

**Cape Fear Center for Inquiry  
Continued Meeting Minutes  
11/20/07**

**Attended by:** Jane Radack, Lori Barrett, Rick Lawson, Heather Kelejian, Lisa Griffin, Eddie West, Harden Barker, Lori Winner, Sarah McCorcle, Karen Varieur (Partnership), Rob Tripp, Michelle Frazier, Joanne Brinkley, Anne Patterson, Beth Carter, John Rack

**Absent:** Ke'pe Harrison, Bob Marcino

**Visitors:** Rose Sutzko, Jay Sharpe, Emily Barth

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Meeting began @ 7:01 pm.

Eddie West motioned to approve the minutes from 10/16/07; Rick Lawson seconded. Motion carried. Jane Radack motioned to approve the minutes from 11/6/07; Rick Lawson seconded. Motion carried.

Heather Kelejian announced that Harden Barker will be the time keeper in order to facilitate the meeting. People will be limited to 2 minutes each. Discussion topics will be kept to 10 minutes when possible.

December's meeting needs to be moved to December 11<sup>th</sup> because the meeting is scheduled during CFCI's winter break as it stands now. Heather Kelejian motioned to move the meeting to 12/11. Anne Patterson seconded. Motion carried with Rob Tripp abstaining.

Heather Kelejian announced that January's meeting will be on the same night as the Partnership so Board members will have a chance to be introduced to the community and then move to a middle school room for the meeting.

Rick Lawson moved to approve the executive session minutes from 10/16/07. Eddie West seconded. Motion carried.

Anne Patterson moved to approve the executive session minutes from 11/6. Rob Tripp seconded. Motion carried.

Jay Sharpe, our auditor, passed out the draft audit; we are waiting for the state to approve the financial statements to be finalized. No explanation as to why it has taken so long for the state to approve the numbers for this school year.

CFCI received an unqualified opinion which is the best opinion you can get.

Financial position of the school as of 6/30/07. Net assets - cash/cash equivalent – over a million; this is a great reflection on cash management over the years. Net assets: \$1,422,701. CFCI has the best financial statement of the nine charter schools Jay Sharpe’s audit.

Majority of CFCI’s funds are spent on instructional programs.

CFCI earned \$47,000 of interest for the ‘06/’07 school year; most charter schools are lucky to have \$1000. CFCI paid off \$17,751 of the debt on the land last year. CFCI owes balance on the land of \$349,909 by June 30, 2009 if we do not refinance.

Accounting policies did not change in the ‘06/’07 school year. The Auditor had no findings and therefore no question costs.

Rick Lawson asked if Jay Sharpe would recommend that CFCI use the interest to pay off some of the land debt. P. 15 – we are \$23,000 in interest on the land, but made \$47,000 on interest; Jay Sharpe wouldn’t recommend putting it against the land at this point since it’s helpful to have some available cash reserves.

Lisa Hassell explained that we intend to wrap the cost of the land into the bond when we finance a new facility. Joanne Brinkley asked how much CFCI has in cash: \$1,074,000 as of June 30, 2007.

**Partnership update:**

Karen Varieur: December Holiday Festival. Fund the Wonder is at \$5200 and getting closer to the goal. The Partnership is putting together a directory of recommended businesses. Not a fundraiser – going through the holidays. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade mosaic is amazing!!! Based on integrated curriculum: communication through artwork. New t-shirts are available as well.

The board voted by ballot on realtors. Tom Wolfe took the vote, 9 to 1.

Heather Kelejian raised the issue of the board policy on Community members who wish to speak at board meetings.

Lori Winner motioned to approve the community sign in sheet. John Rack seconded.

Discussion: Joanne Brinkley would like to change “may not be able to speak”

Harden Barker had researched Pender, New Hanover County, Brunswick. The wording on the proposed policy came from this research.

Eddie West said that every board he has served on has had a policy of letting people speak; the board does not respond, but delegates a response.

Rob Tripp suggested an amendment that says “will not be able to speak at this time”.  
John Rack: so as to avoid confusion in the future he agrees with the amendment. Please realize that the board will not be able to speak to your question, issue, or opinion at this time.

Joanne Brinkley: 20 minutes set aside for community members to speak?

Harden Barker: 20 minutes is in the ballpark of the surrounding counties.

Anne Patterson: where would community members speaking fall in the agenda?

Rick Lawson: usually, honoring and public speaking comes first on the agenda, then a short break

Heather Kelejian: would fall in the same place, the agenda will be adjusted so that the meeting would still be completed within 2 hours.

Lori Winner withdrew her original motion. Lori Winner motioned to approve the community sign-in sheet and the board policy about public speaking at board meetings with the amendments. Rob Tripp seconded. Motion carried.

ADR recommendations up for discussion.

