

APPROVED



Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting (re-scheduled)

Date and Time

Thursday June 16, 2022 at 6:15 PM

Location

PVPA 3rd Floor Conference Room

Online access:

Zoom Account is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Board of Trustees June Meeting re-scheduled

Time: Jun 16, 2022 06:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87966835186?pwd=NG4zRjYvTm54Z2hWNEZ6UDRrZTJIUT09>

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Trustees Present

David Potter, Jacob Rosenblum, Jenna Sardella, Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola (remote), LATRINA DENSON (remote), Maggie Solis (remote), Marty Espinola (remote), Mindi Winter, Neil Hede (remote), Richard Pouliot (remote), Shannon Materka, Shino Pichette (remote), Sofia Getoff-Scanlon (remote)

Trustees Absent

Andrea Nathanson, Jesse Pompei, Tonya Ward

Ex Officio Members Present

Brent Nielsen

Non Voting Members Present

Brent Nielsen

Guests Present

Firas Hashmi (remote), Marcy Conner

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

David Potter called a meeting of the board of trustees of Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School to order on Thursday Jun 16, 2022 at 6:21 PM.

C. Read the Mission Statement

David Potter

D. Approve Minutes

Marty Espinola made a motion to approve the minutes from May Board of Trustees Meeting on 05-10-22.

Shino Pichette seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Mindi Winter	Aye
Andrea Nathanson	Absent
LATRINA DENSON	Aye
Neil Hede	Aye
Marty Espinola	Aye
Shannon Materka	Aye
Jenna Sardella	Aye
Tonya Ward	Absent
Jacob Rosenblum	Aye
Shino Pichette	Aye
Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola	Abstain
David Potter	Aye
Sofia Getoff-Scanlon	Aye
Jesse Pompei	Absent
Richard Pouliot	Aye
Maggie Solis	Aye

E. Public Comment

11th-grade student report (11th-grade representative has to leave early)

School has gone pretty smoothly since our last Board of Trustees meeting. The seniors being gone has been sad, but it provides an opportunity for younger students to step up. The new scheduling system seems to be working well. Having schedules going into the summer takes a lot of the stress away. Staffing has been low in the theater program and within other departments, and students hope to see more continuity in the future.

II. Executive Director Report

A. Brent Nielsen

When the Finance Committee reports out, they will share an idea that we have discussed. It is clear that teachers have been struggling nationwide, and the administration would like to acknowledge the hard work of the staff this year. We would like to offer a \$1,000 bonus for all employees working more than halftime and a \$500 bonus for staff who work less than halftime.

More good news for employees—our tuition revenue for the next school year will meet the required benchmark in the CBA, signaling step increases.

This year, the administration approached building a master schedule with a lens for student satisfaction. They wanted to ensure that students were getting the classes they wanted and needed. As courses were placed on the master schedule, leadership made

sure to verify that there was enough space during every block to put every student into a class.

For rising seniors and juniors, in-person meetings were used to create final schedules so that they would have them going into the summer. Students in grades 8-10, who have more requirements, a system has been implemented to make sure that students are getting the elective classes they want. This scheduling system is a big improvement compared to what has happened historically.

In the middle school, courses will be arranged differently to ensure that students in accelerated math classes have options for their other courses (traditionally, enrolling in an accelerated course constrained other scheduling options).

In the upcoming year, the administration is planning to implement a three block per week independent period for teachers. One of these blocks will be at the same time as other teachers within a grade-based team, allowing for increased collaboration. The special education team is included in this cohort-based free block schedule.

Since the last Board of Trustees meeting, performances and showcases have been great. We had Headgear show, 25th Anniversary Celebration, Music Showcase (part of which took place during community time), and a week-long festival featuring outdoor performances for students. At the last minute, due to some COVID cases, the second night of our production of Hamlet was canceled. Graduation was incredible, and we got some very positive press in the Gazette. Unity day was brought back this year, and it was just like what it used to be—a great celebration. Our final performance of the year, the Film Festival, took place last night. Hats off to everybody involved!

The reporting week ending on May 25th, we hit an all-time high in positive COVID tests. We reported 21 students and 6 staff who were infected. Since then, numbers have decreased and are similar to where they were prior to the surge.

This year, we had a full schedule of MCAS for the first time in a few years (due to COVID). We saw full participation for 10th-grade students. Participation rates for Middle School were a little bit low due to opt-outs. Some students were also out due to illness and for other reasons. We are expected to have 95% participation, a figure tied to our eligibility for charter renewal. Brent will provide a more significant update next year when we are discussing MCAS results.

Question: My 8th-grade student was pretty stressed about the scheduling survey that was sent out. It feels like the system was not particularly well-explained, and students seem concerned that they are not going to get the arts classes they want. It also seems that there was only one tech theater option, which I wanted to mention. More explanation of the process and why it is constantly changing would be beneficial for students.

