APPROVED

Springfield Prep
CHARTER SCHOOL

Springfield Prep

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday January 9, 2025 at 5:45 PM

Location
This meeting is in person at the school (2071 Roosevelt Ave., Springfield, MA 01104). A Zoom option is also available.

Trustees Present
A. Malone, A. Piela (remote), M. Frodema, R. Leonard, S. Fuller, S. Monson

Trustees Absent
A. Narvaez, R. Molina-Brantley, S. Balogun

Ex Officio Members Present
B. Spirer

Guests Present
Garth Janes, M. Wagner

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance and Guests

B. Call the Meeting to Order

A. Malone called a meeting of the board of trustees of Springfield Prep to order on Thursday Jan 9, 2025 at 5:48 PM.

C.

Public Comment, If Any

There was no public comment.

II. Consent Agenda

A. Approve minutes from the previous board meeting

R. Leonard made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 11-07-24.
S. Monson seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

B. November financial dashboard

C. Update on Bank Transition

D. December Academic & Culture Report

E. Vote to approve consent agenda items

R. Leonard made a motion to approve the consent agenda.
S. Monson seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

III. Executive Director Items

A.

Executive Director Report

- Bill noted that it has been a great return to school since the new year. He thanked the board for 100% participation at the recent holiday breakfast. Bill noted that it was a very positive visit with Representative Gonzalez. Sally encouraged the team to continue to try to invite additional legislators. Bill shared that the school has had other members of the legislative delegation here in the past year.
- Bill shared that the Summary of Review has been received from the state for our charter renewal. This is included in the Executive Director report. Overall, the school received a very positive report and was rated “meets” in all categories. Bill reviewed some of the compliance metrics. The board discussed the strategies the school is using to ensure they are targeting a diverse demographic in student recruitment. Bill reviewed some specific highlights of the report, which noted how active and engaged the board is and the high level of engagement and rigor in classrooms. Next, around February 14th, 2025, we will receive a report with a decision from the Commissioner. Bill expects this to be a smooth renewal.
- Bill reported that the new managing director of business and operations that started this year is no longer at the school. School operations remain strong with two effective operations directors in place. The main area of need is in general administrative and special projects work. In the short term, the school plans to add extra capacity, preferably by bringing in consultants with experience in senior operations and special projects roles. The next step is to determine the right role on a more permanent basis.
- Bill provided an update on the Alumni Support Program. An LLC called Springfield Prep Reach is being formed, which will be entirely controlled by Friends. This new LLC will house the Alumni Support Program. We are working with Krokidas & Bluestein, a firm with significant experience in supporting charter schools in Massachusetts with similar structures. The plan is to establish a space and services agreement to support the program and hire an employee within the next year.
    - He highlighted the positive news that, in December, we received a $100,000 unrestricted grant from the Davis Foundation.
    - The board discussed the program’s associated costs and the vision for the staff member who will be dedicated to this role.

IV. Finance Items

A. Fundraising & Annual Appeal Update

- Bill reviewed the current status of fundraising efforts at the school this year. The school had a strong annual appeal, raising $46,000, including board pledges and gifts, which is an increase compared to last year. The school has updated its grant management tools so that it's easier to show clean year-over-year comparisons in future years.

- Bill shared that, due to higher-than-expected federal and state grants, the school currently plans to use any additional funds raised this year toward the Alumni Support program. He also reviewed the current status of Camp Beyond fundraising, which can currently fund 15 campers. If additional funds are raised, the school will open up more spots for campers.
- Bill reviewed the budget for the Alumni Support program to outline the areas of need. Sarah and Sally suggested reaching out to Liberty Bank, and Sarah mentioned she would follow up with an introduction. Bill encouraged board members to share any connections they may have with individuals or organizations that could be interested in supporting this program.

B. Capital Planning Update

- Meghan provided an update on the capital planning efforts. The finance committee has been engaged in discussions for some time to ensure that we are proactively addressing facility needs. Meghan has collaborated with the facilities, operations, and IT teams to identify these needs.
- Meghan presented two options, as outlined in the memo: first, to increase the planned contribution to $50,000, or second, to contribute any unused funds as they become available and monitor this on a regular basis.
- The school's recommendation is to use the second approach, to use unused funds as they become available, so we maintain maximum flexibility, and the finance committee agrees.
- Amy and Mary Kate shared that being able to plan for this well in advance is really valuable and appreciated Meghan and Will's work on this.
- Sally asked about how this would work in practice, and where those additional funds would come from.
- Meghan explained that this year serves as a good example. It was planned to be a very lean budget year, but our state grants ended up being slightly higher than expected. This gives us some additional funds in our budget that could be used for capital purposes.
- The board discussed whether a vote was needed. It was agreed that this was a discussion about strategy and that a vote would be needed for a transfer to a capital project.

C. Fiscal Policies & Procedures Update

- Meghan shared recommended changes in fiscal policies and procedures as outlined in the memo: to increase purchase approval thresholds requiring board of trustee approval from $10,000 to $25,000; to no longer require annual approvals for recurring contracts within budget; to increase the check signing threshold for dual signatures from $10,000 to $25,000; and to slightly increase individual and monthly aggregate thresholds for our Finance & Operations Coordinator. We believe this is reasonable based on the size of the organization. Our auditors were

consulted about best practices for approval thresholds and approval of existing contracts, and they agreed with the proposed updates based on our organization's size and age.
- Amy agreed that it feels like we are properly adjusting to our size and needs over time, without creating more risk. She believes this would allow operations to run smoothly and noted that we have strong financial reporting and open communication around the reports.
- Bob noted that he felt it would be helpful to review approval rights. Bill explained that approval rights are very centralized, so he believes the risks are minimal.
- Anne asked what platform is used and Meghan explained how our payment approval system works.

