

## Ledyard Charter School Board of Directors

### Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 26, 2023 | 5:00 P.M. | Ledyard Charter School

*This meeting was conducted in person at Ledyard Charter School.*

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#### 1. Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 5:10 P.M.

Present: Lucretia Witte, Tom Puleo, Wendy Kozak, Mike Harris, Ben Beisswenger, Bethany Solomon, Amie Bettel, Patrick Darley, James Leavitt, Jose Maldonado and Tonya McMurray

Absent: Ivy Schweitzer

A quorum was present.

#### 2. Welcome & Team Builder

Tom Puleo introduced an ice-breaker game which was conducted for the next 30 minutes.

#### 3. Agenda Review & Public Input & Consent Agenda

- Lucretia Witte called for Public Input, approval of the consent agenda, and outlined the plan and expectations for the meeting which entailed celebrating successes from the previous school year and goals for the upcoming year.
- There was no public input.
- Wendy Kozak discussed the Department of Education (DOE) and their expectations for the Policy and Procurement document as well as the Time and Effort Procedures document to be updated to their standards which included changing a few sentences. The DOE also expects these documents to be approved in person by the board rather than via online signature.

*A motion was made by Bethany Solomon to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Tom Puleo and approved unanimously.*

#### 4. Celebrations

Lucretia Witte discussed the plan to determine successes and victories from the past school year whereby board members and attending staff would group in pairs to come up with three items. The most important of which was determined by each group of pairs and included on the white board. The other groups also weighed in on whether they included the same item in their discussion. There were eight groups and the following list includes the results from this discussion. Each item includes, in parentheses, the number of other groups that also had that item on their own list:

1. Field trips, community engagement and the school's prom. (2)
2. Witnessing student success with a 100% graduation. (2)
3. No staff turnover plus an increase in grant funded roles. (2)
4. Good student behavior and effective discipline. (1)
5. Making the decision to use and improve our upstairs space for the purposes of use by LCS. (2)
6. Clear communication between the board and staff as well as effective coordination when unexpected events came up. (0)
7. Teacher and student success with experiential and project-based learning. (0)

8. Steady enrollment and students on waitlist afforded enrollment. (1)

## 5. Executive Director's Report

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

- There are currently 44 students enrolled for the fall and 10 students enrolled in summer school.
- Jillian, Erica (the recently hired science teacher), Jose and Wendy are working over the summer to upgrade the building.
- Tom and Ben have also done a great deal of work getting work done upstairs. Tom believes it can be ready for use by the beginning of September 2023.
- Wendy brought up some discussion of finances which will be expanded upon in the finance report. LCS will be reimbursed by federal grants for \$25,000. The remaining \$41,405 will expire on 9/20/23. Most of these funds are being spent on services and for work on the renovation.
- Staff return to the school from the summer break on August 25th and students return on the 29th.
- Goals for August include planning field trips and events for the year, finishing summer school successfully and working on the renovation.
- Wendy thanked Tom, Ben, Lucretia and Mike for their roles at LCS.
- Wendy expressed that she would like to wait to increase the number of students There have been many students interested but would prefer to keep their numbers stable at about 45 until the upstairs space is complete.

Tonya asked if LCS was connected with the Couch Foundation and Wendy replied in the affirmative but were unable to secure funding and will try again next year. Bethany recommended a relationship with the Hope Foundation and hopes to establish a donor database as her focus is on individual fundraising vs. crowdfunding.

## 6. Finance Report

Ben Beisswenger provided the finance report and I requested his detailed report to update the minutes with accurate numbers.

### Current status of accounts as of July 1, 2023:

Checking: \$6,679.09

Money Market: \$1,021.19

Emergency Fund: \$6,400.00

Credits for June: \$58,000

Debits for June: \$69,000

- Ben explained that it is typical in the annual cycle to operate at a deficit with a tight budget during the summer months, even though the fiscal year begins in July, LCS does not receive funding from tuition until later in the year, around the fall.
- Revenue comes from: state grants, private grants, individual donations and tuition.
- Expenses include: school operations, projects such as the renovation and services which are largely reimbursable through state and private grants.
- Ben suggested that the school's financial future includes the following problems: LCS dependency on state grants and lack of other sources of income, while at the same time increased expenses for renovations and fees expected to be refunded to the DOE (based on ongoing audit results).

