

**Minutes of Board Meeting
January 21, 2020
6 p.m.**

The meeting was held at the Lakeland Achievement Academy. Board members in attendance were Karli Hughes, Steve Earley, John Weber, Adil Khan, Melissa Devlin, Trish Buchanan, Elizabeth Kerns, Jason Welling, Janice Jones, Stephanie Colon, Jill Haladay and Mike Brossart. Staff members present included Deborah Sulsona, Cindi Parker-Pearson, Stacy Williams-Myers and John Burton. Guest present was Mark Miller.

Approval of Minutes

Karli Hughes chaired the meeting and called it to order at 6:01 p.m. Adil Khan moved to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2019 Board meeting. Janice Jones seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

Financial Report

Deborah Sulsona presented the financial report for the six months ending December 31, 2019. We had a net increase of \$103,774 compared to a net increase of \$11,838 last fiscal year. Total revenues are about \$135k higher than last year at this time primarily due to higher FTE funds and more contributions received for Top Chef and grants at this point in the year. We are just under budget in total revenues and just over budget in total expenses. Deborah reminded the board that we need a large surplus to cover the month of June when we do not receive FTE funds from the district.

Development Report

We have \$113k in Top Chef sponsorships secured so far, however, last year at this time we had \$120k secured. We need help to reach our total goal of \$175k (what was budgeted). Stacy passed around a list of possible companies to ask for a sponsorship. Please follow up and let Stacy know as soon as you can. The chef/community leader drawing was held last week at Bartow Ford. The community leader will help their paired chef raise funds through social media and auction items.

Stacy gave updates on funding requests. We received a \$150,000 grant from the George Jenkins Foundation. We requested \$100,000 from Iron Horse Foundation and received \$25,000. We are still waiting to hear about our \$20,000 grant request to GiveWell Foundation. We asked for \$100,000 from the Hollis family and received \$15,000.

Principal's Report

We had a couple of students not in attendance since we returned from Winter Break so our ESE Coordinators tracked all but one student down (who had moved out of the county). We are filling that spot. FTE week is February 3-7 and we expect to be full. We had a new Occupational Therapy Assistant start last week.

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We have 54 students who are set to graduate this year and another four who might graduate. This will be our biggest graduation class yet! We have tentative graduation dates but are confirming that staff do not have conflicts before we announce the dates. We will hold monthly informational meetings for families on the waiting list. Graduation dates are as follows:

Tuesday, May 12, 2020 – Winter Haven, 6-7pm

Thursday, May 14, 2020 – Bartow, 6-7pm

Monday, May 18, 2020 – Lakeland, 6-7:30pm

We have ordered the Raptor Technologies visitor management system. This system will scan the driver's license of all visitors (including parents at the beginning of the year) and check a national sex offender database. It will also alert us to custody issues. This system was a recommendation that came from the FL Safe Schools Assessment survey and is paid for by the safe schools funding that is a part of our FTE funding.

The state of Florida has changed their "Best and Brightest" program for teachers yet again. This program was initially intended to attract the "best and brightest" to the teaching field and was based on SAT/ACT scores and teacher evaluation scores but has now morphed into a less stringent, more inclusive program for teachers. However, this year we were told it did not include PreK ESE teachers.

The program split into three categories this year-

1. Retention - aimed at teachers and principals who are Effective and Highly Effective but must work in a "graded" school because improvement must be shown with the percentage points. Achievement Academy is an ungraded school.
2. Recruitment - aimed at teachers who are considered "content experts" in math, science, computer science, reading or civics.
3. Recognition - This award is intended for Instructional Staff. We've been told that our staff is eligible for this piece because statute says Instructional Staff and does not require a school grade. The definition of Instructional Staff includes teachers, paras, media specialists, social workers, counselors, etc. Achievement Academy is including our therapists as part of our Instructional Staff since they have direct student contact. The Recognition Award does not include administration or other support staff. To receive this award, one must meet three requirements:
 - o employed with us or the school district last year,
 - o is an Instructional Staff member, and
 - o received a "Satisfactory" or "Effective/Highly Effective" performance evaluation.

Using these requirements, we have 42 of our total 67 staff who would qualify. The funding was based off our FTE count of 157 students and we received \$14,348.15 which will be divided equally among the 42 staff that qualify. We need board approval of the distribution plan. Mike Brossart moved to accept the plan as presented by Cindi. Stephanie Colon seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Executive Director's Report

At the last board meeting, John reported on an offer on our 540A land from Hutton. The Executive Committee met and countered the offer. Hutton declined our counter. We received another offer from BeSpoke Realty. The Executive Committee countered the offer which BeSpoke accepted with a couple modifications which were the amount of the additional deposit at the end of the Feasibility study (\$20,000 vs. \$40,000) and the length of time until the closing date (12 months vs. 9 months). The Executive Committee approved the modifications.

We received official communication in December from Superintendent Jackie Byrd denying our request for Polk County School District to continue providing bus transportation for us. We hired mechanics from McKeel to inspect the surplus buses that the district had offered to us and although the buses are in better condition than

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expected, it was determined that maintenance is still not feasible. Cindi emailed Candy Amato, acting director for the Office of School Choice, to inquire about any consequences for not providing bus transportation next school year and received a response that transportation is not a state requirement or in our contract with the district. Two school board members have indicated that they plan to bring it back up at the next school board meeting. We will see what happens there and then discuss any next plan of action.

John presented the proposed 20/21 Birth to Three budget that was approved by the Executive Committee to meet the January 20, 2020 United Way deadline. We had a net increase over expenses for the year ending June 30, 2019 of \$34,788 for the Birth to Three program. We are required by United Way to either carry over the 2018/19 balance to the 2019/20 actual/estimate budget or specify what we do with it. We are not allowed to designate any portion of the United Way allocation funds to reserves. However, since almost half of our revenue came from other sources, Deborah has carried over \$9,680 to the current year to balance that budget to zero as required. The remaining \$25,108 will be designated for agency reserves. Another new United Way requirement is to not include an increase in the allocation from United Way in the proposed 20/21 budget, but rather, in the narrative which John has done.

Committee Reports

The Nominating Committee met last week and vetted several potential board members. They are also working to identify a 1st and 2nd Vice President as Chandra Frederick's term as President ends in August 2020. All officer positions need to be confirmed and filled.

Unfinished Business

The Leadership Lakeland tour went well. We were moved to the Education Day rather than Human Services Day which seems to be a better fit.

New Business

None

The meeting was adjourned at 6:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Sulsona
Administrative Services Manager