R. Leonard made a motion to revise the Fiscal Policies & Procedures as presented.
M. Frodema seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

V. Governance & Compliance Items

A. Board Candidates for Consideration

- Anne asked Garth about his interest in joining the board. He shared his experience at Doherty Wallace, where public service was really encouraged. He talked about his experience on the board of WGBY and the WGBH Educational Foundation.
- Sarah asked about Garth's initial meeting with the team. Bob and Bill met with him and reported that he asked thoughtful questions about finances, succession planning, and any concerns the organization is having. Sarah shared her experience in knowing him from their work together at WGBH. Bob reflected on Garth's strengths and their experience working together. Bill shared that Garth is a partner at the same firm of Bill's wife. He wanted to be sure everyone was aware of this and highlighted that Garth will likely need to recuse himself in some circumstances.
- Sarah and Bob shared their experience from their meeting with Lashawna, who has had a long career in education, spanning teaching, administration, and a career advising role at Smith College. Lashawna expressed strong enthusiasm for

the school, noting her impression of the calm and quiet hallways, as well as the engaged and rigorous student conversations in the classrooms. Sarah mentioned that Lashawna would be a valuable addition to the board and the academic achievement committee. Bob highlighted her extensive career in education and the significant value her experience would bring to the board.

R. Leonard made a motion to admit Lashawna McKoy to the board, subject to Commissioner approval.
M. Frodema seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

R. Leonard made a motion to admit Garth Janes to the board, subject to Commissioner approval.
S. Monson seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

B. Succession Planning

- Bill outlined his and the school's desire to proactively engage in succession planning for the Executive Director position to ensure the long-term health and stability of the organization. He has begun talking about this more transparently with senior leaders and board members so he can proactively prepare for the future and create a sustainable leadership transition plan. He is thinking more about succession planning, although there is not an immediate plan to move on from the role.

- Bill emphasized the importance of including additional voices and ideas in the succession planning process and discussed feeling like there is a need to move away from a static document into a more concrete plan. This would allow the school to identify areas of growth and focus, ensuring a strong plan is in place for the future.
- Bob expressed his appreciation for Bill's work, stating that while the board would prefer him to remain in the role for a long time, they would fully support a transition process when the time comes. Anne also expressed her gratitude for Bill's openness in this matter, and Sarah acknowledged the value of transparency. Bill clarified that his goal is to continue thinking through the process to initiate more concrete discussions at the governance committee and board levels. Sarah highlighted the importance of having a strong senior leadership team to provide stability during an Executive Director transition. Bob shared his thoughts on whether the school would want to pursue an external search at the point of a transition or focus on internal candidates for the role.
- Anne shared her experience at another organization, where they conducted extensive external searches for two senior candidates, but neither was successful. As a result, she strongly prefers starting with an internal candidate and developing a plan to support that person's growth. Anne shared that she has a colleague in the education space who is in a co-director role and that it may be helpful for us to do some informational interviews.
- Bill shared his view that the "right" successor would depend on where the organization is focused on at that point in time: Are we expanding programs and fundraising significantly? Or are we focused on stability and continuity?
- Amy recommended spending more time engaging with the senior leadership team, involving them in the process, and keeping conversations open. She also emphasized the need to prioritize developing a more tactical plan.
- Bill wondered about investing in outside support to build out a more comprehensive plan. The board was supportive and Bill shared that he believed Shawna Wells, who has deep knowledge of the organization through past coaching engagements, would be the right partner for this work.
- Anne recommended that governance start leading this work and bring this topic back to the board with further insights.

C. Executive Director Evaluation and Compensation

Sarah reported that the governance committee recommended increasing Bill's salary to $184,620, with no bonus based on multiple conversations at the committee level and with Bill. This salary is based on the current organization-wide compensation system for Springfield Prep.

During these discussions, Bill shared a strong preference for being compensated on the scale, as all other staff members are, versus having an "off scale" salary with a performance bonus.

The committee reviewed the school's compensation system, which is the result of a comprehensive salary study done by Edgility two years ago, and cross-referenced benchmark data from the state to inform this compensation decision.
R. Leonard made a motion to move to approve annual compensation for Bill at $184,620, pro-rated to July 1, 2024.
A. Piela seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

D. Board Self-Evaluation

There was not time for this item, so board members will do this independently.

VI. Closing Items

A. Next Board Meeting

B. Adjourn Meeting

R. Leonard made a motion to adjourn the meeting.
M. Frodema seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 7:44 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
S. Monson

Documents used during the meeting

- SPCS FY25 November Financial Dashboard.pdf
- MEMO. Bank Transition 11.12.24.pdf
- Academic and Culture Dashboard 12.18.24.pdf
- ED Report for 1.9.25.pdf
- 2024 Annual Campaign & Fundraising Report 1.8.25.pdf
- MEMO. Capital Planning 11.21.24.pdf
- MEMO. Board Fiscal Policies and Procedures Updates FY25 - Google Docs.pdf
- Bio_GarthJanes.pdf
- LaShawna McCoy resume.pdf
- Board Composition Reference Sheet 1.3.25.pdf
- Bill_Spirer_CEO_Evaluation_FY23-24.pdf