



LIONHEART CLASSICAL ACADEMY CHARTERED PUBLIC SCHOOL
Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting March 13, 2025

MINUTES

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees (the "Board") of Lionheart Classical Academy Chartered Public School ("LCA") took place on 3/13/2025 at 10 Sharon Road, Peterborough, New Hampshire. The meeting was called to order at 6:06 p.m. by Chair Kim Lavallee. Board members present included: Chair Kim Lavallee, Vice Chair Bailey Sweet, Treasurer Kristie Greenwood, Trustee Jason Nero, Trustee David Somero, Trustee Brian Walsh, and Secretary Lori Finn. Executive Director Mike Harner, Principal Kenneth Dobbs, and Accountant Caitlyn Blundell (Zoom) were also in attendance. This was a public meeting and notice of the same had been duly posted in accordance with state law.

The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Chair Lavallee. Principal Dobbs recited the mission statement and shared the following mission moment. After the enrollment lottery, Principal Dobbs welcomed one of the new students. The student said, "By the time I reach 8th grade, I will be smarter than you."

I. Public Comments

- A. Tim & Leona Traffie (parents):** Mr. Traffie commented on the dress code. He said that teachers are representatives of the school, examples to the children. There needs to be something added to the dress code for the teachers. He would highly encourage that this dress code apply to the teachers as well as the students.. Let's be a good example for the children. The teachers are examples to all of those students. Mrs. Traffie said that she noticed limitations in the dress code with regard to jewelry, make up, piercings that apply to children. Adults are also role models for these kids. They would like that considered.

Chair Lavallee noted that ED Harner would follow up on this.

- B. Vicky Gulla (parent):** Ms. Gulla requested a correction to 1/9/25 Board meeting minutes to better reflect her comments. She said that on three occasions she has been belittled and made to look stupid in the minutes. She clarified the last sentence of her public comment at the 1/9/25 meeting, where she raised a concern about a lack of sunlight. She read from Wikipedia about the importance of sunlight hitting the suprachiasmatic nucleus, a region of the brain that regulates circadian rhythms. When we are only exposed to blue light, as in indoor light, it makes our body run poorly. She wants to focus back to kids and what they need. Her child is now only getting one break a day in the cold, and she wanted to emphasize the importance of kids getting outside. With the new building she wants a focus on creating a way to get incandescent light

bulbs, having a window open for natural light, and more time outside for regulation of classroom activities.

II. Secretary's Report: Secretary Finn presented the Secretary's Report. Trustee Sweet suggested a change to the minutes from the 2/20/25 Regular Board Meeting to indicate a cap "up to" 750. Also two minor corrections needed to be made. Trustee Nero moved to approve the minutes from the 2/20/25 Regular Board Meeting pending these changes, seconded by Trustee Somero. All in favor (7-0-0), motion passed.

III. Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Greenwood presented the Treasurer's Report. Caitlyn Blundell discussed the [Monthly Financial Report](#) for February 2025 and the [Accrual Profit & Loss Statement](#) for the period ending 2/28/25. The net surplus as of 2/28/25 is \$429,127 and that surplus was used to help fund about \$347,000 in capital expenditures, a lot of which were funded by the CSP grant. Full revenue is \$2,720,277, and total expenses are \$2,291,150. Total expenses, as a percentage of the full year budget, is 65% at the end of February, which is exactly where we should be on track with the budget. We received our next per-pupil aid payment, and we repaid our HEFA Working Capital loan. We fully spent all CSP grant funds, so there were no funds that were unspent. The biggest source of revenue in February was the CSP grant, which was a little over \$200k. We also received \$15,247 in donations. Our highest expense accounts were salaries and building rent.

Chair Lavallee thanked ED Harner, Principal Dobbs and their team for using every penny of the CSP grant. Trustee Sweet moved to accept the financials from February 2025, seconded by Trustee Greenwood. All in favor, motion passed (7-0-0).

IV. Executive Director Report: ED Harner presented the ED report.

A. Staffing:

- a. They have been busy with the hiring season. They hosted three candidates this month and have hired one so far. There are a couple of offers out and a couple of candidates coming in soon. Hiring for next year looks good.
- b. ED Harner, Principal Dobbs, and Ms. Byrne have been conducting mid-year meetings with faculty and staff just to see how they are doing and also what will occur going forward in the future.
- c. Staff contracts are scheduled to be out the week prior to April break.

B. Raise Craze: The Raise Craze fundraiser will begin 3/17/25 and run through April. This is a unique way for us to raise money for our school and make an impact on our community. Students spend their time serving, not selling.

C. Assessment: Preparing for NH state testing, making sure we have laptops in place and are on track to begin.

D. Lottery: Held our lottery this past weekend, and 57 new students will be enrolled. We will be at our current cap right now. We have 86 students on the waiting list as of today. Demand is good at all grades. We will begin notifying people on the list of openings beginning next week.

E. Budget: ED Harner distributed two budgets—one reflecting current student enrollment (356 students) which is what the cap is right now, and another

reflecting 374 students. The budget with 356 students is the fall-back budget. We are hopeful for an increase in our state allotment. ED Harner proposes that increase for this year to be up to 390, and that gives us a way to admit students on a case-by-case basis who wish to transfer. This fall-back budget (356 students) sits at a \$22k deficit, while the 374 student budget shows a surplus of about \$111k and that includes the hiring of an additional teacher and an additional teacher's assistant. One of the assumptions that has changed. The bottom line is that they are here to teach. ED Harner feels that every dollar spent on administration is a dollar devalued. So they are figuring out ways where everyone (e.g., Principal Dobbs, ED Harner) can be in the classroom next year and pick up some of that teaching. So that has created some space. They are trying to move the resources where they are needed most. The budget also reflects some targeted pay raises for some very good teachers. Teacher salaries are not where they need to be. Our average pay will go up about 6% this year from last year, including a 2.5% raise. They plan to do that each year as we grow and the student population becomes larger. Caitlin Blundell will look over the numbers, and ED Harner plans to present it for approval at the April board meeting.

