



www.PioneerSprings.org

PO Box 95, Cornelius, NC 28031 - 9200 Bob Beatty Road, Charlotte, NC 28269 - 704.236.9610

**Minutes of the Pioneer Springs Community School
Board of Trustees Meeting
October 27, 2015 - 6:42-9:51 pm**

Location: Pioneer Springs Charter School Campus

In Attendance:

Board members present:

Abigail Jennings (Chairman)

Erik Giles (Vice Chairman)-by phone

Mark Barney

Mary Coppola

Kristin Clewell (Secretary)

Others in Attendance:

Erin McDonald (Founding Director)

Randolph Lewis (Founding Director), towards the end of the meeting came in

Mary Mix (Nature Director)

Kristen Krabath (Registrar)

Kim Richards (parent)

Brian Hicks (parent)

Barbara Brown (parent)

Jennifer Foley (parent)

Shawn Chaffin (parent)

Jessica Lenhart (parent)

Michael Amy Cira (parent)

Established a quorum, Abigail calls meeting to order at 6:42 pm.

Mark made a made motion to approve 09/22/15 Minutes, 09/22/15 Closed Session Minutes, 10/12/15 Special Meeting Minutes, 10/12/15 Closed Minutes, 10/17/15 Special Minutes, and 10/17/15 Closed Minutes (all sent to board to review prior to this meeting), Kristin seconds, all in favor.

Financial Report

Erik presented September 2015 Balance Sheet and P and L. He reported there have been 3 refunds to the school: Valspar for defective paint, Insurance for the fire detection system that was struck by lightening, and Synergy One for a duplicate payment. Erik also presented the September 2105 Cash Flow Sheet. Mary made a motion to approve the September 2015 Financials, Mark seconds, all in favor.

Erik also presented the revised budget as the school has now received the numbers for the state allotment per child. Also added the upfits for Asbury Park Grove for net year. This budget will leave the school with a surplus of \$10, 854.01. Mark made a motion to approve the revised budget, Kristin seconds, all in favor.

Strategic Plan

Abigail reviewed the items that were expected to be completed in October 2015.

- Randolph created the building and grounds list
- A global calendar was created for staff
- A global calendar was created for parents
- Policy review-will do later in this meeting
- 5 year budget-will be done for next month
- Mark has helped to move along the process for the Green School Initiative; Jessica Lenhart has agreed to help bring Pioneer Wings into this process and Alex Gallo wants to take the lead from Pioneer Wings

Search Committee

Mark reported the Search Committee has been meeting every Monday. Jen Bourne reported through Mark that the parent panel will be in place by Thursday and the teacher panel was established today. So far 110 questions have been generated and will be pared down for a final list. So far 17 people have taken the survey, want both parents and teachers to take survey. We have 15 applications in hand so far. Evergreen School has given us 2 resources for posting positions and Jenn is pursuing another resource. Still on target for mid-December start date. Kim Richards expressed her desire to help with the search; she has experience in this area.

EC Coordinator position was filled by Christina Licata. Today the final interviews for EC teachers were held, one of these positions requires an Adapted Curriculum Certification. The 2 hired teachers are Natasha Pierce and Gwen Brown, both are starting Monday. Mary questioned if the new staff have all needed credentials/certifications and Abigail confirmed yes. Mark made a motion to approve new contracts for the above 3 EC staff, Kristin seconds, all in favor.

Academic Excellence Report

Mary Coppola thanked everyone for coming together in the past month. Mary did a random observation at school last week; she was very pleased with the level of safety, joy, purpose, and engagement she experienced.

Mary talked with Melissa Young Testing Coordinator, a contact with DPI. Melissa told Mary there is a security shell and only 2 people from each school may have access to it (need to figure out who at PSCS). Melissa said Kristen K. will also have to do a re-rostering process.

PSCS choose to do a 90-minute intensive Literacy time versus portfolios to meet the requirements of the Read to Achieve Program.

Achievement Level-out school grade was low and disappointing but we are going up from last year. Mary reported:

1. we need parent letter to explain how this score is given to a school
2. PSCS is addressing math in an intense manner, still checking into Dr. Peel and Margaret Moose is going to do math staff development
3. PSCS came up with its own math assessment to expose our students to standardized testing formats and to gather data

Mary suggested that before parent teacher conferences a statement should be sent to parents about testing results.

