

**American Renaissance School  
Meeting of the Board of Directors**

**Open meeting minutes**

**Wednesday, April 27, 2016**

**6:30 p.m.**

APPROVED June 22, 2016

**Dated** April 27, 2016

1. The Meeting was **Called to Order** at 6:33 p.m. by Sharon Bell
2. **Board Members Present:** Sharon Bell, Sam Kennington, Marc Davis, Michelle Knapp, Matt Reyes, Anna Johnson

**Board Members Absent:** Kameron Brown, Deb Connolly

**Administrative Staff Present:** Tony Hall, Kathleen Gay, John Mairs, Dr. Betsy Rosenbalm

**Administrative Staff Absent:** Jim Duffey, Jessica Duncan

**Others in Attendance:** Kathy Shipman, Sandy Durham, The Martin Family, Sunshine Miller, Michele Mitchell, Amy McCachren and the NC Odyssey of the Mind Teams, Beverly Brown, The Ruffy family, Teresa Brown and family, Hannah Bricker (staff representative), The Abbott Family, Nicole Kershner, Jason Green, Kimberly Singh.

3. **Review and Approval of Previous Open Meeting Minutes and Agenda** –Sharon Bell

*Matt Reyes made a motion to approve the open meeting minutes from **March 23, 2016***

*Marc Davis seconded the motion.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

*Matt Reyes made a motion to approve the agenda.*

*Marc Davis seconded the motion.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

4. **Student Recognition – Odyssey of the Mind Teams** - Tony Hall
  - Four ARS student teams participated in the Odyssey of the Mind competition this year. This was the first year for a primary team (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders) to participate, coached by Kimberly Singh.
  - Kathy Sipprell also coached a team, as did Sunshine Miller.
  - The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade teams won 3<sup>rd</sup> place in their division and won the Omer award for exhibiting exemplary teamwork.
  - One middle school team also participated.
  - The ARS 4<sup>th</sup> grade Fire Safety Quiz Bowl team placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in the state and the 5<sup>th</sup> grade placed 2<sup>nd</sup>.

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**5. Public Comment – Sharon Bell**

- No comments

**6. RAP Updates – Nicole Kershner**

- Ms. Kershner extended her thanks to Mr. Hall for spearheading the start of this brand new event, the Spring Gala, which is gearing up to be a great community event and fun day. Ms. Kershner asked the development committee to add this to the calendar on the last Saturday in April next year. Mr. Hall commended the committee that has been working on this event. Thanks to their hard work, we have exceeded our goal for sponsorship, sold out all the tickets for dinner, and have already received over \$1,400 in current bids. 150 tickets have been sold. The board thanked the committee for their leadership and hard work on this event.

**7. March, 2016 Financial Report & Updates - Michele Knapp**

- Monthly financials – Although the bottom line shows that we are not within budget, changes will be made to next month’s budget to more accurately reflect where we are.
- The “Summer reading program” line item takes away the deficit, and although federal dollars are in the budget, the “Fund 3 Expense” line item does not reflect this.
- Ms. Knapp feels confident that the end-of-fiscal-year budget will look strong.
- The Internet and telephone bill is for about 2 ½ years of service that has not been paid due to continued vendor error.
- Ms. Knapp provided a breakdown of the fundraising budget.
- Ms. Johnson shared an update on additional funding:
  - We did not receive the Lowe’s grant to help fund the middle school roof
  - ARS received \$800 check from Fire Safety Quiz Bowl
  - An ARS parent approached Ms. Johnson about renting out the Tradd House to local artists. Mr. Hall has a contact through Iredell Art Guild who is interested in renting the space also.

