



“To provide every child a classical and academically rigorous education while instilling a commitment to civic virtue and moral character”

***Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors
Savannah Classical Academy, Inc.
March 9, 2017***

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Savannah Classical Academy, Inc. was held at 5:30 p.m., Thursday, March 9, 2017, at Savannah Classical Academy, 705 East Anderson Street, on notice duly given.

The board directors present were:

Ormonde Lewis
Falen Cox
John Picker
Barbara Cortese
Dr. Jacobium Holliman
Terri O’Neil
Martha Nesbit
Dr. Donna Isaac
Benjamin Couch Payne, School Director

Absent, with notice:

Dr. Gwen Miller-Smith
Andy Blair

It was determined there was a quorum for the transaction of business.

Ormonde Lewis, chair, called the meeting to order at 5:41 p.m.

Barbara Cortese moved to accept the consent agenda, John Picker seconded; all board members present agreed.

Before presentations of Committee reports, the location of the Board meeting was discussed. Ormonde Lewis confirmed, moving forward meetings will be held in the Music room on the second floor at SCA.

Martha Nesbit reported on behalf of the Academic Accountability Committee. Martha asked if it would be beneficial to have the Academic Accountability Committee submit a summary of all accomplishments for the year. Ormonde Lewis and Falen Cox both agreed that it would not only be helpful to have such a report submitted from the Academic Accountability Committee, but a similar report from all Committees would be beneficial. Summaries would include condensed highlights, accomplishments of goals met for the year, along with recommendations for the following year and will be prepared in time for the second meeting in May.

Martha Nesbit reported on behalf of the Charter Renewal Committee. Representatives from the local board of education, along with representatives from SCA attended a meeting related to charter renewal at the local school board. SRI and MAP scores were discussed, in particular the low scoring elementary results. Another discussion point was the dismissal of students. Martha Nesbit reported that the local school board attorney agrees with SCAs position that a dismissal of a student from SCA is not a denial of a public school education. Martha reported that is unavailable on March 29th, the date of SCA’s meeting with the State Board of Education, and suggested that we try to reschedule.

*****All reports discussed in the minutes are kept on file and are available for review.*****

The Board discussed the concerns raised in the letter from Attorney Arti Sharma of the state board of education. Martha Nesbit confirmed that any and all positive academic performance and growth seen will need to be presented explicitly. Other positive highlights to be included are feedback and comments from SCA staff, and the proposed offering of college credit courses through Savannah Tech. Falen Cox proposed retaining Robert Fortson, who has extensive experience in drafting policy for charter schools, to assist in ensuring that SCA's policies are in line with State and local board requirements.

Dr. Jacobium Holliman asked if retaining Mr. Fortson would affect our relationship with Mr. Lowe who has previously assisted the board with this matter. It was determined that since Mr. Lowe's fees are billed hourly, SCA would not incur legal fees regarding this specific matter so long as Mr. Lowe was not asked to complete additional tasks related thereto.

John Picker moved to enter into an agreement with Maguire Woods (the firm of Mr. Fortson) to assist SCA in ensuring that its policies are in compliance with state and local standards at the established hourly rate of \$250, up to a limit of 40 hours of billing, with approval from the Board for any billing needed beyond 40 hours. Falen Cox seconded; all board members present agreed. Falen Cox raised a second motion to find a means, within the current budget, to pay for the legal fees needed, not exceeding \$10,000, by the March 23rd meeting for approval. John Picker seconded; all board members present agreed.

At 6:30 p.m. Barbara Cortese moved to go into closed session pursuant to O.C.G.A. 50-14-3 (b)(2) for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter; Dr. Jacobium Holliman seconded; all board members present agreed. At 6:44 p.m. Barbara Cortese moved to return to open session, Martha Nesbit seconded; all board members present agreed.

Dr. Donna Isaac, reported on behalf of the Community Relations Committee regarding the March 1st local School Board meeting. Dr. Isaac noted there were at least twelve to fifteen SCA families represented at the meeting. Falen reported that Andy expressed that he felt that the meeting and parent presentations went well, and confirmed that the Community Relations Committee will continue to develop positive relationships.

