

Forest Charter School

Monthly Charter Council Meeting Minutes—August 17, 2010

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

5:30 p.m.

224 Church Street

Nevada City, CA 95959

Council Members:

Pam Barram, Chair/Parent Representative

Kelly Chandler, Parent Representative

Sunshine Heaps, Parent Representative

Melody Wilson, Vice-Chair/ Parent Representative

Janice Eggers, ES Representative

Linda Smith, ES Representative

Emma Robards, Student Representative

Nancy Nobles, Secretary

Minutes

Present: Peter Sagebiel, Debbie Carter, BJ Hatcher, Paul Simoes, Janice Eggers, Sunshine Heaps, Pam Barram, Kelly Chandler, Linda Smith, Melody Wilson, Emma Robards, Leanne Engel and Nancy Nobles.

Absent: none

1. Call to Order: 5:38

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Action: Approval of June 25, 2010 Minutes

Kelly Chandler made the motion to accept the Minutes from the June meeting. Sunny Heaps seconded.

Ayes: All Nays: None Abstain: None

4. Action: Adoption of the Agenda

Kelly asked the Council to move agenda item number 15 to number 6. Janice Eggers made the motion to adopt the Agenda with changes. Kelly Chandler seconded.

Ayes: All Nays: None Abstain: None

5. Discussion: Other

Nothing to report.

6. Information/Action: Election of Chair and Co-Chair – Peter Sagebiel

Peter explained that with the new school year the Council needs to open the floor for a Chair and Co-Chair. Pam Barram and Melody Wilson agreed to continue on in their positions as Chair and Co-Chair.

Janice moved to elect Pam Barram as Council Chair and Melody Wilson as Co-Chair. Linda Smith seconded.

Ayes: Five Nays: None Abstain: Two; Pam Barram, Melody Wilson

Note: Item #17 was heard out of order at this time.

7. Information: Brown Act Training – Peter Sagebiel

Peter gave the Council members a handout titled The Brown Act: Open Meeting Laws in California and briefly went over the main points. The handout covered: what constitutes a meeting under the Brown Act; what must happen prior and during meetings; closed meetings.

8. Information/Action: TTUSD Update – Peter Sagebiel

Peter reported to the Council on the progress with TTUSD. He went to the June TTUSD meeting but the proposed MOU was tabled. TTUSD Superintendent Steve Jennings then proposed a new MOU at the end of July. TTUSD has offered to give FCS \$125,000 of the \$250,000 owed to FCS upon the approval of the MOU with the balance to follow at if FCS secures alternate sponsorship, they are asking for a three year agreement.

Janice thought a two year agreement would be better and spoke of concerns about revenue caps in light of the growth Truckee has seen. Pam said that the primary goal is receipt of the \$250,000 and to that end a compromise might be in order. Peter agreed that a two year agreement would be a good negotiating point.

Peter, Holly Hermansen and Donna Fitting met earlier in the day to discuss the offer from TTUSD. Donna feels that TTUSD should be paying interest on the money due to FCS. The Council agreed with this idea. Holly will contact Steve Jennings with items we would like to see changed in the current proposed MOU.

No action was needed.

9. Information: Student Achievement – BJ Hatcher

BJ reported that the Spring CAHSEE results have been received and that there are 11 students that need to pass one or both parts of the test. He added that FCS is going into this year in a “much better place” in regards to our 12th graders. CAHSEE intervention course work is being put in place for this year, this work will be required for seniors who have not passed one or both sections of the test.

STAR results are in for the students and have gone to the ESs. BJ said that FCS hasn’t heard about the STAR results for API scores yet, but should soon. He said that we are still seeing low scores in the area of math and that he is looking at what is causing this.

A discussion followed about Ed Performance testing. Janice Eggers said that it is a good tool to look at gaps in student education and gives a quick focus on which pieces are missing. She said that it measures both strengths and weaknesses. The Council agreed that ESs and parents should be encouraged to use Ed Performance.

10. Information: Strategic Planning – Peter Sagebiel

Peter discussed with the Council a timeline to update the Strategic Plan. He explained that this should be done yearly in either the spring or fall. Pam felt that March/April would probably be best so that everything will be in place when the new school year starts. Janice agreed, saying that August would be too busy with the beginning of the school year. The Council agreed that early spring would be the best time to update the Strategic Plan each year.

