

# F.W. Parker Charter Essential School

## Minutes

### Board of Trustees

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#### Date and Time

Tuesday November 14, 2023 at 6:45 PM

#### Location

Parker School

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#### Trustees Present

A. Jolly, B. Harrigan, C. Soderman, G. Penna, J. Fredericksen, L. Hayner, M. Lindsey, M. Turnbull, N. Odekirk Hatlevig, P. Gordon, R. Madamba, S. Razzetti, S. Reinhorn, T. Testa

#### Trustees Absent

M. Edgar

#### Guests Present

D. Merriam, D. Van Patten, K. Tedstone, M. Beganski, M. McKenna

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### I. Meeting Notes

#### A. Meeting Objectives

1. To debrief our October Board Retreat
2. To review the Enrollment Plan and financial implications
3. To review the Head of School Goals

#### B. To prepare for this meeting, please do the following...

1. Please RVSP through Board on Track
2. Read this agenda and the packet

### II. Opening Items

#### A. Record Attendance and Guests

#### B. Call the Meeting to Order

G. Penna called a meeting of the board of trustees of F.W. Parker Charter Essential School to order on Tuesday Nov 14, 2023 at 6:50 PM.

### **C. Approve Minutes**

Motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees on 10-26-23.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

## **III. Retreat Debrief**

### **A. Retreat Debrief**

Brian asked Board members to reflect on their October retreat and consider.

- What resonated?
- What commitments did we make?

Board members shared in pairs and then discussed within the larger group.

## **IV. Facility and Development**

### **A. Facility and Development**

Brian shared renderings for the proposed work to the front walkway and courtyard (in the meeting packet).

Michelle McKenna said renderings are slightly different than the original to lower the cost.

The cost of concrete has risen significantly. In essence layout is the same. Minor changes include:

- Instead of concrete blocks for seating there will be metal bases with wooden tops
- More greenery spaces and less sidewalk

Michelle said a soil management plan will be part of the bid plan due to an oil spill in faculty parking area. Several agencies need to sign off on the project and proposal before submitting it for bids. If permitting goes smoothly, it will be put out to bid in January.

Glenn asked if the walkway project is now being combined with the courtyard project, as the original fundraising was originally only for the walkway. Martin Turnbull said they are still separate projects.

Brian said Katrina Tedstone has secured a \$250,000 donation for the courtyard project. Katrina said the project is being funded by a family of two Parker graduates.

Brian said the timing will be walkway work beginning this summer and the courtyard work will be done next summer.

Tiff said she thought she remembered tables in a previous rendering and asked if it was part of the plan. Martin said fixed tables add to cost but other table ideas could be considered.

## **V. Enrollment and Finance**

### **A. Enrollment and Finance**

Brian said enrollment is currently at 370 students and the budget assumes an enrollment of 390.

Michelle McKenna discussed the budget implications of low enrollment. Michelle said there are a lot of to-be-determined at this point but the Board may be asked to release reserve funds to cover a shortfall in the budget.

Glenn asked about Sizer Fund money. Michelle said this money is for the walkway and the Sizer Teacher Center

Christina said the Finance Committee has discussed a potential shortfall and see it as mostly a factor of enrollment. Christina said it is a hard situation but the school is in good shape due to years of conservative budgeting and adding to reserve funds.

Tiff asked if the Finance Committee has looked at cutting the budget if enrollment numbers don't increase. Christina and Michelle said we are not yet at that point and there would be no budget changes for this year.

Sonia asked if the enrollment issue could get worse. Michelle said yes, there is often still attrition at this time of year. Christina said that the Finance Committee will reevaluate in January to get a better feel for where finances stand.

Christina said the Finance Committee also discussed releasing funds to support a temporary position to work on enrollment and agreed that given the current circumstances, money needs to be allocated for this purpose. Christina said the Committee voted to recommend taking \$40,000 from reserve to support enrollment efforts. She said the Committee recognizes they may potentially revisit and recommend allocating more funds for this purpose. Christina asked that this be the first read - that the Board should consider allocating this money for these purposes. Christina said Board should also know there be another request in the future.