Terri O'Neil, reported on behalf of the Development Committee regarding the Challenge Campaign. The first steps to introducing new donor prospects were discussed. Terri O'Neil arranged for a tour of SCA for four confirmed prospects at 9:30 a.m. on Friday, March 10th. The next potential date for a prospect tour is set for Friday, March 31st at 9:30 a.m. Terri O'Neil asked board members to try to get a commitment in writing from any potential candidates who would be interested in touring the school along with their name, contact information, and possible donation amount so that information could be entered into the database. Ormonde Lewis reminded the Board of the required minimum pledge to the Campaign, with an aim for 100% contribution to be met soon.

Falen Cox provided an update on behalf of the Foundation Board, reporting that the Foundation has been invited to the March 23rd board meeting where one of the items on the agenda is fundraising. The continuation of construction and build out on the third floor was discussed. A remedial plan regarding the build out is to be put in writing by March 29th. Questions were raised regarding the transfer of ownership and debt of the building. A loan of \$5.1 million is coming due on November 15, 2017 to the South State Bank; it is anticipated that the same will be re-financed by the parties to the loan. It was confirmed that the new building has not been transferred to the foundation yet and it would be best to wait until construction is completed.

Falen Cox reported on behalf of the Governance Committee. And anticipated to schedule a meeting after the Georgia Charter School Association Conference.

As a part of the Director's Report, the proposed continuation of the Strings Program was discussed, as the current contract has expired. Mr. Payne invited Dr. Ciric to speak on behalf of the program, its current status, successes, progress, and mission, as well as his current schedule and daily involvement at SCA. Altogether there have been twenty-seven students enrolled in the program; currently twenty students still involved. Martha Nesbit asked how the Strings program begun at SCA. Mr. Payne confirmed it was started through a \$50,000 grant from the Hodges Foundation in February 2016. Dr. Ciric was listed in the grant as the employee to work at SCA through the program. Questions were brought up as to if the grant could be renewed or if there could be another option to raise funds to continue the program. Terri O'Neil confirmed donations could be committed to the continuation of the Strings Program through the Spartan Fund by allocation or having the donor restrict the funds specifically to the Program.

Further discussion continued as to how to keep the program running through the year's end. Mr. Payne stated that it would take \$4,200 a month to continue Dr. Ciric's employment (about \$13,000 to pay him through the end of May). Falen Cox posed if there is a way for the program to be continued through the end of the year, it would be best if a contract was established for that purpose, and then any further continuation be under contract moving forward. Ormonde Lewis confirmed that a contract would first be needed in writing so the Board may vote on it. Mr. Payne offered to draft a contract outlining pay, dates, and job description for Dr. Ciric under the Strings Program. Martha Nesbit motioned to pay for the Strings Program for one month, pending receipt of an approved contract and receipt of funds. Dr. Donna Isaac seconded; all board members present agreed.

Mr. Payne addressed testing score goals under the Director's Report stating there is no magic strategy to meet set goals. Trends around the scores throughout Georgia schools were discussed. John Picker noted the Reading scores to be worrisome. Dr. Jacobium Holliman affirmed that there are other measures available that more accurately reflect the progress at SCA. Mr. Payne commented that SRI does show we are at 70%. Mr. Payne further noted that testing methods, such as bubble sheets or computer generated, can require a learning curve and that this is something we can concentrate on as far as preparation.

A proposal regarding the procedure for hiring new employees, sent via e-mail prior to the meeting, was discussed. John Picker moved to adopt the proposal as presented. Dr. Jacobium Holliman seconded; all board members present agreed. A copy of the proposal is on file. Ormonde Lewis, reminding board members to have potential candidates submit their resumes to the Board for further discussion. Due to time constraints, remaining agenda items were tabled.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m. A regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 23, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. at Savannah Classical Academy, 704 East Anderson Street.

Respectfully submitted,

(signed copy on file)

Christina Orlandi under supervision of Falen O. Cox, Vice-Chair