

Ledyard Charter School Board of Directors

Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 13, 2024 | 5:00 P.M. | Meeting conducted via Zoom

This meeting was conducted via Zoom. The authority to conduct a public meeting in this manner was granted by Governor Sununu's 12th Executive Order issued on March 23, 2020.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Tom Puleo at 5:07 P.M.

Present: Lucretia Witte, Tom Puleo, Ben Beisswenger, Wendy Kozak, Amie Bettle, Ivy Schweitzer, Alison Heller, Jillian Conforti, Patrick Darley, Marianne St. Laurent

Absent: Bethany Solomon

A quorum was present.

2. Public Input

There was no public input.

3. Executive Director's Report

Wendy Kozak provided the Executive Director's Report. Some of the highlights she brought up are below:

Students Body

There are currently 45 students attending LCS

Field Trips

Recent field trips include ice skating and a bowling outing is coming up later this week. More field trips are being scheduled.

Fundraising

On 3/29/24 there will be a bake sale at the Hartland, VT rest area and on 4/18 LCS will have another pop-up thrift sale on the Dartmouth campus.

The Rotary Club will be helping to plan a bingo night and other fundraising events.

Headrest

Headrest is an organization that helps people with addictions, is going to LCS to conduct a 2-hour workshop on suicide prevention. They will be present twice a week for 6 weeks available to students. Parents will be required to sign off as it is considered a form of counseling.

USDA School Lunch Program

The application process is underway and the goal is to get income from the program to help set up the LCS lunch program to include planning, preparation, shopping and more. While LCS must pay \$7,000 to become a member of the program Wendy expect that \$7,000 will be received back on a monthly basis which makes the up front payment worthwhile. She expects this program to be fully underway next fall.

Fundraising

Wendy held a fundraising brainstorming session with Bethany and Lucretia which was productive. Wendy has a goal now that by July 1st, 2024 she will obtain 50 new contacts for fundraising on top of their current 200. She also has a goal to obtain 20 new donors. A next level goal for the future is to fundraise for a building renovation to redo the flooring in the building. They hope to learn if donors are interested in helping with this specific kind of fundraising effort and if not, obtain feedback for more effective fundraising going forward.

Building and Tenant Update

A number of potential tenants are interested in renting the upstairs space. Their best option would seem to be the Democratic Party of New Hampshire. They would like to move in at the end of March. They are not interested in renovating the space or changing anything. They will basically be there with desks to use as a workspace. They are offering to pay above asking at \$3,000 per month and will only need a 9 month lease. Utilities will be included. Many other interested parties would like to include the back space for storage so when needed LCS will need to clean that area up.

Grant Writing

Tom L:edue has been helping to organize a resource for Wendy to use to complete grant applications on her own. This resource provides verbiage that will make the process much more efficient and effective.

Staff

Wendy is proposing that LCS hire two new staff members on a part time basis. Tom Puleo would start next Monday to help with grounds management, maintenance and working with contractors as well as some behavioral management and counseling as needed since he is a pediatrician. He will be working part time at an hourly rate daily from 8:30-12:30.

The other possible hire is Shelby Day. She specializes in special education IEP work. She has worked with case managers, families and teachers for effective use of IEPs in the classroom and works with advocates as well. Wendy will discuss these positions in greater detail later.

Staff evaluations are underway and Wendy expects these to be completed by May

4. Discipline Policy & General Assurances & 2024-25 Budget

Lucretia brought up the need to approve these documents that were sent out prior to the board meeting and reviewed.

Ivy made a motion to approve the Discipline Policy and General Assurances documents. Ben Beisswenger seconded the motion and it passed with unanimous approval.

Budget Approval

Wendy noted that she entered the same amount for a grant writer position for the time being but if she is able to take over that role those funds can be directed elsewhere.

The special education position is not included on the budget. However, she added that she expects that a grant will cover the payment for Shelby's salary.

