



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

Date: Wednesday, January 27, 2021

Location: Virtual Meeting

I. Call to Order – 6:03 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

Absent: 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)

Other Attendees: Jason Imhof and Ben Culp (Aspire Construction Management)

III. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved unanimously.

IV. Public Comment

- A. Jennifer Platt, Hawbridge parent – Dr. Platt expressed concerns about what information is known by families regarding the timing for the completion of the new school building, what the fall will look like for students, and if there are alternative options the board has considered.
- B. Elizabeth McCue for the Saxapahaw Traffic Committee – The committee had a meeting with Rep. Riddell and NC DOT and Highway Patrol, and it went very well. NC DOT shared data from January 2019, which included information regarding increases in general traffic, truck traffic, and speeding. Rep. Riddell has made a visit to Saxapahaw. The committee was asked to gather more data, which has been compiled, and will have another meeting soon to discuss solutions and next steps.
- C. Leslie Fields – In the public chat, Leslie echoed Dr. Platt's concerns and queries regarding when the new school would open and expressed a desire to have students

return to in-person learning in some capacity. Leslie also shared concern that depression is a problem among some students.

V. Consent Items

A. Approval of previous meeting's minutes

The board unanimously approved minutes from our meetings on December 16, 2020, and January 13, 2021.

B. Future Meetings/Events:

The board unanimously approved our next meeting for Wednesday, February 24, 2021, at 6:00 p.m.

VI. Reports

A. Board

- Groundbreaking Committee (Kathryn Brown) – The groundbreaking committee met on January 11, 2020, and decided that, given the stay-at-home order by the Governor, as well as chances for inclement weather and issues of accessibility to the site, we will have a topping-out ceremony in the spring in lieu of the groundbreaking ceremony in February. The topping-out ceremony will involve having key stakeholders sign the last structural beam, which will then be placed in the new building. The committee is set to meet again on March 1 to plan this new event, which is tentatively scheduled for April or May.
- Fundraising Committee (Kathryn Brown) – The fundraising committee met on January 12, 2020. Dianne has been working closely with faculty to apply for grants. One of interest is Impact Alamance, in partnership with UnitedWay, which will have a Zoom info session coming up soon. The committee is working on creating a landing page on the website to collect money from folks who want to make donations to the school and is in conversation with Brian Setliff, former board member and attorney representative, about the legal issues related to collecting donations. Next fundraising meeting is February 17, 2020.
- Communications Committee (April Williams)
 - Construction flyer – We plan to create and post a new update flyer on various bulletin boards throughout Saxapahaw (General Store, Post Office, Cup 22, Saxapahaw Village Kids) the first week of February. It will include a “please excuse our mess” message, brief info about the expansion and its benefits to the community, how to apply for admission and employment, and a call-to-action to return to the website to learn more.
 - Saxapahaw newsletter – We have provided Linda Pucci, editor of the *Saxapahaw Current*, with information regarding the expansion for the February edition. She asked for information regarding the traffic controls, and we provided her with Elizabeth McCue’s contact info. We believe it is important that the Hawbridge expansion project and the Saxapahaw traffic concerns be separate and distinct stories. We also made note that we need to always include Linda and the *Saxapahaw Current* in our communications with the community.

- Press release – Natalya and Kathryn will finalize the press release and share it with the board for feedback and final approval. Versions of the press release (edited to the appropriate length) will be shared via a) news media outlets, b) Hawbridge’s social media accounts, c) e-mail to Hawbridge families, d) posts to online Saxapahaw community groups (Saxapahaw Sharing Basket, Rivermill Social Club, SVK Parent’s Group, etc.).
- Communicating with the Hawbridge community – We discussed ways we can facilitate greater communication between the board and the Hawbridge community, particularly the families and parents. Possibilities included sending abbreviated summaries of each month’s minutes or quarterly e-mail updates, and/or a brief video “Meet the Board.”
- Assisting the ED – The last point of each of our monthly reports is to ask the ED how we can assist her with her communications efforts. We see our role as supporting the ED as much as possible.
- Renovations Committee (Renee Lynch) – Renee could not be at tonight’s meeting, so there was no report from the renovations committee at this time.

