

**Linn Christian Education Association  
Isaac Newton Christian Academy  
Board Meeting Minutes  
2024-03-26 6:00-8:45pm**

**Attendance**

- staff: Dr. Dean Ridder, Tracy King (via Zoom)
- board members: Amy McDonald, Bob Mosey, John Garbes, Harris Holsapple, Jonathan Newberry, Neil Gutschmidt, Katie Warner (starting at 6:10pm); Steve Howard and Stephanie Prochaska were absent, but those present still constitute a quorum
- guests: Joanna Klever (until 7:55pm, teacher)

**Opening**

Bob opened the meeting in prayer. Harris shared a devotional about Holy Week, including an informal communion. Katie will prepare a devotion for the March meeting.

**Secretary's Report**

The board approved the minutes from the February board meeting via email. The board also approved over email to make an offer to a candidate recommended by both Dean and Katie for the open Director of Communications position.

**Head Of School's Report**

Dean presented five policies for review:

- 3.02.02, Board Member Code of Ethics
- 4.01.03, Transfer or Early Withdrawal
- 5.02, Grading Scale
- 7.01, Student Directory Information
- 7.08.02, Athletic Handbook

No changes were proposed, none were made.

Due to changes in the insurance market, and the losses incurred as a result of the derecho in August 2020, the school's relationship with its insurance company is being discontinued as of June 2024. School leadership is exploring an interim solution involving a combination of catastrophic and liability policies in the short term, until past claims are no longer an obstacle or until a different strategy is put in place. The Finance Committee will be meeting soon to evaluate options and develop a recommendation.

Three open positions have been posted for elementary teachers for the 24/25 school year, as a result of growth and attrition. With board approval secured, the Director of Communications position will be offered to the recommended candidate.

After a question from a board member, Dean led an information discussion about the ISASP standardized testing that will be used in place of the Iowa Assessments, to comply with Iowa law relating to Education Savings Accounts (ESAs). Staff is being trained on how to administer the testing properly, and an update on how it went will be provided at the next board meeting.

Dean shared a board professional development article titled *Who Else wants a Useful School Strategic Plan?*, sourced from LinkedIn.

### **Director Of Development & Enrollment Report**

Tracy provided an update on gifts, with an additional \$7k total received since last month across multiple categories. She noted that the Annual Banquet is not yet fully underwritten to cover the costs (which would enable all gifts during/after the event to be 100% dedicated to supporting the school), but is still working with potential sponsors. She is also working proactively on securing a date and speaker for the 2025 Annual Banquet, but nothing is firm there yet.

The second distribution of STO for the 23/24 school year was received. Tracy will be attending an STO meeting with Heart Of Iowa in July, which will likely address the future of STO in a landscape overshadowed by ESA.

There were no new student withdrawals since last month's meeting, and Tracy is working to fill classes for next year. Administration has gone to great lengths to make effective use of every space available, but additional changes are being considered as our total number of class sections will need to grow by one next year, simply due to an advancing wave of dual-section grades that is pushing into Junior High next year. Three potential short-term solutions are being investigated: temporarily (for one year only) convert the cafeteria into two classrooms using mobile partitions and have students eat lunch in their classrooms; secure a temporary off-site location for a subset of classes to meet; or procure temporary portable classrooms and perform enhancements to our existing site to accommodate them. The board recognizes that none of these are ideal, and a longer term solution is needed (and the board is working on that), but we don't want to cut ties with our existing families just because our current facility is at capacity.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Neil presented an updated financial summary that is right on track with last month's update:

- Year-to-date revenue is up 4% over last year
- Year-to-date expenses are within 0.5% of the budget
- The school is on track to end with positive net-income for the school year
- The balance sheet reflects a positive overall balance, and a portion of it is being moved into no-risk interest-bearing monetary vehicles

### **Facilities Committee**

John reported that the Traffic Evaluation was completed and an analysis was provided to the school regarding our potential for growth. The Facilities Committee will be meeting with the engineering firm that did the study to discuss the conclusions and develop a proposed action plan and next steps.

The facilities committee is exploring the possibility of a permanent second, satellite location. A desirable site has been identified and the committee is investigating ways to perform an inspection/appraisal prior to any recommendation to the board.

John told the board that the Patriot Center building contractor has taken responsibility for resolving the issues with getting side-court basketball hoops installed. A solution has not been found yet, but the issue is getting renewed attention again.

### **Communication Committee**

With the board having approved the candidate for the Director of Communications position, administration will work on getting her integrated into the mechanics of the school office team.

Katie reported that a framework is being laid out for community-building during the 24/25 school year, including class-focused events. She's been conducting trial runs this year, with second grade families, and has received very positive feedback from parents and students after her recent community-building events. A broader roll-out of the plan will occur at the LCEA Annual Meeting on May 6th, with an advertising push in advance of the Annual Meeting to increase awareness and participation.

### **Annual Meeting**

The LCEA Annual Meeting is scheduled for 6pm on May 6th, in the Patriot Center, and a preliminary agenda has been drafted. The Cornwell-Johnston Meritorious Award will be presented. Bob will work with Tracy to identify potential candidates for the award and communicate them to the board to select a winner. Bob will also work with the office to assemble voting ballots and ensure the necessary notifications are sent regarding the Annual Meeting, consistent with the rules laid out in the bylaws.

### **Sports Advisory Council**

Xavier has notified Issac Newton they are ending our existing cooperative arrangements to provide more opportunities for their own student base. We are exploring an alternative relationship and agreement is pending approval. The SAC has resumed regular meetings and has added multiple interested participants.

### **Closed Session**

Visitors were excused from the meeting and the board entered a closed session to discuss staffing. No board actions resulted from the closed session.

### **Closing**

The meeting closed in prayer.

### **Future Board Meetings**

- April 23rd, 6-8pm
- May 28th, 6-8pm
- July 23rd, 6-8pm