11. Information: Joint Powers of Authority Update – Peter Sagebiel

Peter explained that the JPA between the Charter Schools in the County Cooperative special education had so many “pieces” (insurance, etc.) that there was no way to put it in place over the summer. The special education staff was hired by schools in the co-op and business managers will invoice other schools for shared employees’ time.

The JPA will officially launch on September first. The JPA has to exist for a certain amount of time before certain things like health benefits for employees can be put in place. After all these things happen, the JPA will hire all the special education employees.

12. Information: 2010-11 Budget – Debbie Carter

Debbie updated the Council on the current year budget ; explaining that we will begin adjusting the budget for 1st Interim revisions late in September. Cash flow continues to be a challenge for schools as we wait for the State to pass a budget and revenue continues to be deferred. She added that FCS is fortunate that the County continues to cover the \$250.000 held by TTUSD.

Debbie is presently working to close the 2009-10 books and will present that to the Council at the next meeting. She added that it doesn't look like there will be any federal money this year. Kelly questioned if there was any news on the Race to the Top federal program. Peter said that there was not. BJ added that the teachers' unions are fighting the program.

Debbie gave a copy of the narrative and budget information to new members, Linda Smith and Emma Robards.

13. Information/Action: Facilities Update – Peter Sagebiel

Peter reported on the progress of possible new facilities for FCS. The Truckee learning center is now located in the old Sierra College building. New walls have been put up and texturing is being done this week. Janice and Peter agreed that the new facility is looking great.

Peter told the Council that the facility at 215 Washington Street in Nevada City had been finalized earlier that day. This building will house the K-8th PACE program.

Peter reported that the possible NCE site was still being looked at. In early August FCS submitted a bid to the Nevada City School District. The District has 10 days to reflect on the bid. Peter, Debbie and Paul attended a meeting with the District today where they discussed points of the proposal: why was the FCS bid lower than what the district articulated in their resolution; should a charter be there (competition); the district wants someone immediately but FCS is looking at January occupancy. Peter sees this as an opening to discussion. He shared that FCS is in a solid position with the facilities that are in place and said that there are other options in the community that we are researching.

No action was needed.

14. Discussion: Policy Binder – Peter Sagebiel

Peter asked the Council if they would prefer a printed copy of the policy binder or if they would prefer to access it online or use the copy at the office for reference. He explained that each Learning Center and the Foresthill Co-op will have a copy on site. Two members preferred a printed copy. (Pam Barram, Melody Wilson) The Policy Binder will be updated for the next Council meeting. Peter expects the Policies to be posted online by early next semester.

15. Information/Action: 215 Washington Street Contract – Peter Sagebiel

Peter and Debbie explained the lease contract to the Council. Peter said that the FCS realtor, Scott Hicks had gone over the contract, making sure that everything was in place. Debbie went over points: this is a one year lease; \$2000 a month; the security deposit had been lowered to \$2000 (vs. \$14,000); repairs will be paid by FCS if under \$1000, paid by the District if over \$1000 and will be negotiated if over \$5000. FCS will take occupancy on August 30th and the teachers will have one week to get settled before classes start.

Melody Wilson made a motion to approve the Washington Street contract. Janice Eggers seconded.

Ayes: All Nays: None Abstain: None

16. Information: WASC – Paul Simoes

Paul presented information to the Council on the upcoming WASC process. He explained that WASC is the organization that accredits schools in the western region of the country. Paul was part of a visiting team at another school last year. FCS is presently in the 'self study' year, with WASC visiting in 2012.

17. Discussion: Foresthill Co-Op – Peter Sagebiel

Item #17 was heard earlier in the meeting as a convenience to ES Leanne Engel.

Peter opened the discussion on whether or not Foresthill prospective families should be required to come to the Nevada City office instead of interviewing with ES Leanne Engel in Foresthill. The Council was concerned that without seeing the main office including administrative staff, resources and office staff, that new students and families would not have an accurate representation of the whole school. Pam was concerned that new families may not understand the "big picture" of FCS and Kelly added that they may not fully "buy in" to the program. The Council considered the point that new families should visit the office at least once, either for the enrollment interview or possibly as a field trip.

ES Leanne Engel said that the Foresthill Co-Op is comparable to the Truckee learning center. Janice pointed out that the Truckee learning center has a staffed office, library and administrator (BJ Hatcher) present part of the week.

