



The Windham Academy
Board of Trustees

1 Industrial Drive
Windham, NH 03087

Windham Academy Board Meeting
Wednesday August 11th 2021 7-9PM
Meeting ID: 871 5706 1309 Password: 763788

i. WELCOME / CALL TO ORDER

Walter Cartwright (Chairman)
Meg Bedrick (Vice Chair)
Chris Baker (Treasurer)
Vinny DelSignore (Trustee)
Jim Fricchione (Trustee)

Mindy Labo (Director)
Kim Golden (Assistant Director)
Patty Miloro (Curriculum Director)
Caitlin Blundell (CPA)

Committees:
Tony Deluca (Community Outreach)
Rob Skowyra (Fundraising)
Kristin Bohne, Sabreina Crooks
(PTO)
Brandie Shydo (Communications)

Al Sfeir (Trustee)

Absent: Karl Dubay (Trustee), Sean Donahue (Secretary), Christy Donahue (Curriculum), Deb Waitt (Family Outreach)

Walter Cartright (Chairman) called the meeting to order on Wednesday, August 11, 2021 at 7:05PM.

ii. PUBLIC OPENING

- Pledge of Allegiance
The Pledge of Allegiance was said.
- Approval of previous minutes from July 14, 2021.
Baker makes a motion to approve the July 14, 2021 minutes, Meg seconds, no discussion.

Motion approved 6/8

iii. CHAIRMANS UPDATE

- **Gratitude Spotlight:**
Without our wonderful and amazing people, our school would not be in existence. Some individuals on the Board of Trustees have been working for as long as nine years to grow our school to what it is today. This month we recognize one person who is often behind a computer or a video, helping us to communicate with one another, and making social media posts look pretty. Please, take a moment to thank Brandi Shydo for her dedication and effort on our Communications Committee.
- **Monthly Charter Excerpt:**
L. Pupil Transportation
“Windham Academy students will have access to bussing only if they reside in the district where the charter school is located. The charter school will comply with charter law provisions that govern student transportation under Section 194-B:2, which states:



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“Attendance at a charter school for the purposes of transportation shall not constitute assignment under the provisions of RSA 189:6 and RSA 189:8. Pupils who reside in the school district in which the open enrollment or charter school is located shall be provided transportation to that school by the district on the same terms and conditions as provided for in RSA 189:6 and RSA 189:8 and that transportation is provided to pupils attending other public schools within that district. However, any added costs for such transportation services shall be borne by the charter school.”

Students attending Windham Academy who reside in the host school district shall ride transportation provided by that host district, with the charter school providing for added route costs, if so billed.

“For the purposes of open enrollment, neither the sending nor the receiving school district shall be obligated to provide transportation services for pupils attending an open enrollment school outside the pupil’s resident district. No transportation will be provided by a sending school district or receiving charter school for students whose residence is other than where the school program is located.”

As a state authorized charter school, Windham Academy anticipates that students may come from many different communities around New Hampshire. Windham Academy will assist, to the extent possible, logistical assistance to parents and students who wish to coordinate personal transportation, e.g. arrange car pools.

As a state authorized charter school, Windham Academy anticipates that students may come from many different communities around New Hampshire. Windham Academy will assist, to the extent possible, logistical assistance to parents and students who wish to connect and coordinate personal shared transportation, e.g. arrange car pools. (Pages 24-25)

- **Monthly Quote:**

*“Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new”
-Albert Einstein*

iv. **DIRECTORS UPDATE**

- **Summer Update:**

Just look at the number of people who have joined us for this month's meeting; this is a big night at the academy! It is so nice to see everybody’s excitement for the new school year. Classes have been having get-togethers throughout the summer. Kids are getting excited, teachers are getting excited and I love hearing the compliments about the building. It has to look chaotic before you get ready for opening day. Teachers are here constantly. They enjoy getting their classrooms ready.

- **Fall Status Update:**



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The state asked us to create a task force in preparation for the new school year. Our task force is made up of teachers, parents, administration, board of trustee members, and a new Windham Academy family member, the Windham fire chief!

