

先锋中英双语学校

Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

July 21, 2022 at 7:00 PM

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

This meeting was held via Zoom and Telephone access in accordance with current State guidelines regarding Remote Board Meetings during the Coronavirus pandemic. The host for this meeting was Executive Director Richard Alcorn.

Originally, a meeting for the PVCICS Board of Trustees had been scheduled for June 2, 2022. This meeting was postponed on May 30, 2022 and not re-scheduled.

Documents sent for this meeting:

1. Financial Statements dated April 30, 2022
2. Email dated 5/17/2022 -- photos of "Academy Day" showing Congressman Richard Neal with PVCICS students who were appointed to West Point and the Naval Academy
3. Email dated 5/28/2022 -- an article and photos published in the Hampshire Gazette regarding the 2022 graduation ceremony for PVCICS

In attendance for the July meeting: Board Chair Cynthia Farmer, Vice-Chair Mike Rooney, Peter Wood, Gina Ocasion, Frank Soleimani, Ying "Elaine" Wang, and Faculty Representative Greg Rota.

Absent: Sujane Wu and Ann Kochis

Others in attendance: Executive Director Richard Alcorn, Principal Kathy Wang, and previous Board member Elizabeth "Betty" Larivee (meeting scribe)

Documents used in the July meeting:

1. Agenda with information for Zoom and Phone access
2. PVCICS Financial Statement for Proposed FY'23 Budget
3. Email 7/6/2022 regarding "Proven Provider Application" Form and Process
4. Email 7/9/2022 regarding possible extension for Remote Meetings beyond July 2022
5. Email 7/16/2022 -- Draft Minutes of the Board Meeting dated May 5, 2022
6. Email 7/18/2022 -- Proposed contract for renewal of auditing services from "The MP Group"
7. Email 7/19/2022 -- Draft of the PVCICS Annual Report (due to DESE by August 1st)
8. Email 7/20/2022 -- Confirmation of extension for remote meetings to March 31, 2023

Meeting was officially called to order by the Chair at 7:03 PM. Chair Cynthia completed a roll call for attendance of Board members.

Public Comment: None

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Election of Board Officers: Chair Cynthia indicated that the Election of Board Officers for the 2022-2023 Year needed to be held.

- ✚ Frank made a motion to re-elect Cynthia Farmer as the Board Chair; seconded by Peter. Cynthia accepted the nomination. Roll call vote was unanimous approval.
- ✚ Cynthia made a motion to re-elect Mike Rooney as Board Vice-Chair; seconded by Frank. Mike accepted the nomination. Roll call vote was unanimous approval.
- ✚ Cynthia made a motion to re-elect Peter Wood as the Board Secretary; seconded by Mike. Peter accepted the nomination. Roll call vote was unanimous approval.
- ✚ Cynthia asked Elaine about continuing as the Board Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee. Elaine indicated that her family had moved out of the area so attendance at meetings would be difficult. ED Richard and Cynthia both indicated that the use of Remote Meetings had been extended by Governor Baker from July 15, 2022 until March 31, 2023 (and possibly further) so Elaine should not have attendance issues; based on that information, Elaine agreed to continue in the position. Cynthia made a motion to re-elect Elaine; seconded by Greg. Roll call vote was unanimous approval.

Administrative Items: Minutes of the May 5, 2022 Board Meeting were presented for review. No corrections were noted. Mike made a motion to approve the minutes; seconded by Gina. Roll call vote: Unanimous approval. Motion passed.

Committee and Task Force Reports:

Trusteeship Committee: Chairperson Frank reported:

- ✓ A committee meeting will be scheduled in August. There are several Board positions that are unfilled and should be considered for backfilling.
- ✓ The application of ED Richard as a 2023-2025 Board Member has been rejected by DESE. In order for the Executive Director to be on the Board, DESE has indicated that the Board's Bylaws need to state this option.
- ✓ The application for Faculty Rep. Greg Rota to become a Board Member has been put on hold by DESE. Paperwork needs to be submitted to delete him as a Faculty member and Representative and then his application can be re-submitted to be considered as a Board member.

Finance Committee: Chairperson Elaine reported:

- ✓ The committee held a meeting last week to discuss current financial operations and the development of the FY'23 Budget.
- ✓ The committee is recommending that the Proposed FY'23 Budget be accepted by the Board.
- ✓ ED Richard indicated that this budget has a surplus in anticipation of possible purchase of additional school space; State tuition reimbursement forecasts are projected at around a 9% increase; teaching staff received raises; additional funds were allocated to the Stipend line item to eliminate the previous overspending in that line; grant funding is higher than

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normal due to the three (3) ESSER Grants; changes in the Lunch Program staffing has changed that line item.

- ✓ Following general questions and comments from the Board, Elaine made a motion for approval of the FY'23 Budget; seconded by Mike. Roll call vote: approval by Frank, Mike, Gina, Peter, Cynthia, and Elaine. Greg abstained from the vote.
- ✓ Elaine indicated that the contract for Auditor Services needed to be considered. The current company, The MP Group of West Springfield, has been doing excellent work; the committee is recommending a renewal of their contract. Ed Richard stated that there is a slight increase in the cost of their services but he also recommends a contract renewal. Elaine made a motion to renew the Auditor's contact; seconded by Cynthia. Roll call vote was unanimous approval for renewal.

Personnel and Grievance Committee: Chairperson Gina reported:

- ✓ Principal Kathy's four Annual Observations have been completed. A committee meeting will be scheduled to work on the Final 2021-2022 Evaluation Report and her 2022-2023 Annual Goals.

