



The Association for the Advancement of Education, DBA, The Hawbridge School
Board of Directors Meeting

Date: Wednesday, November 18, 2020

Location: Virtual Meeting:

I. Call to Order – 6:02 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Attending Board Members: Todd Nicolet (Chair), Natalya Barker (Vice Chair), Dawnya Bohager (Treasurer), April Williams (Secretary), Kathryn Brown, Matt Buckmaster, Christina Fisher, Dianne Ford, Renee Lynch

Attending Executive Director and Faculty/Staff: Mya Ciccotti (Executive Director), Jonathan Farmer (Faculty Representative to the Board), Daryl Feldman (Assistant Director of Student Services), Emily Martin (School Counselor), Jennifer Shelton (Assistant Director of Curriculum and Instruction)

III. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved unanimously.

IV. Public Comment

A. Dr. Jennifer Platt, a Hawbridge parent, brought to the board's attention the pandemic's toll on students' mental and emotional health, in particular the challenges and stresses of virtual learning, and asked us to consider two issues going forward:

1. The use of outdoor classrooms to alleviate some of the stress of virtual learning; Hawbridge seems ideally suited for this.

2. Preserving snow days to help boost student morale during winter months.

Dr. Platt offered to do more research on an outdoor school initiative that formed in May 2020 to see what the findings have been to aid in our considerations.

B. Elizabeth McCue offered a report on the Saxapahaw Traffic Committee via Kathryn Brown. On behalf of Elizabeth, Kathryn reported that the traffic committee is still working on the community meeting. They have reached out to Rep. Riddell and his assistant (his wife) said they will be e-mailing later for a meeting in December or January.

V. Consent Items

A. Approval of previous meeting's minutes

One edit was suggested, to add Dianne to the fundraising committee. With this edit, minutes were approved unanimously.

B. Future Meetings/Events:

The board unanimously approved our next meeting for December 16, 2020 at 6:00 pm via Zoom.

VI. Reports

A. Board

- Fundraising Committee (Kathryn Brown)

Met virtually on Nov. 12 with Dianne, Natalya, Matt, and Kathryn

a) Grant writing – Dianne met with Rob Greenberg and Liz Stabenow to discuss possible grants and grant writing. There are quite a lot of grants for outdoor learning environments. We're grateful for help from these faculty members. Ginny and Montana from Sprout Farm would also be a good resource. Another meeting regarding grant writing is scheduled for the week after Thanksgiving.

b) Fundraising priority shift – In the past, fundraising priorities have leaned toward expanding the gym, but now priorities seem to need to shift to support more of the needs emerging as we near the opening of the new school building. Important to note that the gym remains a high-level priority for the committee. In the meantime, the committee has considered ways we can improve the school's outdoor spaces, including pollinator gardens and outdoor classrooms, as these improvements don't necessarily cost a lot of money and provide a great way to get the community involved with highly visible and useful improvements. Faculty have expressed interest in gazebos, which could be managed by pulling in help from school families. Consider looking at other charter schools' use of outdoor spaces. Improving outdoor spaces also has the potential to bring in more fundraising support.

c) Confidential donor list – The committee is working on compiling a confidential donor list and will send it out to the board soon.

d) Next meeting – The next fundraising committee meeting will be Dec. 10.

- Communications Committee (April Williams)

Met virtually on November 17

a) Board web page – Jennifer made the changes we talked about in our last meeting and they look great. Our committee has a few edits that we will send to her, including finished bios.

b) Flyer to the community – Dawnya received some aerial maps from Mya that we can use in our community flyer, but we're waiting to take our cues from Mya and Jason re: best timing.

- c) Faculty appreciation notes – We have a list of all the faculty and their addresses; e-mail April if you're interested in writing some handwritten notes of appreciation to the faculty.
- Renovations Committee (Renee Lynch) – Renee reported that the renovations committee is waiting on estimates and timelines and then will establish goals for the committee once they can move forward. They have reached out to Mya for guidance.

B. Director

- Walkthrough with Aspire Construction – Daryl and Mya; great ideas from Aspire; cost-conscious; they will frame their estimate so that each project is a standalone item so that if we need to prioritize, we'll have those separate estimates. Ben and Jason working on that, gave Daryl and Mya a lot of ideas, especially regarding acoustics downstairs.
- Reached out to WUNC radio; have historically advertised for December open house; have usually had a lot of foot traffic; will announce our expansion K-12 and that we're accepting lottery applications instead of open house.
- Air duct cleaning – Friday and Saturday; no one aware of this ever happening before; ensuring that we are bringing in clean air once students are back in classroom; another effort to thoroughly clean.
- COVID funding – Yesterday the school qualified for additional state and federal COVID funding. Working with accountant, looking like school may be able to purchase more computers. Computers are being returned with issues of cameras and microphones, which is problematic, since we don't have someone on staff to fix those and turn them around quickly.
- Flyer for residents – The appraisals have all those plots and renderings. Any preference for those in the folder? Shoot Mya an e-mail regarding what we think is more resident-friendly. Will work on getting that out in a timely way so that folks don't feel anxious or blindsided.
- School's response to COVID – Timeline for decision making as we go forward? We do have a handbook for reopening for return on Jan. 20. Plan is for three cohort, coming in one week at a time and then two weeks off. But we need to get through holidays to see how they affect numbers. Hesitant to share this with families, because grave concerns about the numbers of rising COVID cases. Might be useful not to send the full plan but send a message/outline of what the hope is of what the semester could look like if everything goes well. Acknowledging that the back and forth can be frustrating.
- Marketing – Are we still doing yard signs? Yes, Now accepting applications K-12; will order about 60 of them, one for each faculty, board member, business and community spaces. Waiting a couple more weeks so that more political signs can come down. Still working with Times-News, Orange, and Chatham to get some advertising on their Facebook pages.

