

**Grand Rapids Christian Schools
Board of Trustees
October 16, 2006
Minutes**

Members Present: Cathie Brasser, Jim Bush, Ric Hernandez, Dan Holtrop, Dan Hubka, Ross Leisman, Jim McClurg, Jim Schipper, Candace Sorensen, Dave Tiesenga, Gayle VanGessel, Tim Wiersma

Members Absent: Paul Jeltema

Staff Present: Tom DeJonge, Jay Laninga, Lon Swartzentruber, Eric Burgess

Guests: 2006 National Merit Scholars Semifinalists and Commended students, M. Swets

1. Welcome and call to order
Jim Schipper, President
2. Devotions
Gayle VanGessel, Vice President, read an excerpt on forgiveness and grace from *What's so Amazing about Grace* by Phillip Yantze
3. Approval of minutes
MOTION PRESENTED BY JIM MCCLURG AND SECONDED BY DAVE TIESENGA to approve the Grand Rapids Christian Schools Board of Trustees minutes of September 18, 2006.
MOTION PASSED
4. Public comment – agenda items
M. Swets addressed the Board on debt retirement, GRCS Bylaw amendments, process for constituency submitting bylaw amendments, posting of Superintendent's monthly reports, sale of Evergreen Christian School
5. Items for information, discussion, and action
 - A. Superintendent's report
 - 1) Faith in Action – Jim Primus, high school principal, reported on ways GRCHS students and staff demonstrate faith in action through service projects with students, peers, colleagues, and community members
 - 2) National Merit recipients – 13 recipients (8 present at meeting) were honored with certificates of achievement and appreciation by Jim Schipper, President
 - 3) School emergency plans – Tom reported that all school emergency response plans are currently being reviewed, updated, and drilled at each school
 - 4) Parent satisfaction survey – Tom informed board members that an online parent satisfaction survey will be conducted from November 8 – November 30, 2006
 - 5) MEAP – Tom reviewed the 2006 MEAP test schedule
 - 6) Faith Learning, Inc. – Tom reviewed the current status of Christian High On-Line and opportunities for GRCHS students, including how CSI is managing this initiative on behalf of GRCS
 - B. Executive Committee report
 - 1) Jim Schipper provided the following information on board meetings and member responsibilities:
 - a. Importance of board preparedness
 - b. Board function and member roles
 - c. Board response to public comments and correspondence
 - d. Board packets being mailed 10 days in advance of scheduled meetings
 - e. Members contacting Jim with questions, comments, or concerns prior to board meetings
 - f. Responsibility of communications between public and board being delegated to appropriate administrative staff whenever possible
 - 2) The Executive Committee reviewed four (4) amendments to GRCS Bylaws submitted to the board in February 2006 and acted on four (4) motions summarized below.

a. Amendment #1

Amend GRCS Bylaws to require the slate of at-large candidates for the GRCS Board of Trustees to contain twice as many names as there are positions available. This slate of candidates is to be submitted to the membership for its vote at the Annual Meeting.

MOTION MADE BY JIM MCCLURG AND SUPPORTED BY GAYLE VANGESSEL that the Grand Rapids Christian Schools Board of Trustees submit this amendment to the constituency for its vote at the March 2007 Annual Meeting

MOTION WITHDRAWN due to lack of comprehensive discussion relative to the need for the change and consideration of how to effectively implement a potential change to current bylaw

MOTION MADE BY JIM MCCLURG AND SUPPORTED BY CANDACE SORENSEN

that the Grand Rapids Christian Schools' Board of Trustees send this amendment to the Governance Task Force for more review and recommendation to the board by January 2007

MOTION PASSED

b. Amendment #2

Amend GRCS Bylaws to require the GRCS Board of Trustees to be made up of two representatives from each member district school board, eliminating at-large trustees.

MOTION MADE BY JIM SCHIPPER AND SUPPORTED BY DAVE TIESENGA that the Grand Rapids Christian Schools Board of Trustees send this amendment to the Governance Task Force for further review and final recommendation.