- Brainstorming should be done to determine how to obtain additional income to make up the difference in expenses and income.

## 7. Board Approvals

Lucretia called for approvals on the holding and use of the four Mascoma Bank accounts (listed below) and to provide Lucretia, Ben and Wendy access to these accounts:

1. Checking account for regular business
2. Money Market account
3. The USDA emergency/escrow account
4. The line of credit

*Tom made the motion to approve Lucretia, Ben and Wendy access to the Mascoma accounts and was seconded by Bethany. Approval was unanimous.*

Lucretia also called for the approval of new members to the board.

*Bethany Solomon made the motion to approve Tonya McMurray as a new member of the Board of Directors, Ben Beisswenger seconded and the Board approved unanimously.*

## 8. Building Report

Tom Puleo provided the building report:

- Materials will arrive at LCS within the week to begin various projects including: drywall for the upstairs walls, adding 10 outlets in the large front room and additional outlets for the back area of the upstairs space.
- Hanging light fixtures will also be installed.
- There are no plans at present to include a drop ceiling.
- They plan to clean up the ceiling and consider painting it.
- Flooring will not be installed, rather they plan to use a self-leveling sealant instead.
- The estimate for the work and materials is less than \$23,000, well under the \$25,000 budget.

Wendy said that the front of the upstairs room will be used by the science teacher, Erika, for her classes, and another divided area will be used for Erika to teach physical education in a yoga studio. She also mentioned the space can be easily adjusted to be used as an auditorium for assemblies and celebrations.

~ Lucretia called for a break in the meeting at 6:30. The meeting reconvened at 6:45. ~

## 8. Aspirations for the Year Ahead

Lucretia Witte requested that everyone take 5 minutes to read the document provided on [Board Responsibilities vs Executive Director](#) which she had summed up in the following table provided in the Agenda:

Finance Committee Responsibilities	Education Committee Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with the ED &amp; Treasurer to develop the operating budget and approve any changes mid year</li> <li>- Work with the chair to implement the tuition agreements with sending towns</li> <li>- Secure optimal financing for the school, as needed</li> <li>- Support grant compliance and private fundraising effort to meet the school's budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Each member plans one enrichment learning activity per year</li> <li>- Getting the school new connections (e.g. the field trip at Dartmouth)</li> <li>- Helping design and staff community events</li> <li>- Participate in school operation tasks or find connections who can help (school website, educational community events, community service opportunities, etc.)</li> </ul>

Lucretia called on all to reflect on 3 goals for the year ahead to be discussed in two groups: board members (board goals) and LCS teachers and staff (school related goals). The two groups were then divided to discuss privately and come back with their top 3 goals which were as follows:

LCS Staff Goals:

1. Maintain a 100% graduation rate by updating students with their requirements at the beginning of the year.
2. Foster a positive culture at LCS among students via whole-school assemblies and events.
3. Ask parents to volunteer: possibly teach a class, chaperone events like prom or field trips, and generally help out at LCS to get them involved in their child's education and the school.

Board Goals:

1. Expand the LCS community perhaps by developing an annual tradition (Tom's idea about a John Ledyard Day or Week) for the purposes of fundraising, developing ties with the community, and showcasing the work of students.
2. Formalize a fundraising and finance plan that is sustainable, will increase tuition (sending towns which Lucretia is heading up), and develop a donor database.
3. Complete the renovation of the entire upstairs space by the end of June 2024.

**9. Appreciations**

Bethany expressed her appreciation for Mike Harris and his contribution to the school over the last 13 years. He is the person that started Ledyard Charter School and has done a magnificent job of making it a success and he is now retiring from the board. Wendy and others also expressed their great appreciation for Mike and gave him a gift of a Hibiscus tree and an LCS sweatshirt.

**10. Adjournment**

Lucretia adjourned the meeting at 7:36 P.M.

The next meeting is scheduled for August 9th at 5:00 pm, location TBD or via Zoom.