



LIONHEART CLASSICAL ACADEMY CHARTERED PUBLIC SCHOOL

Board of Trustees Regular Meeting July 11, 2024

DRAFT MINUTES

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees (the "Board") of Lionheart Classical Academy Chartered Public School ("LCA") took place on , 2024 at 10 Sharon Road, Peterborough, New Hampshire. The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Chair Kim Lavallee. Board members present included: Chair Kim Lavallee, Vice Chair Bailey Sweet, Secretary Lori Finn, Jason Nero and Brian Walsh (being a quorum of the Board). Kristie Greenwood was excused due to a scheduling conflict. The Chair noted that this was a public meeting and that notice of the same had been duly posted in accordance with state law. The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a reading of the mission statement.

Chair Lavallee began by acknowledging LCA staff and faculty. Trustees had the opportunity to speak with them and found them all to be positive and forward thinking. She expressed a big thank you to them. She also thanked parents. A parent survey was sent out, and results have been overwhelmingly positive and supportive. She expressed appreciation for parents who have been willing to communicate. Whatever their thoughts are, she appreciates hearing them.

Chair Lavallee noted some adjustments to the agenda to accommodate some Zoom presentations, the first being a report by Principal Kenneth Dobbs, who celebrated the birth of his third child last night.

I. Executive Director Report

Principal Dobbs introduced himself and expressed gratitude for being at LCA. He is 100% committed to being here. He indicated that the staff have been incredible—kind and generous. He announced a training update. Teachers have been going to Seacoast Classical Academy for training in Singapore Math. It has been successful. Principal Dobbs has been networking with NH charter school leaders to help develop our school, learning best methodology for leaders. He also arranged for an in-house 4-day Literacy Essentials training next month for all staff, including TAs, so they will all be much more knowledgeable.

Principal Dobbs reported that hiring is his number one priority and that we are doing well in that area. Fiona Byrne, Jordan McCarthy, Leah Seymour, and Ashlee Wheel have all helped tremendously with phone calls, screening, and bringing people in. We have a new receptionist who is fully committed to the LCA mission. Additionally, one of our kindergarten teachers who had planned to leave LCA has now decided to return. Principal Dobbs has received emails from parents about how excited they are that she has decided to stay. He has also extended an offer for a teacher position. He has been bringing in to teach sample lessons, bringing in LCA students to be a part of that process.

Principal Dobbs reported on preparations being made for the school year. The library will be converted to two classrooms, and construction will begin without delay. He is also working on enhanced front door security and cameras. There will also be a new walkie talkie system in place which will allow everyone to be paged no matter what channel they are on. Safety is a top priority.

Principal Dobbs reported that summer staff have been working full days. He is extremely impressed by the amount of work that has been done to get ready for the new school year—organizing and purchasing curriculum. Leah Seymour has ordered what we need, and Cindy Hixson has been moving and organizing the supplies. In terms of enrollment, there are 309 students enrolled, with 15 in progress. The waitlist has 126

children on it, demonstrating that we are progressing and excelling in growth. This month's Mission Moment showcases summer staff who have demonstrated perseverance, integrity, and responsibility in coming in on summer break to help prepare. It is greatly appreciated.

II. Secretary Report

Vice Chair Sweet presented the Secretary's Report, consisting of draft Minutes of the Board's Regular Meeting held on June 13, 2024. Trustee Finn noted an error in the name of one of the applicants to the Board. The Secretary's Minutes of the Meeting was approved pending that correction by a vote of 4-0-1 on motion by Trustee Nero, seconded by Vice Chair Sweet. Trustee Walsh recused himself from the vote.

Action Item: Secretary Finn will make corrections to minutes and submit to LCA for posting.

III. Audit Presentation

Chair Lavallee announced that Nathan Wechsler and Company will be conducting the annual financial audit for LCA. The results of the audit are usually presented in September or October. Sam Henrichon and Kelli D'Amore then presented an informational session via Zoom. They discussed the audit process, their role, general focus, and their responsibilities. They take a risk-based approach, with an objective to obtain reasonable not absolute assurance. They are currently in the preliminary planning phase. Testing is expected in July and August, and it should be wrapped up in September in time for the DOE 25 report that is due.

