**Watershed Public Charter School January 2025 Board Meeting Agenda**

January 28, 2025  
6:00pm, In-Person

Video call link: https://meet.google.com/ihz-hdun-whh

Or dial: ‪(US) +1 435-708-1178‬ PIN: ‪366 919 109‬#

| **Board Member** | **Attendance** |
| --- | --- |
| Baze, Crystal | Virtually Present |
| Dietzen, Lindita | Virtually Present |
| Donn, Angela | Present |
| Freedman, Laurel | Present |
| Keniston, Charlotte | Present |
| Magness-Hill, Sage | Present |
| Pettiford-Kelly, Kelley | Absent |
| Smolinski, Ann | Present |
| Thompson, Raven | Present |
| Wenck, Leah | Virtually Present |
| **Ex-Officio Members** | **Attendance** |
| David Miller | Present, in-person |
| Lori Widney | Present, in-person |
| Maria Willey |  |

Called to order at 6:10 p.m. by Laurel.

**Board Norms**

* *Come to meetings with an open-mind*
* *Prepare to actively listen*
* *Trust collective wisdom that is shared*
* *Strive for consensus and clarity*
* *Be willing to accept feedback and ask questions*
* *Value all lived experiences and perspectives*
* *Use cultural humility when engaging with others*
* *Be conscious of “air time”*

**Public Comment**

* Katarina De La Durantaye - Speaking as a teacher, stakeholder, and Community member since 2021 Ms. De La Durantaye spoke of frustrations with space including the delayed modular construction. The delay is leaving teachers and students without a safe learning environment. There are various work arounds they have been using that go against the TABCO master agreement. Teachers and staff are going to be leaving due to these conditions. There are daily hurdles, including no work space for related service providers, no confidential spaces, limited storage, only one adult restroom stall, no cafeteria, so few student restrooms, damaging sound and chaotic environment for several classes.. Ms. De La Durantaye asks for solutions and a plan for modular construction to be communicated to staff. As a response and asking classification from the board, it was explained that daily emails are sent to staff. Ms. De La Durantaye further explained her safety and security in open air classrooms including both emotional and physical safety. She stated there is not a current safety concern since the trailer was installed. She will email comments gathered from the staff to board email address.
* Caroline O’Brien- As a teacher at Watershed since 2021, Ms. O’Brien recognizes the social emotional barriers after the trauma of covid. Teachers are collaboratively working on the mission and vision but need resources to function. Ms. O’Brien express that there are solvable problems with the facilities. The school is at capacity and staff spend countless hours dedicated to creatively thinking of ways to operate, physically moving things, give up classrooms, and move working spaces into to closets. Middle school staff are asking for a building to conduct classes. The three classes in the gym have no phones and are in a shared space while two other classes are learning making it difficult to hear and this poses a safety concern.
* Janine Gibson - Ms. Gibson is a parent asking for override of decision that is currently not allowing her on campus. She wants to be a part of her children’s school and serves as a middle school chair. Her child receives limited services because of the space constraints. She described herself as a supportive, active part of the community. She would like clarity of any policies on situations such as hers, how one person has the final say, and policies of discrimination of both students and parents. She explained she was told not to say personal situations during this platform. The Board asked for an example of discrimination. Ms. Gibson did not provide an example. The Bboard will look at policies and ask for clarifying questions if needed. The Board communicated that they may not have any authority to override this type of decision.

**Consent Agenda (2 min)**

* Approval of [November Minutes](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vxvTEPTVh68VZ2OVuDtEVKTfbPXjomh12AsmUx-8n8Q/edit?usp=sharing)

| **Board Member** | **Vote** |
| --- | --- |
| Baze, Crystal | Yes |
| Dietzen, Lindita | Yes |
| Donn, Angela | Yes |
| Freedman, Laurel | Yes |
| Keniston, Charlotte | Second |
| Magness-Hill, Sage | Yes |
| Pettiford-Kelly, Kelley | Absent |
| Smolinski, Ann | Motion to accept |
| Thompson, Raven | Yes |
| Wenck, Leah | Yes |