Answer: We are building a more comprehensive tech theater program and plan to develop it beyond what we have seen in PVPA history. This project will take a few years. With regard to the process, the administration is near certain that every student will get either their first or second choice for every student.

III. Board Committee Reports

A. Finance Committee Report

As Brent discussed, the Finance Committee had an unusual June meeting to discuss items that arose late in the year.

Tonight, the Finance Committee will ask the Board to approve the one-time bonus proposed by the administration as well as increase the FY23 capital budget from \$111,500 to \$397,358.

The reason for the capital budget increase is a report from architects estimating the cost of developing third-floor storage into an office space.

Mindi Winter made a motion to Approve the employee payroll bonus as stated in the agenda (" All employees on the payroll as of June 14, 2022 shall receive a one time bonus equal to \$1,000 for full time to 50% FTE employees and \$500 for part time employees less than 50% FTE").

Maggie Solis seconded the motion.

We prepared for raises this year if there were to be a new schedule, so we wanted to ensure that we were making true on our suggestion of raises.

Question: We were discussing retroactive raises as specified by the CBA earlier. Are these raises in conflict?

Answer: Not at all. We wanted to increase the length of the workweek for this year, which would have led to a salary increase, but the bargaining team did not want to make that change this year.

The hope is that we will hit the CBA threshold every year, but the raises are retroactive to ensure that we *know* we will have the tuition revenue before providing the raises.

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

Roll Call

Mindi Winter	Aye
Shannon Materka	Abstain
Shino Pichette	Aye
Tonya Ward	Absent
David Potter	Aye
Marty Espinola	Aye
Neil Hede	Aye
Sofia Getoff-Scanlon	Aye
Andrea Nathanson	Absent

Roll Call

LATRINA DENSON	Aye
Jenna Sardella	Abstain
Jesse Pompei	Absent
Richard Pouliot	Aye
Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola	Aye
Jacob Rosenblum	Aye
Maggie Solis	Aye

David Potter made a motion to Approve the second recommendation to Increase the FY23 capital budget from \$111,500 to \$397,358.

Jacob Rosenblum seconded the motion.

Question: Could you talk a little bit more about how we can afford this?

Answer: This money would come directly from reserves. We have \$2.6 million in reserves right now with \$1.5 million set aside—that leaves \$1 million.

Question: Would this be a one-time consideration?

Answer: There could be projects down the road. This will likely not be a yearly affair, but future projects may come up. This proposal applies only to this fiscal year.

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

B. Governance Committee Report

The Committee discussed the need to provide the Board with a slate of candidates.

The bylaws state that every officer of the Board must have been a member in good standing for at least one year. The slate of candidates that the Committee is recommending is:

David Potter - President
Shino Yoshen - Vice President
Neil Hede - Treasurer
Jacob Rosenblum - Clerk

If we accept this slate of officers, Shino will not be able to serve as Chair of the Governance Committee due to availability concerns. She can travel to PVPA if the need arises on a case-by-case basis.

It seems that Neil would need to be reelected prior to being nominated as an officer. Everybody ending their term now needs to be reelected.

Mindi was elected to finish out a term in 2016. Does this count as a term?

David Potter made a motion to nominate Neil Hede for a second, 2-year term as a Trustee.

Maggie Solis seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

LATRINA DENSON	Aye
Neil Hede	Abstain
Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola	Aye
Jenna Sardella	Aye
Jesse Pompei	Absent
Maggie Solis	Aye
David Potter	Aye
Marty Espinola	Aye
Jacob Rosenblum	Aye
Shino Pichette	Aye
Sofia Getoff-Scanlon	Aye
Tonya Ward	Absent
Mindi Winter	Aye
Andrea Nathanson	Absent
Richard Pouliot	Aye
Shannon Materka	Aye

David Potter made a motion to nominate Shino Yoshen for a second, 2-year term as a Trustee.

Sofia Getoff-Scanlon seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola	Aye
Sofia Getoff-Scanlon	Aye
Jesse Pompei	Absent
Jacob Rosenblum	Aye
LATRINA DENSON	Aye
Shannon Materka	Aye
Jenna Sardella	Aye
Tonya Ward	Absent
Richard Pouliot	Aye
David Potter	Aye
Maggie Solis	Aye
Mindi Winter	Abstain
Andrea Nathanson	Absent
Shino Pichette	Abstain
Marty Espinola	Aye
Neil Hede	Aye

David makes a motion to nominate Mindi Winter for a third term for 2 years

Marty seconds the motion

Discussion:

I think the more conservative approach would be to hold off on nominating Mindi for another term until we verify what a term means.

Recently, we have seen complaints and some issues with compliance. A more conservative approach could be wise at this point.

We should consider keeping Mindi on the Board with consideration for the best way to ensure Board function.

MOTION WITHDRAWN

Neil Hede made a motion to not recognize Mindi's first, partial-year participation as a full term and to nominate Mindi for a third term for 2 years.

Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola seconded the motion.

