

**Bellows Free Academy, Union District #48, and Northwest Technical Center
Board of School Directors**

Board Meeting
September 11, 2007

Present for a quorum: Bruce Scott, Nilda Gonnella-French, Jim Mercier, Sally Lindberg, and Al Corey

Student Representative: Rina Perrault 2007-2008

Administrators: Dave Kimmel, Ned Caron, Wendy Meunier, Laurence Carnahan, Geoff Lyons, Marilyn Grunewald

Visitors: Lynda Ulrich, St. Albans resident, Tim Viens, Kelly Viens, Jed Kettler, *County Courier*, Larry Trombley, teacher

1. Call to Order: Jim Mercier called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance, followed by moment of silence in observation of 9/11
- 4.1 Approval of Minutes

Al Corey made the motion to approve the June 5, 2007 minutes; Sally Lindberg seconded the motion, with all in favor. Motion carried 5-0.

Al Corey made the motion to approve the July 12, 2007 minutes; Sally Lindberg seconded the motion, with all in favor. Motion carried 5-0.

Al Corey made the motion to approve the August 14, 2007 minutes; Sally Lindberg seconded the motion, with all in favor. Motion carried 5-0.

Al Corey made the motion to approve the September 5, 2007 minutes; Sally Lindberg seconded the motion, with all in favor. Motion carried 5-0.

Corrections: amend the minutes so that the vote to hire Amanda Ashton be properly recorded as 4-0-1 (four in favor, none opposed, and one abstention) and that Sally Lindberg's name be spelled properly, with no final "h"

- 4.2 Superintendent's Summary: Included in mailed packet
- 4.3 Student Representative Report: Orientation went well. Student council was very helpful. They are currently planning homecoming for September 22, 2007, including the football game and bonfire.

5.1 Collins Perley Sports Complex: The forums were well-attended and well-received by the community. All of the Board members received feedback from members of the community, both at the forums and by telephone and email. Some feedback was completely in support of the entire project. Some community members reported support for the improvements that were critical (such as the rink and the track) but opposition to the total price tag of \$20 million. Al Corey reported only one entirely negative response, which indicated support for BFA improvements, but not Collins Perley. All Board members reported receiving some feedback that was supportive of the concept, but not for the total price.

Board members expressed an interest in thoughtful planning before the next proposal is made. The Board desires to prioritize the list of improvements, while keeping an eye toward future projects. The Board wants to come up with a plan that will a) meet the immediate repair needs, b) meet the fiscal constraints of the community, and c) keep avenues open for expansion/development down the road.

Lynda Ulrich addressed the following concerns to the Board: She wonders if the people who call or write to Board members are all in a particularly vocal subgroup, and might not be a representative sample of the community. She believes that the public was not supplied with enough details, particularly about sustainability, to help them make an informed decision. She is concerned that some people (such as the elderly) whose taxes would not change due to these improvements, do not realize that they would have nothing additional to pay, and therefore are objecting without all the facts. She feels strongly that Collins Perley not only draws students to BFA, but new community members to St. Albans, and it is an asset to all. She urged the Board to provide the community with information about sustainability and upkeep, and to allow the community the chance to vote on the bond issue as it stands.

Nilda Gonnella-French made the motion to approve the bond to send to the voters; Al Corey seconded the motion, which was opposed by four Board members. The motion failed 1-4.

5.2 Space Needs: Ned Caron has been approached by five different facilities with space that BFA could potentially use. He wanted to inform the Board before pursuing any conversations with these facilities. The Board is not opposed to finding reasonable and affordable solutions to space needs. Main concerns to be kept in mind are transit, logistics, safety, and security.

5.3 Breaking Ranks II: The Learning Community Committee was established as a way of getting more faculty input on decision-making. They looked at the issue of low test scores and the Breaking Ranks model was chosen because of the professional support that was available. Four subcommittees were formed, but at the end of last year the committees were having trouble. Hired consultants met with the Leadership Team to help focus the work. Efforts were too broad and it was decided that it would be best to focus on one thing: relationships.

One of the items under discussion is advisory system. The Leadership Team does not feel that current advisory meets the students' needs.