IV. Organizational Committee

A. Board Succession and Planning. Chair Lavallee provided a review of last month's meeting with regard to Board Succession and Planning (Organizational Committee). When we met, we recognized the contributions of David Somero who is clearly invested in the success of the school. At the first interview with him he voiced strong concerns about the time commitment required of Trustees, prompting the Board to consider him for Board of Advisors. He later reassessed the time commitment and graciously agreed to have a follow-up meeting to further discuss. Based on that meeting, Chair Lavallee invited him to the Board for a three-year term to end in June 2027. This was approved by a vote of 5-0-0 on motion by Trustee Nero and Trustee Walsh. At that time, David Somero joined the table at the front with the rest of the Trustees. Vice Chair Sweet announced a new planning document for future succession, mapping out skill sets and tenure.

B. Bylaws / Charter. Vice Chair Sweet reported that the Organizational Committee met on 7/11/24 to discuss an update of the by-laws and changes to the charter. Proposed changes to the charter include enrollment, vision statement, language changes to highlight various expertise needs for the Board (finance, legal, academics, etc), to clarify that no fewer than 25% of Board members should be parents, and to amend the maximum number of Board members to nine (an odd number). Changes to the by-laws include simplification of Article 5.4 to refer directly to charter. These are posted on the website. Trustee Walsh motioned to increase the Board of Trustees by one to a maximum of nine subject to charter being approved by SBOE. Trustee Nero seconded. Vote passed, 6-0-0. Trustee Nero motioned to approve the by-laws as written and described by Vice Chair Sweet. Trustee Walsh seconded. Vote passed, 5-0-1. Trustee Somero abstained.

C. Policies. The following draft policies were discussed at the regular June 13,2024 meeting and have been posted on the website for over a month: Policy Process and Adoption (BG); Nepotism (GBH); Grievance Process (ACG), Public Participation at Meetings (BEDH); Board Member Removal from Office (BBBD), Regular Board Meetings (BEA). Chair Lavallee noted that there had been no public comment on the draft policies and moved forward to approve policies as a group. Trustee Nero motioned to approve the policies that had been recommended to move forward for adoption at the last meeting. Trustee Walsh seconded. Vote passed, 5-0-1. Trustee Somero recused himself from the vote.

Action Item: Secretary Finn will submit approved policies to LCA for posting.

D. Advisory Board. Vice Chair Sweet discussed the newly formed Advisory Board. Its duties are to provide guidance and advice, expand network, and promote the school in our community and in their network. The goal will be to solicit specific areas of expertise (e.g., facility, fundraising, strategic planning). Barry Tanner agreed to join Advisory Board. He has expertise in strategic planning. We had originally asked David Somero to join, but now he is on the Board. Howard Koloogian will train us on Fundraising 101 at the end of the month. Vice Chair Sweet suggested the possibility of inviting him to join our Board of Advisors. He will attend the Finance Committee meeting on 7/31. Seeking advice on long-term strategic plan and long-term building plan.

E. Executive Director Search Update. Vice Chair Sweet indicated that we partnered with American Classical Education to help with the search. There have been 33 applicants for ED so far. The first-round interview Zoom screening will be conducted by Vice Chair Sweet and Trustee Walsh. Some of those interviews were conducted today. After that, a small-group interview panel will conduct in-person second interviews at the end of July. That panel will consist of Chair Lavallee, Secretary Finn, Principal Dobbs, Fiona Byrne, and Josh Prather. Vice Chair Sweet indicated that when we asked staff and teachers what they would want to see in an ED, a background in education was very important. Experience in classical education was also important.

V. Finance Committee

The Financial Report was presented by Trustee Nero.