Sonia asked how the amount was determined. Brian said the idea and amount came from a year-long look at the exploration of a variety of methods to support enrollment .

Brian said the most expensive method considered was hiring a consultant and it was decided not to go this route right now.

Sonia asked what would trigger the decision to hire a consultant.

Christina said the Board should see how this plays out as part of the strategic plan work and that identity and messaging will inform the process.

Brian distributed an enrollment plan and asked the Board to review it. He said Parker is currently accepting applications for the February lottery and has set a goal of 283 applicants.

Glenn said increasing the application pool is important to the health of enrollment.

Stef asked if the Strategic Plan consultants are working on the narrative we want to promote. Brian said he and Monique are meeting with a consultant firm that assists charter schools with marketing.

Monique spoke about working with Niche to improve Parker's visibility/digital presence. Brian said work will be done to increase ratings with Niche and Great School.org

The Board discussed marketing the school.

- Shawna said the intention of putting the word out there is great and that the message of excellence in education needs to be seen and felt by families.
- Stef asked if short term and long term talk about personalization overshadows the message of excellence and rigor. She said the strategic plan will address the longer range question about the story to get out.
- Brian said it will be important to talk about student outcomes.

## **VI. Head of School Goals**

### **A. Head of School Goals**

Brian reviewed the Head of School Goals:

- Use the NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) self-study and Strategic Plan to define our essential priorities
- Put Parker on a path towards consistently full and diverse enrollment
- Create and execute a development plan that generates \$200,000 FY24

The Board discussed these goals.

Glenn suggested that the NEASC process should be used in marketing the school.

Brian said increasing diversity is part of increasing enrollment. Reducing withdrawals is also part of this plan as withdrawals are higher post-Covid. The Board discussed issues around enrollment.

Brian said year is going well in terms of development and development is looking for a way to generate another \$50K. Alums and friends of Parker are the areas for greatest growth.

Stef said that the Development Committee is forming working groups for a 30th anniversary event. Stef said development is hoping for 100% Board participation in giving. Glenn challenged Board members to give before the next meeting.

Julie suggested increasing the expected percentage of families participating in giving to 100%

Pam said families are not used to donating to public high schools. Katrina spoke about some of the education efforts around informing families about why they are being asked to give.

Glenn said the Head of School Evaluation Committee (Glenn, Stef, Pam) asks the Board to share their feedback with them, look over BoT measurement tools, and consider how Brian meets these goals.

Brian asked Board members to think about what these goals ask of them. Board members shared their thoughts:

- Amy said supporting the Head of School.
- Matt said connecting people and bringing them along.
- Martin said empowering everyone to be more active in these goals - how do we influence others?
- Shawna said the goals ask for members to be fully committed and fully engaged.
- Stef said they ask that we continue to measure our progress using performance indicators.

Brian said there would be a Strategic Plan update at the next meeting.

## **VII. Other Business**

### **A. Plus/Delta**

Brian asked the Board to share what worked well tonight:

- Sonia said she appreciated the engagement and straight talk.
- Matt said that he felt it was helpful that some agenda items were combined. He said this prompted good conversation and it is important to talk about some of these issues in connection to one another.
- Stef said that stating goals helps with accountability.

Glenn asked how the group will know what committees are working on if they aren't reporting out during monthly Board meetings. Nicole said committee Chairs can send

details to Brian for inclusion in the Head of School report or can ask to be added to the meeting agenda.

Brian asked the Board to share what could be changed for the next meeting:

- Glenn said presenters should be mindful of using acronyms - they may not be known and understood by everyone - and encouraged people to ask when they don't know.
- Martin said NTC hiring should be included in the current budget.
- Stef said it is tough to be strategic while the strategic plan is in the process of being created.

## **B. Comments from the Public**

There were no comments from the public.

## **VIII. Closing Items**

### **A. Adjourn Meeting**

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

M. Lindsey

C. Soderman made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

S. Razzetti seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

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## **Documents used during the meeting**

- 2023-1006 Revised Rendering 10-9-23.pdf
- 2023-0929 Francis Parker Courtyard\_KZLA.pdf
- dashboard.pdf
- 2023 November Head of School Report.pdf