An in-service is planned to work with consultants to create an effective advisory program and schedule. Consultants will bring examples of possibilities to the teachers, who will decide what best fits BFA's needs. Some areas that may be changed in this process are the trimester system, the school day, the isolation of teachers, and the lack of interdepartmental sharing. Any major changes in the schedule must be made by December 12, 2007.

At 7:15 p.m. Jim Mercier called for a 10 minute recess. The meeting reconvened at 7:25 p.m.

6.1 Committee Reports:

Curriculum: The committee met and discussed staff summer work, professional development, NECAP testing, NEASC accreditation, Breaking Ranks, Smaller Learning Programs grant, and Breaking Ranks II. Forty-four teachers pursued professional development in differentiated instruction; thirty-three pursued it in other categories. Math and English will be in October this year; Science will be in May. The NEASC accreditation process is beginning this year. Math, Science, English, and Social Studies teachers attended a conference in Massachusetts to learn about the process. The Breaking Ranks information was similar to that provided earlier in this meeting, and not repeated. Wendy Meunier wrote a Smaller Learning Communities grant this summer and the results will be out by the end of the month.

Finance: The committee did not meet. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday September 19, 2007 at 5:30 p.m.

Personnel: Nilda Gonnella-French was not able to attend the most recent meeting, but the minutes were included in the Board packet. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday September 25, 2007 at 5:00 p.m.

Policy: The SU Policy committee did not meet this summer. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday September 27, 2007 at 4:30 p.m.

6.2 Collins Perley Report: Nothing to report. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday September 13, 2007.

6.3 Fiber Optic Deed of Easement: discussion was delayed until after the Executive Session.

6.4 Job Descriptions: Questions arose as to the wording in several areas of the job descriptions:

- The pounds to be lifted in the physical demands section varies from teacher to teacher. The Board feels that these numbers need to accurately reflect lifting books and papers as the same load for all teachers.
- Section 1.i in the description for Athletic Director will be a topic of discussion for the Personnel Committee.
- The qualifications required for a Social Worker are not clear. Which degree(s) are required?

The Board feels that it has a responsibility to clean up ambiguities in the language before approving any job descriptions. From now on, the Board (and the Personnel Committee) will address five or fewer job descriptions per session, thus having time to give each description the attention it deserves.

Sally Lindberg made the motion to accept the job descriptions as written; Al Corey seconded the motion. After discussion, Sally Lindberg withdrew her motion; Al Corey seconded the withdrawal. The motion was withdrawn.

- 6.5 Senior Privileges: Rina Perrault read a letter from the Senior Class to the Board in which the Seniors requested the privilege of leaving school during times when class is not in session, contingent upon continued responsible behavior. The Board clarified that the privilege only extended to lunch time, not study hall, advisory or other non-instructional school time.

Al Corey made the motion to allow Seniors the privilege of leaving school for lunches, contingent upon responsible behavior. Sally Lindberg seconded the motion, with all in favor. Motion passed 5-0.

8. Agenda Items for Future Meeting

- 8.1 Adopt Revised Bylaws
- 8.2 Schedule Changes (possible item, based on in-service results)

9. Approve Warrants

Al Corey made the motion to approve the June and July Warrants, as presented in the Board packet. Sally Lindberg seconded the motion, with all in favor. Motion passed 5-0.

10. Executive Session

- 10.1 Negotiations
- 10.2 Real Estate
- 10.3 Personnel

Sally Lindberg made the motion to enter into Executive Session at 7:52 p.m. for negotiations, real estate, and personnel; Al Corey seconded the motion, with all in favor. Motion passed 5-0.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 8:30 p.m.

Nilda Gonnella-French made a motion to authorize Jim Mercier, Board Chair to sign the easement agreement once Attorney Cahill had made changes to the document. Sally Lindberg seconded the motion, with all in favor. Motion passed 5-0.

11. Adjourn

Sally Lindberg made the motion to adjourn at 8:40 p.m.; Al Corey seconded the motion, with all in favor. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jodie Anne Lemery

F:\Admin-ASST files\BFA New\board\minutes\FY08\BFA minutes 091107.doc