Trustee Nero moved to increase FY26 enrollment to 390 students subject to state approval of the overall cap increase, seconded by Trustee Finn. No further discussion. All in favor, motion passed (7-0-0).

- F. **Dress Code:** The Student and Family Handbook was previously approved without the dress code. The final dress code has been distributed, and there are a few additions: quarter zip sweaters (without hoods or pockets) will be allowed; polo shirts can be navy, white, or grey; sweatshirts with the Lionheart logo can be worn at any time over the uniform. For 6-8th grade, pants should be chino style, navy and khaki, but no restriction on material. No leggings or jeggings. This dress code is proposed for the next school year.

Trustee Finn moved to accept the proposed dress code for the next school year, seconded by Trustee Nero. All in favor, motion passed (7-0-0).

V. Board Business

- A. **Finance Committee:** Trustee Nero provided an update on the activities of the Finance Committee. They have been meeting regularly with Roundtable and Raymond James who have been diligent about creating a loan package for the new property. They should have some answers shortly. Trustee Nero thanked Trustee Somero for helping with the construction project.
- B. **Organizational Committee:** Trustee Sweet provided an update on the activities of the Organizational Committee.
- a. **Drug-free Workplace Policy (ABD)** - Annual approval needed. No changes made. Trustee Somero moved to reapprove the policy as written, seconded by Trustee Sweet. All in favor, motion passed (7-0-0).
 - b. **Anti-Discrimination Policy (AC)** - This policy is required, based on our charter. We always had this in the charter document itself, but we pulled out the same language to create a standalone policy. Trustee Somero noted that there are five terms used for the same idea, and he would like consistency. He expressed

frustration that much of the policy goes against the principles of facts and science. The board agreed to table this policy and reconsider the language in the charter and check with legal as we go through to make changes throughout.

- c. **Student Conduct Policy (JIC)** - This was revised to include the student honor code and parent and student expectations to sign the pledge. The draft is posted on the website for review. Trustee Somero moved to move JIC to the 4/10/25 meeting for review and approval, seconded by Trustee Finn. All in favor, motion passed (7-0-0).

- C. **Academic Committee:** Trustee Finn provided an update on the activities of the Academic Committee. The Classical Learning Test will be administered in April. Parent training on classical education, originally scheduled for March, will be rescheduled, hopefully for 4/9 or 4/16. Trustee Somero requested that it be offered online as well. ED Harner indicated it will be.

VI. New business

- A. **Board Succession and Planning Committee:** The invitation for board membership went out, and resumes are due 4/1/25. In the past, we have created a subcommittee that exists for the length of time it takes to review resumes, interview, and make a recommendation for new committee members. Trustee Walsh moved to create a Board Succession and Planning Committee consisting of Trustee Somero, Trustee Greenwood, and Trustee Sweet. Trustee Nero seconded. All in favor, motion passed (7-0-0).
- B. **Bank discussion.** We need to update signers for the bank. Current signers are Trustee Greenwood and Trustee Lavallee. Trustee Greenwood will be stepping down in June, and Trustee Lavallee's term ends in June. Trustee Somero moved to approve ED Harner and Trustee Sweet as signers on the bank account, seconded by Trustee Finn. All in favor, motion passed (7-0-0).
- C. **Board Training Discussion - Governing for Greatness (Chapter 1 - The Charter).** The charter is up for renewal on 8/31/2027. Chair Lavallee recommended submitting a letter of intent to renew at least 6 months prior, and she reviewed the general review process. She indicated we should check with the DOE because things may have been updated. The authorizer of the charter is the NH SBOE. The charter is held by the corporate entity of Lionheart.. Student outcomes and specific metrics are listed in the charter in Exhibit F, which is not posted online. Chair Lavallee will find the exhibits referenced in the charter and add to Sharepoint. Discussion of student outcomes will be tabled until the April 10th board meeting after Exhibit F is reviewed. We will also review Chapter 2 at that time.

Action Items:

- Chair Lavallee will locate and add exhibits from charter to Sharepoint
- Board members will review Exhibit F and Chapter 2 of Governing for Greatness for discussion at April 10 board meeting.

Chair Lavallee announced the next regular board meeting would be held on 4/10/25. She thanked everyone for coming and let them know they may stay until the board is officially in non-public.

Trustee Greenwood motioned to enter into non-public session under RSE 91-A:3, II, (d), and Trustee Nero seconded. [(d) Consideration of the acquisition, sale, or lease of real or personal property which, if discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general community.] Approved by roll call: Walsh (yea), Nero (yea), Somero (yea), Lavalley (yea), Sweet (yea), Greenwood (yea), Finn (yea). Motion passed. The non-public session began at 7:24 pm Executive Director Harner was invited to attend.

The Board returned to public session at 7:40 pm. During the non-public session the board discussed financing options for the new property and lender options.

Trustee Somero motioned to seal the minutes of the nonpublic session, seconded by Trustee Walsh. Approved by roll call: Walsh (yea), Nero (yea), Somero (yea), Lavalley (yea), Sweet (yea), Greenwood (yea), Finn (yea). Motion passed.

Trustee Somero made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Trustee Nero. Public meeting adjourned at 7:41 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori L. Finn

Minutes approved at the 4/10/25 Regular Board Meeting