

BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

Shiflet Hall Conference Room

September 10, 2021 – 10:30 a.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Hugh Bland, Board Chairman, called the meeting to order.

II. WELCOME GUESTS and MEDIA

Mr. Bland, President, introduced Mrs. Georgia Seabrook of the Foundation Board of Directors, Mr. Steve Jordan from the Foundation Board of Directors, and Ms. Lindsey Hodges from the Index Journal.

III. INVOCATION

Edgar Lamb, a member of the Board, gave the invocation.

IV. ROLL CALL

Mr. Keown conducted the roll call. In attendance were Hugh Bland, Edgar Lamb, Tom Love, Craig Kesler, Ron Davis, Gary Coleman, and Owen Smith.

A quorum was declared.

V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Davis made the motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Love seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the agenda.

VI. APPROVAL OF June 18, 2021 MINUTES

Mr. Love made the motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Lamb seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the minutes.

VII. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Keown provided an update to the Board of Trustees.

Mr. Keown started his report off by showing his excitement for the new group of students on our campus. We are starting this school year with sixty-one students and have had zero cases of homesickness so far. Our minority population has increased to 18%, and Ms. Giba is out recruiting today. Mr. Keown also mentioned our show barn and encouraged everyone to drive by

it. The cows are extremely comfortable and almost represent every breed of cow.

Mr. Keown then provided the Board an update on our new hires. The SC Governor's School for agriculture has hired a new social studies teacher, farm manager, and residential advisors. Our staffing turnover was minimal, but we are still looking for part-time residential advisors.

The state has approved renovations to De la Howe Hall, and we have reviewed all architects that put in a bid. The last three residential halls will have a general contractor. We will also tackle all items on our deferred maintenance list from the 2018 report. Once we received the SC Inspector General's Audit, all employees had to go through a procurement workshop and an ethics workshop.

Representative Patrick B. Haddon is working on a bill to help us get a first right of refusal for farm equipment. Furthermore, we are having a legislative dove hunt on campus hosted by Farm Bureau on September 23rd. The whole general assembly is invited to this hunt, and DNR game wardens will be checking guns, followed by a safety talk right before they go into the field. After that, everyone will be spread out, and DNR will check licenses.

In closing, Mr. Keown provided the Board with a Covid-19 update. The four students who tested positive all lived in the same residential dorm. Our Covid task force is now coming up with new ideas, and our students are excited to come back Sunday. We have eight students who are vaccinated, and nearly all employees are vaccinated.

VIII. FOUNDATION UPDATE – Mr. Bob Coble

Mr. Coble gave an update on the Foundation by first introducing Mrs. Georgia Seabrook and Mr. Steve Jordan from the John de la Howe School Foundation, Inc.

Mr. Coble then gave two legal updates concerning the Foundation. First, the Attorney General had to approve the rate, and we are working at the lowest rate. Once the enabling legislation was passed, we did not need a lobbyist. Concerning our MOU, the items in red are required by enabling legislation. Section seven requires that the Foundation have an MOU that is consistent. The MOU clarifies that the school controls the Foundation and that the Foundation cannot go off on its own. The enabling legislation also states that the Foundation cannot do anything the Board of Trustees does not want them to do. Mrs. Georgia Seabrook is serving as the interim chair for signing purposes.

The second legal update is concerning restricted funds held by the SC Treasurer in six accounts that have been held for years with interest growing on it. We do not have any of the original documentation. The Treasurer is currently holding the money, and Mr. Keown can work with the Treasurer to see if we can agree upon a purpose to acquire the funds legally. When acquiring it properly, we want the funds to be used in ways that the school needs. Some missions might have to be changed. The MOU and enabling legislation did not cover this, so this is unchartered water. We want to make sure the Board of Trustees and the President are taking the lead. We also might want to consider having a joint meeting with both Boards.

A motion was made to allow the Chair and President to sign the MOU. Mr. Smith made the motion. Mr. Kesler seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved.

A motion was made to allow Mr. Keown to acquire with the Treasurer on behalf of the Foundation to investigate restricted funds in the state Treasury. Mr. Love made the motion. Mr. Gary Coleman seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved.

