

Baxter Academies of Maine Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, October 14, 2014 – 5:30 PM
54 York Street, Portland, Maine

Board of Directors Members Present: Allison Crean-Davis, Kelli Pryor, Peter Morrison, Ruth Dean, Peter Montano

Guests: Carl Stasio (Executive Director), Michele LaForge (Head of School), Shanna Guevin (Business and Operations Manager), Len Cole, Christian Sparling (Board candidate)

The board meeting was called to order at 5:38 pm.

Board Secretary Peter Morrison made a motion to accept the September 9, 2014 board meeting minutes. Peter Montano seconded the motion. The board minutes from September 9, 2014 were unanimously approved by the Board of Directors.

The Chair's Report, noted in the Agenda, moved to later in the meeting.

Executive Director Carl Stasio gave an Executive Director's report:

Carl has been updating Baxter Academy policies this last month, and is currently approximately 75% complete. On November 3, he will present the revised policies at the board meeting for the board to review and vote. The revised policies will be distributed the week preceding the November 3 board meeting for the board members to review.

Carl reported that Baxter Academy did not receive the federal grant that was submitted in July.

Michele LaForge gave a Head of School's report:

Michele shared some photographs and anecdotes from the first six weeks of the school, including:

- Students and staff recently spent time discussing and evaluating various social media sites. Michele led students to identify websites that tend to lead to positive outcomes versus sites that tend to evoke negative issues or behaviors, essentially forming a list of sites that have the potential to be good for students and humanity. Michele thought this was helpful for students to become more aware of their online activities.
- Flex Friday, the day for students to work on year-long (or multi-year) projects, has started. Groups have formed and proposals are being worked on. There are groups of many students, as well as some solo projects. Project groups will need to present their project proposals to a panel of staff members and one student.
- Tomorrow, October 15, students will take PSATs in the morning, and have a revised schedule in afternoon. The afternoon schedule will allow for students to work on Flex Friday project proposals, as well as for students to participate in group discussions on specific topics related to the Baxter community. The group discussions, led by the

Student Senate, will enable new students to meet one another. The two topics being discussed tomorrow are PDAs (public displays of affection) and dress code.

Kelli Pryor, Board Chair, then announced that new board candidates that were being considered this evening. Christian Sparling and Kim Gustafson, who was not present, have already met all board members. There have been one-on-one meetings, as well as group meetings, with candidates, during which they could ask and answer questions. Kelli asked if anyone had any additional questions for the new board members. Christian indicated he would be thrilled to join the Baxter Academy Board of Directors. He has had experience with charter school leadership in New Jersey. Christian recently moved here and is happy to have this opportunity.

Vice Chair Allison Crean Davis moved that the board approve the two new candidates, Kim and Christian, to be directors on the board. Board member Ruth Dean seconded. The floor was opened for discussion, but there was none. The board unanimously approved the election of both candidates.

Board Treasurer Peter Montano gave an update on Finances:

A revised budget for 2014-15 was presented for review and approval. This budget document notes the budget originally approved, the current projections based upon YTD expenses, and the proposed budget. The budget is a cash-based budget, and includes revenues based upon 230 students. Baxter Academy currently has commitments for approximately \$67,000 towards our contributions/grant line. Peter Montano and Business and Operations Manager Shanna Guevin will soon start to work on the FY16 budget. Some notes from the FY15 budget are:

- Liability insurance quote was less than originally budgeted.
- There is currently \$8,000 allotted for professional development. Michele has been creative in seeking opportunities that fit within that budget.

Peter Montano moved that the board approve the revised budget for FY15. Kelli seconded. All board members (with the exception of newly appointed board member Christian, who abstained from voting this evening) approved the revised FY15 budget.

Peter Montano gave out quarterly financials. These documents show that Baxter is on track to be within budget for this fiscal year. As of October 14, there was still approximately \$130K in Accounts Receivable from the Quarter 1 district invoices. Fundraising will be a key component this year to close the gap between the amount spent per student and the amount received per student.

Peter then gave an update on the financial audit completed in August 2014. The auditor, RKO, has completed the financial statement audit report, which was distributed this evening, but is still working on the 'procedures' piece. RKO will then have recommendations for Baxter Academy. The financial report illustrated a strong balance sheet from June 30, 2014.

Peter Montano moved that the board approve the audit report performed by RKO for 6/30/2014. Peter Morrison seconded. There was no discussion. All, with the exception of Christian who abstained from voting, approved the audit report completed by RKO.

Kelli Pryor gave a Development report.

A donor will be contributing \$50,000 to be used as a matching grant. Kelli and Ruth created a development timeline for fundraising efforts within the school community. A Year-End Appeal will be sent out in mid-November, and one parent from each advisory will help lead the appeal. Baxter is aiming at 100% participation from current families.

Carl is researching what our financial picture is compared to our sending districts; this work will illustrate the gap between Baxter and the sending schools. Kelli plans to put together a "progress report" showing the gap between Maine and other states, along with the gap that Carl has exposed. Allison and Kelli will work on this.

Goodwill tours will still continue on Fridays. The work from these tours has helped strengthen policies, advocacy, contributions, and community building.

Christian asked if people have the ability to request a Goodwill tour, or if it was by invitation only. He suggested using an online service, such as Eventbrite, that could schedule individuals who would like to visit the school. Allison questioned how to separate these tours from general admissions tours for prospective students.

The date for the Portland Chamber of Commerce After Hours Date has been pushed back due to scheduling conflicts. The event will help Baxter connect to Portland and will create more relationships. Revised dates being considered are April 2, 7, and 8, 2015.

Ruth discussed her work with Baxter's parent group. Ruth's goal with parents is to share the story of what is required at Baxter --how the gap is currently filled by hard work.

Carl gave a Facilities update:

Having 230 students in the building works well. Things are flowing nicely; the only congestion is during Town Hall (Friday morning meeting with all students) in the Great Room, and at dismissal. Adding an additional grade next year may overtax existing space. We are exploring short-term solutions for September 2015, as well as long-term solutions.

Baxter is currently researching several options, including an extended day (or staggered schedule), as well as the rental of additional space near 54 York Street.

Allison would like an update at the next board meeting (11/3/14).

Peter Montano left the board meeting at 7:28pm.

Kelli mentioned that students are questioning the job opportunities in Maine after college. Could there be a task force for students to join with others in addressing the issue of young people leaving Maine for better jobs. How can we join with policy makers, and other partners, to work on this? How do we get young people to stay in Maine, or come back after college?

There will be an Open House on October 22 for current students and families.

The board opened up the meeting for public discussion. There was no public discussion. Allison motioned to adjourn the board meeting at 7:52pm. Peter Morrison seconded. All board members approved.