APPROVED

Springfield Prep

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday May 28, 2024 at 5:45 PM

Location
This meeting will take place via Zoom.

Trustees Present
A. Malone (remote), A. Narvaez (remote), A. Piela (remote), S. Balogun (remote), S. Fuller (remote), S. Monson (remote)

Trustees Absent
M. Frodema, R. Leonard, R. Molina-Brantley

Ex Officio Members Present
B. Spirer (remote)

Guests Present
M. Wagner (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance and Guests

B. Call the Meeting to Order

S. Balogun called a meeting of the board of trustees of Springfield Prep to order on Tuesday May 28, 2024 at 5:50 PM.

C.

Public Comment, If Any

There was no public comment.

II. Consent Agenda

A. Approve minutes from the previous board meeting

S. Fuller made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 04-30-24.
A. Malone seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

S. Monson	Aye
M. Frodema	Absent
R. Leonard	Absent
R. Molina-Brantley	Absent
S. Balogun	Aye
A. Malone	Aye
S. Fuller	Aye
A. Piela	Aye
A. Narvaez	Aye

B. Monthly Financial Dashboard

C. Nutrition Program Civil Rights Policy

D. Vote to approve consent agenda items

S. Fuller made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented.
A. Malone seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

S. Monson	Aye
A. Narvaez	Aye
S. Fuller	Aye
R. Molina-Brantley	Absent
M. Frodema	Absent
R. Leonard	Absent
A. Malone	Aye
S. Balogun	Aye
A. Piela	Aye

III. Executive Director Items

A. May Executive Director Report

- Bill shared that the school is busy as we move toward the end of the year and is finishing up MCAS testing. Bill reminded the board about the required actions for all board members annually (Conflict of Interest Acknowledgment and Training and Financial Disclosures).
- He shared an article written by Springfield Prep Science Teacher Ian Hartigan about reading instruction and a local news story about our Girls on the Run program
- Bill invited board members to 2 upcoming events, including the Math Symposium and the 8th grade graduation.
- Bill provided an update on our plans for legal counsel and the school's decision to engage Krokidas and Bluestein. The school chose this firm because of their expertise in governance and nonprofit and charter school law.
- Bill reported that Meghan will be moving into a part-time CFO role and the school is still planning to hire for a Managing Director of Business and Operations to take on the operational and HR leadership work Meghan did as a COO.
- Bill shared that we are planning for next year's charter renewal. The Renewal Application is due August 1, so the July board meeting is an important one, because the application requires board approval.

IV. Academics & Culture Items

A. May Academic Dashboard

Jess Yiannos joined to review the Academic and Culture Dashboard, including the latest assessment updates. She highlighted a number of topics, which the board discussed.

- The school is fully enrolled, with no concerns for next year based on waitlist numbers for 2024-25. Currently we are still a little bit short of our overall goal for attendance, but have seen very strong improvement overall and specifically in the area of chronic absenteeism. The school is currently on track to exceed targets from DESE in this area for the year. The discipline rate has also decreased from last year.
- In terms of ANet performance, Jess shared that overall averages are very similar this year to last year, with some areas higher and some areas lower, but no overall trends or concerns. She shared that the school has started looking at projected "cut" scores from ANet instead of averages to better determine what percentage of students are performing at or above benchmarks. The benefit is that a few high or low students won't skew the score, but this calculation may not be reliable year over year if the cut score changes. Using this method we are performing similarly to last year, with the exception of 6th grade ELA. Sherriff shared his appreciation for this approach because it provides a more useful view of the data. Sherriff inquired about how the results compare to the network and Jess shared that the network score is not as reliable as it used to be given that fewer schools are in each "network". She has continued to provide feedback to ANet about this and

how this has not been as helpful of a tool and won't be going forward. ANet plans to start using different tools to help schools better identify students that need additional support.

- Jess shared that STEP is discontinuing the STEP assessment beginning in SY25-26. Our plan for next year is to continue to move forward with the plans we already had in place for making some changes to our implementation of STEP and the school will create a plan over the course of the next year to determine a future assessment plan.
- Bill shared additional context about the impact of the Science of Reading and other new reading initiatives on how reading is being taught and how these changes are leading to impacts on how it will be assessed.
- Sally shared information she received from a session with Secretary Patrick Tutwiler about Evidence Based Learning on how reading is being taught and assessed and provided some updates about what Western Mass Literacy is doing to support this work.

V. Finance Items

A. Surplus Planning

Meghan explained that as we approach the end of the year, we are considering the excess surplus calculation. She gave a recap of how the excess surplus calculation works and highlighted key considerations, as well as the school's planned approach.