Rob Tripp motioned that whereas the board went into the agreement with ADR that we would implement their recommendations as a whole, and the board’s only stipulations for dismissal of a recommendation was based on conflicts with CFCI’s vision, budgetary concerns and/or impossible practical implementation of a recommendation and since the board put forth at the called meeting on November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2007 that any concerns with items should be forwarded to the board president by November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007 and since none of these concerns were so egregious as to completely dismiss any of the recommendations, he moved that the board accept ADR recommendations as a whole with future plans for implementation charged by the CFCI board to appropriate board committees and/or the school support team. Lisa Hassell seconded

Discussion:

Heather Kelejian did receive concerns about the ADR recommendations. She did not email out all the discussion items. She recommended sitting down with Lisa Griffin, Rick Lawson, Eddie West and Heather Kelejian to discuss the amending of the ADR recommendations.

Joanne Brinkley asked why we need to approve the ADR recommendations if the board had agreed to them upfront. Heather Kelejian and Jane Radack explained that at the time, there were no executive session minutes kept, therefore there are no minutes that corroborate that the board agreed to these and they need to be officially approved.

Lori Winner expressed strong concerns about approving the recommendations as a whole because there are specific budgetary concerns, i.e. – full-time ec coordinator, as well as logistical concerns, i.e.: the committee restructuring idea.

Joanne Brinkley: as to the committee structure how do we know it would work, how do we know we could fill up the committee spots and get the work done if the recommendation that each faculty member serve on only one committee does not work?

Rob Tripp reiterated that the board said we would go along with these recommendations unless they were so egregious that it doesn't align with the mission of the school, now he is concerned because we are focusing on worries about implementation.

John Rack asked for clarification of what a positive vote means.

Heather Kelejian: a positive vote indicates that we are accepting in good faith that what ADR has given us, that these recommendations will help the school improve.

Michelle Frazier: until we approve these as a board, we can't get to the implementation; if we vote yes then we can get to the tweaking and the implementations.

Lori Winner: She does respect ADR's expertise, but there are some pieces she is not sure we can implement at all - #18 sounds great in a perfect world, but can we?

Beth Carter: if we approve these, we are approving spirit of the law vs. letter of the law, we are approving the spirit of improvement of the school, we are expressing trust that it will move forward with the faculty, board, and community making sure they are implemented in ways which are responsible.

Eddie West: it is a conceptual framework.

Vote: 9 Yeses, 2 Opposed (Joanne Brinkley, Lori Winner), No Abstentions

Lori Winner: since her concerns were brought forward but not sent out to the board as a whole, she wanted it noted that she did not feel her concerns were heard.

**Job Description Discussion:**

Jane Radack explained that the Business Position will be consistently referred to as Business Operations Coordinator. Also, meeting monthly with the Board Treasurer to go over the budget to be presented at each monthly board meeting will be added to the Business Operations Coordinator position's job responsibilities.

Beth Carter: how much do we pay North Star Acadia? She would like to have the board consider moving all the accounting back to the Business Coordinator as a way to attain more money for the curriculum coordinator position. How much are we paying for administrators to run the school vs. curriculum?

Lisa Hassell: Acadia serves as another control for the money.

Sarah McCorcle expressed concerned about the student discipline responsibilities under the support team; only the Director, Curriculum Coordinator and EC Coordinator would probably be qualified to play that role. Sarah McCorcle is also concerned about the Director's coordination of faculty's 3 part review; she does not feel it is appropriate that parents' evaluations could influence whether a contract was renewed or not. She pointed out that management of 504 plans is missing and needs to be included under one of these jobs.

Rob Tripp moved to extend questions for 10 minutes. Anne Patterson seconded. Motion carried.

Anne Patterson: sees the grant writing part under the director's job responsibilities as not under the correct job; she sees the Business Operation Coordinator as the safety officer but not overseeing the front office staff; the jobs need clarification about who reports to whom.

Lisa Hassell: the business manager overseeing the front office staff doesn't make sense if that job is part time.

Lori Winner: we need to discuss these job descriptions at length.

Anne Patterson motioned to have a called meeting to discuss job descriptions as well as fit in the executive session about personnel matters on Tuesday, November 27<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm. Lori Winner seconded. Motion carried. **Lisa Griffin will put info on the marquee.**

Employment Contract Revisions: Lori Barrett explained this issue came up in the spring of last year when the lawyer made suggestions of clarifications of ambiguity so as to avoid wrongful termination litigation.

Anne Patterson – where are the changes? #8, #9

Harden Barker: on proposed contract, where is the county supplement?

Lori Winner: agreed that #7 would make her feel more comfortable if it were spelled out as 8%.

Joanne Brinkley: agreed with specifying the county supplement as 8%.

Michelle Frazier: can we add that part back in?

Sarah McCorcle: is there room for 30 days notice if you're done with this job?

Lisa Griffin: no, because we are at-will, and it works both ways.

Heather Kelejian – the board should be prepared for a vote on this in December.

Beth Carter: are we moving to binding arbitration? That would be a new precedent for us.

Rick Lawson: binding arbitration only comes into play if there is a separation of employment, mediation occurs prior to that step.

Joanne Brinkley: can this issue be slated for a vote in January?

**The board agreed to table the vote on new employee contracts until January, '08.**

Finance Committee Report:

Lisa Hassell passed out the budget. This format is the official state format; however our numbers have not been officially adjusted. They will be available in December. Expense numbers are correct; revenue numbers are not yet updated.

