



Wasatch Charter School
Governing Board Meeting
June 26, 2024 | 11:30 AM - 1:05 PM
1458 East Murray-Holladay Road, Holladay, UT 841112

[Zoom Link](#), [Board Packet](#)

Minutes

1. Opening

- a. Confirm Recorder is on: Confirmed
- b. Roll Call and confirm Quorum: Quorum Confirmed

Present:

Ann Johnson, Board President (via Zoom)
Melissa Jensen, Board Member (via Zoom)
Scott Whitehead, Board Member (via Zoom)
Mac Gaulin, Board Member (via Zoom)
Rhiannon McDaniel, Board Member (via Zoom)
Katie Benish, Board Member
Emily Merchant, Executive Director (via Zoom)
Tricia Sullivan, Wasatch Family Foundation Director (via Zoom)
Brian Cates, Business Manager (via Zoom)
Jillian Rose, HR representative

Wasatch Charter School Staff Members: Sarah Parsons

Members of the Public:

Tara Thomas (potential board member, via Zoom)
Brooke Kirk (potential board member)
Rachel Harris (potential board member)

Excused:

Peter Westman, Board Member
Lyn Spataro, Board Member
Melissa Frisch, Board Member
Kara Salisbury, Administrative Director
Heather Campbell, Student Support Services Director
Nicole Denison, Pedagogical Chair

- c. Potential Conflicts of Interest: None reported.

d. Waldorf Verse

*“The healthy social life is found
When in the mirror of each human soul
The whole community finds its reflection,
And when, in the community,
The strength of each one is living.”*

-Rudolf Steiner

- e. Chair Remarks: Trustee Johnson welcomed members, and thanked Trustee Benish for her work on getting board candidates.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

a. [May 22th Meeting Minutes](#)

Trustee Benish made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes from the May 22th Meeting; Trustee Jensen seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

3. Option for Public Participation: Jillian Rose introduced herself as the HR representative.
4. Business Manager Report: Mr. Cates reported that, as of the end of May (approximately 90% of the fiscal year), the PTIF is doing well after our ERC fund deposit last year. Additionally, Mr. Cates reported that the school is projected to hit a 3.2% operating margin, that our cash balance is good, and that we had some reimbursement requests fulfilled and rest are expected to be fulfilled in the next 2-3 months. In August the finance committee will decide whether to move more cash into PTIF. Enrollment is up to 612 as of the end of May, and Mr. Cates is projecting August enrollment at 635. Mr. Cates introduced the current year budget summary and forecast for next year, constituting the two agenda items to be voted on. Mr. Cates reported that our bond payment expectations are higher next year, based on discussions with Roundtable financial. Personnel expenses are expected to be the largest increase over the next year, while property expenses are expected to decline (primarily reductions in furniture and fixtures, hardware & software. Overall, Mr. Cates summarized that we are not expecting significant change in expenses percentage-wise, resulting in an expected 3.3% operating margin. Revenues are expected to increase due to state & federal funds increasing, but local revenue decreasing mostly due to PTIF income likely reducing due to expected falling interest rates. Lastly, Mr. Cates reported that the audit will begin next month, and that books are currently being closed & prepared.

5. Foundation update: Ms. Sullivan shared that registration for summer camps are going well, currently tracking ahead of this point last summer. Ms. Sullivan is still working on budget planning to address expected revenue reductions next year due to the loss of kindergarten aftercare. Ms. Sullivan reported that there are still some open spaces for fall enrollment, which are still being filled.

6. PAC update: Not available due to daytime scheduling.

7. Board Education Presentation: Not available due to daytime scheduling.

8. Committee Reports

a. Finance Committee

Trustee Gaulin made a motion to approve the FY24 Final Budget and the FY25 Preliminary Budget, Trustee Jensen seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

b. Audit Committee: None

c. Governance Committee: Trustee Jensen shared that the governance committee is working on putting together a calendar to aid with scheduling. Trustee Benish reported that there was information on potential Board members in the board governance folder, and that her last meeting would be the August board retreat meeting. Potential board members Rachel Harris, Tara Thomas, and Brooke Kirk introduced themselves to the group.

d. Fundraising Committee: Trustee McDaniel shared that the committee is combining feedback asynchronously from the team due to scheduling difficulties. Trustee McDaniel shared that she will be taking the lead on the harvest festival organization, and that the board should expect a request for feedback about the past events.

e. School Land Trust Committee: None

f. Policy Committee

i. [Public Participation at Board Meetings](#): Trustee Gaulin introduced the public participation at board meeting policy updates, revealing that the policy committee had determined that the policy was sufficiently clear enough about public participation, and that the only change was to require public participants to introduce themselves when attending virtually. Trustee Jensen made a motion to approve the public participation policy, Trustee Gaulin seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

ii. [Communications and Complaint Policy](#)

