

先锋中英双语学校

Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

May 6, 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 regulations and closures from the Coronavirus pandemic. The host for this meeting was Executive Director Richard Alcorn.

In attendance: Board Chair Cynthia Farmer, Peter Wood, Elizabeth “Betty” Larivee, A. Juliet Larke, Mina Liang, Vice-Chair Edison Santana, Ying “Elaine” Wang, and Faculty Representative Hannah Treworgy.

Absent: Lian Duan, Dan O’Shea, and Student Representative Sebastian English.

Others in attendance: Executive Director Richard Alcorn and Principal Kathy Wang

Meeting was officially called to order by the Chair at 6:06 PM. Roll call was done for attendance of Board members.

Public Comment: None

Administrative Items: Minutes of Previous Meeting(s): Minutes of the April 1, 2021 Meeting were presented for review. No corrections were noted. Hannah made a motion to approve the minutes; seconded by Peter. Roll call vote for approval: Betty, Hannah, Peter, Juliet, Mina, Elaine, Edison, and Cynthia; no abstentions.

Committee and Task Force Reports:

Finance Committee: Chairperson Elaine reported:

- ✓ The committee had not met so there is no report.

Personnel and Grievance Committee: Chairperson Peter reported:

- ✓ Last week the committee met with Principal Kathy to review her contract, which is due to expire on June 30, 2021, as well as her current job description. The session was very productive and resulted in the draft of a new four (4) year contract for 2021 to 2025 and some updating to her job description. This Draft Contract will be reviewed by Atty. Dupere next week for any legal revisions. If revisions are minor, then the Board might receive it at the next meeting for review and be able to schedule a vote on it at the following meeting.
- ✓ The Principal’s current contract has a “rollover clause” which automatically extends the current contract for one year at the salary as of June 30th until such time as a new contract is signed. This means that Principal Kathy will continue her employment with PVCICS.

Trusteeship Committee: Chairperson Betty reported:

- ✓ Recruitment for new Board Trustees has been completed. Five (5) people submitted applications – all applications were complete and also had at least three people that responded to a request for a Letter of Reference. Interviews were conducted with all

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Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes of May 6, 2021

Page 2 of 3

candidates. The Trusteeship Committee is recommending all five candidates for positions on the Board of Trustees in Class #C 2021 to 2024.

- ✓ Two weeks ago, the Trusteeship Committee sent the Board a letter with information on each candidate as compiled from their application as well as their interview. No Board member has asked for further information on any candidate.
- ✓ Comments and discussion on the diversity and qualifications of the candidates were offered by various Board members.
- ✓ Peter made a motion, seconded by Edison, to approve all five candidates as Board members. Roll call vote was unanimous approval.
- ✓ Betty stated that the next step was to have ED Richard send the applications to DESE so the Commissioner of Education could have final approval on these five candidates. Once approved, they could start their three year term on the Board as of July 1, 2021.

Principal's Report: Principal Kathy reported:

- ❖ Kathy shared a PowerPoint presentation regarding: (a) the current State Health Metrics for Covid-19 cases and vaccines; (b) updated guidelines from DESE; (c) dates and numbers of students returning for in-person learning; (d) operational changes in the school for technology, outdoor lunch, and parental support of established protocols; and (e) timelines to close out the current school year regarding end of year activities, testing programs, and graduation.
- ❖ The U.S. News and World Report has completed their annual survey of high schools and published a report indicating that PVCICS ranked #2 in Massachusetts, #40 in the country, and #6 among National Charter Schools. A variety of metrics were used to assess each high school program and determine this ranking. This report on PVCICS was also highlighted in a news article from the Massachusetts Charter School Association.
- ❖ DESE is doing a Sixth Year Tiered Monitoring Review at PVCICS. This is a three component monitoring of the school: (a) Civil Rights is primarily a paperwork review which has been completed; (b) review of the English Learner Program has also been completed; (c) paperwork for the Special Education Program has been completed and an on-site review of the Program will be done on Monday 5/10/2021. A report of all three components will then be sent to the school.
- ❖ The school staff will be working this summer to develop the Charter Renewal Application which is due every five years. This will then require an on-site review sometime in the fall of 2021.
- ❖ There are twenty-eight (28) seniors that will graduate in the class of 2021. Each graduate will be allowed up to four (4) guests at graduation. Faculty and staff will be limited due to the current pandemic restrictions on outdoor gatherings.

Executive Director's Update: ED Richard reported:

- Lottery Enrollment: At this time, the school has admitted students to fill all vacancies; there are high numbers on the wait list but they cannot be admitted because of the mandated cap on enrollment; attrition rate is unknown but at this time seems to be very

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Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes of May 6, 2021

Page 3 of 3

low; no recruitment is being done due to numbers on the waitlist. The success of the PVCICS remote learning program has kept many students at the school instead of leaving for other schools. The current notoriety from the US News & World article has increased applications to the school.

- The school has been applying for a variety of grants. A request for funding for the summer program has been awarded to PVCICS at \$50,000 which is about half the amount that was requested. Other grants relate to Covid-19 equipment and materials. It is anticipated that a \$300,000 grant will be awarded to PVCICS which will be used for capital improvements to the facility (no-touch faucets; HVAC replacement for the gym; new technology; and, possibly buying a bus). Additionally, funding from the Student Opportunity Act is expected to be increased for 2021-2022.
- Salary adjustments, with a range of 3% to 4% for all staff, are being worked into the upcoming budget.
- Verizon Company has approached PVCICS regarding locating an antenna on top of the school. No further updates are available at this time.
- Once again, we are facing issues regarding current facility space and enrollment caps.
 - (a) What does expansion mean? – double the elementary school or increase only the high school.
 - (b) Given the current economy, finding a new building to rent or buy is difficult. It may be prudent to wait until the economy stalls and prices are lower.
 - (c) Is it most appropriate to buy or rent additional space – or should an addition to the current building be considered? What is the construction cost related to these options?
 - (d) No decisions are being made at this time – further research will be completed and presented to the Board in the future for their consideration.

New Business:

- A question was asked about any current concerns or issues from the Mall now that students have returned. ED Richard stated that as of this date he had not heard anything from the mall.
- Ed Richard asked that Board members to let him know about any contact that they might have with UMass-Amherst. He has heard that there are empty campus buildings that may be available for our use if we move forward with school construction.
- Peter reminded the Board that elections and committee assignments are upcoming for the new school year. Everyone should think about their future commitment and involvement.

Having no further business, Chair Cynthia called for a motion to adjourn. Peter made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Juliet. Roll call vote was unanimous approval: Edison, Betty, Juliet, Mina, Hannah, Elaine, Peter and Cynthia.

Meeting adjourned at 7:11 pm.

Minutes approved by Board of Trustees on June 3, 2021

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