- She noted that it's healthy to carry over surplus to ensure necessary operating reserves if needed.
- She recommended that the board approve a contribution to the capital reserve account of $25,000, which will be needed for future capital improvements and is not considered as part of the excess surplus.
- She shared that we haven't used our contingency fund this year and are planning to use part of this for an end of year staff bonus. This will be very much appreciated by staff members, will ensure that we do not approach our excess surplus limit, and does not negatively impact our general operating reserves or capital reserve account, both of which are in a strong position.
- Bill noted that we will communicate that this bonus is connected to the contingency we carried this year, possible in part due to ESSER funds.
- The board was supportive of this approach.
- Amy noted that Meghan manages the budget really well and shared appreciation for her and her team's work. Meghan added that we are slightly under the projected spend in each category, and these savings — plus the contingency and no major unforeseen expenses — add up to a surplus.

S. Fuller made a motion to transfer $25,000 to the School's capital reserve fund.
A. Piela seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

S. Fuller	Aye
R. Molina-Brantley	Absent
R. Leonard	Absent
M. Frodema	Absent
A. Piela	Aye
A. Narvaez	Aye
A. Malone	Aye
S. Monson	Aye
S. Balogun	Aye

B. Insurance Program Renewal FY25

Meghan provided an overview of our planned insurance renewal.

- This is already planned for in the approved FY25 budget, but we included this in the agenda given the size of the contract and because we did not have these numbers before our finance committee meeting.
- Overall, the renewal is going up 5.5%. This is lower than the industry average. We did see major increases last year since it increased to cover a greater value of the building; this year the increase is much lower.
- For workers comp, we considered an alternative program and found this to be the best price.
- Meghan noted that Fred Church provided some additional options and we decided that additional coverage was not necessary at this time.
- Sherriff asked if our risk profile has changed in any way. Meghan noted that it has not and that it would if we made changes to our program, such as by purchasing buses or vans and transporting students.
- Amy asked about the charge we pay to the broker. Meghan said she did not know the percentage the broker receives was but would look into this for next year to ensure it is in line with the industry.

A. Piela made a motion to approve the insurance policy proposal as presented.
A. Malone seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

A. Malone	Aye
A. Narvaez	Aye
S. Fuller	Aye
A. Piela	Aye
S. Balogun	Aye
R. Leonard	Absent
R. Molina-Brantley	Absent

Roll Call

M. Frodema	Absent
S. Monson	Aye

VI. Governance Items

A. Mission Affiliate Changes and Updates

Bill provided some historical context about the changes to the Realty and Friends board to ensure compliance.

- Based on previous guidance, we made changes to the compositions of these boards to avoid overlap of trustees on the School and affiliate boards. In his previous role as President of the affiliates, he could take on some of the administrative tasks and had signing authority. In the most recent structure that removed Bill from these boards, we needed to go to other board members to get signatures for administrative tasks and this created some difficulties and inefficiencies for the school and board members.
- After engaging Krokidas and Bluestein to resolve this issue, they've advised us to have Bill serve on the board and take steps to disclose what could be seen as a conflict: (1) updating Bill's School job description to state that the school has a distinct institutional interest in Bill serving on these boards and that doing so is part of his official job duties, (2) submitting a Section 6 disclosure to explain the financial interests between the three entities, and (3) having the School's board appoint Sherriff and Bill as directors and/or officers of Realty.
- The board discussed the changes and asked about the counsel we're receiving, which Bill said had been excellent.

S. Fuller made a motion to approve all four votes regarding affiliate governance, as presented in the memo. These include: 1. That the job description attached hereto is approved and adopted as the job description for the position of Executive Director of the School. 2. That the Board of Trustees has reviewed the disclosure form submitted by Bill Spirer under Section 6 of the State Conflict of Interest Law, attached, and determined that the financial interest is not so substantial as to be deemed likely to affect the integrity of the services which the School may expect from Bill Spirer. 3. That Sherriff Balogun, Chair, is hereby authorized to sign the Section 6 disclosure form submitted by Bill Spirer on behalf of the Board of Trustees. 4. That, pursuant to Section 4.1 of Realty's Bylaws, the Board of Trustees elect Bill Spirer and Sherriff Balogun as Directors of Realty, such elections to take effect upon the resignations of Mary Walachy and Frank Roberts respectively.
A. Malone seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

S. Monson	Aye

Roll Call

S. Balogun	Aye
A. Narvaez	Aye
A. Malone	Aye
M. Frodema	Absent
R. Molina-Brantley	Absent
S. Fuller	Aye
A. Piela	Aye
R. Leonard	Absent

B. Board Self-Assessment

The Board discussed the Board Self-Assessment. The governance committee met last week to discuss this.

