

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
OF  
THE FRANCIS W. PARKER CHARTER ESSENTIAL SCHOOL  
AND THEODORE R. SIZER TEACHERS CENTER  
49 ANTIETEM ST., ROOM 27  
DEVENS, MASSACHUSETTS**

**MEETING HELD: FEBRUARY 6, 2007**

Trustees present: William Allen, Deborah Chamberlain, Chet Gapinski, Ann Glannon, Diane Kruse, Andy Perkins, Laura Rogers, Teri Schrader, Daphne Shethar, Kathy Singh, Patricia Underwood

Also present were: Nicola Dudensing, Rick High, Heidi Kulik, Michelle McKenna, Paula Turnbull, Matt Underwood

Trustees absent: Kathleen Cushman, Jack Donahue, Peter MacDonald

**CALL TO ORDER**

Andy Perkins, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. A quorum being present and notice having been given in accordance with Open Meeting Law, the meeting commenced.

**MINUTES OF PAST MEETINGS**

Andy asked for comments on the minutes of the January 16, 2007 meeting. Kathy Singh noted a correction. Bill Allen moved that the Board accept the corrected minutes of the January 16, 2007 meeting. Diane Kruse seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The Board: VOTED (10/0) to accept the motion. (The student is a non-voting trustee.)

**FY07 BUDGET UPDATE**

Michelle McKenna, business manager, presented the FY07 Year to Date Financial Performance Analysis. Based on performance in the first six months, Michelle projects a small net operating loss of \$32.5K offset by interest income of \$70K, resulting in a net gain of \$37.5K versus the net budgeted loss of \$139K. This positive result is due to (1) net \$52K increase in income from a change in the state tuition formula, (2) \$17K increase in interest income and (3) net \$103K savings in expenses primarily due to \$89K decrease in wages and related benefits costs for unfilled positions and \$13K savings in utility costs.

Michelle asked the Board to consider approving the purchase of a copier, as recommended by the Finance Committee. She said a request for a capital item would normally be included in subsequent year's budget but Michelle recommended purchase at this time given Parker's immediate need for another copier and the favorable pricing she was offered. Kathy moved that the Board authorize Michelle to purchase the copier for \$9,500. Bill seconded the motion. The Board: VOTED (10/0) to accept the motion.

**PARKER WAY**

Andy presented the Parker Way and thanked Kathleen Cushman and Becka Kane for their dedication and hard work in producing the edition. The other Trustees concurred. Andy stated

the Parker Way will be distributed via bulk mail during the week ending February 16. Becca will provide extra copies for fundraising purposes as requested. The next edition of the Parker Way will be published in April and its theme will reflect Parker's impact on teaching and education outside of Parker.

### **CLASSROOM CAMPAIGN**

Andy reported the Classroom Campaign has raised \$351,500 to-date, more than one-third of the goal. She said the many people she's contacted have all been very generous and willing to go as far as they can to help Parker.

The Board discussed the feasibility of reaching the stated goal of raising \$1 million in six months. Teri Schrader and Andy said the intense pressure of their efforts was perhaps not helpful to developing long-term relationships with donors and recommended extending the timeframe to three years. Kathy said her sense is that people are willing and eager to give back to Parker. Chet Gapinski thought the \$1 million goal was the right amount but agreed the timeline could stretch out 1 to 2 years. Andy asked for Board to make the timeline 3 years and she received general approval.

Andy said she feels very supported by the Board and thanked them for stepping into a variety of roles to further the building goal. Chet said the PR campaign to educate people about the space problem had a good start with the Parker Way edition on space needs. Andy said the Friday Announcements would contain more information and Kathy suggested the parents be educated as to effects of space constraints on their kids. Heidi Kulik will write a letter about her engineering design class space needs for inclusion in the February 9 Friday Announcements. Andy added that information meetings at Parker will be held in March and April.

Andy reported that the brick walkway (whereby donors purchase a brick with inscription for walkway) discussed at the January 16 Trustees meeting was not practical. Andy said they were working on a permanent display to commemorate donors. For naming opportunities, Andy said there had been no interest so far but she would like the ability to offer it as necessary. Laura moved that the Board authorize the Classroom Committee to offer naming opportunities as follow: for donation of \$500K or more, naming of the entire wing; for donation of \$50K or more, naming of a classroom. Bill seconded the motion. The Board: VOTED (10/0) to accept the motion.

