

First State Military Academy Board Meeting Minutes

25 April 2023

Moment of Silence - Quorum present, in-person and Zoom meeting called to order at 1735.

Board Members Present: In-Person: R Payus, K Yencer, H Contant, R Vascik, K Stark, R Capitan; via zoom: L Grateri, C Martin.

Staff/Founding Committee Members: In-Person: R Wallace, Commandant; B Newman, Acct Principal

Guests Present: In-person: T Craig, S Unruh, C Decker, S Godfrey, J Leidy, K Palaisa, Y Johnson, J Carlise, K Handschuh, A Pochak, S Kinder, R Sandberg, J Braxton, D Bates; via zoom: K Anderson, L Brown

Approval of Agenda: Motion to Approve Agenda, 2nd, Passed 7 to 0.

Opening Remarks: R Payus briefly introduced the presenters from Wye River Consultants. It is valuable for the school staff to be exposed to types of services that the board considers as it seeks avenues to fund future project for the school.

Wye River Consultants: For a fee of approximately \$25,000, Wye River Consulting Group proposes the service of evaluating the school's overall financial health, and in consideration of strategic plans and capital improvements, supply decision making tools to evaluate differential plans. If elected, continuing services for fee include sourcing and closing funding partners. Follow up questions centered on the pay schedule for initial and ongoing services. Other follow up questions centered on Wye's experience with business models similar to FSMA. Wye River Consulting Group excused themselves following their presentation.

Secretary's Report: Motion to Approve minutes of the 28 Mar '23 board meeting, 2nd, Passed 7 to 0.

Public Comment: Regrettably, the recording was paused when the button on the recorder was bumped. All of the public comment period and a brief section of the committee reports were lost. Recording resumed after the board returned from a short recess. Board member R Payus committed to providing timely answers to questions posed during public comment.

S Unruh spoke from a prepared statement. She recounts her view of events beginning with the placement of Dr. Auster as school principal, citing board of director remarks about the characteristics on which she was selected. Ms. Unruh continued her remarks with her failure to understand the sequence of events which led to the Board's decision to reassign Dr. Auster from the position of principal. Ms. Unruh expressed her concerns that there is a tone and pattern of disrespect toward women, and based on this observation, opts not to enroll her daughter at FSMA, and tenders her resignation.

S Godfrey addressed the board regarding the reassignment of Dr. Auster away from the role of principal. She requested to know the specific reasons why this decision was made. The board declined to supply that information. Ms. Godfrey expressed her concern that on the occasion

of an Emergency Alert that occurred at the school, she was not made aware of the event by immediate email, text, or phone call. The party involved in the medical emergency was no relation to Ms. Godfrey.

J Leidy returned to address the board about his concerns for the math department, and the syllabus by which instruction is delivered. Mr. Leidy was not provided an answer following the March board meeting. Mr. Leidy noted that several board members have overstayed their term of office as described in the bylaws. Mr. Leidy echoed the comments of Ms. Godfrey as it relates to public notice of an emergency alert at FSMA.

S Kincer spoke from a prepared statement. The main theme of her remarks centered around the absence of a well communicated strategic plan determined by the board of directors. She specifically cited the absence of a marketing campaign, the absence of short, intermediate, and long term goals (established by the board), and unclarity on how roles and responsibilities are divided between the staff and the board of directors. She expressed concern that the board, collectively and individually, fail to take seriously and consider the impact of their decisions upon the careers of school staff.

S Hanschuh indicated her concern for the absence of a definitive strategic plan, and inquired how the board intends to increase funding for the school.

Treasurer's Report: R. Vascik presented the WSFS banking statements via email prior to meeting. Members indicated they reviewed statements prior. Ongoing USDA withdrawals totaling some \$24k each month continue. Ending balance in both accounts about \$136,962. No invoices were paid, and only small interest payment was received. Incoming funds for bleachers, board member financial support, and miscellaneous payments will post in April. **Motion to accept Treasurer's Report, 2nd , passed 7 to 0.**

Principal's Report: B Newman. Numerous past and future events were presented in the Principal's Report, which was distributed by email prior to the meeting. One teacher resignation, and one MCJROTC staff appointment were presented.

Financial reports were made available via email prior to meeting. There were no significant remarks regarding the financial picture. The expenditures are in line with the budget to date in the fiscal year. At 75% of the fiscal year completed, spending is at 73.7%. Diligence to expenditures is always, and continues to be, necessary. **Motion to approve web report of 31 March '23, 2nd , Passed 7 to 0**

Committee Reports:

Strategic Planning and Development: H Contant - Heather will be reinvigorating the strategic planning process which began in July '22. This initiative has been on pause for several months while the board focused attention on seeking and seating a principal following the retirement of the founding principal. Board members should expect to see taskings for restarting this process.

Marketing/Communications: R Payus - Indicated the need to reply in a formal and timely manner to some matters presented in the public comment period.

Academic: K Stark - Presented a distilled collection of thoughts on behalf of the teaching staff regarding their (teachers') understanding of board priorities from past through present.

At 1908, **motion was made** to take a short recess, 2nd, Passed 7 to 0.

Board reconvened at 1916.

Board Governance: R Capitan - Noted that the "Board Handbook" will be out of for board review prior the next board meeting. Mr. Capitan advocated for changing the work flow of the board, such that all recurring reports and forms are disseminated with sufficient lead time to negate significant discussion during the meeting. Board meetings should focus on activities that take place in committee which require board action or review.

CBOC: R. Payus noted that CBOC met prior to Mar board meeting. Then next CBOC meeting is in May, and there is no new news to report.

Facilities: K Yencer - Mr. Yencer spoke briefly on a geothermal audit that was conducted at FSMA. There is presently nothing actionable in regard to conversion to geothermal environmental systems. Mr. Yencer provided great color regarding the reality and viability of major facilities projects. In short, any significant facility improvement comes with new costs. The only realistic way to consider large, but in reality most, significant facility improvement is through grants.

Motion for **Executive Session** to discuss responses to individuals who spoke during public comment, 2nd, passed 7 to 0 at 1935.

Motion to return to **Regular Session**, 2nd, Passed 7 to 0 at 1945. No action required by Board.

Organizational Issues: Asked Board members to finish background checks. S Kincer noted that DOE will implement (May 3) a revised process for fingerprinting. Board members are reminded to complete DOE mandated training courses. Members noted that the greatest impediment to DOE training is access to the appropriate web sites and training delivery systems. Noted that DOE audit is June '23. Noted all renewal docs are due 1 October 2023 to DOE.

Meeting adjourned 1950.

Next Meeting: 23 May 2023 at 1730.