Betty asked to make a comment; she indicated that committee assignments needed to be reviewed to insure adequate staffing of all committees. In accordance with the Bylaws, the Trusteeship Committee has a required number of five (5) participants and the Finance Committee requires a minimum of two (2) Trustees. Chair Cynthia indicated that she would review this information and address it at the August Board meeting.

Annual Report: ED Richard reported:

- This Report is due to DESE by August 1st. Prior to this meeting, a DRAFT had been sent to the Board for review. This DRAFT is missing financial information which was just accepted by the Board. Anita (Business Accountant) will add the missing financial information to complete this Report. A final document will be sent to the Board once this is completed.
- 2021-2022 information on both the Accountability Plan and the Recruitment and Retention Plan are also included in this Report. These are generally the areas where DESE finds exception with PVCICS.
- Following discussion, Peter made a motion to (1) approve the DRAFT Annual Report and (2) hold a "Special Meeting" if Board comments about the final document were substantial; motion seconded by Gina. Roll call vote was unanimous approval.

Proven Provider Application: ED Richard reported:

- A Charter Amendment is required by DESE for any changes to previously approved headcount, instruction and/or location. As a current provider, a complete application is not required so this "Proven Provider Application" was submitted. At this time, DESE has rejected the application as written because it does not highlight a specific school district as program leader. Another round of applications can be submitted in November.

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- Following discussion and questions, Peter made a motion to allow ED Richard to submit the PPA to DESE; motion seconded by Cynthia. Roll call vote was unanimous approval.

Principal's Report: Principal Kathy reported:

- Power Point presentation covered the following topics:
 - The students ended school on June 17, 2022. Staff worked another five days
 - Planning is underway for the 2022-2023 school year
 - Summer services are being provided for Special Education Students (as specified in their IEP's) as well as Chinese Credit Recovery for Middle and High School students
 - Many reports are being completed and submitted to DESE regarding students and staffing
 - The building is being cleaned; no construction projects are occurring this summer
 - New Teachers will return August 17th; returning staff will start on August 22nd
 - No new information or changes from DESE and DPH regarding Covid Protocols
 - State Funding for Pooled Testing at school and Antigen Home Testing has been stopped
 - PVCICS has employed an Alum as a tutor in the Summer Program
 - The school's Accountability Plan is in the process of being updated for the new Five (5) Year Cycle. DESE has pushed the submission date ahead by one month; the Board will need to review the Plan in September for a vote on approval; submission to DESE will occur in October
 - Issues with parking at school and student transportation continue to be concerns

--Peter asked a question about the Board's receipt of the 2022-2023 Family Handbook for review and approval since the start of school is only a month away. Kathy indicated that some Policies are still being updated (Dress Code and Cell Phone Use). She would address this matter at tomorrow's Admin Team meeting.

--Betty indicated that the last review and approval of this document by the Board occurred on October 3, 2019 so there are many edits and updates that the Board has not approved. Additionally, an e-mail dated 4/6/2022 from the Dupere Law Offices indicated the need to also update the Sexual Harassment and Retaliation Policies.

--Peter stated that the Handbook used during the 2021-22 year is available on-line so Board members can start to review this very lengthy document. The approval of School Policies is an important role of the Board.

Executive Director's Report: ED Richard reported:

- ❖ Financial issues, FY'23 Budget, and Annual Plan have already been covered
- ❖ The Student Opportunity Report is due to DESE by August 1st
- ❖ No movement has occurred on the possible acquisition of nearby property
- ❖ Hiring of new staff is ongoing. Increase of staffing can be done now due to funds from the ESSER III Grant but these are not long-term funds so implications for future budgeting purposes need to be considered as grant cycles terminate.

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- ❖ Mike asked a question regarding current space for instruction and students. Richard indicated that space will be tight but should be “okay” this upcoming school year and Kathy concurred with this information.

New Business:

--Peter asked about negotiations for a new contract for ED Richard since his contract expired on June 30, 2022. Betty stated that his contract has an automatic one-year “roll-over” clause so the contract automatically continues each year unless Richard resigns/retires or the Board gives Richard notice of non-renewal. The Personnel Committee will be responsible for any contract negotiations with Richard; the Board will review for approval once the contract has been vetted by the Board’s Attorney. ED Richard said he is not generally worried about an immediate renewal of the contract but would like to be considered for an immediate raise in his salary.

--Cynthia stated that the Board used to hold meetings at 6:00pm but changed the schedule to accommodate a Board member. At this time, she would like to propose a return to the 6pm schedule because the accommodation is no longer needed. Most Board members indicated agreement with this time change. Cynthia made a motion to return to 6:00pm Board meetings on the first Thursday’s of each month; motion seconded by Mike. Roll call vote was unanimous approval.

--Principal Kathy asked about the posting of Board meeting dates on the website. Cynthia confirmed that meetings would continue on the first Thursday of each month with time changed to 6:00pm. Kathy stated that she would post the dates for the 2022-2023 year.

--Peter indicated that he had a conflict with attending the August Board meeting. Betty stated that she could attend that meeting and scribe for him.

Having no further business, Chair Cynthia thanked everyone for their participation in tonight’s meeting and indicated that the planned Executive Session would not occur tonight.

Chair Cynthia called for a motion to adjourn. Mike made the motion; seconded by Greg. Roll call vote was unanimous approval: Peter, Gina, Mike, Frank, Elaine, Greg, and Cynthia. The meeting adjourned at 8:49pm.

Minutes approved by Board of Trustees on August 4, 2022

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