Ben Beisswenger made the motion to approve the budget for 2024-25 school year. Ivy Schweitzer seconded. Tom Puleo chose to abstain from this vote as he is one of the new hires and did not want to create a conflict of interest. A vote of 5-0 passed the budget.

5. Discussion of New Hires

Since Lucretia was not available at the start of the meeting she asked Wendy to discuss the two positions she is hiring for and then a special session will commence where a vote will take place on the approval of the new hires.

Shelby Day

- Wendy stated that she is looking for a special education coordinator to take the workload off of her since that is not her area of expertise.
- Shelby Day has a great deal of experience working with special education students, and as a parent of a child with special needs she will be effective in this role.
- Shelby has experience working with case managers, parents and advocates and a well developed understanding of disability laws and special education.
- She can start right away and Wendy is not sure if the position will continue next fall as she is hoping Shelby can set up a system that could be continued without her presence going forward. If she were to stay in this position next fall it could be covered by a grant.

Tom Puleo

- Wendy stated that Tom will be helping with building maintenance, working with contractors, and tenants. Tom stated that he hopes to also contribute with a role in behavior management and counseling since, for a profession as a pediatrician, he works with students with learning differences on a regular basis. The hopes to initiate a discipline program to involve faculty and students.
- Lucreita asked Wendy how she envisions Tom's role in the future and Wendy stated that she is not quite ready to define his position at this time but if more hours are needed to keep him involved she would be willing to consider that.

Lucretia called a special session at 5:45 P.M. in order for voting on new hires. All meeting members were requested to leave the zoom call and would be invited back shortly.

- Ben Beisswenger made a motion to approve Shelby Day for Special Education Coordinator. Alison seconded the motion and it was approved 5-0.
- Lucretia made a motion to approve Tom Puleo in his position at LCS. Ben seconded and it was approved unanimously 5-0.

The regular meeting was called back to order at 6:00 P.M. and Tom was congratulated for his new role with LCS. It was recognized that his role on the LCS Board will change somewhat as he will be unable to vote on some items. He may consider discontinuing membership on the board in July.

6. Finance Report

Ben Beisswenger provided the finance report:

Current status of accounts as of March 13, 2024:

Balances: \$368,917.64

Checking: \$230,613.10

Money Market/Savings: \$128,704.54

-Includes all money earned via fundraising for 2023-24

USDA Reserve Fund: \$9,600

Line of Credit: \$0 of \$75,000 utilized

Notable deposits: \$50,000 - donation and \$23,215.07 - tuition deposit made in February 2024

7. Fundraising Update

- Lucretia provided the fundraising report. She mentioned the meeting she and Bethany had with Wendy where they discussed working to build a presence in the community.
- They are planning a targeted campaign, messaging and requesting from institutions not only for donations but for feedback on their efforts to build even better fundraising campaigns in the future. She hopes to tap into a wider network for fundraising opportunities when they launch a larger campaign.

8. Building Report

Tom Puleo provided the building report.

- He is working on small projects such as painting, drywall and other items around the building. He has contacted the city and is awaiting the Certificate of Occupancy so they will be able to legally rent out the space by the end of March.
- Alison asked if the cracks in the floor still needed to be filled and Tom stated that he can do that or Valley Flooring, who may be installing the carpet tiles could do that.
- Wendy stated that the goal for the downstairs area is to have her class aid, who is graduating from Dartmouth this spring to become a full time teacher next fall. LCS currently has 4 classrooms downstairs and they need a fifth functioning classroom, so she hopes to knock down a wall and create another classroom.
- Tom noted that the work they do for that classroom will not impinge on a lift installation in the future if that becomes a desired goal.

9. Adjournment

Lucretia adjourned the meeting at 6:14 P.M.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 17, 2024 at 5:00 P.M., in person at LCS

Topics: Contract Renewal for teachers & Wendy and how we can help the staff going forward.

Please note this is the THIRD Wednesday as LCS is on spring break April 10.