*Anna Johnson made a motion to accept the March 23, 2016 financial report.*

*Marc Davis seconded the motion.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

- At the last board meeting, a discussion was tabled on whether or not to include Development as a line item in the budget. Mr. Hall discussed removing it for the coming year and then put what we have raised into the following year’s budget. The accountants present at the meeting said this was not an approach they would recommend. They shared that Development funds are in the budget for most but not all schools, and there is variation in how this is handled. For example, fundraising dollars could be tied to special projects. In the past, this number was

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based on what we needed instead of what we raised. We need to be prepared for cuts. Dr. Johnson stated we would never reach our strategic goals the way we are doing things now. She asked Mr. Hall if he would be able to provide us with sample budgets to see what it might look like before they make a decision on the actual budget. Mr. Hall said he would prepare these for the board.

**8. Head of School Report - Tony Hall**

- Financial services is the second largest expense in our budget. Mr. Hall has been in contact with alternate financial service providers and has been in contact with Eddie Goodall, which is a large firm with around 70 CPAs. He checked their references.
- Zac and Andrea Donahue of Charter Financial Services (Wake Forest, NC) came before they Board for a short discussion of their services. Mrs. Donahue has experience with charter schools' financial needs. They presented a year-to-year contract. Their fee is based on number of staff and the amount of payroll work involved; their rate does not increase if our staff numbers do not increase. There can be a cap to the amount they will charge. They currently work with 2 schools and have 3 under contract for next school year; their goal is to select a few schools and provide them with high-quality service. Charter school accounting is different than regular accounting.
  - Mr. Hall shared that he wants a better understanding of where we are on a daily basis, and they responded that they will provide valuable information that can be used for decision-making and that is customized to the client needs. Mrs. Donahue will train our team on how to read the reports and will also send information to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). They usually work with PetwayMills for audits. Their goal is to have the audit go as quickly and smoothly as possible, and they format reports with the audit in mind.
  - Mr. Kennington asked whether they will be adding staff, given their additional number of clients this year. They responded that they would.
  - Mr. Hall asked if they would be available between now and the new school year to prepare for the new year, and they responded that they would, but the more lead time, the better.
  - Mr. Reyes asked if they were going to be visiting the schools on site, and they responded that they would, possibly once a month on site (as needed). They would also provide training on site and quarterly financials face-to-face.
  - Mr. Kennington asked if the contract they submitted to Mr. Hall still stands in its current form, and they responded that it does.

*Sam Kennington made a motion to accept the contract for financial services.*

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*Matt Reyes seconded the motion.*  
*The motion carried unanimously.*

- Time Warner Cable update: Tony Hall and John Mairs drafted a letter, but eRate advised they not send the letter. We have 23 months of bills totaling \$25,600 in outstanding debt. As of May 2015, there was only one account out of four that was paid. eRate can rescind the eRate funds. We have missed out on roughly \$2,000 in federal funding due to their failure to provide us with timely invoices, despite repeated requests. Mr. Mairs is getting mixed results with discussions with Time Warner Cable. We are going to change providers for Internet services. We will keep Time Warner Cable for phone services. We have repeatedly requested billing, which has not come to us. Board asked that we contact them to get a refund of the money that we have lost out on in federal funding. Mrs. Bell asked for recommendations. The suggestion was made that we pay the money we owe and move on, and to request that the \$2,000 we lost due to their failure to provide us with timely invoices, despite our repeated requests, be refunded by Time Warner Cable.

*Sam Kennington made a motion to recommend that the new attorney board member contact Time Warner Cable after we pay this bill and request a refund of the amount we have lost.*

*Michele Knapp seconded the motion.*  
*The motion carried unanimously.*

- Mr. Hall shared that staff have been asking about contracts and staff assignments. Mr. Hall shared that he informed them that staff contracts will be made in June after the budget is set. Staff also wanted to know if the will board pay on new state scale, but there is only a proposed new scale at this time. The board is committed to trying to stay on state scale.
- Mr. Hall shared that one staff member is retiring and another is resigning to be with family, so there are 2 positions to fill.
- Mrs. Gay shared that we received 2 bids for school uniforms. One proposal had better pricing than our current uniform provider. Mrs. Gay was given the bid from the new vendor but found the new company does not provide the necessary related services that we currently receive from Trophy House Treasures and that we would need to accept the contract (e.g., discounts on Field Day t-shirts, free staff shirts, sorting of shirts for each family, etc.) The school parent-teacher organization, the Renaissance Association of Parents (RAP), used them this year. Nicole Kershner (RAP Co-President) shared that when she used the other company, the shirts were less expensive and of good quality, but no additional services were provided (e.g., design, pick-up, sorting, payments) Dr. Johnson asked if additional bids were