I took part in a state call today. Masks are recommended by the health department but are not required. As of now it looks like we will be opening the way our school year closed; families will decide if their child will be wearing masks or not. While there are school districts that are going with a mask mandate, those districts have a larger student population and larger number of students riding on busses. Windham Academy is made up of students from twenty-two towns. Last year, Windham Academy had ten cases of Covid-19, the last case being in April. Our building is also equipped with a modern-day HVAC system; the way the air moves in our building differs from many other schools. Cleaning protocols put into place last year will remain the same (routine cleaning, electrostatic sprayer, hand sanitizer and hand washing). Families, please let us know if your preference is for your child to wear masks. However, all students should have masks available if there are situations where they will be working closely together.

Mr. Baker shares his families experience with Covid-19 and the Delta variant this summer: "I was quarantined with my wife and four kids. All six of us had Covid-19 this past month. We had the delta variant. My wife, Lyndsey, was knocked down for eight days, myself fourteen. All of our children had virtually no symptoms. Other than a runny nose and a slight fever you would not have known our children had it. That is not to say there are not families who were more severely impacted by it.

When it comes to our school we want to make sure to look at all of the data available to us; not just what one source says. We weigh it all and decide what we feel is ultimately best for our families and staff. To those who don't happen to agree with our decision we ask that you just be respectful. It is a volatile time. The media is pinning family and friends against one another and that is not what we need to be doing right now. We need to be supporting one another.

While I am part of the task force, I am not speaking on behalf of the task force but I wanted to share my experience. There is a lot of fear around this virus and debate about what is appropriate, palatable, popular, etc. As a board we make decisions that will be unpopular to some or in the eyes of many. One thing we believe as a board is choice. Being a charter school, we are built around giving families choices and deciding what is best for their children. We don't want to view this time any differently. While the amount of damage caused by the virus is limited to an extent thanks to the vaccinations we have available, a blanket mandate on vaccinations would be the wrong move."

Mr. Cartwright adds, "the task force will be meeting again to make an educated and informed decision on our specific protocol for return to school. The decision will be made into a policy and disseminated to families. We acknowledge these decisions impact many families and they are not taken lightly."



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Mrs. Labo shares, “we will not offer remote learning at this time. That does not mean it won't be an option later on in the year. It is important for all students to be in school for their social and emotional peace, sense of normalcy, and getting back to academics. If cases get higher then we will need to tighten up. If cases are low then we can lessen things. Mrs. Miloro is making an “if-then” chart in response to potential scenarios that could play out this year. You will be informed of the decisions and they will be the same across the building.”

- **Enrollment:**

Mrs. Golden shares, “We are incredibly full, and I am filling the last two spots that recently opened up. Our waitlist continues to grow in most grade levels. Third grade is the only grade without a waitlist and with one open spot but other than that we are full. If you have just joined us, once I receive your paperwork teachers will be reaching out. To those already enrolled, teachers have reached out to families and class lists have gone out. If you have not heard from your teacher please let me know.”

- **New Staff:**

Please welcome our new teachers and staff!

Third grade: Caroline Jablonski and Kasandra Taylor

Sixth grade: Allie Kisiel

Kindergarten: Healthier Hankus

Paraprofessionals: Theresa Adams, Dakota Hamele, Lisa Moore, Ayla Retelle, and Beth Demaris

We have had one of our new first grade teachers let us know this week they will not be starting with us and I will be reaching out to those families to let them know. We have amazing candidates interviewing for the position. The class list won't change but the teacher will.

- **Uniform Policy:**

A few people have reached out about uniforms. I want you all to know that uniforms are not my number one focus at this time. We are facing a potentially unpredictable school year and I need everyone all in on doing all we can to have a clean, safe building. I am not looking down the halls at what students are wearing ready to call home. A few weeks ago the question of “do we need to make updates to our uniform policy?” came up due to only a few issues with students coming in with things that are not school colors such as zebra or floral print pants. Students can dress to their comfort but we don't want to see baggy sweatpants where they are so long they are dragging on the floor and being walked on. As far as leggings, go for it but keep them to solid, Windham Academy colors. There has to be a line where if we see someone who is looking sloppy or not ready for school that might be something we need to address. The uniform policy will not be voted on this evening but the dress code will need to be fine tuned to be made ready to be included in the student handbook.