Melody suggested that FCS make a video presentation to show prospective parents. She added that we can engage new parents through the newsletter.

Peter will take this to the Faculty Council for suggestions and will bring back ideas to the Council next month.

18. Information/Action: Conflict of Interest Policy – Peter Sagebiel

Peter presented to the Council the Conflict of Interest Policy for annual approval. He reminded the Council that this is the same policy as approved in May, no changes. The County is asking that this is approved annually.

Melody Wilson made a motion to approve the Conflict of Interest Policy. Janice Eggers seconded.

Ayes: All Nays: None Abstain: None

19. Information/Action: 2010-11 Salary Schedule – Debbie Carter

Debbie reviewed the 2010-11 Salary Schedule and asked the Council for approval. She explained that there were no changes except to the date. The County has asked for yearly approval of the salary schedule.

Melody Wilson made a motion to approve the 2010-11 Salary Schedule. Janice Eggers seconded.

Ayes: All Nays: None Abstain: None

20. Discussion: CA SB 1451 Regarding Instructional Materials – Melody Wilson

Melody presented information on California Senate Bill 1451 which was recently passed. She Explained that this bill was in regards to an issue in the state of Texas where they are attempting to change or delete information in history books. Texas is the largest producer of history books with California in second place. The bill that passed states that California will not use books from Texas.

21. Information/Action: Employee Handbook – Debbie Carter

Debbie presented information on the FCS Employee Handbook. She explained that this was done as part of the GRASP process and was completed with the help of the attorneys. Debbie feels it will be a great tool for the staff as a resource. She added that the intent of the policies have not changed but are articulated better. BJ added that we should trust that the attorneys used specific wording for a reason.

The Council had a few suggestions on wording in the drug/alcohol and the sexual harassment policies.

Melody was concerned that the staff may have issues with the handbook and asked that the staff have a chance to review before the Council approves the handbook. Peter will send the handbook to the staff for review. There is a possibility of the need for a special meeting to approve because of a September deadline with the insurance company.

No action was taken.

22. Action: Consent Agenda – Debbie Carter

Debbie asked the Council to approve the new contracts.

Melody Wilson made the motion to approve the Consent Agenda contracts. Emma Robards seconded.

Ayes: All Nays: None Abstain: None

23. Information: Director's Update – Peter Sagebiel

Peter told the Council that FCS has “hit the ground running” with the start of the 2010-11 school year.

- **2010-11 Enrollment:** Enrollment has been going well and is at 635; the co-op enrollments are doing very well; families are still calling for enrollment daily.
- **Learning center updates:** The Truckee learning center and PACE, Global Studies, the Truckee Tree Top and Foresthill co-ops are all growing or full.
- **Staff In-Service:** The Truckee team building day was a great success; Peter said that teaching can be isolating and sees the team building as an engaging opportunity for the staff to work together. Friday there will be a staff development meeting from 9:30 to 3:30 for all ESs.
- **Handicap Parking:** FCS has put in place a handicap parking space at the main office.
- **Charter Renewal:** Next year is the renewal year (fall 2011); this is the time to negotiate; Peter said that we are lucky to have a good relationship with our sponsoring agency.
- **New FCS ESs:** FCS has two new ESs, Michelle Litton and Mark Keim. Michelle is the ES for the 6, 7, 8 PACE program and Mark is the ES for the 4-5th Tree Top co-op.
- **CPR Training:** The training is planned for September or October; date TBA.
- **Other:** Nothing to report.

24. Discussion: Future Agenda Items

- Budget expense training—fall
- Employee handbook
- Discussion on engaging the Foresthill community
- Race to the Top (if new information)
- Set a date for possible Foresthill Charter Council meeting

25. Information: Charter Council Meeting Dates

- The Council agreed on meeting dates for the 2010-11 school year. (see item 26)

26. Information: Reminder of Future Meeting

- September 21—Truckee; 4:30 (dinner to follow)
- 2010—October 26; November 16; December 14 (if needed);
- 2011—January 18; February 15; March 15; April 12; May 17; June 14

27. Action: Adjourn at 8:02 PM

Linda Smith made the motion to adjourn. Melody Wilson seconded.

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Respectfully submitted:

Nancy Nobles, Secretary

Date

Charter Council Approved:

Pam Barram, Chair

Date

Melody Wilson, Vice-Chair

Date