



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

Date: Wednesday, May 26, 2021

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)

Other Attendees: Jason Imhof (Aspire Construction Management)

III. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved unanimously.

IV. Public Comment

A. There was no public comment.

V. Consent Items

A. Approval of previous meeting's minutes

The board unanimously approved minutes from April 28, 2021, with edits.

B. Future Meetings/Events:

The board unanimously approved our next meeting for Wednesday, June 23, 2021, at 6:00 p.m.

## VI. Reports

### A. Board

- Topping-Out Ceremony Committee (Kathryn Brown) – Based on the latest construction update, our timeline is moved back to possibly the end of July. The committee feels good about our to-do list; we hope that Mya can join us briefly for our next virtual meeting (TBD) to go over some details.
- Fundraising Committee (Kathryn Brown) – Fundraising is paused while the PASTA group is doing their fundraising event. It might be helpful if there is an official end to that fundraiser so that we have a better understanding of when we can kick-off with some of our events (likely May 31, when their terms end). We want to work collaboratively with PASTA and the school, possibly hiring a part-time person to oversee it, a marketing manager or fundraising manager, someone to help make this a collaborative effort, to help get the word out, and to build up an alumni and donor list. Think about how such a role might be supported; valuable if we can afford it. Mya has talked with Woods Charter for several years about their marketing and fundraising campaigns.
- Communications Committee (April Williams) – An annual timeline was proposed for regular communications with the school, as well as draft language for the board’s end-of-year e-mail. The board discussed what signature to use in our e-mail communication and agreed to sign this proposed end-of-year e-mail as “Your Hawbridge Board” and to include all of our names, first and last, as a runner at the bottom of the e-mail. The question was raised if *The Saxapahaw Current* newsletter is available in the school to students and staff, and yes, hard copies are available.
- Renovations Committee (Renee Lynch) – We’re focusing on the beautification of the exterior of the school:
  - Mural – We’ve received some mural designs from local artists for the front of the building, which we submitted to Mya and Daryl a few weeks ago. Two possible directions: either a designed mural or a mascot. The school has received over 30 submissions from students with designs for the mascot; considering putting the students’ designs inside and then something professional on the exterior.
  - Raised beds – We’re partnering with Sprout Community, using some of their grant money to fund this project. We’ve moved forward with process of getting this started as part of their afterschool curriculum and to support our new teachers’ curriculum.
  - Beautification work day – We plan to have a volunteer work day this summer, likely using Sign-Up Genius so that folks can sign up for specific time slots and for specific kinds of labor/tasks.
- Selection Committee (Matt Buckmaster) – We had a very strong pool of applicants this year; the committee’s recommendations were forwarded to the board. We anticipated two membership terms coming open, but because Matt’s wife will be joining the school as part of the third-grade faculty in the fall, in

accordance with the bylaws, Matt must resign and his term must also be filled. New board members will be announced during the June meeting.

#### B. Director

- Athletics program – We’re struggling to fill the position of part-time athletic director. This role typically fell on Daryl, but he will not be able to continue because of his director position at the lower school. Given our lack of facilities, coaches, and director, we’re considering temporarily pausing the athletics program. The board advised that if we’re asking for help from parents, we may want to be as direct as possible, since folks might be willing to do more if it’s clear that there may not be any athletics in the fall without more help. The school does not want to pause the program, but it needs more help and wants to make sure it’s being equitable in its sports offerings. There is a supplement for the athletic director position and for coaches, so they are paid positions. Mya encouraged the board to see if we could help find qualified folks to fulfill the positions. Also consider asking around at parks and rec departments. Once the new building is finished and we can host athletic events, we anticipate eventually needing a full-time athletic director, so it’s a position that will likely grow.
- State testing – Testing is underway, and thus far, we have 100% participation!
- Graduation – The graduation ceremony will be June 1<sup>st</sup> at 7 p.m. at the amphitheater.
- Senior picnic and senior sunset – This event will be tomorrow on the downstairs patio, a chance for the graduating seniors to be together in person.
- Temporary location preparations – Tree removal to make sufficient space for the upper school portable classrooms is done, which will now allow the grading company and temporary classroom company to come in and make sure everything is prepared and ready for the fall.
- Lunches – Staff appreciated the lunches from the board, especially grateful now during testing.
- New admin roles – Admins want to send out a letter to families to announce new administration of upper and lower school and to define the details of the temporary location. The admin team will draft this communication and get it out tomorrow; they suggest the board send its end-of-year letter to Nancy next week.
- Teacher recognition – Mya wanted the board to be aware of all the hard work the faculty is putting in right now: Teachers are grading, giving exams, putting themselves together from the past year of COVID teaching, and packing up their entire classrooms—all the grit work on top of all the other typical end-of-year tasks. It’s organized chaos, and the faculty are doing an incredible job.
- Faculty involvement with graduation ceremony – It’s a surprise!
- Board attendance at graduation – Board members are welcome to come view the ceremony, since the Governor switched the outdoor gathering limit from 100 to 200. Not sure we’ll be able to stream it, because the wi-fi is not dependable.

### C. Treasurer

Dawnya reported that we are 83% through the year and that revenue is keeping up with that progress. We continue to operate with a healthy surplus, partly from less use of the building and some reduced personnel costs due to COVID. Purchases are still in flux (e.g., teacher development training, things students will need, etc.), so while we are at almost a \$200,000 annual surplus now, it will likely be closer to \$100,000 once we're done with this year's spending. We're on track or a little better from previous years. Our total fund surplus is approaching one million dollars, positioning us for better financial resilience as we become financially a much more complex organization. While this seems like a lot of money, it is not as large a surplus as it seems, given that we will need to maintain a much larger reserve next year because of the school expansion. Our reserve best practice is the amount we want to make sure we have on hand to cover three months' worth of expenditures. That number is about to change dramatically and our being positioned to have that is remarkable. Also note, the fund balance doesn't take into account the lower school renovations and upper school temporary location costs. And we haven't finished our large construction project yet, which we hope will not have overruns. Revenue is still coming in, all of which should come in by the end of the year.