David Potter would like to include that we will make space in the summer retreat to clarify terms and protocols regarding terms.

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

Roll Call

Jacob Rosenblum	Aye
Neil Hede	Aye
Shannon Materka	Aye
Maggie Solis	Aye
Shino Pichette	Aye
Tonya Ward	Absent
Jenna Sardella	Aye
Richard Pouliot	Aye
Marty Espinola	Aye
Jesse Pompei	Absent
Andrea Nathanson	Absent
Sofia Getoff-Scanlon	Aye
LATRINA DENSON	Aye
Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola	Aye
Mindi Winter	Abstain
David Potter	Aye

We are looking for new members to replace those who are leaving.

Marty Espinola made a motion to approve Sofia as a new Board member
Shino Yoshen seconded

Discussion:

Question: Sofia, will you be able to attend meetings in person?

Answer: I will not be able to be in person.

A quorum is required to attend in person along with the chair.

We cannot determine what will happen with Open Meeting Law. Should we wait to approve Sofia?

We cannot afford to not have people on the Board, but with so many virtual participants, we do not have a cushion.

We will revisit this question at the retreat once we have an opportunity to look into the numbers further.

MOTION WITHDRAWN

We should be focusing on recruiting individuals with law, finance, and hr perspectives as well as experience in the arts.

Marty Espinola made a motion to Nominate David Potter as President, Shino Yoshen as Vice President, Neil Hede as Treasurer, and Jacob Rosenblum as Clerk, each for a one year term.

Maggie Solis seconded the motion.

One member of the Board thinks that we should vote separately on the nominations.

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

Roll Call

Richard Pouliot	Aye
Jesse Pompei	Absent
Sofia Getoff-Scanlon	Aye
Shino Pichette	Aye
Mindi Winter	Abstain
LATRINA DENSON	Aye
David Potter	Aye
Tonya Ward	Absent
Jacob Rosenblum	Aye
Shannon Materka	Aye
Andrea Nathanson	Absent
Neil Hede	Aye
Marty Espinola	Aye
Maggie Solis	Aye
Jenna Sardella	Aye
Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola	No

The Governance Committee recommends that we form a retreat-planning ad-hoc team to put together an agenda and items for the retreat.

Retreat Planning Team:

David, Jake, Marcy, Maggie, Latrina, Brent

The annual meeting is the same thing as the retreat.

We should discuss the bylaws and our adherence to the terms during the retreat.

David thanks the Governance Committee.

C. Executive Evaluation Committee

The Executive Evaluation Committee has been hard at work recently. Brent has attended meetings to ensure that we are creating a practical and purposeful process for goal-setting.

David shares [Head of School Evaluation Components document](#) and [Evaluation Timeline Draft](#)

Within the Committee, there should be a singular point person who will meet with Brent regularly to manage progress and goals.

D. Long Range Infrastructure Committee

The Long-Range Infrastructure Planning Committee met last week and discussed our progress with the PA system. Members of the staff need training on how to use the new system, though it is quite simple. It has been working well.

[LRPC Report](#)

The CCTV system project is on track for this summer.

The classroom makeover project is now priced and planned. Summer makeovers for east annex classrooms will be completed this summer.

- Five classrooms every summer will get the same treatment

The Committee has discussed the roof and HVAC needs. Each member of the Committee has been assigned to look at projects for the next year.

IV. Internal Stakeholders

A. Staff Reports

The five teachers who are getting upgraded classrooms are very excited for the updates.

Teachers would love to have some data-based decision making process for masking next year. There is also a desire for exit interviews.

Brent responds that this is already a process that exists.

There are concerns about student behavior, though it seems that next year there may be more clarity regarding who is responsible for what.

B. Student Reports

Firas covered a lot. Graduation was great, and the outgoing seniors want to express gratitude to the teachers who made the year what it was.

V. President's Business

A. Trustee Disclosures & Membership Updates

David gives a shoutout to our departing members for their service to the Board.

David also reminds Trustees about disclosures.

B. Board Self-Evaluation

David has shared the past Board self-evaluation via email.

C. Summer Retreat Updates

Sunday, August 7th, from 11-4 is the date that the retreat team landed on for the meeting. The Committee can discuss venue and specifics.

VI. 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 8:46 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jacob Rosenblum

VII. Executive Session

A. Motion

David Potter made a motion to move into executive session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares. Marty Espinola seconded the motion.

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

This issue is related to a lawsuit that came up last year.

Jenyka relays that she was connected with the claimant and attended PVPA with them and raises concerns about whether they should be included in the discussion.

David Potter made a motion to allow legal counsel to manage this current lawsuit complaint related to events that allegedly took place from 2009-2014.

Jacob Rosenblum seconded the motion.

One Trustee clarifies that this is a demand letter rather than a formal lawsuit.

The Board hopes that this case can be settled out of court.

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

David Potter made a motion to exit the executive session and adjourn the meeting at 8:57.

Mindi Winter seconded the motion.

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