A. Operating Budget

- 104% of income, due to donations received. This is over our budget and is great!
- 87% of our Expense Budget. Savings due to budgeted positions currently being hired
- State Adequacy Aid per pupil aid - we were only \$3k off of budget. We will have a better true up number when the final 10% of pupil aid comes in around August 1st or 2nd. Hit mark!
- Differential Aid Review-Plus \$20k due to English Learner and Lunch Aid to be received in September.
- Donations up \$5000, fundraising down \$23,661 but it was made up in the other items not budgeted for, rental income, Food Service revenue, before and after school care
- The only thing significantly off of budget is the CSP grant. We are at 45% of budget because it hasn't fully been spent yet.
- Most expense line items are under budget, salaries for positions that weren't hired yet, Employee on unpaid leave of absence
- Total expenditures amount to 82% of Budget, gives us a net surplus of \$845K, that amount funded about \$654K in Capital expenditures during year.
 - A couple things that will offset these numbers are the final payment of pupil age
 - after audit Depreciation expenses (budgeted \$178K)
 - Amortization expense
- **Balance Sheet**
 - Investments for the Stock gift, brought to zero and changed that into a pledge
 - A lot of Fixed assets purchased-Improvements and equipment \$2.57M
 - Use our \$200K HEFA Loan
- **CSP Grant**
 - June report \$27,487 to be submitted, will be submitted in the next week, About \$5k in uncategorized receipts which she can also submit
 - Leaves us with about \$370K left to spend in the CSP grant to be used by Feb 2025

B. Building Strategy. Update from Hutter this week, building permit should be signed and

approved as early as tomorrow or Monday with a start date of 07/22/24 Preliminary Planning is underway for adding 8th grade for 2025, want to get a head start, dependent on building agreement as to what makes the most financial sense.

C. Facility Walkthrough

1. South Wing of the building. Trustee Nero indicated that a facility walkthrough with Hutter and the Peterborough Building Inspector yielded a number of safety issues that need to be resolved this summer. Some of these issues include:

- The first items identified were the Emergency Lighting (EMU's) systems throughout the first and second floors in the South Building. All of the emergency backup batteries were no longer good and none of them worked. What this means that if there was a power outage the emergency lighting system would not work or turn on, which can cause people to not see the hallways and make a way to exit the building.
- Our second finding was in the Multipurpose room where the fire alarm system is not even installed or usable in case of an emergency. Wiring, strobe light and emergency pull handles need to be installed correctly and usable. There needs to be two Fire Extinguishers in protective box which can be installed to meet fire code.
- Our third finding was also in the Multipurpose room. We identified exposed insulation that children have been exposed to while playing which is not good. However we could wrap the bottom 4-8' of wall with a 1/2" type of plywood material to shield the kids from being exposed to the fiberglass and also allow us to save the insulation that is in the walls as well.
- We also need two illuminating exit signs in the Multipurpose room

Action Item: Trustee Nero will follow up with these items and ensure they are corrected before the school opens in the fall.

2. Additional Items Identified.

- Nurse's office: Currently has no door. Possibly combine two rooms, add a door to her office with side lights and one top light (window). This will provide privacy and make storage of medical records and medications more secure. Possibly build some storage cubbies so she has a place to store her supplies. Seems like the nurse's office is spread through three small rooms
- Exposed Electrical Box needs a lock or needs to be locked on second floor.
- EMU Exit sign doesn't work on second floor.
- Need certificate in Sprinkler Room.
- Buildout Cubbies in the North wing,
- EMU at the Nurse's Station doesn't work, may just need a new battery backup.
- Alarm system on exterior doors non-existent.
- EMU in the entrance of the building doesn't work.

Action Item: Trustee Nero will follow up about these items to ensure all safety violations are corrected before the start of school in the fall.

3. Four doors with crash bars needed for Fire Safety Code. Originally it was for two doors, now two more have been identified.

Action Item: Trustee Nero will oversee the correction of these Fire Safety Code violations.

D. Stock Donation. Trustee Nero reported that there have been three recent meetings with the landlord, with another tentative meeting scheduled for next month. The landlord has acknowledged that the \$1M stock donation is not worth anything. He will make good on the \$1M by upholding his original \$1M pledge over 10 years. Trustee Nero reported that the landlord has acknowledged that he will be paying and sticking to his commitment to his \$100k per year pledge for naming rights, knowing that he

has \$900k left. Trustee Walsh requested clarification on the stock donation. Trustee Nero reported that the \$100k naming rights agreement over 10 years (total \$1M) was the initial agreement. The stock agreement came later, with the understanding that if the stock increased LCA would benefit, but since it did not, the landlord is making a commitment to honor the original agreement.

Action Item: Vice Chair Sweet and Trustee Nero will meet again with the landlord to continue negotiations.

E. Playground. Trustee Nero reported that the building inspector informed him that approval was never given to build the playground. The original notice of decision in 2022 allowed for a fence but stated no structures. It is in a flood zone. The playground will not be able to be used until this is taken care of. Because FEMA is involved, it isn't clear how long of a process it will be.