Recommendations for next steps from Academic Excellence Committee:

1. Director search is a priority
2. Mary Mix, Erin and Mary C. will meet with K-4 lead teachers in November
3. Identify designated PSCS contact person to request secure shell access and notify DPI Testing Director/Area Coordinator
4. Technology Hardship letter- we can request help to provide technology or to take the test differently-Abigail wants a deadline for this letter
5. Designate one staff meeting per month as an assessment related study; Erin reported staff is requesting this also

Shawn Chaffin (parent) shared that he heard Dr. Valerie Truesdale speak at a Google Innovative Conference (she helped CMS get Chromebooks). Shawn was wondering if we could do that. Mary C offered to contact Valerie. Mark also noted that he has a plan for applying for technology grants.

Policy Review

1. Policy and Procedure for Time and Effort Logs for Grant Related Employees -Mary Mitchell from CSD helped to construct this policy. Mark explained that this is a federal law. This needs to be added to the employee handbook. Mary C brought a hardcopy of the form for the employees it impacts to sign. No further board questions. Mark made a motion to approve Policy and Procedure for Time and Effort Logs for Grant Related Employees, Mary seconds, all in favor.

Director's Report

Erin reported that the culture at school is much improved with teachers and families. It has been a very productive time putting new things into action. Staff is feeling good about conferences. Fairy Tale Ball is coming up soon, still need yarn, pumpkins, and tomato stakes. The afternoon playdates at school began again last week. The before school sports and crafts activity (whole school inclusive) will hopefully start before Thanksgiving. This will be supported by both parent and staff volunteers.

Curriculum Night will be in November, Dr. Piel assisted with planning this.

Wednesday of this week PSCS will be selling school gear and pre-ordering sweatshirts.

Last Saturday the workday was not heavily attended. There are plans of having 1 workday per month. Erin and Randolph have a list of projects that can be worked on anytime someone with that particular experience has time. Mark is trying to pair specific instructions with each item to make the list more user friendly.

Shawn asked if an additional playdate on another day of the week could be added so more children can attend, and Erin responded this is possible if more volunteers offer to help.

Review of Behavior and Discipline Policy

Abigail and Mark recommended no changes to this policy, just need to make sure the day to day procedure is being followed per the policy.

Jennifer Foley questioned if a student is removed from campus what are the specifics to coming back? Abigail reviewed the policy which outlines these specifics.

Mark reminded everyone that this is a policy and every child is accountable, but it is also important to take into account the child's individual circumstances (i.e. hard time at home, being bullied, etc.). Safety is 1st for all involved. Erin reinforced that child's whole story needs to be considered. A parent questioned what is told to the other children in a class if a child has to leave campus. Erin and Mary both explained this is also a case-by-case basis; if a child asks a specific question it will be addressed. Mary C. noted that teachers often have a blanket statement to redirect a student's attention from something that is not their business. Erin stated if your child is concerned have them talk directly to his/her classroom teacher. Jennifer Foley offered that this can be a teachable moment and Kristen K stated school is a safe place to make mistakes and it's not what you did but what you did about it. Erin also mentioned that it often prudent to wait a little and not react right away; if it is a trend in the classroom it can be address as a collective class meeting in a positive way with gentle reminders.

Shawn Chaffin brought up a concern about his own child who he stated was accused of bullying and presented as such by another parent in a group email to the whole class at the start of the previous year. The past director and teacher confirmed to parent this child was not bullying. Abigail stated that this issue was recently addressed with her and that we are working on ideas to build community and address this situation. Mark noted that this negative group email behavior is not directly addressed by the Behavior Policy but perhaps it should. However, it may not be possible to provide true consequences for this type of parent behavior. Mary C said kindness matters and this will issue should be addressed. Kristin C and Mary C mentioned that in the Covenant Conferences at the start of the school with

parents, this would be a good time to remind all parents about this type of behavior. Mary C also said Erin's Coop Scoop would be a place to address this issue too. Mark reminded that group emails to parents should be BCC (blind copy) to prevent reply all. Barbara Brown suggested that a sense of community is one way to prevent negativity when parents have a face to put with each child and parent but that because we are a charter school families are spread out geographically. Kim Richards suggested that Wings could organize socials for just parents and Erin said there have been aspirations to have parents socialize on campus during the day but right now space is limited. Barbara also suggested that it is difficult for new parents (especially midyear) to figure out all of these groups (i.e. Wings, Voices, ect). Abigail asked Erin to put it in the Coop Scoop and also suggested a welcome packet. Kim noted last week Wings talked about having parent buddies for new families. Barbara reminded that children who start mid year feel this way too, not just parents. Brian Hicks suggested maybe smaller meeting with grade levels to increase familiarity. Jennifer Foley asked if the Minutes could be posted in the Parent Portal but need to be public, but a link can be put in the Portal to redirect to Minutes on the website.