IX. REVIEW OF DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

The Board Members received departmental reports from the school prior to the scheduled September meeting. They took this time to discuss any questions or concerns they had from the written reports. Each department head present gave an update on their department for the school year.

Business Operations- Mr. Coleman

Mr. Coleman first introduced Melissa Simpson. Melissa is our new procurement specialist coming to us from SC DHEC where she worked for twenty years.

Since our last meeting, we have been in a new fiscal year. The business office has completed six of the nine consolidated financial reports. We will have the remaining three next week. Next month we will be meeting with the executive budget for our fiscal year 2023. We are also finalizing our annual Accountability Report this month. We have been extremely busy for the start of our fiscal year. We had all three auditors in during this time. We have been looking at a snapshot of expenses with an increase in students and staff.

Getting into the operational aspect, we have already completed our Fees and Fines Report. Next month we have our Bank Account Transparency Accountability Report.

Furthermore, we had about 1.7 million carry forward and will be set aside for deferred maintenance. One thing that has been helping during our transition is that we have an MOU with the Department of Admin through shared services. With growth, we will need to request a new resource for IT to increase to more than one person. When we get to our maximum capacity, we will probably have to grow our business department.

Maintenance- Mr. Durham

Mr. Durham first wanted to address the reports and what the maintenance department has learned from them. Mr. Durham decided how the residential houses were going to be ready. As a general contractor, he did not believe the residential houses would be completed in time, doing them one by one. Mr. Durham wanted to ensure everyone that nothing was done intentionally or underhanded. As the Inspector General showed, nothing was done illegally.

Moving forward, we will keep around twenty to twenty-five projects at a time. Some of the maintenance items that we have been working on are eighty hours of mulching, the cow show barn, and the horse arena, which they will begin bringing in the sand next week. This new horse arena will be able to handle anything, and we can now host a rodeo, English dressage event, show horses, and livestock shows.

We are still waiting on specifications on our generators that are on site. We have also received the final drawings for the pool demolition. The two units for L.S Brice have been ordered. Osmosis has been here, and they finished their inspection and treatment last week. Furthermore, we tried to get a partnership with the DOT to fix the road to the Education Center, but they declined. We had three trees cut and then found four more. Since then, we have been looking at a comprehensive plan to spend money on trees.

We also received a draft lease agreement for Verizon that will help a mile radius around campus. In addition, we are working on our five-stand for skeet shooting. You have also received an assessment of the Branch House. For De la Howe Hall, we received 11 proposals. We will be inviting firms in two weeks to interview. We must pick a firm by October/ November to have a design by March of next year.

School-Mr. Thompson

Mr. Thompson gave an update regarding the school. We have filled all of our vacancies for the school, including Mr. Sargent, our new social studies teacher, Mr. Mann, our new ag teacher, Mrs. Banks, our new science teacher, and Mrs. Lively, our new school registrar. We are working with Mrs. Lively to improve our communications with our procurement process. So now we will have one contact from the school to reach out to the business office.

The new students on campus have blended in perfectly with our old kids. Our male and female students are almost even. One day we would love for everyone to come to see our data room. Furthermore, we are in the process of trying to purchase a bus with Mr. Coleman. Our academic schedule is different from last year, where all of our classes are blended in together. Right now, as our students are virtual, we have had a smooth transition. Every morning we meet with the students at 7:45.

Also, Ag Mec was added to our pathways. One thing we need to look at is promotion requirements. We have to have a policy voted on to determine what makes a sophomore, junior, and senior. The policy we are voting on will require sophomores to have five credits with one English and one math. As a junior, you have to have eleven credits with two English classes, two math classes, and one science course. You will need seventeen credits, three English courses, three math classes, and two science classes as a senior. This will keep us in line with our students graduating to receive a high school diploma in the state of South Carolina.

We are excited about the new animals and crops on campus. However, one of the most exciting events coming up will be our graduation on June 4, 2022. As you see in your packet, there is a snapshot of our high school diplomas. We already have several seniors accepted to several different colleges.

