

Los Feliz Charter School for the Arts
Monthly Board Meeting Minutes
May 28, 2009 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm
2709 Media Center Drive L.A. 90029

BOARD MEMBERS:

Present: Karin Newlin, Sharon Sutton, Bob Greenberg (via phone), Michael Bishop (via phone), George Abrams (via phone), Marta Alcumbrac, Gabrielle Samuels, Linda Johannesen (via phone), Marissa Chibas-Preston (via phone)

Absent: Verna Dauterive, Elise Buik

Quorum? Yes.

Also Present: Mary Ann Gallo, Kevin Mulcahy, Florie Savage, Tammy Stanton, John Vargas, (via phone), Nancy Martorelli, Adam Kopald, Amy Mayne Robinson, David Landau, Cynthia Wattros, Candace Cain, Melissa Hanson-O'Hare, Nicole Shandrew, Howard Gindoff, Joe Syracuse, Jennifer Johnson, Mariana Weldy, Richard Visser, Rhea Neumann, LaToya Knoten

PROCEEDINGS:

- George Abrams called the meeting to order at 5:40 pm.
- Abrams asks Karin Newlin to outline the Field Trip policy. Newlin does so, includes information on insurance, permission slips, materials teachers carry, etc.
- Abrams moves to accept the Field Trip policy. Marta Alcumbrac seconds. Ayes: Abrams, Alcumbrac, Linda Johannesen, Bob Greenberg, Marissa Chibas-Preston, Sharon Sutton, Gabrielle Samuels. Motion carries.
- Abrams invites LFCSA parent Amy Mayne Robinson to speak to the Board for the 3 minutes she requested.
- Alcumbrac makes note that in terms of personnel issues, no names can be used due to confidentiality.
- Mayne-Robinson introduces herself as the current PTA president and last year's PTA vice president. Reading from a prepared statement, she says she wants to make the Board aware of four issues: a teacher who has not been asked back for the coming school year, lack of "cool tools" usage by an aide, limited access to the Selma Library, and proper usage of the PTA.
- Abrams says that he would like copies of Mayne-Robinson's statement. He says he would like to work with Mayne-Robinson and the Board on how to examine and address the issues raised. He notes that as these are far-reaching issues, he wants to devise a strategy for "unfolding" the information.
- Marianna Weldy wonders if there can be a time before the June 12 Board Meeting when the personnel issue can be addressed.
- Mayne-Robinson states that she would like to see more parents involved in Board discussions.
- Abrams says that he wants the time before the June 12 meeting to make sure all legal issues can be understood.
- Gabrielle Samuels asks that given the amount of discourse in the community, the issue can be addressed in some way prior to the next meeting.

- Alcumbrac says that Abrams will work with Mayne-Robinson and that a statement can go out via email within the next few days.
- Amy Mayne Robinson, David Landau, Cynthia Wattros, Candace Cain, Melissa Hanson-O'Hare, Nicole Shandrew, Howard Gindoff, Joe Syracuse, Jennifer Johnson, Mariana Weldy, Richard Visser, Rhea Neumann, and LaToya Knoten leave the meeting at 6pm.
- Tammy Stanton distributes the budget assumptions. John Vargas starts a walk through of the information.
- Michael Bishop joins by phone at 6:10pm.
- Stanton helps to clarify the issue of the ending cash balance and the potential problem of a negative cash balance in out (future) years.
- Vargas volunteers that excluding the zero-emission bus and park fees could help offset that problem.
- Brief discussion follows regarding the use of public parks by public schools.
- Stanton wonders about possibility of using some of the outdoor space at Media Center Dr. as an outdoor play area.
- Kevin Mulcahy says that the tests they are conducting may show that the school is OK to use the larger outdoor area between the hours of 10am & 5pm which could obviate the need for the bus and park fees.
- Mulcahy asks Florie Savage to speak about her most recent research.
- Savage says that there are not any promising alternatives in the real estate market to properly serve LFCSA's needs and be affordable.
- Bishop feels that although this site will require getting loans and seriously fundraising, there is no good alternative.
- A brief discussion of the Capital Campaign follows. This is followed by a longer discussion of loans.
- Vargas points to the section of the hand-outs where he expresses his concerns. Bishop asks about the note concerning the \$1000/child recommendation. Vargas explains that it's an average based on the charter schools that ExED works with. Stanton adds that ExED advises keeping rent at 12% of budget.
- Abrams asks Alcumbrac to address the matter of the CUP.
- Alcumbrac talks about the 2 main issues that will influence the permitting process: proximity to the freeway & proximity to the rail line. She says that they are now working with the top scientists in the field and that if the data comes in on the side of the school, these scientists would testify on behalf of the LFCSA before the planning commission.
- Mulcahy gives the timeline for the process and says that he believes that if it goes to City Council, we would get the council's support and that they would decide the issue in mid-December meaning that construction could begin by December 21st and they could stay on target for a January 25 start date at the new location.
- There is a brief discussion of how accurate the numbers are in the budget projections. Mulcahy says that there are few unknowns in terms of the building. Alcumbrac notes that it is the air quality and entitlement issues that are potential variables.
- There is further discussion of loans and the Capital Campaign.
- Sutton observes that in her experience, giving is down by 12%.