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v. PUBLIC COMMENT

Parent 1: "I had emailed Meg and she mentioned form fitting clothing. Hand-me-downs and financial disparity need to be taken into consideration. As children's bodies fill out it can be a sensitive time. The growing body can feel insecure and prefer baggy clothing. These situations impact girls more than boys.

Mrs. Labo: As I said earlier, when the administrators are walking around, our focus is not on uniforms, our focus is on the health and safety of our school. We will make sure the wording in the policy is clear. There may be some uniform changes in the upper grades but we're just looking to make sure it looks clean and neat. Times are tough and we have to be understanding and hope you know us well enough to see things are handled gently and kindly.

Parent 1- I am happy to hear that. School colors make sense. I just want to make sure we are not targeting gender or body image; the body (shoulder/thigh) is not to be seen negatively on a child.

Mr. Baker - You made the comment, "as children's bodies fill out it can be a sensitive time". We also have to be sensitive to that. We have to be careful if a family is sending a child in attire that is not school colors or too revealing; we do have the discretion to bring that up. We want to instill a sense of pride about our school with the uniforms. I hope you understand the intention of our policy is to promote spirit and be proud of our school.

Parent 2 - Parents took issue with the discussion of students in second grade and above not being allowed to wear leggings and how that could impact young girls and body image.

Parent 1 - I'd like to bring up the idea of making "other" people uncomfortable. That is where they put the burden of comfort on a child and telling how she is dressing is making another person feel badly. This is called rape culture; blaming a girl for another's perverted thoughts. We need to educate our boys and remove any teacher who feels uncomfortable by what a student is wearing.

Mr. Cartwright- We are not currently changing any verbiage on the policy. When we do, we will take your concerns under advisement and open for discussion.

Parent 3 - Are plaid jumers still okay? I thought I read something about solid tops only.

Mrs. Labo - Anything on Lands End is approved. Those plaid jumpers are awesome.

Parent 1 - Sometimes there is a glitch on Lands End where it does not allow you to view certain clothing items. If you refresh the page it will return.



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Parent 4 - Has the board ever considered recording these meetings? I miss a lot of them and it would be great to be able to go back soon after to listen or watch rather than wait for the minutes to be approved.

Mr. Cartwright- Per the RSA, unapproved minutes are available in just a few days after the meeting. We have someone taking minutes during the meeting who will take some time to edit typos and organize the layout. The draft minutes are then available a few days later and ratified at the next meeting.

Parent 5 - On the website I noticed there is a special board meeting Monday nights at 8pm on expansion planning. I didn't know if it happened this week. I hadn't heard or seen anything about it on facebook. Was there really a meeting? If there was, could you provide a summary of what was discussed?

Mr. Cartwright - We discussed opportunity and where the next phase goes for us; such as internal modification of the current building or what it would look like if we add another building to the property and everything that goes along with it such as permits. Nothing was voted or decided on but as soon as we make a decision we will inform the families.

Parent 5- Is there any way parents can get involved in that meeting?

Mr. Cartwright - Parents are invited. It is an open meeting.

Parent 5- I mean, if parents have relevant expertise or contacts is the board open to having parents participate in any of that to help offset costs?

Mr. Cartwright - Yes, please reach out if you are interested or have an area of expertise. We are fortunate to have board members experienced in this area and certainly welcome additional hands.

Parent from the chat box - Will there be a STEM teacher?

Mrs. Labo - Melissa Coakley will be teaching STEM-richment.

Mr. Deluca - Earlier you mentioned a grant we were denied for. Do we have a list of which schools were approved and the amounts?

Mrs. Labo - The highest grant awarded was for \$1.2 million and the lowest was for 5 or 6 thousand dollars.

vi. TREASURERS UPDATE

- July Financial Statements:



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See financials provided by Caitlin Blundell or email Chris Baker for an additional copy;
CBaker@tcewendys.com.

July first marks the first month of the new fiscal year. We are still waiting for summer funding through the state of New Hampshire. Mrs. Golden phoned the New Hampshire treasury Department to track it down because we should have had it by now. Due to the delay in funding, we had to draw on our line of credit in the amount of \$29,650.00. There were expenses towards science and math curriculum, some of which will be reimbursed. An anonymous donation of \$200 was made to Windham Academy and it was the only donation last month.