- E-mail to announce accepting applications – E-mailed everyone on last year’s waiting list that didn’t get a seat; got a huge number of applicants once that e-mail went out. Mya is trying to be respectful in the order of which she’s notifying folks: first wait list folks, then residents (who will be impacted the most by the expansion), then outreach in the community. Strategic, step-by-step communication. We’ll be recruiting students up to February 28, 2021, and this info will go on WUNC radio and other marketing strategies.
- Any idea of how many spots we’ll need to fill? Yes, the Lotterease software allows admins to look each week, every Monday, at the number of spots that are available and how many applicants have applied. Mya can share this info with the board each month easily, and can share areas of concern: We’re going to struggle in 10th, 11th, and 12th; we may be able to offset the number of 8th graders, can front load the lower middle school grades since they will be in the same building. Board expressed that we would like to get this report for next couple months, especially seeing how slots are being filled and what areas we are concerned about. Mya will add this to the December agenda.
- Surveys related to COVID – Will we repeat that survey or modify it? It will more than likely have to be somewhat modified. If we move to plan B, we still have to offer a plan C; will be difficult for those virtual students, because they will have to adjust to the bell schedule. We don’t have enough faculty to do both. Virtual students will just zoom into class as the faculty is teaching.
- Can part of the survey be a defined outdoor option? Hiking and outdoor science classes, poetry by the river, as option? It is safe to say that if there is in-person instruction, it will be done the Hawbridge way: outdoors as much as possible. We don’t need new construction now by way of tables or gazebos. Social and emotional piece is so crucial, and this is also the Hawbridge way. It will be Jan/Feb/March, so must be mindful of the weather.
- Discussion about outdoor learning: 100% outside for just one day, what would that orchestration be, etc.? Hard to go into a lot of the detail in this board meeting—how would that work, how could that work, what are the implications? If we re-do that survey, we’ll need to make sure that the in-person experience would be really clear. The stated goal is we’re trying to work toward that.
- Emphasize that so many were impressed with how well Hawbridge did emergency response in spring and then the ongoing responsiveness and flexibility so that the experience could be as good as it possibly could be.
- Possible to go through PASTA to get students together, in small groups; several parents are trying to get their students together. Emily can help parents connect with other families of grade-level peers. A way to make sure those community resources are available to folks who need them.

C. Treasurer

- October saw a continued influx of our revenue and for the first time we saw an appreciable influx of county revenue. Moving along with expenses. Bright

spot: Several expenses related to building cost and maintenance are not needed now, so we'll have some small sustained savings there.

- Question re: budget: Expenses feel under control—can we spend down the COVID budget line before the deadline? Answer from Mya: Some money we'll have to give back to the state, such as the school nurse money (we don't have a nurse). Chromebooks and hot spots have been on back order. Invoice received today for laptops that will roughly spend 70 percent. How quickly we can get the funds spent before the funding must be returned.

D. Faculty Representative

- Faculty doing ok. Everyone working really hard to tend to students' mental health, cutting back on homework as much as possible. In terms of middle school, almost all of the seventh-grade teachers are not giving homework. The high school students have been able to get their work done during the eight-hour school day.
- Question: How is the faculty feeling about continuing this track? Can't speak for every faculty member but appreciate the message from the admins to do this in a sustainable way, to tend to mental health and well-being of all, make sure kids come back to school still liking school.
- Important note: As the board, we have to support the narrative that we're *all* the victims of the virus. We want to make sure that the *teachers* want to come back too!
- Basically, everyone is missing each other; faculty are missing students, to be with them in a way that we can be meaningful.

VII. Unfinished Business

A. Hawbridge Expansion Update (Little Diversified and Aspire Construction)

- Fingers are crossed that closing is on the horizon. Todd and Mya will be signing the documents tomorrow in Cary. Tomorrow, we'll know our timeline more firmly and we'll need to have a special board meeting to discuss the implications of this. Proposed public meeting for Wednesday, December 9, at 6 p.m. The admin team has been working on alternative plans so that they can bring some ideas to us so that we're not figuring it out as a board but that we'll be able to support them.

VIII. New Business

A. Admissions Policy amendment

- We have four different ways that people can apply for the lottery, but since we have the new lottery software, they no longer apply. No longer paper applications. We have to go through the online lottery.
- Eliminate 1 a, b, c, and d in the current Admissions Policy.
- We always offer the opportunity to come to the school to apply. Open laptops during open houses to fill out applications.

- Accessibility: Is the website certified to be ADA compliant? The application can be translated into eight different languages. The school is ADA accessible and the library is ADA accessible.
- Does the website function appropriately for alternative readers? Mya will reach out to Lotterease to make sure that their website provides fair and adequate access to everybody.
- Discussion to amend the language. Proposed revision is as follows:
“1. Applicants should apply at <https://Lotterease.com>. If you need any assistance with the application, please see thehawbridgeschool.org/admissions for detailed information or contact the school.”
Proposed language was approved unanimously.

IX. Closed Session – 7:45 p.m.

- a. To Consider Confidential Matters Pursuant to NC G.S. §143-318.11
 - i. Subsection (a) - (5)

X. Adjourn – 8:23 p.m.