

**Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Association  
Board of Directors Meeting – Official Minutes - Final**



Date: March 14, 2016

Starting Time: 5:30 pm Ending Time: 7:35pm

Benson Library

**ATTENDEES:**

Mike Landstrom (ML), Josh Piper (JP), Dale Bajema (DB), Annika Johnson (AJ), Wes Soderback (WS), Neal Galash (NG), Rob Johns (RJ), Roger Edwards (RE), Don Wear (DW), Max Baker (MB), Gerry Ochs (GO); guests: Bill Pattison, Bosomworth-Fox Marketing; Kevin Clark.

**MINUTES:**

- Introductions new board member:
  - Gerry Ochs: Class of 1977, OSU Civil Engineering, Project Management – construction, Dean of Civil Engineer @ OSU went to school with Gerry
- Introduction of guests:
  - Bill Pattison: 1965, International marketing, PHD in Psychology, Marketing – Research/Public Relations
  - Kevin Clark: 1984 Mechanical drawing, Bio-medical scientist, Serves on the Master plan meeting
- Multiple meeting on Master Planning Committee for Benson HS.
  - School board, 3 committee Member meetings
  - Lots of progress
  - Good discussions
  - Dowya Architect Corporation
    - Local company – first Thursday to use space (need to clarify where) to showcase Benson for bond measure (date to be determined)
    - Jerry Vincent – design lead CTE focus
  - There was discussion on the bond measure, etc.
    - Plumbing, electrical, earthquake.
    - Asked for what we'd like to see different
    - Guest: mid-April?
    - They'll keep the auditorium
- Treasurer's Report (ML): \$3487.48 balance.
  - There was a \$25 donation bad check written, so we had a returned check fee of \$30.
  - Still owe Tammy for yearbooks.
  - Still owe Max from Tech Show.
  - Doesn't reflect anything in the mail.
  - PayPal: \$874.51
  - We'll need to set aside some money for the centennial.

- Discussion about possibly not accepting checks, but it was determined that we would just contact the individual.
- Membership (JP):
  - 27 paid members, but haven't checked mail since tech show.
  - This time last year were at 92, but many members like to renew by mail, so we would guess there are many in the mail.
  - 5 are brand new members, 3 are people that used to be members and now renewed.
- Bylaws review (DB):
  - Discussion of history of the group – where we've been, what we've accomplished.
    - Started with scholarship fund.
    - Discussion about starting alumni association in 2008. Started with 12 members, sponsored the alumni picnic. Tammy made connection with principal and we got a rep on the site council. This was an important connection with the school. Dick Spies developed a schematic vision of new Benson, promoted to teachers and alumni, and suddenly the alumni group became important. 2009 and 2010 redesign kicked off. We attended meetings and sent a few papers to the superintendent. The district at that time was considering converting Benson into a 2 year skills center, which the interim principal supported. When the alumni group and others put pressure on the district, the effort to save Benson as a four year school was underway. Tammy and the site council helped the district design a recruitment program for the school and generated a lot of interest to keep the pressure on. At that time it was capped at 850 students. We expanded the alumni picnic into a Benson Supporters picnic, which was eventually moved to the front of the school. Pressure on the district, and changing board members, have helped bump up enrollment, and we have 300 incoming students this year, supposed to get 365 next year. There's been activity trying to get the Boosters and PTSA going, but the alumni association is the only current strong support group. With additional students, they've added some new programs. Architecture teacher came, district worked to get a grant, and now we've had computer science added back and hoping for engineering next year. We've been involved in selecting the last 2 principals.
    - We had a big fight over athletics a few years ago – to make all high schools a 6A conference, they wanted to take away sports. We kept the Varsity team one year, we had JV last year, and will have an independent varsity team next year.
    - Alumni Association put up the money and did the paperwork to create a 501C-3 Foundation to accept donations. We've had some generous donations despite the lack of advertising. We need a marketing person.