B. Director

- New openings – We have interviewed 14 potential candidates via Zoom, five more coming up (about three a day); exciting candidates!
- Lottery – There are over 300 applicants as of this afternoon. We likely can anticipate the usual push in February as the lottery comes to a close.
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – We have a draft of the MOU for the temporary site for the upper school. One “kink” is with the electricity to the trailers, but we’re working on that with the church team, who have been amazing to work with. We’re confident this temporary location will be a good fit for us until the new building is ready in January. It will provide what we need and be as convenient as possible for families, being just a few miles down the road from the existing school.
- Communication plan with families – 1) Page on the school’s website with updates on the upper school and information about the temporary location and calendar 2) This same information will be included in Sunday call and e-mail with families 3) Virtual Q&A for families and students. We want to recognize that this need for a temporary location during construction is common to educators, but an understandable concern for families, which may cause some anxiety for them and their students. We plan to include the backstory of how we got to this decision. (*Questions for admin team: How can the board’s communications committee help with this messaging? Would it be helpful for any of the board to be at that meeting?*) 4) Google slideshow that will include photos of the temporary site, as well as explanation of where everyone will be at the site, to be shared at the Q&A and posted on the school’s website.
- How COVID affects the MOU – Concern was raised about the uncertainty of COVID, in particular the accessibility of vaccines by the fall, and how this might impact our MOU. Because the MOU is not a contract, we are not locked into any particular timeframe or obligation with the church. As for the mobile classrooms and restroom trailers, those are available on an ongoing, long-term basis, and

the vendors have earmarked some for us; we can wait until as close as a month before we need to sign a contract to lease them. Setup for the trailers could be done in as quickly as one week, if need be, though we don't want to have the timing be that tight. All this to say, we have some significant flexibility if we need to delay going back in person and are still doing virtual learning in the fall.

- FAQs – Prior to the Q&A with families regarding plans for the fall, the school could ask families to submit their questions (like we did with the open houses) so that we can be sure to address everyone's concerns. After the Q&A, we can compile a list of Frequently Asked Questions to post on the website for folks who can't make the meeting or who need more clarification.

C. Treasurer

Dawnya reported that everything is on track for the 20-21 budget; we're on course.

D. Faculty Representative

No news from Jonathan. Emily is working on new resources for supporting faculty and students' mental health.

VII. Unfinished Business

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

- Picture report – Jason encouraged the board to take a look at the picture report Aspire shared today (forwarded to the board from Mya), including visuals of the site (storm retention ponds, erosion control, a lot of dirt and earth movement—we're making progress!).
- Challenges
 - Dirt – Some of the dirt on site is not suitable dirt to be under a building, so we've hired a third party to monitor and test the dirt as it gets compacted and put in place. Dirt that is not good for this purpose will be used in landscaping or removed from the site; we're hoping to avoid having to bring in new dirt and remove unusable dirt. The testing company will micromanage this issue, making decisions in the field as quickly as possible, trying to avoid stoppages. We pay a little extra money to the testing and engineering contractors so that we don't have to pay a lot of money to the grading contractors later.
 - Site contractor – The site contractor that was initially hired by CT Wilson has a debt with USDA, so CT Wilson has hired a different site contractor. Provided that the new company doesn't have the same issue, we should be able to work with them.
- Budget – We got first drop from First Citizens, so Mya was able to write checks to CT Wilson. The school is also getting paid back for what we've already invested (\$153,000).
- Traffic – We had a lengthy discussion regarding traffic concerns.

- The traffic engineer for our project has been brainstorming good/better/best ideas to help with the crosswalk situation.
- Jason raised the question if the school should work independently with the DOT or are our interests fully represented through the Saxapahaw Traffic Committee. In other words, should our traffic engineer initiate contact with DOT? The board considered whether we can have a magnifying effect by working in parallel with the community group, or if it has the opposite effect—could we be distracting?
- Jason recommended that if the school has the ability to have a strong voice as part of the community group, then a unified approach would be best, but cautioned that the school wants to make sure we have a strong voice and strong interest represented in the community group's efforts.
- Is the community group advocating just for a low tonnage road? And if so, this will not solve the full problem of getting folks safely across the road.
- Mya reported that in the Saxapahaw Traffic Committee meeting with the DOT, there were several suggestions on the table (sidewalks from B. Everette Jordan Elementary to Hawbridge, roundabouts, a low-tonnage road—concerns about this one because the landfill is on that road—crosswalks, pedestrian flashing light by the school, additional signage, drastically low speed limit to deter trucks), but there's not one solution that everyone is advocating for.
- When those ideas need to become just a few, will everyone have the same interests? Can the group express a single list of priorities once we have to make tradeoffs? Too soon to tell.
- The next follow-up will be more with the DOT engineers, and this may be when we get a better idea. Right now, we're working really well within the parameters of the school. Community is very invested in making sure our community of students and faculty and families are safe. We want to go with the community approach.
- Consider the size of the ideas—roundabouts don't take months; they take years. We need to make sure on opening day we have it as right as we can get it. We need to make sure we work together to ensure short-term gains that make the whole community safer.