Trustee Jensen discussed her comments on the policy, specifically how the board handles communication from various parties, acknowledging that while the board should not overstep its bounds, it does behoove the board to be aware of cultural or other complaints. Trustee Jensen believes it would be helpful to add HR as a formal body to the policy, and that it would be helpful for the board to have visibility on outstanding and future incoming complaints. Trustee Jensen suggested that potentially a solution could be to have high-level reporting about conflicts, complaints etc. be provided to the board similar to the reporting on the level of enrollment numbers. Trustee Jensen also suggested that the board get more clarity into how the public complaint process works (specifically to the board of education), and that that clarity should include reports on when such complaints occur. Trustee Johnson suggested that language about a third party HR entity as a channel in the complaint process be added to the policy, but clarified that this should only be after the rest of the policy's process were followed. Director Merchant added that we should make it clear that we are not creating new processes, and reiterate that the existing processes should be used in the appropriate circumstances. Trustee Jensen cautioned that there may be issues with escalation being gated by "permission" and that escalating to HR be an option for internal complaints being brought forth. The board decided to add language

9. Executive Director [Report](#) discussion

Review of mental health screener: Trustee Johnson clarified that the screener is voluntary but results in personally identifiable information being gathered. Ms. Merchant clarified that the purpose of this mental health screener is intended to be akin to those of vision or hearing screenings, namely that if the voluntary screening identifies something problematic, it be caught and parents be referred to an appropriate medical provider. Trustee McDaniel asked whether the screener covers anxiety, which is an increasing issue amongst youth. Ms. Merchant clarified that the health screener was sourced from a limited set of options as approved by the State.

Ms. Merchant opened a discussion of Trustee Benish's question regarding Robyn Brown's training. Ms. Merchant reiterated that the overall approach of the school is to provide broad support for continuing education, with the "first level" focus being Waldorf Teacher training. Historically, this included onsite training from Gradalis as well as Kim John Payne, the latter of which was very expensive. Over time, the training broadened to include multiple other trainers, and the administration is increasing the reimbursement amounts this year, and adjusting the reimbursement process to be more accommodating to teachers. Ms. Merchant shared that she has been requesting feedback from the teachers about what training they might want on an ongoing basis, and has adjusted the supported training in response. She has also historically met individually with teachers to match their training and professional growth goals. Overall, Ms. Merchant summarized that the school has been increasingly systematic about professional development so that is ensured to be equitable. Recently the school has started working with Robyn because she offers a child-specific training program that is unique across Waldorf related programs, and is deeply rooted in Steiner's pedagogy. Trustee Jensen highlighted that the new approach of paying for the full training up front is a welcome improvement to the administration's approach to continuing education. Trustee Jensen asked whether the changes in training reimbursement affected the budget, which Ms. Merchant clarified would increase slightly but not solely due to that reimbursement change. Trustee Jensen requested that some of the upcoming board education include a three-streams overview.

Trustee Johnson asked whether the school is investing enough resources into SPED related avenues. Ms. Merchant clarified that the school spends a significant amount on such SPED services and support, including a specialized class with multiple instructors, multiple support staff, a full time SPED writer for customized lesson material.

Trustee Benish asked whether our associate teacher positions have been filled, to which Ms. Merchant affirmed they had. Ms. Merchant also mentioned that three of the current associate teachers are also planned to move into lead roles in the future.

Purchase approvals: Ms. Merchant requested approvals for two ongoing professional development services. Trustee Jensen motioned to approve the two professional development purchases, Trustee Whitehead seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

10. Option for Closed Session: Trustee Gaulin made a motion to enter a closed session to discuss the character or competency of an individual and to discuss the purchase, exchange, or lease of real property; Trustee Jensen seconded the motion, and the meeting entered a closed session at 12:50pm.
11. The open meeting resumed at 1:39pm. Trustee Gaulin affirmed that the content of the closed session was limited to the anticipated discussion of the character or competence of an individual and/or of the purchase, exchange, or lease of real property.
12. Curiosity Questions: None
13. Adjourn: Trustee Benish made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and the meeting concluded at 1:40pm.

Board Meeting Public Participation Note:

Persons requesting to speak to the board of education in an open meeting need to sign up prior to the start of the open session of the board meeting. Resolution of questions or responses to proposals should not be expected at this meeting; staff or others may be asked to research and/or prepare materials and solutions for a later time. Fifteen minutes total have been scheduled for persons requesting to speak. Three minutes will be allotted for individual requests and five minutes will be allotted for group requests. If we receive more requests than the allotted time permits, those requests may be scheduled for the next board business meeting. Your concerns may be submitted in writing to the Board Secretary for distribution to the board at any time.