

Los Feliz Charter School for the Arts
Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 3, 2011 6:00pm
2709 Media Center Drive Los Angeles, CA
Approved

Board members present: Karin Newlin, Tracy Prinz (via phone), Gabrielle Samuels (via phone), Darcy Mellinger, Tony Butka, Sharon Sutton (via phone), Michael Garces, Bob Greenberg (via phone)

Board Members absent: Matthew Shenoda

Quorum?: Yes.

Also present: Mary Ann Gallo (via phone), Omar Ramirez

- Gabrielle Samuels calls Meeting to Order at 6:15 p.m. She then opens the floor to public comments.
- Public Comments: LFCSA parent, Omar Ramirez mentions that he had heard LAUSD Board member had noted the lack of outreach in the community. Ramirez wonders what is being done to address that issue. Samuels points out the rules prohibiting Board members responding directly to public comments but notes that these comments are appreciated & will be addressed at a later date.
- Tony Butka moves to elect Sharon Sutton to LFCSA Board for a 2 year Term. Samuels seconds. Ayes via roll call: Samuels, Prinz, Butka, Garces, Greenberg, Sutton. Motion carries.
- Samuels asks Newlin to address Item IV., developing Board policy on an Independent Study Program. Newlin says that by approving this program, a student who will be absent for more than 5 days will be given a rigorously prepared assignment(s) and a contract will be signed. Samuels asks if this can be enacted for a short-term absence. Newlin says that advance notice is needed to prepare and that a fair amount of work is required. Discussion of various scenarios and parameters follows. Mellinger urges examining the cost/benefit analysis, warning that it could impact teachers' job satisfaction. Newlin also notes how closely watched these programs are. Bishop says that where districts get into problems with this is in the wording of the contract or in proving that the quality of the work being offered at home is equal to that which is being offered in the classroom adding that due to past abuses, this type of program can be a target for audit.
- Bishop moves to approve moving forward and agendizing the approval of the independent study program at the March 10 meeting. Garces seconds. Short discussion follows. Newlin mentions the need for a public hearing. Samuels asks if that can be at the March 10 Board meeting. Butka says yes as long as it is announced that this issue will be covered. In response to a question from Mellinger about the length of absence, 5 days or more is proposed. Butka suggests looking at contracts that are being used successfully by other schools or districts. Ayes via roll call: Bishop, Samuels, Sutton, Prinz, Greenberg, Garces, Butka. Motion carries.
- Newlin notes that ITEM V, the closed session cannot be held at this meeting due to Brown Act restrictions and will be moved to the March 10 meeting.
- Bishop asks Prinz to begin discussion of Item VI, Fundraising. Prinz gives an overview of the successful 1st week of the reinvigorated Annual Give. She emphasizes the need to restrict funds as they come in in order to be ready to fund traffic light construction. Samuels and Butka discuss following up on Movin' In pledges. Samuels mentions that a comprehensive fundraising meeting was held and that the Board will learn the conclusions at the March 10 meeting. Prinz gives overview of the Annual Give's immediate next steps. Discussion follows about setting a date for the Town Hall meeting.

Tuesday, April 5 is chosen. Prinz mentions Mellinger's suggestion that teachers help with childcare. Prinz adds that the communications team will emphasize that parents are discouraged from bringing their kids. After a brief discussion, Prinz says that the Town Hall will be April 5, and childcare options will be discussed offline. After discussion of schedule and start time, a 6:30 start is set.

- Bishop moves to Item VII. -- Governor's Budget Proposal/Effect on 2011-2012 Budget. Prinz reads from an e-mail from Charter School office announcing that the state has voted to continue SB740 funds. Newlin says that SB740 covers about ½ our facility rent costs. Newlin refers to discussions with Dave Guthrie about details of budget proposals and potential impact on LFCSA. Bishop suggests exercising caution with expectations as it is only March and voting will happen in June. Bishop says that everything is contingent on tax extensions. Samuels mentions an email that she sent to Butka, Abrams, Bishop and Joe Meza in which she asked about how the salaries for the new positions were determined. Prinz mentions timeline. Butka talks about disconnect between his understandings and the way that ExED arrives at figures. Newlin refers about particulars of contract with ExED. Bishop says that discussion will need to happen but that it doesn't need to be had at this moment.
- Bishop moves on to Item VIII regarding the Media Center. Prinz touches on Building Committee discussion of developing 6th grade class. Samuels asks when this ad-hoc committee was formed. Newlin believes it was at the Nov. meeting when Abrams was still on the board. Samuels asks Prinz to share what she knows about the playground development. Prinz says that things are moving forward with Kaboom and the building owner and asks Newlin if we need to have the \$25,000 in hand ready to deliver as soon as Kaboom finds a donor to partner with us. Newlin says it should be about 2 months after the donor is identified. Bishop talks about how money can be protected in the future. Prinz expresses her concern is about whether the \$300,000 which was set as the amount to get us through June 30 is an accurate figure. Mellinger asks if playground flooding issues have been examined. Newlin describes issue. Bishop suggests that a custodian or groundskeeper handle the issue.
- Mellinger asks if there is an update on the ADA campaign. Newlin doesn't have the entire month calculated by percentage, but she can report that a 5th grade class had the lowest number of absences. She says the 5th graders were extremely excited & looking forward to choosing their activity.
- Newlin says that Councilman Ed Reyes came to LFCSA for a short visit. He was genuinely enthusiastic about this school being in his district. Newlin says that throughout the tour he was impressed and moved. The 3rd Graders presented him with a mural about Los Angeles.
- Newlin adds that she is very pleased to have the 5 year Charter Renewal successfully completed. Bishop talks about concerns he heard suggesting a lack of diversity and a notion of exclusivity. Newlin speaks of Board member Steve Zimmer who expressed concern about LFCSA's lack of English Language Learner students. Newlin says that our rep at the Charter Office spoke well in defense of our program. Because Zimmer would not let the issue alone, Newlin was finally permitted to come to the microphone where she pointed out that LFCSA had asked for and received authorization from the LAUSD Board to allow LFCSA to put free and reduced lunch students at the front of the list for admissions. Resultantly, our numbers had gone from 18% to nearly 30% in the last year. A short discussion of the target for next year follows. 40% is still the target, but the number will move up more slowly b/c there won't be as many new kids for next year. Greenberg opens short discussion of applying for Title 1 funding. Newlin says she will explore the topic with ExED. Butka requests that the Board have that information by the March 10 meeting.

Bishop adjourns meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Mary Ann Gallo