A motion was made to approve the recommendation of promotion requirements for students. Mr. Love made the motion. Mr. Davis seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved.

Mrs. Miller- Education Center

Mrs. Miller gave a summary regarding the Education Center. The Education Center was wide open all summer. We could not have had a better turnout for summer camps this year. We had six different day camps that served over one hundred children. We had students from eleven counties from South Carolina represented, six counties in Georgia, and a student from Texas. We had an Aggie Adventure overnight camp that serves as a recruiting purpose. We had one student from this camp become a student. We were fortunate to have the Farm Bureau Youth Leadership Camp this summer, and they could

have selected any location. They have already sent in a date for next year. We also squeezed in a canning workshop and are planning a fencing workshop, burlap wreath workshop, beginning farmer workshop, cookie decorating workshop, farm safety training workshop, and a small ruminant workshop. The Education Center also hosted a law enforcement animal welfare training that worked with the University of Georgia and the University of Florida. We had the Garden Club of South Carolina come to our campus, leading to several other speaking engagements. In February, Ms. Miller will be attending an event in Elloree, SC. Several Farm Bureau committees have toured and visited campus. In closing, we have several field trips coming up. As of now, we have two scheduled, one from Greenville and one from a homeschool group.

Ms. Belton- Public Relations and Marketing

Ms. Belton provided a brief update on our social media with Facebook having the largest following with over 3,000 likes. A social media policy was sent out to staff regarding personal and school pages. We are doing a MOA ceremonial signing with SC State on September 22nd and we would love to have you all there.

Dana Marin- HR and Residential Life

Next, Ms. Martin updated the Board on HR and residential life. In the HR department, we had a busy summer. We had a lot of new hires. We have eight of twenty-six part-time positions filled. The listings are still posted on the state website. In August, we hired a science teacher, social studies teacher, agricultural teacher, several residential advisors, guidance counselor, part-time animal feeder, registrar, part-time shot-gun coach, part-time maintenance position, part-time academic coach, and a procurement specialist.

For residential life, our RA's were extremely busy this summer. Our RA's went through inventory through all houses and completely cleaned out Charleston and Hessie Morrah. The residential advisors also moved the residential life office to give us more space for the new assistant director and meeting space. In addition, we hired four new full-time residential advisors, and each of the residential life staff went through two weeks of training.

Security- Officer Steve Osborne

Officer Osborne gave the BOT an update on security for the campus. It has been a great year so far. The only few incidents we have had are medical.

One young lady hit her neck playing ultimate frisbee and an elderly man got overheated at the horse barn visiting his granddaughter. We are fortunate on our night shift to have a retired EMT. As Ms. Miller mentioned, we are having a farm machinery rescue training. Also, we ordered new traffic signs to match the rest of our signs, with our speed limit being 25 mph.

Wellness Center - Anne Horne

Mrs. Horne provided an update on the Wellness Center. The school is hosting a flu clinic on September 16th and a Covid-19 vaccine clinic on September 30th. We had four positive Covid cases and students will come back on Sunday, September 12th. Are faculty finished CPR training and are now working on vector solutions.

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND CAMPUS LANDSCAPE- Andrew Warner

Andrew Warner was introduced. Andrew is originally from Greenwood, SC, and was a UGA Extension Agent. His goal for this campus is to get it into good shape, with his long-term goal of having row crop research to add to our programs. As for animals, we have ten hogs right now and around 12 horses. We are down one pasture with the new horse arena. Mr. Warner's primary goal is to provide educational experiences.

X. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 12:30 P.M. Mr. Love made the motion to enter executive session. Mr. Davis seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved.

REPORT ON EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board exited executive session at 12:52 P.M. No action was taken during executive session.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

XII. NEXT REGULAR BOARD MEETING – Friday, December 3rd at 10:30 a.m.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Lamb made the motion to adjourn the Board of Trustees meeting. Mr. seconded that motion and the meeting adjourned at 12:55 pm.

Dec 3, 2021
Date Approved by Board of Trustees

H. M. Bland
Mr. Hugh Bland, Chairman

Vacant, Secretary
Scottlyn Cloninger

Scottlyn Cloninger, Recording Secretary