**Old Business (10 min)**

* DEI Facilitation Update - A small committee interviewed two potential consultants who were similar scope and cost. Christina Easton from Impact Consulting was selected for Lori to interview. Ms. Easton is a former city charter school principal. The committed will be revising timeline to get started to late February or March. This initiative is being grant funded. Ann discussed meeting with Ms. Easton and expressed her concerns that her presence may be perceived as intrusive. With the lack of facilities and the focus of DEI, Ann is concerned about doing this now as the findings may be skewed. Laurel explained it is not optional. The work will start as a document review and Ms. Easton will not be on campus until the new building is completed. The committee will recommend Impact Consulting and bring it to the Board to vote on the contract. It was inquired why can’t we use the DEI person through BCPS. The Board wanted to be more autonomous and have it examined through an outside lens. Lori wants more transparency about the process. Staff should know what the course of action will be, including their roles in the process. Sage stated the staff are the experts and will be included. Ann feels there are communication gaps with this issue. The Board has time to design this progress. Charlotte recommended that building staff should meet with the consultant. As it is grant funded, the information can be implemented into action.
* MSDE Expert Review Team visits on February 5th and 6th- [MSDE Expert Review Team](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1BMnEpeCuXS0lU78Ntj4qR2TqFVTMUScR/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=114945571610056350598&rtpof=true&sd=true) - Dave and Lori discussed that every school in the state will be visited and reviewed by 2031. Elementary schools are visited first. On February 5th there will be focus groups of teachers and parents. February 6th will have classroom observations and will meet with Lori. The rubric is similar to renewal but they asked for separate specific information. The findings will be published on the MSDE website.

**New Business (15 min)**

* Advocacy Update by McKenzie Allen, MAPCS – Advocacy Day is being held in Annapolis on February 19, 2025 at 8:30. Ms. Allen is the executive director of Maryland Alliance for Public Schools. Usually 400 people attend every day for advocacy days. Leadership from Baltimore County will be attending. During this advocacy day, they try to meet with every elected official with a goal of spreading a deeper understanding of charter schools. It is important to understand the financial difficulty charters school face, especially how facilities are affected. Charter schools are included in the Blueprint for Maryland. In Frederick County, four charter schools sued and received a declaratory ruling for per pupil calculations. The State found that the 25% was the maximum for withholding schools funds from the district. Frederick county is required to pay back the schools. All money sources must be included in the calculation. The mandatory withholding the county uses is allowed to keep from the pool of all students. Special education overages will be used equitably off the top of all students. Baltimore County will need to calculate very clearly their per pupil funding. They can give schools the money, then present schools with a menu of resources in which schools can negotiate prices. This ruling is considered precedent. A regulatory work group is tasked for charters school. WPCS is coordinating a field trip for 6th and 7th graders to attend advocacy day.
* Audit Review and Approval: [WPCS FY24 Financial Statements Final](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tsnFS9CUhu9QaqlV1Ri7cqSquUJpEgoh/view?usp=drive_link) [WPCS FY24 - TB & AJEs Final](https://drive.google.com/file/d/11HFrNFCeE6rvDoWs6WbnFvHS2O7B6rjr/view?usp=drive_link) 
  + Linda, Dave, Crystal have worked with an independent auditor for the financial statement of fiscal year 2024. There were no noted concerns and opinion letter from the auditors was supplied. It was reviewed first through the financial committee along with Laurel. These findings will be submitted to BCSP. Raven sugested a public version be posted on the WPCS website.

| **Board Member** | **Vote to accept the financial report** |
| --- | --- |
| Baze, Crystal | Yes |
| Dietzen, Lindita | Yes |
| Donn, Angela | Yes |
| Freedman, Laurel | Yes |
| Keniston, Charlotte | YEs |
| Magness-Hill, Sage | Motion to accept |
| Pettiford-Kelly, Kelley | Absent |
| Smolinski, Ann | Yes |
| Thompson, Raven | Second |
| Wenck, Leah | Yes |

* Green School Application - An update was provided on the process and progress. Currently, WPCS is in the second round with a graduated timeframe. The first renewal of process with the Maryland Association of Environmental Outdoor Educators. There will be a meeting later in February and the application is due March 3rd, 2025. They will look at a broad scope of how the school incorporates environmental learning.

