a week. He will work with Paula to compile the final summary report for Board review at the June meeting.

Principal's Update: Principal Kathy reported:

- The pandemic closed the school on March 16th. The end of the year was scheduled for June 18th so 60 school days will be missed. Actually, 10 days would have been used for testing and student activities so only 50 instructional days will be missed.
- Remote learning was set up by week 2 of the closure. There has been great collaboration from the teachers – classroom as well as specialists for ELL, SPED, and support staff.
- The school has loaned out chrome books to any family that has asked for them.
- Surveys were sent to staff and families during week 2 or 3 to determine their needs. This outreach was an attempt at problem solving issues with remote learning.
- There is revised grading for all grades based on DESE guidelines.
- MCAS and IB testing has all been cancelled.
- End of year events have been cancelled. All grade 12 students have been accepted into college programs; as per their request, they will have a graduation ceremony at the end of summer or possibly over December vacation. Awards Night will be held as scheduled with a virtual event.
- The staff is holding various Team meetings to plan for summer services and re-opening of the school. It is anticipated that special needs students will have summer services in accordance with their IEP's for extended year services; Chinese recovery training will need to be provided to most students; operational changes per DESE guidelines are being discussed for class size, rotating schedules, social distancing, and building capacity.

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- The Board may be faced with unknown budgeting costs as the school re-opens.
- There seems to be equitable access for remote learning. All families have cell phones so email contact has been consistent. Families with multiple students have had the opportunity to borrow computers so each child has their own. Elementary students are getting hard copies of all work materials. Teaching schedules and follow-up sessions with teachers have been adjusted so there is no overlap in sessions when multiple students are in the same home.
- Attendance Policy is an issue for the fall if families keep students at home with remote learning. DESE will be providing guidance on this issue.
- Social-emotional concerns of students, families, and staff need to be addressed. Counseling, psychological support, and mental health safety will be important aspects of the upcoming summer and re-opening schedule.

Executive Director's Update: ED Richard reported:

- ❖ Student recruitment for September 2020 continues. Follow-up is being done with all applicants and current students to determine acceptances and withdrawals.
- ❖ Facility Plan and Renovations have already been discussed.
- ❖ Discussions are being held with Mt. Holyoke College and UMass Amherst to have student interns at PVCICS. This will assist in various resources as well as with the H1B VISA requirements which have been problematic for teaching staff.
- ❖ Most current contracts for bus services have been re-negotiated by school districts. The Board received an email copy of the proposed PVCICS contract (similar to the one proposed for the Hadley Public Schools). Peter questioned page 2, item 3 – there appears to be a missing reference to paragraph #2. Paula made a motion to approve the re-negotiated contract with the edit to item #3; seconded by Juliet; roll call vote was unanimous approval.

Board Member Updates: Several Board members spoke about the excellent transition from school to remote learning as experienced by their children due to the support and planning from the PVCICS teachers and staff. Kudos were also given to Principal Kathy for her leadership in the midst of this turmoil.

New Business: Chair Dana announced that he will be resigning from the Board at the close of the July meeting. He will be starting a PhD program at UMass as well as continuing his job so time constraints are an issue with Board membership.

There being no further business, Chair Dana read the following statement:

The PVCICS Board of Trustees will enter into Executive Session per M.G.L. Chapter 30A

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Section 21(a) 3: To discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body, and the Board so declares. The Board meeting will not re-convene after Executive Session.

Chair Dana made a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board and go into Executive Session; seconded by Peter. Roll call vote was unanimous approval: Student Representative Sebastian English, Board Chair Dana Parsons, Roland Mandler, Aime DeGrenier, Faculty Representative Hannah Treworgy, Dan O'Shea, A. Juliet Larke, Peter Wood, Vice Chair Paula Quinn, and, Charles "Nick" Bagley.

Regular session of the Board of Trustees Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Minutes approved by the Board of Trustees on June 4, 2020

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