

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of  
Austin International School  
August 20, 2014  
6:30 pm; Adelphi Campus**

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**Board Members Present:** Barksdale English, Sophie Cano, Ana Barbara LLorente, Ricardo Sanchez, Dina Sherzer, Liz Wiley

**Absent:** Guillaume Hennion, David Arnow

**Quorum:** Yes

**Visitors:** Hannifa Smine, PTO president.

**Resources:** Christophe Bonnet, Head of School.

The agenda having been circulated prior to the meeting, the August 20, 2014 meeting of the AIS Board of Directors was called to order at 6:35pm.

*The previously scheduled meeting of August 13, 2014 was postponed to August 20, 2014 so that all the members could attend.*

**Proceedings – Public Session**

**I. Chair report to the board**

- a. Barksdale opened the meeting by introducing the new officers for 2014-2015: Liz: Vice-Chair; Anna Barbara: Treasurer; Sophie: Chair of Governance committee; David: Chair of Audit committee; Dina: Secretary.
- b. With a quorum present, Barksdale called up the minutes from the regular meeting and annual retreat of June 7, and of the email vote to approve the auditor of July 25-26, 2014 meeting. He announced that (i) David had provided him his proxy and (ii) Guillaume had provided his proxy to Liz.

Liz moved to approve the minutes of June 7, and July 25-26 2014. Sophie seconded the motion. With no further discussion the motion passed on a vote of 8-0 with no abstentions and no dissents (with Barksdale voting for David and Liz voting for Guillaume).

- c. The meeting schedule for 2014-15 was approved with a change for the March 18 meeting postponed to March 25 due to a conflict with school vacations.
- d. The chair reported on the Board Self evaluation that had taken place in June. This evaluation is required by the NAIS. On a score of 1 to 5 with 5 being the best the result averaged around 4 for the entire board and individual assessment. While this is satisfactory, and while board members find their participation meaningful, the chair emphasized the necessity to put in place an orientation and a training process, and involve new and old members on committees. He added that keeping members engaged in an atmosphere of good friendship and camaraderie will contribute to the building of a strong positive culture inside the board for the benefit of the school.
- e. The next item on the agenda was a discussion of the 2014-2015 goals. The chair explained that we should work to improve the governance of the school so that ideally we will have structures in place and processes documented creating a strong identity for the school and facilitating the accreditation with NAIS. The chair identified several areas requiring attention.

**- Working on various committees.**

Starting in January each committee will report on its work. To that effect they should develop work plans and goals.

Ana Barbara will make a proposal for what the Finance committee should be doing.

The governance committee has the task of coming up with a recruiting and orientation process. This year it should recruit three new board members so that we have a board in the thirteen persons range that would give us more organizational, fundraising and networking capacities. Sophie is to report about her plans at the next meeting of the board.

**- Creation of a new strategic plan for 2015-2017**

This document will be preparing us for the opening of the Middle School in 2017. Liz agreed to coordinate the work of

the strategic committee. She is to report about her plans at the next meeting of the board.

Christophe recommended that the strategic plan be flexible so as to accommodate eventual changes in the environment. Ricardo noted that these possible changes should be factored into the new plan.

#### **- NAIS Accreditation**

This year is an important phase toward the accreditation of AIS. It will help the school to get better and stronger because we will have established procedures.

We will have to review our gift acceptance policy and our investment policy to include them in the NAIS dossier.

Barksdale volunteered to be the chair of the accreditation committee so that we are ready for next year.

#### **- Opportunity for board members development**

What could the board do to help advancement, marketing, and fundraising since we do not have very good results in these areas?

We have internal fundraising but we need external as well. Christophe stated that we need someone on the board who thinks in terms of fundraising, understands what it means and how to go about it. Barksdale mentioned an organization called *Donor Path* that for a fee gives advice on raising money.

Hannifa offered to contact PTO parents that have experience in marketing.

#### **- Audit committee update**

Christophe and Janet are members of the committee. They will work with the firm Atchley & Associates that has excellent auditors and will provide good advice. Barksdale noted that we are in good hands with a CPA on the board, Ana Barbara, and a CPA as auditor.

## II. HOS Report to Board

### a. Construction

The new wing was completed on time and below budget adding 9,000 sqft of educational space

### b. Enrollment

There should be 201 students by November 3<sup>rd</sup>. With at least 200 students our benchmark will be reached.

### c. Marketing and Communication

During the summer, in collaboration with Jennifer Darouzet, Christophe launched a survey to better understand the community. Questions such as why parents enroll their children, why they stay, why they leave, why they come back were asked. As of August 20 103 parents responded to the survey. This good participation is an indicator of the parents' positive attitude towards the school and it is corroborated by the fact that 67% of parents are talking positively about the school.

Christophe has hired two consultants Sharon Monroe and Libba Letton. They will craft a communication strategy using the results of the survey. STEEL will continue helping us to present our positioning.

### d. Administration Improvement Plan

Christophe reported that he and five people will be working during the October break on an administrative chart that will be more horizontal and collaborative. The new chart will be presented at the November Board meeting.

### e. Faculty Improvement Plan

During the summer Christine and Christophe attended a five day training program which was instrumental in articulating a new vision for the faculty.

Currently Christine and Christophe are in the process of developing innovative ways to treat teachers. It will be worked out over three years. The idea is to create a culture where faculty learn from one another, give and receive feedback, and are receptive to peer to peer reviews. They would be encouraged to do public presentations or if they chose to do them on a one to one basis.

Teachers will also have the possibility of attending conferences.

This year the school will profit again from the visit of the specialist in science who came last year.

Christophe reported that the faculty was pleased with these initiatives.

f. Miscellaneous.

Christophe distributed a corrected version of the draft of the Five Year Projection Budget. At the retreat David had pointed out an error that has now been rectified.

The school hosted a reading and writing program that aims at teaching kids to read and write from elementary to high school.

Sunday August 24, an agreement will be signed to finalize a Russian school, which will take place every Sunday at AIS. In addition to some extra income, this initiative will be good publicity for the school.

The inauguration of the new wing will take place Friday September 26. Members of the Board are invited to attend and to bring along friends and acquaintances to introduced the school to new prospective parents or donors.

### **III. PTO President's Report**

The board had the pleasure of meeting the new president of the PTO Hannifa Smine. She reported that she had already met many parents, and that many of them offered to be volunteers.

Hannifa indicated that the PTO will take on the challenging and complicated landscaping project.

She reported that Pizza Friday continues to be a great fundraiser.

The next PTO meeting will take place September 10 at 5:30.

There being no further business before the Board the public proceedings concluded at 8:41 PM

**Approved on September 10, 2014**

**Signed:**

*Dina Sherzer*