- We've been involved in other things – welcome picnic for incoming freshmen, homecoming, clubs, programs, teacher socials, and the Benson 5 year plan.
  - We haven't been quite as aggressive at pushing on social activities.
- Passed out copy of bylaws.
  - Did we ever incorporate or get tax exemption? No.
  - Promote and support Benson high school.
  - We also provide social activities for alumni, faculty and friends.
    - Alumni room at Tech show and the picnic in Aug have been our big events.
    - Had a monthly social for a while at Kenton station, and some other one-off events.
  - Members – any supporter can be member, \$20 a year dues, annual meeting moved to Tech Show. Select board of directors. Ten members were required.
  - 15 directors maximum specified elected for 3 year terms, which we staggered.
  - Bylaws said meeting quarterly, because we thought we'd have functioning committees, but it's evolved into monthly meetings with minor committee activities.
  - Section 6: supposed to establish board meetings for the coming year. Currently it's the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month. We may want to formally adopt that.
  - Office specifics: board members were only supposed to serve 2 consecutive terms. We've fudged that a bit because of lack of interest.
  - Board has authority to fill vacancies, people can resign etc.
  - Chairperson can convene executive committee to make decisions in-between meetings. We generally email the entire board.
  - Scholarship – we do not comingle the scholarship funds with our general funds. JP has assumed that responsibility in recent years. The account is around \$100,000 and the interest is used to provide scholarships to students each year. The amount awarded per student depends on how many students apply and are accepted.
  - Bylaws can be amended by 2/3 majority of the board. We've amended them a few times but they've been flexible enough that there haven't been many changes needed.
  - ML: section 1 and section 5 might be conflicting. We haven't established a quorum. 10 members for annual meeting, but for other meetings, it's not specific.
  - NG: we changed it to be the majority of filled positions.
  - ML: so with 12 members, we need 7 to be majority. Just a point of clarity.
  - The fact that we have a structure and that we are representative of thousands of alumni (there are 2000 members on our contact list), we are recognized as an influence.

- We have three members on the master planning committee and are looking forward to a number of events to observe the centennial.
- We have won a lot of battles, and there are some alumni that still want to fight those battles. We might think about how we can redirect those efforts to enhance the school. 505 applications this year. We've convinced the district that CTE is valuable – they get that now. But they don't necessarily think of CTE as we do. Health Occupations and Communications counts, but culinary arts, accounting, pre-law are also considered CTE. Everyone is looking to expand CTE inside the city of Portland. CTE at Franklin might be a few electives in automotive – might be largely textbook, but they have a program. Now there's programs in all high schools, but those are not the same.
- Lottery – evolved. 350 for 250, now 500 for 300 spots. They have 500 apps, but now it is in a sense multiple lotteries. Each neighborhood has an allotment, so there's more openings allocated to Roosevelt, Franklin etc. 10 or 15 slots for Lincoln, Wilson etc. if you're an applicant from those schools you are almost sure to get in. They wanted to diversify kids from all over the city, and not deplete certain schools. 300 notices will go out to students that won the lottery.
- Rebuild is for 1700.
- Bill: don't see the lottery as a good thing for Benson because they are not necessarily wanting to go there, they just want to flee.
- RJ: PPS interpretation of No Child Left Behind ended a lot of the requirements for student selection. There have been a few different versions of how to let students into the school. They've also been reengineering the schools: Madison, Jefferson etc. Carol Smith still has this idea in her head that this is the 'overload' school. We've been vocal about our opposition to their perception of the school. We've been gaining ground about moving outside programs that take up CTE space out of the school, but currently this is what we have.
- We've made a lot of gains – career and counseling center, health center etc.
- Bill: finding what people want and make sure your product does that. We need the community to want to preserve it, appreciate it. Let's use it as the prototype. Getting the people paying for it and voting for it saying we have to have it.
- RJ: stats show that CTE ups grad rates. I think we'll see that differentiate with "little CTE" and "big CTE". Every effort does show an impact.
- In the Grant renovation, she will have 8 CTE classes. They won't be comparable to Benson though.
- Bill: let them have CTE, we need a new name that's better than CTE.

