

先锋中英双语学校

Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

January 7, 2021 at 6:00 PM

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

This meeting was held via Zoom and Telephone access due to the current State mandated school closure from the Coronavirus pandemic. The host for this meeting was Executive Director Richard Alcorn.

In attendance: Board Chair Cynthia Farmer, Charles “Nick” Bagley, Peter Wood, Elizabeth “Betty” Larivee, Edison Santana, Scott Livingstone, Dan O’Shea, A. Juliet Larke, Mina Liang, Faculty Representative Hannah Treworgy, and Student Representative Sebastian English.

Absent: Lian Duan and Ying “Elaine” Wang.

Others in attendance: Executive Director Richard Alcorn, Principal Kathy Wang, Director of Student Services Marilyn Kusek, and Middle School Chinese Teacher Hsiao-wen Yeh.

Meeting was officially called to order by the Chair at 6:03 PM. Chair Cynthia extended a “Welcome” and “Happy New Year” to the Board and others listening to the meeting. She also expressed her appreciation to the Board for their support in the election and getting her started as the new Board Chairperson.

Public Comment: None

Administrative Items: Minutes of Previous Meeting(s):

Minutes of the December 3, 2020 Meeting were presented for review. No corrections were noted. Betty made a motion to approve the minutes; seconded by Scott. Roll call vote for approval: Betty, Nick, Edison, Scott, Hannah, Mina, Juliet, Dan, and Cynthia; Peter abstained. Motion passed.

Election of Vice-Chair: Chair Cynthia indicated that this was an item carried over from the previous meeting. She asked for nominations but none were forthcoming; Betty mentioned that Board members could also self-nominate. Cynthia nominated Peter Wood for the position but Peter declined the nomination. Betty stated that this position was only until the remainder of the school year because new elections would occur at that time; the same candidate could run again for the position; responsibilities occurred only if the Board Chair was not available. Peter then nominated Edison for the position and he accepted the nomination. Cynthia asked for other nominations; hearing none she called for a roll call vote to elect Edison as Board Vice-Chair. The vote was unanimous approval with Edison abstaining from the vote.

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Committee and Task Force Reports:

Finance Committee: Chairperson Elaine was absent so ED Richard reported:

- ✓ The tuition received from DESE is currently based on an estimated enrollment count of 550 as previously submitted to DESE. This count is now actually 560. Changes are being made to tuition reimbursement based on the finalized State budget but will be changed as local cities/towns finalize their budgets and per pupil expenditure costs.
- ✓ At this time, finances are strong and the only issue is with tuition reimbursements.
- ✓ Dan asked questions about enrollment and applications for FY'22. Richard clarified the e-mail that had been sent related to these counts.
- ✓ Betty asked a question regarding the 100% expenditure in the line item for Paraprofessionals. Richard indicated that some “regular education” paras had been transferred to “special needs” to assist staff with remote learning so the costs were higher than anticipated.

Trusteeship Committee: Chairperson Betty reported:

- ✓ The committee has lost two members with the resignation of Paula Quinn and Aime DeGrenier. Bylaws indicate that the committee must have five members to operate so at least one new member is required. Juliet self-nominated for this committee. Betty made a motion to approve; seconded by Hannah. Roll call vote was unanimous approval with Juliet abstaining.
- ✓ Nick Bagley and Scott Livingstone will be leaving the Board as of January 29th. They have both completed six years of service to the Board and various committees. Their support and involvement has been instrumental in the success of the Board. They will be sorely missed – but happily will be continuing their involvement as Community Members because Nick will remain on the Finance Committee and Scott will remain on the Trusteeship Committee.
- ✓ Board recruitment for new Trustees will begin in February. A handout was e-mailed to all Board members with general information and timelines. The proposed slate will be presented at the April Board meeting.
- ✓ Board Self-Evaluation has not been discussed with the new Chair. This item will be reviewed in upcoming months.

Personnel and Grievance Committee: Chairperson Peter reported:

- ✓ At this time the committee has nothing to report.

Principal's Report: Principal Kathy presented an updated one hour report regarding the current state of remote learning, expectations for re-opening the school, and, data from various sources regarding the infection rates of Covid-19 in the majority of cities/towns sending children to PVCICS.

- She is anticipating further information and directives from DESE, the CDC, and DPH regarding re-opening schools.
- The Western Mass infection rates and process of vaccinations will impact re-opening.

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- Families and staff are being surveyed again to determine who wants to return to school versus staying in remote learning.
- Spring semester starts January 27th. It is hoped that PVCICS will have half-days for students and half-days for staff prep. Return to school is unlikely before February break.
- Ongoing issues and operational changes are occurring for schedules, staffing, students, technology, and budgeting.
- Middle and High School students will have access to live streaming instruction. Elementary level students have two teachers in each class so they co-teach the remote and in-person instruction for students.
- Instructional needs as well as mental health needs are being considered as return-to-school matters are developed for staff, students, and families.
- This presentation will be posted to the website with the previous presentations.

Chair Cynthia gave “kudos” to Kathy and the staff for all their ongoing work in successful remote instruction, student interaction, and student engagement.

Principal Kathy also mentioned that the DESE Compliance Review has been scheduled for March 8, 2021.

Executive Director’s Update: ED Richard reported:

- DESE has developed the “Student Opportunity Act” but has not funded it. In spite of this, a “plan” must be developed and submitted to DESE by January 15th. The DRAFT plan was emailed to Board members for review. Betty indicated that some wording regarding special needs staffing should be re-worded – Richard took notes on the change.
- Verizon Company has approached PVCICS regarding locating an antenna on the roof of the school. They are doing a site visit tomorrow and will develop a proposal for the usage. Richard will have the proposal reviewed by an independent source before presentation to the Board. Principal use for this revenue will be to pay down the flexible mortgage as found in the Foundation Budget.
- Technology for Hybrid-Learning has been tried out by a high school teacher. This camera allows for real time instruction with students while they are in a remote setting. Twenty-five (25) cameras have been ordered for classroom use. However, the shipment is currently being held by U.S. Customs because they are being imported from China.
- Upgrades to the school’s internet structure and fiber-optics continue to be done.

New Business: None

Having no further business, Chair Cynthia called for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Peter and seconded by Hannah. Roll call vote was unanimous approval. Meeting adjourned at 8:03 pm.

Minutes approved by the Board of Trustees on February 4, 2021

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