Action Item: Trustee Nero will work on obtaining all of the necessary permits that were not obtained prior to the building of the playground. Target date, start of school year.

VI. Academic Committee: no update

VII. Public Comments

Chair Lavallee reviewed the policy for public comments, including a 3-minute time limit for each person, respectful language, comments need to be related to agenda items, and no interruptions when people are speaking.

A. Leah Seymour – She is a parent of an LCA and a staff member. She expressed her thanks for the support of the Board. She said it was initially nerve wracking with all of the changes, but she thinks great things are coming down the line. She said we are all invested in Lionheart's future.

B. Fred Ward – Founder of LCA. He indicated that he donated \$250K for 6th grade and again for 7th grade. He wasn't asked for 8th grade. He stated that he doesn't believe that the Board has put together a plan for K-12.

C. Kerry Bedard – Former LCA ED. She expressed thanks to parents and staff. She said she was grateful to the Board that they can recognize the great team at LCA. She said that she served as ED, wrote the charter and co-founded school. She had been increasingly sharing her concerns with the Board over the past few months. She supports the effort of Fred Ward's lawyer. She is concerned about a high school building. She said it is time for the Board to be open about plans to deliver K-12.

D. David Bedard – He indicated that he donated 3500 hours of his time at LCA for the Monadnock Community. He worked to make LCA happen, and has given of his time and money. He said it was disgraceful what happened to his spouse. The building doesn't support the vision.

E. Kevin Brace – Father of LCA student. He said that we all need good role models, and they have to start at the top. He feels it was a mistake to let Kerry go. He call for parents on the Board to be elected by the parent body.

F. Leo Plante – Founder of LCA. He expressed support for the Board and appreciation for what it is doing. He told of a meeting at his house on 1/23/2021 to pursue a dream. He thought it would be good for the community for the parents in the area to have a choice of a tuition-free classical school. Three-and-a-half years later we are welcoming 325 young scholars to our school. It's been an incredible success. We have also achieve another objective—to get the founders off the Board and have a parent-led Board. He said he couldn't be more optimistic. He also introduced Augusta Petrone, another donor. She said that Lionheart is awesome and wonderful and so good for the community and the country.

G. Vicki Gulla – Parent of a 6th and 2nd grader. She said she knew most of the founders. When

she first saw the school, she said that she thought the building was great, but that we can't stay here. She thinks Voss Farm Road across from Conval should be considered. She has a background in real estate and was surprised that the landlord didn't assume HVAC and roof expenses. She thinks the classrooms should have windows. She says that kids need more outdoor time, more fresh air and sunlight even if it is cold and rainy. She said she doesn't want our kids to be wimps. They can go outside even if it is below 20 degrees. She was disappointed about the decision to hire a school counselor. She said that mental health is crap. She also wanted to know what happened with the playground. She also expressed thanks for Principal Dobs.

H. Andrew Alajajian – He expressed gratitude for the school and to the Board. He said he appreciated Kerry's efforts. He echoed efforts about long-term vision, that we need to figure out the long term. This isn't a good building for the long term, but we are headed in the right direction.

Chair Lavallee announced the next Regular Board meeting for 8/8 @ 6 pm. She said this is subject to change, as we may need to move it to accommodate the DOE. She closed public session at 7:46 pm.m

Vice Chair Sweet motioned and Trustee Nero seconded to enter into non-public session pursuant to RSA 91 – A:3, II (a), (c), and (l) - compensation of public employees, matters which may adversely affect the reputation of any person, and consideration of legal advice. The Board entered into a non-public session at 7:49 pm. Board approved by roll call: Walsh (Yea), Nero (Yea), Somero (Yea), Lavallee (Yea), Sweet (Yea), Finn (Yea).

The Board exited non-public at 8:43 pm. Vice Chair Sweet motioned to exit non-public, and Trustee Nero seconded. Approved by role call: Walsh (Yea), Nero (Yea), Somero (Yea), Lavallee (Yea), Sweet (Yea), Finn (Yea). The Board returned to public session at 8:44 pm. Vice Chair motioned to seal the minutes from the non-public session, seconded by Trustee Walsh. Approved by roll call: Walsh (Yea), Nero (Yea), Somero (Yea), Lavallee (Yea), Sweet (Yea), Finn (Yea). Public meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Finn