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received, and Mrs. Gay responded that a decision needs to be made as soon as possible so we can have uniforms in the fall. Mr. Reyes asked how much we order from Trophy House Treasures each year. Mrs. Gay responded that she does not have this information on hand but can get it. Mrs. Bell suggested that we continue to bid this out, as there is a difference in pricing of the bids we currently have. Trophy House Treasures has been going up in price in the past few years. Mr. Kennington asked if there were other vendors that could be used. This has not been a public bidding process, and the board would prefer that it is. This will be an agenda item in the May meeting.

- Dr. Rosenbalm, Hannah Bricker and Amy Morley presented information on Standards Based Grading and what they concluded at the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching (NCCAT). They discussed the use and value of homework, which is a natural progression to Standards Based Grading (SBG). ARS is very active with NCCAT, and we sent a group to explore SBG. They researched “what is a grade?” and “what is assessment?” Their goals were to research, develop a Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) Analysis for SBG and discussed the next steps for ARS, if we were to implement this here. We would look at a report card similar to the K-1 report card. A SBG Report card would look like a rubric that would state a grade on each of the standards for that grade level. If we were to move forward with SBG, we would need further information before June 2016, with a pilot team to begin SBG processed and components, to create the grade level or subject area standards to match instructional guides and yearlong plan. At the end of the year, the team and school administrative staff will reflect and decide if this is what we want to continue with. High schools are the big pushback against SBG.

**6. Strategic Planning Workgroup Reports – Sharon Bell**

- Feedback on the workgroups – Mrs. Knapp and Mrs. Bell suggested setting a meeting to discuss these
- Mr. Davis’s Safe schools and plan has not been sent out yet as it was not discussed in the board meeting. Dr. Johnson asked if there is a standard protocol or guidelines for handling student injuries.
- Mr. Reyes does not have a Development update. He will put the Spring Gala on the calendar for next year April 29<sup>th</sup>
- Mr. Kennington presented the Nurturing Environment strategies/plan, which includes a plan for more open communication between school and home. He likes Mr. Hall’s daily email and the weekly newsletter.
- Other committees will share updates during the next board meeting.

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**7. Governance Committee Report – Sharon Bell**

- Mrs. Bell requested that board members send Mrs. Bailey or Mrs. Bell a message if they are not able to continue as a board member next year. Anyone who is willing to step up to serve as Board Chair or Secretary, please let them know.
- Meetings for next year: we need to specify the day of the week and the time of day for next year. We have previously been meeting on Wednesdays in the evenings. Mrs. Bell will get a calendar ready for the 2016-17 school year.
- Summer activities: trainings over the summer, ideas, areas of interest, retreat? Dr. Johnson suggested that this summer we wanted to touch on recent expansion of other charters in the area, what sets us apart, what are our strengths, branding, etc.
- Mr. Kennington suggested a review of the strategic plan, driven by the board without outside mediation. Mrs. Bell will look at this and come back with dates.

**8. Closed Session (if needed) – Sharon Bell**

None.

**9. Next Meeting and Adjourn –**

The next meeting of the board of directors will be on **May 16, 2016 at 6:30** in the Elementary Building Board room.

*Anna Johnson made a motion to adjourn.*

*The motion was seconded by Sam Kennington.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

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A motion to approve these board minutes is made, seconded and passed. (Item 4 on next meeting's agenda.)

Approved on: June 22, 2016 Signature of Officer: \_\_\_\_\_