MOTION PASSED

c. Amendment #3

Amend GRCS Bylaws to require any proposed change of facility plan be voted on and approved by the membership before implementation, retroactive to the start of the 2005 – 06 school year.

MOTION MADE BY JIM SCHIPPER AND SUPPORTED BY JIM MCCLURG that, while obtaining input from constituency on school realignment and facility utilization is necessary and desirable, the Grand Rapids Christian Schools Board of Trustees moves to *not submit this amendment* to the Governance Task Force or constituency for a vote for the following reasons:

- i. Current governance policies require membership from district boards on the GRCS Board of Trustees who, on behalf of their individual schools and GRCS, are equipped to represent the Schools. Therefore, individual school constituencies are represented in all GRCS Board of Trustees votes.
- ii. Decisions of this magnitude are consistent with the role and authority of the GRCS Board of Trustees, which acts on behalf of the Association and its seven member schools.
- iii. Asking that the membership vote on facility realignments and school consolidations potentially allows a small minority of parents to skew a vote that has significant operational implications for the entire GRCS constituency
- iv. The school consolidation decision made in December 2005, effective the 2006 – 07 school year, was based on a recommendation from a Facility Realignment Task Force, which included representation from each school's district board. The task force gathered and considered input from parents at all schools and from interested others within the constituency before making its final recommendation.

MOTION PASSED

d. Amendment #4

Amend GRCS Bylaws to require a balanced budget so that no operational deficit may occur and expenses do not exceed revenue in any fiscal year.

MOTION MADE BY JIM SCHIPPER AND SUPPORTED BY DAVE TIESENGA that the Grand Rapids Christian Schools Board of Trustees send this amendment to the Finance and Operations Committee for its review and directs the committee to recommend policy language requiring a percentage of the Schools' operational budget be established annually as a cash reserve.

MOTION PASSED

C. Personnel Committee report

Dan Holtrop, Committee Chair, reported on the 2006-07 Personnel Committee goals, which include a review of the staff evaluation process and policies relative to teacher certification and hiring

D. Finance and Operations Committee report

MOTION MADE BY JIM BUSH AND SUPPORTED BY GAYLE VANGESSEL that the Grand Rapids Christian Schools' Board of Trustees approves the sale of Evergreen Christian School, located at 2550 Eastern Avenue SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49507, to Tabernacle Community Church for the price of \$830,000 according to the terms listed below:

- \$200,000 paid to GRCS in December 2006
- \$630,000 paid to GRCS no later than December 2011
- Interim payment in December 2009

MOTION PASSED

E. Development report

Lon Swartzentruber, Development, provided an update on the Bright Hope dinner and concert scheduled for October 26, 2006, Get Healthy fund raising surpassing \$21.5 million from more than 750 donors to date, the closing ceremony of the athletic stadium scheduled for October 20, 2006, and the 40% increase in Annual Fund giving during the 2005-06 school year

F. Admissions report

Eric Burgess, Admissions, reported on enrollment and recruitment for goals for 2007-08, recruitment strategies for Creston, Evergreen, and Rockford Christian Schools (north-end strategy), and 2007-08 enrollment events beginning in January 2007

6. Correspondence

- A. Letter received from M. Swets regarding amendments to GRCS Bylaws
- B. Letter received from J. Varinau regarding Shared Time

7. Public comment – items of interest:

M. Swets restated concerns and questions expressed earlier in the meeting (noted above in the Public comment – agenda items minutes); Tom, Jay, and Lon responded to each question

8. Round table

Board members expressed comments in the following areas:

- A. Education committee – still needs GRCS board member representation
- B. Nominations committee – looking for names
- C. New to You Shoppe – reminder to support and thank the volunteers

9. Meeting closed with the reciting of the Lord's Prayer.

10. Meeting adjourned at 9:12 pm

Next Meeting – November 20, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. at the GRCS central office – Room 7

Minutes respectfully submitted by Sara Buchholz, GRCS Administrative Assistant