B. Renovations Update

- Architect – We're in the process of obtaining proposals from three architectural firms and should have these to review with the board. If there's an ability to finalize a contract prior to the next board meeting, we'll do that, but by the next meeting we should be able to pick someone.
- Because the budget is approved, Mya can make renovation decisions on her own, but we offer the renovations committee as a sounding board (not a decision-making board) so that she has access to board input if she wants it.

VIII. New Business

A. Board Selection Committee

Two board positions are finishing their terms this year. Per the bylaws, the selection committee must be formed by February 15. Kathryn, Matt, April, and Dianne volunteered to serve as the four board member representatives alongside the two faculty reps and one parent. Faculty reps are determined by a call for volunteers and then an anonymous vote from all faculty via GoogleDocs.

B. Future plan for school safety/security

- Temporary site for the Upper School
 - Rekey the church; Ed (church rep), Mya, and Jennifer the only keyholders
- Lower School
 - Secure the front vestibule
 - Add security cameras to the exterior
 - Eliminate some of the glass doors by turning them into windows
 - Possibly using same key fob system as the upper school (still looking into this—depends on pricing, perhaps possible to mimic)
- Both schools
 - RhinoWare door barricade system
 - Annual training and refreshers for faculty
 - Comprehensive emergency plan
- School resource officer (SRO)
 - In years past, we have gone back and forth on this issue, both as a board and as an admin team, reviewing a lot of data and expressing concern over what this would look like in our unique environment.
 - It would be a really large expense for the school. It used to be a 50/50 split with sheriff's department, but now around \$60,000-65,000/year to have a full-time SRO.
 - Mya can share data and faculty response from last year with the board. Views have been very mixed in the past. (Note, the survey we took last year may not be representative of what folks are thinking and feeling now, as we have heard from some of the faculty that their views have changed.)
 - We've been told from a contact in the sheriff's department that there used to be more choice for schools, but because of shortages, now we have more of a get-what-you-get situation (same person every day, but we would not get the option to interview, just whoever they can spare).
 - The need for an SRO became more of a concern when we doubled the student body and plan to move students across the street.
 - According to the Alamance Sheriff's Department, standard response time to our area is roughly 18 minutes; this is a serious concern, as it is a long time to wait should an emergency arise.
 - We're the only charter school in Alamance without an SRO.

- We would have to go through the Alamance Sheriff's Department, because it is where the school pays taxes; could not use an SRO from any of the other counties whose students we serve.
- The Alamance Sheriff's Department has received negative attention recently on a national scale; consider how an Alamance SRO may be received/perceived by current and prospective students and families.
- In the past, we have had someone from the Alamance Sheriff's Department teach our D.A.R.E. program and the students loved our D.A.R.E. officer.
- Depends on the person and if they are a good fit for our school.
- We have not considered a private resource officer in the past, but we could look into this option to try to have more control over our choice.
- Talked at one point to local business owners, about taking their feedback into consideration.
- Could we share an SRO with B. Everette Jordan Elementary?
- Can we consider a more restorative practice by tapping into a social worker? There's the possibility some of the new lower school counselors may be social workers.
- Consider what the differences are for SRO and social worker, different responsibilities, different perceptions, different outcomes?
- Admins will collect more research based on this conversation in the next couple of months to share with the board as we continue to consider this important security issue.

C. BTSP Addendum

New language to the Beginning Teacher Support Program policy has been shared with the school and a motion was raised to add the following sentence to the end of section 2.e.1 in the Hawbridge Policy Manual:

If a principal determines that a teacher rated "proficient" or a retired teacher is the most appropriate mentor for a new teacher, the principal shall maintain records of the reasons for that determination.

The motion was approved unanimously.

IX. Adjourn – 7:45 p.m.