- DW: we have industry investing here. We should show that association.
- RJ: There's only 3 seniors in construction right now. About ½ the students are in Health Occupation. ACE lost their space, they are producing about 50 kids that had high school and possibly college credit. There's discussion about having ACE here.
- DW: We have CTE instructor that is retiring and didn't get the freshmen and sophomores interested in the course. Construction was stagnant a few years ago. Now it's picking up again. Now they have newer young faculty in manufacturing and construction and the students are getting energized about it.
- RJ: Algebra Tech and Geo Tech classes started. The city may give a grant to the program to build little houses for the homeless. There are interesting things happening.
- Kevin: Filling a need, creating a civic connection, making the city dependent on the school.
- DW: We help the students develop a technical mindset.
- Bill: spacex, the Tesla cars. There's people out there with money that would be glad to front a contest for modular affordable homes. Benson would be the ideal catalyst for something like that, pulling in various disciplines. Willamette Carpenters Training Center that trains union members, they would love to do something with a school. Lowe's was putting kits together after Katrina, we could do the same thing here.
- WS: The IBW used to use Benson as its apprenticeship school, ended in 1979. The IBW built their own electricians college. They pump out about 30 electricians a year. High voltage that work for PGE. For years they recruited from Benson. Because of labor laws etc. it might not be viable for high school students to take the type of courses they would need unless they had that kind of partnerships.
- Kevin – is there a master list of partnerships?
- RJ: Another element of the complication is that each CTE instructor has their own list of contacts and they didn't want to share. During the redesign is the time when we think this will open up more possibilities with partnerships. Many kids want to go to OIT, Oregon State instead of going directly into trade. That's a factor today.
- DW: Need to emphasize the fact that trades do pay well.
- Kevin – what is the district's feeling about Benson? RJ: 70% of kids do continuing education. The remaining military, trade.
- RJ: How can we create more candidates for industry? We have to get more kids through.
- Bill: formalized mentoring program for elementary schools?
- Jerry: I don't think they ever did. Tech Show was the big draw.

- DB: They do go talk to some 7 and 8<sup>th</sup> grade kids. The reality is that neighborhood schools want to hang on to these students. They didn't let Benson people in.
  - Bill: If we can get students to go help in the elementary/middle schools it will keep kids in.
  - WS: The mindset of the district is that every high school should be equal, and it should prepare kids for college. This is where we lose out, because we say that not all kids need to go to college, at least not right away. Some of the board thinks they all should go.
  - WS: This last election, we got a new board. But you're still obligated to go along with the crowd or you get isolated.
  - Max: most parents want their kids to be happy and successful. Maybe we can help spread the word that that doesn't necessarily mean college at 18.
  - DB: Navigating these waters is difficult. We can come up with many great ideas, but the school and the district are complicated organisms. The school is always trying to balance multiple objectives. We can dream big but appreciate the sector of society we're trying to affect is complicated. Building upon our continued success is the goal. Thanks for the good discussion.
- Centennial Reunion – DB:
  - Date for reunion is: June 16 – 18. Building will still be available for tours, hopefully teachers will still be around.
  - About 50 responses to the Tech Show questionnaire.
  - Teachers responded to Curtis' questionnaire. Will get responses tomorrow.
  - Meeting for committee next Tues at 7PM.
- Design Committee – discussed earlier.
  - DB, DS, RJ, Kevin are on the committee.
  - DB: The district is proposing to introduce a CTE strand here involving education. Has this been discussed?
  - RJ: I talked to Carol Smith and said – education for adults CTE teaching school. Many teachers do it online but they don't get practical experience with teenagers. There's room to benefit from this type of program, and it meets the district's needs.
  - DW: Facility to train CTE teachers here.
  - DB: Next fall's CTE plans handed to Curtis from the district includes 1/7 CTE program for "Education". RJ offered to talk to Curtis about it. MB said that if he has a specific ask for the board we are more than willing to help. You could take "education" to be many things, like sustainability, which have direct ties to CTE.
  - WS: Oregon Democrats have now adopted a program for grades 13 and 14: free community college education. There's no opposition. It's a new thing in the game. Hoping to increase graduation rate.
- All officer positions are full.
- Committees:
  - Membership and Marketing are in need of members.

- Tech Show:
  - Liked the new table position – opened space. Lot easier to get people signed in.
  - Having the cake in the back brought people in.
  - Having people roaming and talking to people keeps them engaged.
  - WS: Get them to sign up.
  - Bill: The smarter you are, the less you want to engage in dialog. Talking makes the tech show.
  - Why do we do sign in sheets? We enter it in the DB. It's different people every year.
  - Send any other comments.
- Minutes:
  - Feb minutes were sent the day of the meeting. Please send any comments by Friday.
  - Annual minutes will go out today, please send comments by Friday.
- Next meeting April 11th at the Benson Tech library.

OLD BUSINESS – things to keep in mind

- Plan for merchandise?
- Archiving location and cataloguing

Respectfully Submitted,

Maj Britt (Max) Baker  
Secretary  
BPHS Alumni Association