

**Baxter Academies of Maine Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Tuesday, August 12, 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)

The meeting was called to order at 5:35pm by Board Chair, Kelli Pryor.

Minutes from the July 8, 2014 meeting were distributed at the start of the meeting. Board Secretary Peter Morrison made a motion to accept the minutes. Ruth Dean seconded the motion. All board members approved.

**Executive Director's Report**

Carl Stasio gave an Executive Directors Report.

Baxter Academy is currently awaiting news on three significant grants that were submitted last year. We should know about the Ladd grant by mid-September. We should also hear about the Unum grant (for enrichment-related activities and costs) by that time. We should hear back about the Bangor Savings Bank Foundation grant (for equipment/supplies for the Fabrication and Master Science Labs in the basement) by the end of September.

We are also awaiting news on a large federal grant that was submitted July 12, 2014; we should hear by mid-October. Should Baxter be awarded this grant, the distribution of funds would begin in November 2014.

**Head of School Report**

Michele LaForge gave a Head of School Report.

This summer of 2014 has been the “summer of firsts.” Baxter submitted many end of year reports, including a behavior report, to the Department of Education. The major part of this particular report highlights reporting around bullying. Baxter has a J Board (judiciary board) that has acted as a good intervention throughout the year and has helped to address and alleviate any bullying.

Major cleaning has been occurring over the summer within classrooms and hallways to prepare for the fall.

There are some items still to be finalized before the school year begins, including transportation routes and carpooling. Kelli Pryor has done much work around these needs by connecting families for carpooling.

Baxter is considering a tech fee for students to help offset the advanced technological resources at Baxter. Baxter currently has two computer labs, one to one devices for

students, and a large data pipeline. Michele is discussing the possibility and feasibility of the tech fee with a variety of parents. Should a tech fee be implemented this year, Michele would host a town hall meeting with parents to review.

Michele LaForge then gave a staffing update: All teachers have been hired. The hiring of two additional instructional support staff will help with substitute needs and additional elective-teaching opportunities. New for Baxter is a French teacher and a Spanish teacher, both part-time. Jess Talbot is moving from the Front Office into a Special Education support role. Alice Pfeifer was recently hired as the Front Office Manager to replace Jess. Baxter is still looking for an IT Manager and Health Coordinator.

The success of finding a great pool of new teachers and staff is due to the hiring process for teachers. The applications were narrowed down to a smaller field, and prospective teachers were invited into Baxter for a full day to teach a class, meet with parents, students and various staff members. A full evaluation was compiled at the end of the day for each candidate. Students and parents felt engaged and invested in this process.

Allison Crean-Davis suggested we share this information on the hiring process with the community as it is a valuable and illustrative representation of Baxter's culture. As this is one of the unique features of our learning community, she raised the question of how we might best communicate our philosophy and process for hiring and other important issues on the website or in other materials. A brief discussion ensued and will be revisited at a later time.

Students have been in the process of registering for classes for the fall session. What Baxter has done is determine what expertise we have in the faculty, what the students are interested in, and most effectively matched them up while meeting requirements. Last week, in-person registration started for all students (alongside parents). Every family has a one-half hour meeting with a faculty member in the school. They review the requirements and the electives. This process is occurring over two weeks, for three days each week. Faculty members have volunteered to come in to help with this. This registration process was designed and implemented by Pam and David Rawson.

Some faculty members have attended conferences and developed community partnerships this summer. For example, Art & Design teacher Nathaniel Edmunds attended a weeklong project-based learning seminar that will continue throughout the year. Humanities Teacher Adam Gilman has begun work with One Longfellow Square and 317Maine to connect music with the 10<sup>th</sup> grade social studies curriculum.

On Monday, August 18<sup>th</sup>, there will be a one- day retreat for new & current faculty.

The week of August 25<sup>th</sup> will be professional development for all faculty and staff.

Michele provided information on the schools' first few days of school. Freshman and sophomores will begin on Wednesday, September 3, at Fort Williams. They will participate in a program lead by Rippleffect.

On September 4<sup>th</sup>, the juniors will head to Cow Island with Rippleffect, while the freshman and sophomores are at Baxter.

On Friday, September 5<sup>th</sup>, freshman and juniors will participate in mentoring activities at Baxter.

### **Facilities Report**

Peter Morrison provided a Facilities report, beginning with a status update of the basement renovations:

- Sheet rocking will be completed on Thursday, August 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Priming and painting will be occurring this coming weekend.
- Suspended ceilings will begin to drop on Monday, August 18<sup>th</sup>. This will take 1.5 weeks.
- Door installation and HVAC work will be in progress, along with the lift installation.
- Two items that are still being worked on: flooring and plumbing. The flooring type will be determined on Wednesday.
- If all goes well, everything should be completed by September 15<sup>th</sup>.

Michele LaForge mentioned that she could have a revised schedule for the week of 9/8/14, or possibly rent space nearby.

### **Finance Update**

Board Treasurer Peter Montano gave a finance update:

There is a need to add Michele LaForge as an authorized check signer, as well as a debit cardholder. Peter Montano made a motion to enable Michele to approve expenditures within the guidelines of Baxter's policies, to add her as an authorized signer for checks, and to be issued a debit card for purchases. Kelli Pryor seconded the motion. All board members approved.

Baxter has hired RKO to perform the financial audit beginning the week of August 25, 2014.

The meeting was then opened for public discussion. There was no public discussion.

Kelli Pryor moved that the board proceed to an executive session to consult with its attorney concerning the legal rights and duties of the Corporation related to personnel and governance matters, as permitted by the Freedom of Access Act, section 405, paragraphs (6)(A) and (E).

Allison Crean Davis seconded. All board members approved. The public portion of the board meeting ended at 6:32 pm.