**Reports**

* [Principal’s Data Report](https://bcpscloud-my.sharepoint.com/:p:/g/personal/lwidney_bcps_org/EQ0GBRizTRVKuKCJn1BsljoB4cD42oUR5QXJzJX21Anh2g?e=QNxOpd)
  + Maryland Report Card and 1st Semester School Performance Plan review (10 min) - ESSA ratings for the Maryland Report Card based on school performance, WPCS retained four stars, but saw some drops in various areas in the last year. School quality and school success improved. It is anticipated that the elementary and middle school findings will be separated next year. The results were explained on the attached power point. WPCS is currently in the 54th percentile but that is down from the last two years.
  + Instructional focus
    - Math bridges curriculum was implemented, but the data was not showing proficiency in the past. Now they are focusing on looking at intervention, which is a significant ask for teachers to do multiple assessments per module and input in data along with gradebook requirements. Data from various groups were discussed including the discrepancy of African American students.
    - ELA - Comprehension, reading, and also using written language to comprehend was discussed. The slide for ELA is from November so students are still building skills. The gap with African American students is significant. The type of writing is important to take into consideration.
  + Next steps-
    - A video was played with students expressing what they like most about Watershed. This highlighted that success is not always portrayed as numbers but within our students.
    - MAPP assessment will be taken to cross reference the validity of the rubrics and scores.
* [January 2025 Teacher Report.pdf](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1czhwFJHXUnl425xx9AdxJOVAP1SX10K7/view?usp=sharing) (5 min) - Ann will complete a PDF for reporting in the future which could highlight projects that are being worked on, pictures, day in the life,student performance or other possible ways to showcase work from teachers’ perspectives.
* [Executive Director's Report and Financial Report](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1RngU9AWlY0S-koi8r-bwmeIThwwIS18j/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=114945571610056350598&rtpof=true&sd=true) (10 min) - Explained and documented in the report:
  + Enrollment lottery - Board members are encouraged to attend
  + Grant summary
  + DOE Renew America’s Schools grants - This is currently in flux due to unexpected political orders
  + Potential grants -Baltimore Community Foundation grant was left off the slide that is for our DEI work.
  + Modular Middles School Classroom Units and facility updates
  + Watershed celebrations
  + FY25 Financial Summary- with linked financial reports, overview of cash flow over last three months, cash flow overview from July -December with linked budget vs. actuals.
* [PTO Report](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1psONlZBahnfbv_4teHL2guJGKNUGDDz4lz7bMe_CQmw/edit?usp=sharing) (5 min)
  + Review of December and January events
  + Executive board and committee work
  + Building Watershed Community
  + Upcoming events and dates

**Key Dates:**

* February 3, 10:00 am: Del. Cheryl Pasteur visit
* February 5 and 6: MSDE Expert Review Team site visit
* February 6, 6:00 pm: Enrollment Lottery
* February 7: PTO Repair Cafe
* February 11, 5:30 pm: Governance Committee Meeting
* February 19: Maryland Charter School Advocacy Day
* February 25: Board Meeting (virtual)
* February 27, 6:00 pm: PTO Spelling Bee
* March 11, 5:30 pm: Governance Committee meeting
* March 12, 4:30 pm: Unit 2 Showcase
* March 25: Board Meeting (in-person)

**Open session adjourned at: 8:15**

Vote to move to closed session

**Recorded vote to close the meeting:** Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_; Time:\_\_8:15\_\_\_\_; Location:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_;

Motion to close meeting made by: \_\_\_Charlotte\_\_\_\_\_\_: Seconded by\_\_\_\_Raven\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_;