Review of Salary Policy

Staff previously paid over 10 months but last year changed to 12 months; however policy was not changed to match. Policy wording amended to reflect 12 months. Mark made a motion to approve the change to the Salary Policy, Mary seconds, all in favor. Jennifer Foley questioned how subs are paid and Abigail said there is a line in the budget for that.

Review of Allergen Awareness Policy

A parent had recently questioned the policy and would like more information. Abigail wants to establish a task force to hear parent's concerns. The taskforce will include Kristin C, Erik, Randolph, and Christina.

EC Report

Abigail reported PSCS was selected to have an EC audit this year. We need to do a pre-audit to make sure we are prepared. She recommended that Julie Robinson, an EC compliance specialist from Catawba County conduct the pre-audit. We need to provide a contract and privacy document.

In addition, as Abigail recommended we hire Mary Mitchell, the EC Coordinator from CSD, as a contractor when needed to provide ongoing EC guidance.

There is a student with vision impairment and need a contract for a qualified person to do the vision assessment.

Also, due in particular to EC privacy laws, a formal contract for substitute teachers that includes a confidentiality clause is needed. Abigail and Sandy will create this document.

Mark made a motion to proceed with the contracts for Julie Robinson, Mary Mitchell, Vision Contractor, and Substitute Teachers. Mary seconds, all in favor.

Abigail asked if there were any more questions or comments before moving into closed session?

Kim Richards stated that so far PSCS has raised \$94.00 from Box Tops and the goal is about \$1,000 for the year (achievable if each student collects 50 Box Tops). Next deadline is March. Erin will put in the Coop Scoop.

Erin reported PSCS is not registered for Amazon Smile. We are set up Harris Teeter but not Publix for fundraising. Some teachers are doing Amazon wish lists, which are great to share with grandparents.

Jessica Lenhart reported for Ann Y. and Pioneer Wings:

- Hike will be November 8th
- Want more Bonfires
- Wings Unity Community Group started Holistic discussion group on Fridays, 1st one started in September
- Wings information is presented through Twitter, Newsletter, Pinterest, Facebook, Shutterfly-they want to Hootsuite to be more efficient.
- Room Parent Coordinator, Sarah Dickson, just did more parent training and is reaching out to lead teachers and Marina for more feedback. Erin requested another room parent meeting.

Mary C wanted to put in the minutes a public thank you for Laura Mock and her leadership.

Parents and Kristen K left.

At 8:56 Mark made a motion to move into closed session to discuss privileged information about facilities negotiations.

At 9:18 Mark made a motion to move out of closed session, Erik seconds, all in favor.

Mary C asked if the consulting group has a good track record. Erik responded yes and they have helped several other charter schools in our area.

Mark made a motion to approve AVH-One LLC to assist with rezoning and building change of use, Mary seconds, all in favor.

Mark made a motion to approve a letter of intent and \$10,000 payment to Dominic Polzella in order to proceed with the Asbury Park purchase. Mary seconds, all in favor.

Thomas Miller submitted a contract to PSCS for 90 days as a consultant, but the board agreed the price was currently too high for our needs. Erin stated we need to evaluate what we specifically need him to do for us and Mark suggested we do a retainer and hourly fee. Mary C stated appreciation for his assistance to the admin team thus far and reminded the board of his extensive experience as a charter school leader. Thomas proposed to help with 1) coaching and consulting to administration 2) EC program 3) coaching from a board perspective. Erik stated we already have #2 and #3 covered at school. Mary C said he could be valuable to help with the transition of the new director. Mark felt like not for the actual transition, but to be available during this time as a resource. Abigail wants to ask Thomas for an hourly rate. Thomas can help with assessment but not curriculum.

Report cards come out this week. Then we can interpret raw data as suggested at a previous board meeting.

Abigail noted that the Center for Instructional Learning website also has consulting resources; this group advocates for director to be in the classrooms to help with assessment.

Mary made a motion to approve contacting Thomas Miller to ask for an hourly rate and explain what our specific needs are, Mark seconds, all in favor.

Erin and Randolph explained Expeditionary Learning (Evergreen School does this) how fits well with our philosophy.

Mark reported for the director search we have 16-17 resumes so far; 40% are local the rest are national. That is not really many choices, should have 30-35 applicants. We have a consultant with Teachers to Teachers that will assist us in a campaign to promote this position. If we do not receive enough resumes, we may need to hire a consultant to find more.

Mark and Mary both agreed that the parent panel needs to hear from our final candidate selections and that we will listen to their ideas but the board does make the final decision.

Next board meeting is November 17th 2015.

Mary made a motion to adjourn, Mark seconds, all in favor.
Adjournment at 9:51 pm

October 27, 2015 Minutes respectfully submitted by Kristin Clewell.



Kristin Clewell, Secretary