MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
FINN ACADEMY: AN ELMIRA CHARTER SCHOOL
610 Lake Street Elmira, New York 14901
June 10, 2024
6:00 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

	Present	Absent
Kevin Brimmer	___X_____	_____
Kathryn Coletta	_____	___X_____
Jean Papandrea	___X_____	_____
James Pfiffer	___X_____	_____
Patricia Richards	___X_____	_____
Matthew Seybold	____X____	_____
Renée Sutton	____X____	_____
Martina Baker (ex-officio)	____X____	_____
Aimee Ciarlo (ex-officio)	____X____	_____
Ryan Dunlap (Teacher Rep)	____X____	_____
Sabrina Morrison (Parent Rep)	_____	__X_____
Jen Fetterman (Parent Rep)	____X____	_____

IV. WELCOME & MISSION MOMENT

At Finn Academy we promote an inclusive, rigorous and nurturing environment to best prepare our children for their future and to cultivate a community of scholars, leaders and friends.

V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Resolution to approve/amend/add/table/delete agenda items:

So Moved: Kevin **Seconded:** Jean **In Favor:** All
Opposed: None

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

VII. PARENT REPRESENTATIVES REPORT: Talk about threat to school welfare. Lots of questions. Couple of parents need to be talked to privately. Unknown and not sure what going on concerned and frightened some parents. Some parents said they didn't think they were being heard. We only had info from law enforcement, and we have privacy issues to follow. It wasn't a direct threat to school, but hearsay info through several individuals. We shared the info we had as school. Lot of social media chatter, some of it false. Law enforcement deemed no threat to school.

Finn Family Crew got result of penny wars: second grade scholars $671 raised for Meals on Wheels, AO neonatal care.

VIII. TEACHER REPRESENTATIVE REPORT: Teacher feedback on alleged threat, thought it was handled well. Some nervousness and tension. One person contacted Ryan regarding pay scale at Finn. Hope more can be done to know if someone came to Finn with 4 years' experience will they make same as someone who work at Finn for 4 years. With annual pay increases wonder if staff been here five or 10 years get bonus or slight pay increase. We have discussed loyalty incentives, but they are difficult given our financial situation. We have to weigh the increases in health insurance stipend. We are trying to be competitive with local districts, but budget restraints are an issue. This is not the year to offer a bonus.

IX. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. GOVERNANCE

Resolution: To approve the 2024-2025 paid holiday calendar for 12-month employees, as presented.

So Moved: Kevin **Seconded:** Pat **In Favor:** All
Opposed: None

B. FINANCE: Lisa Kirisits: want to maximize interest rates advantage. The $75,000 dissolution fund is kept is separate savings account earning little interest. Move from savings account to CDs', less than one year, with Chemung Canal Bank. Zero risk because federally insured. Do ladder CDs: 3, 6 and 9-month CDs. Part

II (no board resolution needed). Interest would be transferred into general operating account when the CDs mature. 5% rate in 9 month CD, .05 % for three months.

Checking account has no interest. Can use sweep account, savings and checking sweep account in 2% interest range. Money is peg balance, your account doesn't go under that amount to offset the bank's services costs. Money sweeps back and forth each day. We would use sweep account within treasury product. Not a change in bank account so no need for board resolution. We set balance that operating account does not go below. Money is made overnight and put back into the operating account. Have to consider account fees.

April financial statement: $795,000 cash, change in accounting lease law doesn't impact balance sheet. The lease expires June 30, 2025, and do negotiations soon. Bill district six times a year. Bill in advance and earn it throughout the year. Balance sheet look healthy. Difficult budget year for all school districts because federal funds dried up. Enrollment budget for next year: grades 3 and 4 heavily weighted do we add classroom and teacher and how it affects budget. Big question is how many students expected to return. Don't know until scholars are in their seats. 418 is enrollment budget for next year. State funding is based on formula based on cost per pupil for each district. The health insurance plan starts in Jan. not sure what rates will be but expected to be more and increase employee contribution from $750 to $800 next year. We have $25,000 budget surplus now. We need to update our obsolete phone system with a new $35,000 capital project. Will be savings compared to current phone costs. Left with $1,802 surplus when you add in all these additional expenses. Lot of other schools suffering same problems for budget year. We are surveying families about transportation for use of three buses (instead of four) to give transportation to families that absolutely need it. We are still able to come up with a balanced budget without cutting staff or level of programing. Other districts have made significant cuts to staff to meet budget demands. We will talk with other charter schools to see how we can partner with them, colleges and other nonprofits to reduce health insurance costs.

Resolution: To approve the April Financial Statements as prepared by Kirisits and Associates.

Resolution: To approve the budget for the 2024-2025 school year, as amended.

Resolution: To revise signature authority for the 403b Retirement Plan offered through Chemung Canal Trust Company, as presented.

So Moved: Matt **Seconded:** Jim **In Favor:** All
Opposed: None

C. ACADEMICS: One on one goal setting for students not doing as well on exams as we expected them to do, staff did one on one meetings to look at their NWEA scores over time and set goals. Identify strategies and goals with student input on what they can do themselves to improve their learning. Learn how to be a better learner. Lifelong skills development. Curriculum committee reflect on action steps: novels to read, science kits. Teachers invited to have input on this. Had presentation about annual professional teacher evaluation and how compare with evaluation at beginning of year. Looks at how teacher skills have been improved since the beginning of year. Knowledge of resources. Classroom environment of respect and rapport now changed to managing student behavior is highest goal.

Want to improve communication effectively with students. Lead teachers are every grade level and their special skills how they are used. Now gather feedback on how the process went and what will change or improve next year.

Special education our percentage of students here have REPs is 11.4 percent and district are 13 percent,

national average is 15 percent. We are in the same ballpark as most schools for students who need special educational services. We need to look at declassification and intervention processes. Could we collect case studies with interviews with students about instructional support and how did it work and what is school like for you now. Kids reflect on their own learning. Wait until Sept to look at NWEA results and make recommendations. Ryan: kids put in significant effort. Realistically not expecting amazing results for third grade. Next year have to take the tests with a computer.

Aimee: science questions were difficult. We had only one student opt out to take the test. Must have 97 percent of students to take tests. We've consistently had one or two students opt out.
Fully staffed for summer session. Final lesson plans are due June 14. We have 99 scholars coming to summer school.

X. REPORT OF THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution: To move into Executive Session for purpose 1.d and 1.f (below):

So Moved: Kevin **Seconded:** Jim **In Favor:** All

Opposed: None

(Upon a majority vote of its total membership, taken in an open meeting pursuant to a motion identifying the general area or areas of the subject or subjects to be considered, a public body may conduct an executive session for the below enumerated purposes only, provided, however, that no action by formal vote shall be taken to appropriate public moneys: d. discussions regarding proposed, pending or current litigation; f. the medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation.)

Resolution: To return from Executive Session**.**

So Moved: Matt **Seconded:** Jean **In Favor:** All

Opposed: None

Resolution: To approve the Personnel Packet as presented during Executive Session.

So Moved: Jim **Seconded:** Jean **In Favor:** All

Opposed: None

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Resolution to adjourn meeting at: 7:52 p.m.

So Moved: Kevin **Seconded:** Matt **In Favor:** All

Opposed: None