



Explorations Charter School

Minutes

Governing Board Regular Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday February 25, 2025 at 5:30 PM

Directors Present

Bryan Raydenbow (remote), Ginni Block (remote), Greg Skinner (remote), Hilary Paden (remote), Kali Blakeslee (remote), Lori Noto (remote), Robert Peterson (remote), Sarah Annis Haynes (remote)

Directors Absent

Julie Luby

Directors who arrived after the meeting opened

Greg Skinner, Hilary Paden

Guests Present

Cat Raydenbow (remote), Jill Johnson (remote), Kaelynn Woodtke (remote), Susan O'Rourke (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Robert Peterson called a meeting of the board of directors of Explorations Charter School to order on Tuesday Feb 25, 2025 at 5:34 PM.

C. Approve Minutes - 1/21/2025

Bryan Raydenbow made a motion to approve the minutes from Governing Board Regular Meeting on 01-21-25.

Ginni Block seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Robert Peterson	Aye
Bryan Raydenbow	Aye
Sarah Annis Haynes	Aye
Julie Luby	Absent
Hilary Paden	Absent
Greg Skinner	Absent
Lori Noto	Aye
Ginni Block	Aye
Kali Blakeslee	Aye

II. Student Representative Introductions

A. Board member introductions

B. Student representative introductions

1. CR (11), Winsted
 1. "Welcoming community."
2. KW (10), Winsted
 1. "Attentive, patient staff."

Joseph White arrived at 5:52.

III. Financial

A. January Monthly Report

Susan O'Rourke

- January 2025 report
- 58% into the school year
- March 29: Next check from CT
- Personnel line item work pending
- Insurance check pending paperwork

Bryan Raydenbow made a motion to Approve Financial Report.

Robert Peterson seconded the motion.

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

B. ERTC Financing Discussion

Jill Johnson:

- Update on financing committee
- November 2024 Johanna Hayes communication
- Follow up with John Larson's office
- Email this week from Johanna Hayes office: case ID issues
- Referral included in priority IRS processing
- March 10 or before status update

IV. Committee Reports

A. Policy Committee

Joseph White

- Electronic Devices policy

Greg Skinner arrived at 6:06 PM.

Hilary Paden arrived at 6:06 PM.

B. Finance Committee

Ginni Block made a motion to To approve the Electronic Policy as written.

Lori Noto seconded the motion.

Sarah Haynes asked a clarifying question.

Kali Blakeslee spoke.

Joseph White reminded us that the current CTSTE policy is to "limit use and teach responsible use of..." (Our policy can stand until a state mandate comes down.) Board to reconvene to discuss at 2025 Board Retreat.

Ginni Block spoke.

Lori Noto spoke.

Jill Johnson spoke.

Bob Peterson spoke.

Kali Blakeslee spoke.

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

Jill Johnson:

- Recap of finance committee meeting
- NW Community Bank bridge loan per finance committee. Board approval needed to accept a \$200,000 loan, interest only, to be paid in full when tax credit checks received from IRS.

Lori Noto made a motion to Accept a bridge loan from NW Community Bank for \$200,000 (interest only) be paid off by pending federal employee retention tax credit monies.

Robert Peterson seconded the motion.

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

C. By-Law Revision Committee

Sarah Haynes:

- By-law revision work done by committee

Robert Peterson made a motion to Approve by-laws.

Sarah Annis Haynes seconded the motion.

Lori Noto:

- Spacing/formatting to be corrected before final draft published.

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

D. Personnel Committee

Sarah Haynes:

- Employee handbook
- The goal is to send it to the lawyer, and then vote on it during the March Board meeting
- Posted to Board on Track
- Sick leave: January 1, 2026 exemption ends pending legislation
- Push for public school exemption re: notice of leave
- Policy will have to be amended when/if that becomes law

V. School News

A. General Updates

Jill Johnson:

- Enrollment is 75 students
- Open house March 26 from 5:00 - 7:00 pm
- January: Chronic Absenteeism (CA) rate: 47.3% (51.4% at the end of December)
- The attendance team is working hard to address the CA rate

- After 19 absences, a student is considered CA for the year

Bob Peterson:

- Expresses gratitude for the work done to combat student chronic absenteeism

Charter School Reporting

Jill Johnson

- Accountability and Support Subcommittee in January
- In March, the commissioner will review the data presented and decide if Explorations will be put on probation.
- Phone meeting with state contact Shakira on 2/24/2025.
- Meeting Wednesday, March 5 with State.
- Documents to be sent for review by 2/26/2025.

Joseph White provided clarification.

B. School Climate Survey

Joseph White:

- Summary of the school climate survey.
- Student, parents, and staff numbers.
- Goal to pick what we can address effectively.
- Social interactions and connections were highlighted in the survey.
- Website: Thought Exchange

Ginni Block expressed gratitude to Joseph White for his work in creating, compiling, and analyzing the results of the survey.

2/26/2025 "Pizza and Presentation" night with Scott Rossignol.

Bob Peterson asked a clarifying question.

Greg Skinner:

- "Handle with Care" protocol.
- Rolled out at the staff meeting on 2/26/2025.
- School climate and connection with communication and school climate.
- Comes from a state initiative in partnership with McCall Behavior Health and local PDs.
- Upcoming staff development.

VI. Closing Items

A.

Adjourn Meeting

Robert Peterson made a motion to Adjourn the meeting.

Sarah Annis Haynes seconded the motion.

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

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 7:03 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kali Blakeslee

Documents used during the meeting

- Monthly Report January 2025.pdf