

BlueSky Charter School Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Draft of BlueSky Charter School: Board Meeting Minutes

October 10, 2006 9am

1821 University Avenue Suite N178

St. Paul, MN 55104

Members in attendance: Cindy Baer, Jennifer Knutson, Paul Wasko, Martha Spires (left meeting at 10:54am), Dennis Fazio, Julie Wicklund, Suzanne Bordeau

Others in attendance: Mary Swingle, Heather Novak, Amanda Furth, Marti Prekker, Ana Duran, Nely Duran, Andrea Swanson, Derek Feil, and Tom Ellis of BlueSky Charter School, Eugene Piccolo from the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools (arrived at 9:15am), Cindy Ruther, and Deb Peters both community members

Note: All votes were unanimous unless otherwise stated.

Call to Order: Dennis Fazio 9:05 am

Welcome: Dennis Fazio

Mr. Fazio gave a brief welcome to everyone present at the meeting before attending to board business.

Agenda:

An agenda was presented by Dennis Fazio and handed out to each member and audience member present. This agenda was not the one posted to the public. There was a motion for the board to adopt the new agenda presented by the board chair. There were no objections by board members. Andrea Swanson received permission to speak and expressed her concern about the agenda switching and stated that she came to the meeting because of a specific agenda and cited section 2.10 paragraph two of the Bylaws. She stated that board meetings are open to the public, there was no notification of a meeting with this agenda and she felt this was in violation of meeting law. Dennis stated that a notice was sent out of today's meeting and that this agenda was presented and has changed.

Presentation of letter from Eugene Piccolo (9:15am)

Eugene was given permission by the board to express some concerns he had after last month's board training session, as well as some observational concerns. One of Eugene's first concerns was in regards to board governance. Eugene delivered a memo to the board which reviewed board governance and school management policies and procedure. Eugene stated that both the Director Tom Ellis and Board Chairman Dennis Fazio were invited to a meeting to discuss some issues that have caused distrust. He came to the conclusion that both administrators have two different philosophies of management and governance of the board. One is Black/White with clear cut rules and policies and the other is more of a gray shade with flexibility for decision making. Eugene stated that this school can no longer be run like a corner store as it has been able to do in the past. Eugene pointed out that if changes are not made then the school would be strangled. Only the board can give the school a new approach and Eugene suggested that it take action. His recommendations involved five key areas. To establish ground rules of what members and staff can and can't do, establishing sanctions and penalties for individuals who violate these ground rules. He suggested establishing an Independent Task Force that consists of outside personnel (no school board members or administrative personnel), and if any board members felt that they can not handle the suggested topics they should step down and allow

another individual to take their seats. The last recommendation involves a meeting with the school sponsor to outline issues facing the school and discuss procedures that the sponsor will be utilizing in determining the charter renewal.

The board discussed Eugene's letter and also asked him a few questions regarding sponsorship and how this would affect the relationship between schools. Eugene stated that this is just a way to start with a clean slate and dissolve any issues the board may be facing. He didn't think that this would harm the relationship with the sponsor but strengthen it and help the school move in a positive direction.

There was a motion by Paul Wasko that the board accept Eugene Piccolo's report and place it in today's minutes. Suzy Bordeau seconded the motion. There was a brief discussion about what challenges the board and school administration would face to move forward and also what role everyone would play to take action. A role call vote was suggested and names were read. Martha Spires – I, Julie Wicklund – I, Paul Wasko – I, Cindy Baer – I, Jennifer Knutson – I, Suzy Bordeau – I, Dennis Fazio – I. Motion passes unanimously.

There was a motion by Paul Wasko that the current board would adopt an Independent Task Force to come in and help the school and current board move forward. The motion was seconded by Suzy Bordeau. The motion passed unanimously.

Paul Wasko made a motion that upon completion and acceptance of the Independent Task Force's recommendation the current board would cease to exist. The motion was seconded by Julie Wicklund. The board held a discussion regarding the Independent Task Force and expressed their concerns to one another, as well as putting a time frame on the projects at hand with the Task Force. After discussion, an amendment was made by Dennis Fazio to the original motion. The amendment read that if the task force that is appointed does not fulfill its duties, then the current board would continue governance until elections in February 2007. The amendment also added a 90 day time frame for the task force. The amendment was accepted by Paul. Call of roles to vote was suggested. Martha Spires – I, Julie Wicklund – I, Paul Wasko – I, Cindy Baer – I, Jennifer Knutson – I, Suzy Bordeau – I, Dennis Fazio – abstained from voting. Motion carried.

Management and Consultant Suggestions, Independent Task Force, Tactical Rules, Director Issues, Meeting with School Sponsor:

The board discussed the above issues to help move in the direction suggested by Mr. Piccolo. There was a motion by Cindy Baer to form a committee to move forward with recruiting and hiring of an outside person or firm to help with management consulting for the school. The motion was seconded by Dennis Fazio. After a discussion, a friendly amendment was added to the original motion. Dennis suggested that the motion be amended to read that the committee would recruit and hire a professional management firm to meet Eugene's fourth bullet in his memo: to hire someone or a firm to assess the management needs for the school and make recommendations on how to appropriately provide for adequate administrative staffing of the school. The amendment was accepted by Cindy. The motion passes unanimously. Cindy, Suzy, and Julie volunteered to be on the committee with Suzy being chair. Dennis also stated that he would be available to help as an assistant.

Dennis Fazio made a motion to form a committee to recruit and report back to the board its findings and recommendations for an Independent Task Force. The motion was seconded by Paul. After a brief discussion a friendly amendment was made to include if the committee meets

a deadline a special meeting would be called to make a decision with the committee's recommendations. The motion passed unanimously. Martha Spires, Paul Wasko, and Jennifer Knutson volunteered to be on the task force committee with Martha Spires chairing. The number and size of the task force will be left up to the committee.

Agenda issues:

Cindy Baer made a motion to form a process for getting an agenda out to the public for meetings. No second was made. A discussion by the board suggested that Cindy be appointed this duty as Secretary, and that the process of getting an agenda out should be left up to her for the next two meetings. At that time, the board would decide how to continue with the agenda process.

There was a motion by Paul for the purposes of the next two meetings that Cindy would be assigned as Secretary to construct and consent a draft of the board agenda. Secretary is in power to solicit and propose the next two meeting agendas. The motion was seconded by Jennifer. Motion passed unanimously.

Dennis and Tom conflicts/clearing up:

There was a motion by Dennis to form a committee of 2 board members to look at, make recommendations and decisions and to clear up any misunderstandings or false actions among individuals and to take action. The motion was seconded by Paul. Motion passed unanimously. After discussion Julie and Paul would be willing to serve on the committee.

Eugene's memo:

Paul made a motion that Julie would contact MDE and Keith Lester our current school sponsor and report to them what happened at today's meeting and also to discuss the plan of action. The motion was seconded by Dennis. Tom Ellis stated that these two parties have already been contacted by him personally and suggested that he work with Julie on this task. After discussion, it was recommended that Julie be the sole contact person, as the board representative. The motion passes unanimously.

Public comments and email chains:

Dennis made a motion to request that no public comments with the exception of customary school business be made by any board or staff member and that email chains be removed except for customary issues. The motion was seconded by Julie. After a brief discussion the motion passed unanimously.

Adjourn: (11:25am)

Dennis made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Paul. Motion passes unanimously.