Members in favor\_\_\_\_\_\_; Opposed:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; Abstaining:\_\_\_\_\_\_; Absent:\_\_\_\_\_\_

**This meeting will only be closed under the provision or provisions checked below, all from General Provisions Art. § 3-305(b):**

**(1)\_\_\_**“To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals”; **(2)\_X\_\_ “**To protect the privacy or reputation of individuals concerning a matter not related to public business”; **(3)\_\_\_** “To consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto”; **(4)\_\_\_** “To consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State”; **(5)\_\_\_** “To consider the investment of public funds”; **(6)\_\_\_** “To consider the marketing of public securities”; **(7)\_\_\_** “To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice”; **(8)\_\_\_** “To consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation”; **(9)\_\_\_** “To conduct collective bargaining negotiations or consider matters that relate to the negotiations”; **(10)\_\_\_** “To discuss public security, if the public body determines that public discussion would constitute a risk to the public or to public security, including: (i) the deployment of fire and police services and staff; and (ii) the development and implementation of emergency plans”; **(11)\_\_\_** “To prepare, administer, or grade a scholastic, licensing, or qualifying examination”; **(12)\_\_\_** “To conduct or discuss an investigative proceeding on actual or possible criminal conduct”; **(13)\_\_\_** “To comply with a specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosures about a particular proceeding or matter”; **(14)\_\_\_** “Before a contract is awarded or bids are opened, to discuss a matter directly related to a negotiating strategy or the contents of a bid or proposal, *if* public discussion or disclosure would adversely impact the ability of the public body to participate in the competitive bidding or proposal process”; **(15)\_\_\_** “To discuss cybersecurity, *if* the public body determines that public discussion would constitute a risk to” (i) “security assessments or deployments relating to information resources technology”; (ii) “network security information,” such as information that is related to passwords, personal ID numbers, access codes, encryption, security devices, or vulnerability assessments or that a governmental entity collects or maintains to prevent, detect, or investigate criminal activity; or (iii) “deployments or implementation of security personnel, critical infrastructure, or security devices.”

| **Citation**  **(insert #**  **from above)** | **Topic** | **Reason for closed-session discussion of topic -** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2 |  | Individual concerns not related to public business |

Closed session-

Allegation of discrimination from Public Comment parent speaker, Janine Gibson.

* The parent can follow the grievance policy and procedure through WPCS and a separate one through BCPS and through the state wide anonymous stakeholder reporting. Charlotte will review our board policy to make sure it is clear and will report to Laurel, Dave, and Sage. Lori ensures safety and security of the school but doesn’t make the decision on her own - The Office of School Safety and Security and the Executive Director are included in the decision making progress in alignment with COMAR for safe and orderly experiences within the school house. Four times this parent interrupted experiences, rules, policy, procedures. The final incident the School Resource Office asked her to leave campus and she resisted before she left on her own accord. A No Trespass letter was sent certified mail. She must follow outlined procedures but will not be denied access to child’s education. She will be able to drive on to campus, but not get out of the car. She must get the principal’s direct permission to attend in-person events. The Board does not have the authority to reverse the decision and they reviewed the procedure. The Board will give opinions to Dave for the drafed response.
* The response can include what the grievance process is and how it needs to be put writing. The Board does want her to be heard.

Pubic comment 1-

* TABCO educator council meets. They will receive reports/issues. They have met twice regarding the facilities with previous recommendations of updates. Administration now send daily updates. A space analysis was conducted and the school is in compliance. Lori’s opinion is that the staff wants assurance about next year. Lori will meet with the staff on February 19th and will also be discussing the significant less people and resources alloted for next year. Laurel will be able to attend for the first few minutes of the meeting as a show of support from the Board.
* The February 19th meeting can be our timeline for response. It is important to manage expectations about a modular/building project like this. The first two public comments will be responded to in writing but the meeting is also the response.
* Some of the framing can be about what it means to do something for the first time as WPCS blazes a trail for BCPS charter schools- both the positives and the struggles.