Fund Balances:

PTO: \$5,928.00

Uniform Assistance Fund: \$1,815.00 (if there are families having difficulty affording uniforms there is a form you can fill out; we are here to support you)

Unfortunately, the CSP Grant we applied for was not accepted. We applied for \$346,000.00 over the next 3 years for our building expansion. We are taking steps to figure out what we could have done differently and will be applying for the next round in September. Sad news but we forge ahead.

vii. COMMITTEE UPDATES

- PTO:

Sabrina shares that we have the first meeting of the new school year happening tomorrow at 6:15PM at Windham Academy. We will be going over fundraising for the year, planning back-to-school gifts for teachers, and discussing past events we have done. I hope to see some new faces. There appears to be a lot of families interested in joining the PTO. We are also in the works of planning an ice cream social event at a park that Sara Jensen is currently coordinating. We will talk more about that at tomorrow night's meeting.

- Curriculum

Mrs. Miloro shares great progress has been made in developing the new curriculum plan. Christy, our curriculum chair, is working with Brandie to update the website so all current curriculum documents will be on the website to give you an idea of what material your children will be experiencing here at Windham Academy. Saxon Math is in every classroom. We are working on obtaining grant approval for two other programs;

eie.org

A science and engineering curriculum

projectread.org

A 40+ year old, very well researched k-2 phonics program



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STmath.com

A potential supplement to Saxon Math. Includes online games!

I spent a lot of time going through donated materials. When we first opened the school, various districts gave us a lot of brand new items. Some of it can be used to supplement instruction. I am bringing these resources to the teachers.

- **Communications:**

New and updated staff bios and photos will be posted to the website very soon. To any staff who may need help or photos taken, I will be here tomorrow morning. Any information about daily school routines such as details about pick-up/drop-off etc. will be posted soon. There will be lots of updates and changes to the website this month.

- **Facility:**

The elevator is up and running. It is making the lives of the teachers much easier as they move around the building. Old playground equipment will be removed and new equipment will be installed in the next week or so.

- **Fundraising:**

Mr. Skowyra shares, we held a meeting this week to coordinate four repeatable yearly events; a golf tournament, gala, 10k challenge, and raffle tickets. We are still solidifying the golf tournament and gala details; more information is to come. We brainstormed how we can network and expand beyond our Windham Academy community for the 10k challenge and raffle ticket events. The committee welcomes anyone and everyone who would like to join us. We will be meeting the first Monday of the month at 7PM.

- **Community Outreach:**

Mr. Deluca shares, a golf tournament has been tentatively penciled in for October 1. I am going over the details to see what we can make work. Other than that, I am rescheduling meetings and getting things up and running this week. I met with a realtor team of fifty agents in Windham. One particular realtor, Deb, will add mentioning Windham Academy in her repertoire to help spread the word. Mr. Cartwright adds, "this is a time where one of our committees overlaps; where Tony arranged the golf tournament for the Fundraising Committee. If you're part of one committee it is like you are a part of them all".

- **Family Outreach and Coordination:**

Deb Waitt is on vacation; Mr. Cartwright shares on her behalf. The committee met with Mrs. Labo and Mrs. Golden to have a refresher course of the Rediker software. A Zoom call was held last week to go over survey questions for outreach. Updates will be provided as the committee moves along with gathering information. More information to follow on an ice cream social for the last Sunday in August.



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Mr. Cartwright - I like to utilize this part of the agenda to recognize there is a chairman from another charter school, Jim Miller. As charter schools, we are all family and work together. Thank you Jim for joining our meeting tonight.

Mr. Miller - Thank you for including me. Windham Academy has been a model for us and we have received guidance from Walter and Jim. It is great to see all of the players serving the children of our state.

Mr. Cartwright - Thank you to all of the families for joining us this evening. I know a certain topic piqued your interest but once a month we have this forum. Seeing the parental involvement is very exciting. Attendance tends to taper off once school kicks up but we implore you all to join us on a monthly basis. We meet on the second Wednesday of every month. The agenda is posted the day or so before. We look forward to seeing you at future meetings.

Next Meeting: September 8, 2021

viii. ADJOURN

*Baker makes a motion to adjourn; Fricchione seconds the motion.
The motion is approved 6/8.*

Meeting adjourned at 8:09PM