### D. Faculty Representative

Jonathan expressed that the lunches the board provided were very much appreciated. Elizabeth Osborne does the heavy lifting putting all of these together. Students have been real troopers during testing. It's been a super weird way to end a school year, but there are also really nice reminders of how Hawbridge is special. Look forward to an interesting surprise at graduation! The board congratulated the faculty on making it through this challenging year.

## VII. Unfinished Business

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

- Jason reported that the construction project is organized chaos and that it's a relief to not have to talk about rain and wet dirt. Now the focus is on concrete. The retaining wall is in place. Footings are in the ground. Underground plumbing has been installed. Slab will be poured, masonry elevator shaft will go up, and utilities will be going in soon. Structural steel will start middle of June.
- Owner move-in is still scheduled for December 15, which factors in the 25-day extension that we approved for CT Wilson due to rain delays.
- Lumber pricing and structural steel pricing are a daily concern regarding the supply chains; things you would normally expect to pick up at the hardware store with no delay are now not available. Really odd time in construction. For the upper school, we got ahead of that curve on the procurement standpoint, as we have a lot of our materials already, and the hope is that things will level out with supply and demand.

## B. Renovation Update

- By the end of the week, we anticipate having full plans from the architect to review with Mya, and then we'll be able to get the plans out to bid.
- It's challenging to get subcontractors interested right now, because the industry is so busy; folks don't even have time to bid on new projects.
- We may also need to be more flexible regarding the materials due to the unusual challenges in the supply chain; this likely will not affect major materials but rather accepting minor adjustments to maintain our timing and budget.
- Assuming the permitting process is reasonable, the renovations still should start the first week of June and should be done before the school year begins, likely a week before the first day teachers would need to be in the classroom. We are on track as of now, but it's dependent on how quickly the permits can be issued.

## VIII. New Business

### A. Audit Contract Approval

The contractor we have used for the past six years has added a need for board approval this year, as well as a section on Governmental Unit. The question was raised if we should consider changing up the auditor from year to year. Mya replied that Nicole, our financial advisor, has a really good working relationship with this group; it might be worth revisiting once the expansion occurs. For now, we want to continue to follow the guidance of our financial advisor. The board unanimously approved the audit contract.

### B. FY 21-22 Projected Budget Review

- Mya, Dawnya, and Nicole (our financial advisor) met recently to go over the FY 2021-22 Budget. Nicole considers us extremely financially sound. Mya and Dawnya led the board through a brief overview of the working budget for next year, explaining that they have included very conservative estimates for projections. Our reserve is right where it needs to be, not excessive, but not deficit. Given the huge transition we're making, Nicole is impressed by our operating budget and reserve surplus values; we're in good shape.
- Note: Ask Nicole to keep the three-month book balance at the bottom of the spreadsheet moving forward.
- Acknowledging Hawbridge's efforts and struggles over the years to become as financially stable as we are now, Jonathan asked if the board would consider when teachers might count on regular step increases in their salaries so that their years of service and commitment to the school are recognized. He hastened to add that everyone feels well regarded and well treated, but in years past, staff have had to take salary cuts for the school to remain viable.
- In response, Mya shared how challenging it has been over the years when offering employment contracts. The most equitable way she has found to offer contracts is to use the state's adopted schedule and supplements that match those of the Alamance-Burlington school district. The hope is to be able to adopt

a salary schedule so that the staff are rewarded each year for another year of service.

- Todd noted how Mya has advocated strongly for fair and equitable teacher pay since she was first hired. There were large discrepancies when she took over as ED, and she immediately negotiated contracts to try to achieve a more equitable balance between experience and salaries.
- We want to be competitive in terms of how faculty are supported and how they are compensated. We want that to be a strong part of the balance and one of the tools that an ED can employ to ensure financial and educational health. Retention of faculty is pretty high, even in tough times, and that's a testament to the leadership.
- Board members should review the proposed budget in more detail on their own before next month's meeting, when we will be voting on its approval. If we have any questions, send them via e-mail to the entire board with a CC to Mya.

#### C. Mental Health Plan Approval

Emily Martin, Hawbridge's school counselor, reviewed the school's very detailed mental health plan. The state is now requiring all charter schools to have a mental health plan, but many of their requirements are things Hawbridge was already doing. We have lots of teams already in place: crisis team, racial equity task force, SLT, etc. The crisis team reviews suicide assessment protocols, tornado drills, active shooting training, the anonymous reporting system, and other safety measures. The racial equity task force assesses how students and families feel about Hawbridge as an inclusive community and how we can improve, with a focus on racial equity, but also gender, socioeconomics, ability, and other forms of identity that can be better represented in our school. The driving goal behind the mental health plan is to provide a safe space for every student. Funds are available for staff development in these areas. We will do a full needs assessment next school year, and faculty will be aware of the state's new social and emotional learning standards. The state is requiring six hours of initial training, followed by two hours in subsequent years. Our assessment will also target needs for mental health support related to the pandemic and COVID trauma. We will be sending one teacher to nonviolence and trauma training that will certify her to be an instructor to provide the training to the whole staff. One board member suggested adding an item to the mental health plan about Hawbridge's emphasis on outdoor learning as part of its mental health support. The mental health plan was approved unanimously by the board.

#### IX. Closed Session

The board voted to move to closed session at 8:09 p.m. to consider confidential matters pursuant to NC G.S. §143-318.11, i. Subsection (a) - (5).

#### X. Adjourn – 8:32 p.m.