- Abrams summarizes the top issues affecting the discussion are the CUP, financial loans, and the bus and park use.
- An extended discussion of the bus and park use follows.
- Abrams moves to strike the park use fee from the budget for year one and for all the out years. Alcumbrac seconds. Ayes: Abrams, Chibas-Preston, Johannesen, Bishop, Greenberg, Alcumbrac, Sutton, Samuels. Motion carries.
- Abrams raises the issue of loans. LFCSA parent, Tod Abrams, has offered to make a \$250,000 loan. George Abrams believes that he can raise another \$100,000 by reaching out to some people himself.
- There is further discussion of how to address financial needs. Chibas-Preston notes that as LFCSA works to cultivate interest in the neighborhood pre-schools, the school population will likely change and thereby increase Title 1 funding.
- Sutton says that the fundraising focus will have to be on foundations. Johannesen adds that it generally takes 12 -24 months for the foundation money to come in.
- There is a discussion of how to raise the \$100,000 to cover a budget shortfall. Abrams feels he can secure a loan or loans with a guarantee (with a reasonable degree of certainty) of repayment within four years.
- Samuels moves that the Board authorizes Karin Newlin to enter into a lease agreement with the owner of Media Center Drive. Sutton seconds.
- In response to a question from Johannesen regarding LFCSA's ability to repay loans if for some reason the school cannot occupy the site, Mulcahy says that the risk of not being able to move in is very small.
- Ayes: Abrams, Johannesen, Greenberg, Chibas-Preston, Bishop, Alcumbrac, Sutton, Samuels. Motion carries.
- Alcumbrac asks LFCSA parent, Adam Kopald to address the Board regarding the issue of after school care.
- Kopald identifies himself as the PTA vice president. He says that there have been a number of complaints about the high cost of the current E3 after school program. Kopald has gone to E3 to ask if they can bring down costs and be more flexible. They did on both counts. There is also a provider who currently runs the STAR program at Wonderland School. This alternate program would cost roughly the same.
- There is a brief discussion of reasons why or why not to stay with E3. Newlin notes that 09/10 will be a challenging year, and while she very much likes the woman from Wonderland, this would be her first time running her own program, and E3 has come down in price.
- Kopald adds that since E3 was not entirely clear about price reduction, there is a chance they may come down even more for the neediest families.
- Alcumbrac mentions that at the recent PTA meeting, the members present voted to go with the new provider by a small margin. Abrams notes that it is not so much saying "no" to the new woman as it is delaying a change at this time.
- Abrams moves to hire E3 as the after school care provider until such time as we have a move-in date for the Media Center and they throw open the interview process.
- Chibas-Preston seconds. Ayes: Abrams, Chibas-Preston, Bishop, Greenberg, Sutton, Samuels, Alcumbrac. Motion carries.
- There is a brief discussion regarding authorization for check writing. Mulcahy emphasizes the need to vote on this before the 6/12 meeting.

- In answer to a question from Sutton, Mulcahy says that there are currently 10 contracts needing to be paid on.
- Abrams moves to authorize Karin Newlin to enter into contracts regarding 2709 Media Center Dr. and that those contracts cannot exceed \$100,000 and must be reviewed by the Site Committee. Alcumbrac seconds. Ayes: Abrams, Greenberg, Chibas-Preston, Alcumbrac, Sutton, Samuels, Bishop.
- Newlin will present the contracts for ratification at the next Board Meeting.
- Abrams moves to adjourn at 8:35 pm. Alcumbrac seconds. Ayes: Abrams, Sutton, Bishop, Greenberg, Alcumbrac, Chibas-Preston and Samuels. Motion carries.
- Meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Minutes submitted by Mary Ann Gallo.