- We had 100% completion and a lot of positive responses. There were some questions about the meeting materials because there were 2 responses that meeting materials weren't presented clearly. The committee also discussed strategic planning work, the size of the board, and succession planning.
- Some board members were not clear about the succession plan and the committee discussed moving forward with a review of this.
- The committee discussed having 11 or 12 members to ensure stronger succession planning and to broaden the institutional knowledge of the board. Sarah added the importance of growing while some of the more senior board members are still present on the board. She also shared the benefits of a larger board for committee sizes.
- Amy asked about benchmarking our board size to other boards. She also shared the benefits of having 6 months plus of overlap for committee chairs. Bill said he would look back at the MCPSA governance report to see if there were good benchmarking tools.
- Sally shared the opportunity to partner with a voluntary consultant to provide the board with some additional tools and training.
- Bill shared the importance of considering everyone's networks when thinking about growing the board.
- Sarah shared the idea of having a board retreat. Sherriff added that some team building time might also be valuable.
- Amy noted the amount positive data in the survey and that we should not overlook this. Generally, the board feels very positively about the work it does.

C. Staff & Family Annual Survey Data

Bill shared the staff and family survey report that we shared with our school staff with the board. Bill noted that we also shared the data with graphs for each area with staff.

- Bill noted that we had a lower family response rate this year (~60%) which he attributes to general survey fatigue, not a lack of family engagement.
- Overall, there were overwhelmingly positive responses from parents with over 98% saying they would recommend the school to others.
- The feedback and areas for improvement that were noted included increased after school programming and improved food in the school meals program.
- On the teacher and staff survey we saw very positive results. We are also focusing on a few trends as potential areas for improvement:
    - A softening of positive response rate in overall job satisfaction, with more neutrals than last year.
    - A higher neutral response rate in the question "my workload has been reasonable". Bill is planning to discuss this with the Team Chair Council to see if we can better understand this.
    - In the area of PD & Growth, Bill also shared that the school is planning to make some adjustments to PD and coaching pairings to address some concerns and the challenges of meeting the PD needs of teachers at varying levels of their career.
    - Anne shared appreciation for the detail and noted that there is a lot to be very proud of in the data. Bill shared some of the challenges in meeting planning time needs, professional development needs, and collaborative planning time. He noted that we are working in additional planning time to Summer Institute to be responsive to this. Anne shared the importance of listening to staff and continuing to be transparent with staff.
    - Amy highlighted the strong response rate of the question “I know what is expected of me at work” and shared the analysis that there is a high level of clarity on the “what” and the comments are more about the “who” and the “how”
    - Bill reported on some of the work the school is doing on move toward increased flexibility and adaptability.
    - Amneris shared appreciation for the strong results related to professional development and coaching, as well as the appreciation for the very strong family results.

D. FY25 Board Meeting Schedule & July Meeting Date

Bill noted that the next meeting is scheduled for June 13 and noted we don’t have anything scheduled for July. We need to get this on the calendar because it's a very important meeting (required to approval the Annual Report and Renewal Application). The board discussed July 25. Bill will contact those not present to see if this works and get this scheduled.

In terms of next year's board schedule, Bill suggested moving the board meeting to the first Tuesday of the month instead of the last, which would allow leaders to incorporate

more feedback from committees into the meeting packets. Bill will send out a scheduling link and the board will discuss this next month.

VII. Closing Items

A. Board meeting debrief

- Sheriff - Good discussion. Relevant topics, good mix of making decisions and taking about key issues.
- Amy - Appreciated Jess's presentation and loved seeing positive data on chronic absenteeism.
- Amneris - Appreciated making the information digestible, especially when technical.
- Anne - A lot to be proud of when looking at the board survey, staff survey, and family survey. Also helpful to hear about how it's been shared with staff.
- Sarah - Agree, lot to celebrate. We tend to focus on what could be better but we shouldn't lose sight of all of the positive data too.

B. Next Board Meeting

C. Adjourn Meeting

S. Monson made a motion to adjourn the meeting.
A. Piela seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

A. Piela	Aye
M. Frodema	Absent
A. Malone	Aye
S. Monson	Aye
S. Balogun	Aye
S. Fuller	Aye
A. Narvaez	Aye
R. Leonard	Absent
R. Molina-Brantley	Absent

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 7:39 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
S. Monson

Documents used during the meeting

- 0._SPCS_FY24_April_Financial_Dashboard.pdf

- NSLP Civil Rights Policy 5.24.pdf
- ED Report for 5.28.24.pdf
- Academic & Culture Dashboard - May 2024.pdf
- MEMO. Excess Surplus Calculation updated 5.22.24.docx.pdf
- Fred C Church Insurance Program Proposal FY25.pdf
- MEMO. Affiliate Entity Governance. 5.24.24.pdf
- SPCS. Job Description. Executive Director 5.24.24 (2103850.1).pdf
- Section 6 disclosure of financial interest - Bill Spirer updated 5-28-24.pdf
- 2023-24 Board Self-Assessment Survey Results.pdf
- Staff & family survey report out - 2023-24 (1).pdf
- FY25 DRAFT Board Meeting Schedule.pdf