

**Linn Christian Education Association
Isaac Newton Christian Academy
Board Meeting Minutes
2024-01-23 6:00-9:15pm**

Attendance

- staff: Dr. Dean Ridder, Tracy King
- board members: Amy McDonald, Steve Howard, Bob Mosey, Stephanie Prochaska, John Garbes, Harris Holsapple, Jonathan Newberry, Neil Gutschmidt, Katie Warner

Opening

Jonathan opened the meeting in prayer. John shared a devotional about renewal as we start a fresh calendar year. Stephanie volunteered to prepare a devotion for the February meeting, and Harris in for March.

Secretary's Report

The minutes from the November board meeting were sent to the board for review, with some corrections/suggestions provided. A more extensive revision was proposed and will be reviewed/approved via email after the January meeting.

Head Of School's Report

Dean presented three policies for review:

- 2.02, Philosophy of Christian Education
- 4.01.01, Tuition and Fees
- 8.11, School Visitors and Guests

No changes were proposed, none were made.

Dean explained a requirement of the Iowa Students First Act legislation, which created Education Savings Accounts (ESAs), associated with standardized testing. Students at Isaac Newton Christian Academy who have taken the Iowa Assessments for many years will instead be taking the ISASP (Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress), which public schools have already been using. The board discussed some concerns related to the new requirement and Dr. Ridder will continue to monitor. As the new test is shorter, this change in testing will also allow Isaac Newton to add a new Bible Assessment testing component, developed by ACSI.

The board asked if there were any other potential new requirements related to ESA and Dr. Ridder advised he participates in multiple organizations to provide him insight and wasn't aware of anything else. The board discussed generally concerns related to ESA and risks to our Mission. The board reiterated the priority of the school's mission first and foremost.

Dean provided a staffing review of the school's faculty. He noted in particular that Isaac Newton Christian Academy has a high percentage of faculty with advanced degrees and many excellent new teachers for the current 23/24 school year.

Dean shared a board professional development article by Henry Contant titled *Important or Urgent, What Makes It on Your Board Meeting Agenda?*, about prioritizing strategic discussion at board meetings and being effective with the time the board spends.

Director Of Development & Enrollment Report

Tracy shared an update on gifts year-to-date, which are on track overall, and ahead of the budget in all areas except the Annual Banquet which hasn't happened yet. Preparation for the Annual Banquet in April is in full-swing. The funds available for student tuition via the STO program got a little boost from undesignated gifts received by Heart Of Iowa that were distributed to participating schools that had not individually reached their giving limit; the total STO funds available to distribute at Isaac Newton totaled \$96,722 for the 23/24 school year.

Tracy reported a total current enrollment for the 24/25 school year of 351 from current families before opening up enrollment to new students/ families, and will follow up later to the board with details by-grade so that sections and faculty can be evaluated.

There will be an Open House on February 20th for current and prospective students. Board members will be available to support, but will not have a specific "board table" to staff.

Treasurer's Report

Neil presented an updated financial summary:

- Year-to-date revenue is up 3% compared to last year, on track with budget
- Year-to-date expenses are up 1% compared to last year, ahead of budget
- The school is on-track for the expected outcome at this point in the school year
- The balance sheet reflects the current zero-debt situation for the school

Neil will be prepared to lead the board through staff salary planning at the February meeting.

Communication Committee

Tracy and Amy met with two different capital campaign consultants. The committee recommended Amperage to conduct a feasibility study for a potential capital campaign, with a \$25.5k initial cost. The board discussed the proposed services, the overall need, and timing. After the feasibility study, additional services for the actual fundraising campaign could optionally be considered. Neil made a motion to allow the committee to hire Amperage if and when they deem it prudent; Harris seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous verbal vote.

Facilities Committee

As facilities growth is considered on our existing campus, the facilities committee recommended that a traffic evaluation be performed to determine potential pain points that would be exacerbated by adding classrooms, initially starting with access/parking, and potentially expanding to kitchen, music, specials, etc. For vehicle-related considerations in particular, a Transportation Engineering study would analyze whether relevant logistics problems can even be solved at our current location, due to limitations of our geography and Cedar Rapids city ordinances. The committee recommended hiring Hall & Hall Engineers to perform a traffic evaluation, at \$10k cost. The board discussed considering a 2nd site alternative and pros and

cons to a 2nd site that would eliminate the need for the traffic analysis. Neil made a motion to allow the committee to hire Hall & Hall if and when they deem it prudent; Harris seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous verbal vote.

Nominating Committee

Steve & Katie met with Gabe Rohwedder for consideration of inclusion on the board, and shared a summary of their meeting. Steve & Katie made a motion to recommend Gabe for inclusion on the election ballot at the Annual Meeting; John seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Steve & Katie also met with Stephen Pitts for consideration of inclusion on the board, and shared a summary of their meeting. Neil made a motion to recommend Stephen for inclusion on the election ballot at the Annual Meeting; Jonathan seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Closing

The meeting closed in prayer.

Future Board Meetings

- February 27th, 6-8pm
- March 26th, 6-8pm