### **STAFF ATTRITION**

Teri presented the Staff Attrition Preliminary Report dated January, 2007. The report is part of the Board's major goals for 2006-07, Goal 3.3 "By May 2007, research facts regarding faculty turnover and share with staff/parents. Overall the data showed that, over the past ten years, Parker has employed 56 to 60 teachers annually, with an average of 9 of those, or 16%, not returning at the end of each year. Bill Allen noted that teacher turnover rates in public high schools as a whole have risen to about 20% annually, with many teachers aging out of the system, others moving to different districts and others moving to different careers (most new teachers leave the field within 5 years). Parker's 16% attrition rate is lower than this national average.

Teri then explained the reasons that teachers leave Parker. Of the 90 classroom teachers who have left the school's employ in the past 10 years, 33 departures (37%) were due to non-renewal or self-limited contracts. Twenty-one departures (23%) came because the teacher moved on to advance his/her career, either through attending graduate school, or taking a leadership position. Nineteen departures (21%) came for personal or family reasons such as family relocation, maternity or increased focus on family, or in one case immigration obstacles. The remaining 17 departures (19%) came for a variety of reasons, including desire to work in urban setting and desire to work closer to home. Salary is not a significant factor in teacher departure.

The Board discussed whether attrition is perceived as a problem by parents and teachers. Teri equated the teaching experience at Parker with a teaching hospital, with a mix of seasoned and less experienced teachers and anticipated/expected attrition of the newly trained teachers. Tricia Underwood said that when a teacher leaves, because of relationships fostered in team, domain and division levels, it may be felt more closely at Parker. Daphne Shethar said as student, she expects that as natural progression of the system some teachers will leave. It was noted that the school's model and mission includes sending good teachers off to strengthen teaching and learning in other schools. Diane asked if evidence was available about salary comparables. Kathy commented that a study was contemplated but it was not a trivial exercise and involves careful review of data to get a true comparison to Parker's staffing. The Board discussed public message about staff changes in June when contracts are set and students are moving to next school year or graduating.

### **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

Teri reported the admission lottery was held on Feb. 6, as scheduled. Parker received more applications this year than last, including 30 siblings' applications. Teri will present the pre-enrollment report at the next meeting. Teri also reported that the Faculty Building Task Force held its first meeting on Feb. 6. Teri announced the hiring of Parker's new librarian, Ann Bate who is newly certified as a school librarian but has spent 9 years as school technical person and is expected to enhance technical skills at Parker. Teri thanked Ann Glannon for her help with this hiring process. Teri reported the Charter Renewal Inspection findings were that Parker is in compliance. The Coordinated Program Review is due at the end of February.

Teri presented the Principal's Goals 2006-2007 revised with measures for outcomes (attached.)

Heidi asked for the status of the Leominster relationship. Teri reported that while the high school principal and majority of the staff are committed to the conversion of Leominster High School into five smaller schools, a project now in its third year with Parker serving as mentor, the new superintendent is not. The Teachers Center will continue to provide support through the end of this school year. Diane asked about the New Teachers Collaborative funding and Teri stated that it's one of several initiatives of the Sizer Teachers Center and would draw operational funds from the Gates grant. Bill complemented Teri on the wonderful athletics article in the Boston Sunday Globe.

**CLASSROOM ADDITION**

Rick High presented an update on the classroom addition project. He reviewed the architect’s rendering of where the modular building could be sited and discussed options for school to work as one building with the new and existing structures and handle the flow of traffic throughout the school day. Laura asked if Devens Enterprise Commission (“DEC”) or Mass Development had any negative response to the project and Rick replied there was no evidence of lack of cooperation or enthusiasm. Bill added that Parker is viewed as a good neighbor and there was a general sense of support. Bill announced a field trip scheduled for February 8 with the Devens Fire Chief and Inspector to tour the modular building at Wachusett. Rick said the Building Committee is on track to submit the permit application to DEC on March 8.

Rick discussed the budget and reminded the Board that while he believed the figures were good estimates, until more detail was available they remain preliminary and subject to change. Regarding furnishings owned by Wachusett, Rick said anything in the modular that was attached and not free-standing (like the lockers) would be included. Teri will review the list of additional items that may be obtained if Wachusett no longer wants/ needs them.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Andy moved that the Board go into Executive Session to “consider real estate transactions since an open meeting would undermine the school’s negotiating position.” The Board will not return to open session following the Executive Session. Ann seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was held and the Board of Trustees voted as follows:

- Laura Rogers            AYE
- Diane Kruse            AYE
- Deborah Chamberlain   AYE
- Kathy Singh            AYE
- Bill Allen                AYE
- Chet Gapinski            AYE
- Tricia Underwood        AYE
- Teri Schrader            AYE
- Andy Perkins            AYE
- Ann Glannon            AYE

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the open meeting, Laura moved to adjourn the meeting and go to Executive Session. Tricia seconded the motion. The Board VOTED (10/0) to accept the motion and the meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Turnbull, recording secretary  
Ann Glannon, Clerk