

March 4, 2021

**MINUTES OF THE**  
**UTAH STATE CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**

Thursday, March 04, 2021  
[www.youtube.com/utahscsb](http://www.youtube.com/utahscsb)

**DRAFT**

**Members Present:**

Chair DeLaina Tonks (\*refrains from voting, unless otherwise noted)

Vice Chair Bryan Bowles

Member Cynthia Phillips

Member Krystle Bassett

Member Michelle Smith

**Members Absent:**

Member Stephanie Speicher

**Staff Present:**

Jennifer Lambert

William Evans

Assistant Attorney General David Jones

Amber Hellstrom

Stewart Okobia

Greg Connell

Marie Steffensen

James Madsen

Jenna Magnetti

Robert Kohutek

Smriti Dhakal

Andrew Vardas-Doane

Liz Bunker

**Others Present:**

Matt Hymas (USBE), Erik Olson (awaiting confirmation to SCSB), Karen Rupp (Trust Lands), Paula Plant (Trust Lands), Natalie Gordon (Trust Lands), Steve Davis (Trust Lands), Jennilyn Derbidge (UCAS), Trevor Nelson, Roger Simpson (Voyage Academy), Nicole Jones (Voyage Academy), Tara Merryweather, Clark Baron, Joyce Baron, Angie Stallings (USBE). Kim Frank (UCN),

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### **Call to Order**

Chair Tonks called the meeting to order at 10:04 AM.

### **Public Comment**

No public comment was made.

### **Board Chair Report**

Chair Tonks thanked staff and introduced the soon-to-be confirmed SCSB Member Erik Olson, noted: AMES was recognized as an ESSA distinguished school, Better Days 2020 held a “She Started It” contest and Lieutenant Governor Henderson announced the winners which included students from American Academy of Innovation, Renaissance Academy and Edith Bowen Laboratory School.

Chair Tonks also discussed Creativity Inc, by Ed Camol, noting the merits of the metaphor of ugly babies and beasts. Chair Tonks noted she would like Vice Chair Bowles to share a thought at April’s meeting, and that she will be assigning a presentation of thoughts to other board members for subsequent meetings.

### **Consent Calendar**

*A) February 11, 2021 Minutes, B) Monthly Financial Report, C) Exhibit A: Valley Academy, D) Language in Charter Agreement: Channing Hall, E) Utah County Academy of Sciences*

### **Motion**

Member Smith moved, and vice Chair Bowles seconded, “to adopt the consent calendar.” The motion carried unanimously.

### **Executive Director Report**

Executive Director Lambert noted that Megan Peacock of Utah Virtual Academy was recognized as the Employee of the Month of SCSB Authorized Schools, new staff on the School Performance team have been visiting with schools virtually (and some in-person) and focusing oversight to help schools become better.

### **School Spotlight: Voyage Academy**

Ms. Smriti Dhakal displayed a presentation on Voyage Academy’s rock-solid enrollment which the school credits to academics, comradery among staff and students, and exceptional financials, then played a video produced by Voyage Academy students which had an adaptation of the “Brady Bunch” theme song containing lyrics about Voyage Academy.

Representatives of the school discussed their culture and shared leadership, expertise of teachers, transparent financials, and involving stakeholders.

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Board members asked representatives questions about shared leadership and consensus, culture, ABCD acronym, Covid response, and community feedback.

### **School Children's Trust Lands Report**

Ms. Karen Rupp laid praise on SCSB staff and charter school directors then displayed a chart detailing the fund's growth, program areas of distribution, process of approving plans, 97% of schools having their plans submitted on-time this year, issues with website but encouraging schools to work on their reports and holding necessary votes in open meeting, and the importance of schools meeting deadlines to receive money on-time.

Ms. Natalie Gordon asked the SCSB to recommend a change to U.C.A. 53F-2-404 and R277-477 Distributions of Funds from the Trust Distribution Account and Administration of the School LAND Trust Program to distribute the base amount as defined in R277-477 to first year charter schools and newly opening satellite schools.

### **Motion**

Member Phillips moved, and Vice Chair Bowles seconded "that we support changes in Rule, and related changes in code, that would allow for the changes as described by the Lands Trust section relative to charter schools in the specific circumstances that have been brought up to be changes as described." The motion carried unanimously.

### **Discussion to the Motion**

Offering solutions and gratitude for the Lands Trust section employees was discussed.

### **Revisit SCSB Goal**

*By March 2021, an innovations survey of all Utah charter schools will have been created, conducted, and received a 50% response rate. These survey data, the foundation for a future Innovation plan, will be analyzed and presented to the Utah State Charter School Board Innovations Committee who will then present to the Utah State Charter School Board by July 2021.*

Mr. William Evans presented a report noting the number of reports that schools are required to complete, having no active Innovations Committee, no innovations plan being worked on and the March 1<sup>st</sup> deadline not being met. Mr. Evans proposed portfolio managers could ask about innovation when they visit with schools and asked what the board wants the innovations plan to consist of. Mr. Evans proposed changing the goal and having a portfolio review consisting of previously procured data and information from meetings to understand what schools are doing to innovate and use that data to identify gaps within the SCSB portfolio and then presenting that information to the Authorizing Committee so they can review and put out RFPs for schools for which needs have been identified for.

Vice Chair Bowles reiterated that the spirit of the goal has been to look for innovation, and having new members on the board that could comprise a new Innovations Committee.

### **Motion**

Vice Chair Bowles moved, and Member Smith seconded, "that we retire innovations goal and

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request that staff create a new goal for themselves around that notion of innovation and bring it back to the board to acknowledge in a subsequent month.” That motion failed unanimously.

### **Discussion to the Motion**

Need to know innovation in schools, clarifying the kind of innovation the board wants to see, these goals being board goals and not staff goals though board goals influence staff’s goals, and creating a database of innovative practices was discussed.

### **Motion**

Member Phillips moved, and Vice Chair Bowles seconded, that “the board retire the innovation goal as now constituted and create a new smart goal related to gathering of data from a wide variety of sources, including visits, currently held information, and other similar, related to innovation of schools we authorize over a period of time, to be advised by staff, and methods to be advised by staff to support future innovations by the board, and further move that staff propose language to replace the current innovation goal of the SCSB.” The motion carried unanimously.

### **2021 Legislative Session**

Ms. Kim Frank of Utah Charter Network discussed legislative audit on reporting requirements of charter schools and bills proposed to limit those workloads, bill creating risk pool for debts of closed school having passed, and a transportation bill for rural schools.

Mr. Royce Van Tassel of the Utah Association of Public Charter Schools discussed CARES Act money.

Member Phillips expressed appreciation for the associations and noted being able to discuss achievements for thoroughly in the next month or so, change to perceived tone thanks to the risk pool funding.

### **Adjourn**

### **Motion**

Member Smith moved to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.