Rick Lawson: how do we operate 6 months in the blind?

Lori Barrett: we make a projected budget based on last year's expenditures, and revenues based on head count of students.

Joanne Brinkley: is the net surplus going to go up?

Lisa Hassell: that is her understanding as well as the knowledge that the red light money will go into local revenue.

**Strategic Plan Report:**

Anne Patterson: Trish Torkleson, CFCI's EC Coordinator thinks it is realistic to come back with an implementation plan for 2008/09 school year, item #2 under academic excellence. Her recommendation changed 3c under the strategic plan.

Anne Patterson reminded us that we don't do the work of the goal; we confirm that it is still valid.

Middle grades: feedback by January – **Sarah McCorcle will take #s 4 and 5 back to middle grade teachers to see if they are valid.**

The Board reviewed #6 of strategic plan, pertaining to integration of new students to CFCI.

Joanne Brinkley: does this refer to what happens up front to inform new families what makes CFCI different or after they enroll?

Michelle Frazier: It is valid, but let's keep those ideas separate, whether it is the upfront or within the school year.

Sarah McCorcle: the new Curriculum Coordinator could take this on.

Beth Carter: She sees this as the faculty's job, a logical thing would be to have a k-2, 3-5, 6-8 night where you see what an inquiry project looks like, what homework looks like, this is how you can support your kid from now on (maybe between lottery and enrollment).

Lisa Griffin: We need to reassess what we are not communicating about how CFCI is different.

Jane Radack: She would like to see the Partnership involved as well in this process.

The Board reviewed #7 of the strategic plan, pertaining to consistency of progress reports, etc...

Rob Tripp: This goal was set because there were difference among the middle grade, as well as between loops.

Sarah McCorcle: It makes sense to assess this year, address it next year. Format of how the document looks.

Jane Radack: Clarified that this goal is definitely still valid.

Beth Carter suggested postponing the field trip form since we cannot change it before the Holiday break.

#### Policy and Procedures Mileage Reimbursement Discussion:

At 9:00 pm, Rob Tripp motioned to extend the meeting for 15 minutes. Anne Patterson seconded. Motion carried.

Emily Barth said that now there are on-line meetings that should impact this financially in a positive way.

John Rack: how did the committee come up with \$2500 as the maximum line item.

Beth Carter: This was based on the worst case scenario.

Lori Barrett: From a financial view of this, we have been operating on the premise that we don't pay out things that we don't need to, that is why we have reserves. Lori Barrett drives a lot but has always understood that it was part of her job.

Heather Kelejian: is this only for a trial year?

Rob Tripp: mileage reimbursement is like free coffee, we're requiring people to go so he feels it is important.

Lori Winner: expressed frustration that we have discussed this item at length vs. the ADR recommendations. She asked to bring issue to a vote.

Recommendations were approved with Jane Radack abstaining.

Anne Patterson: charges finance committee with budgeting the policy and putting it in as a line item.

Lisa Hassell asked if this means that once the \$2500 cap is meant, no-one else will be reimbursed for that school year.

#### **Director's Report:**

Disciplinary Data was distributed by Emily Barth.

Now that CFCI uses the NC wise program, Acadia will process this data. There is a form for a major incident with a child without an IEP, or any incident involving a child with an IEP. Emily Barth and Lisa Griffin are proposing to get NCwise at the local level so as to not outsource this job. This information must be reported to DGP; this way it will not go through so many hands. Lisa Griffin's research shows that more and more, schools are asking for that one little component to be at the local level.

Anne Patterson: will there be a reduction in costs?

Jane Radack: Acadia needs to be formally asked to reduce their fees if we do this.

Joanne Brinkley: what does it take to change this?

Lisa Griffin: It takes no money, etc...

Jane Radack: the only downside is that full responsibility will now be in Emily Barth's hands for reporting to DPI, checked by Lisa Griffin.

Anne Patterson made a motion to move the DCC site of NCwise to the local level. Rob Tripp seconded. Motion carried.

Last year, the board had asked whether it was feasible to move the lottery earlier in the year because other local schools have earlier lotteries. Lisa Griffin and Pam O'Dell have worked on this. They will eliminate intent form. January will be the month for informational meetings. The lottery will be held in February.

Rick Lawson: Are there any difficulty with the charter if you don't have an accurate numbers about availability?

Lisa Griffin: No. Even in the past, openings are generally not complete until the summer, and are always changing.

Jane Radack: Will Lisa Griffin be sure to communicate with current CFCI families about change in the process so as to get as accurate of a count of openings as possible?

Lisa Griffin: Yes.

At 9:15 pm, Rob Tripp motioned to extend the meeting for 6 more minutes. Joanne Brinkley seconded. Motion carried.

Anne Patterson made a motion to approve the Lottery process moving up to February. Lori Winner seconded. Motion carried.

Jane Radack motioned to adjourn the meeting. Lisa Hassell seconded. Meeting adjourned at 9:25pm