

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



Date: August 9th, 2012

Starting Time: 5:30 pm Ending Time: 7:45 pm

Location: Group MacKenzie

**ATTENDEES:**

Dale Bajema (DB), Dick Spies (DS), Neal Galash (NG), Joanne Stainbrook (JS), Josh Piper (JP), Rob Johns (RJ), Max Baker (MB), Wayne Devore (WD), Don Wear (DW), guest Caesar Wong

**MINUTES:**

- Thanks to NG for bringing leftover sausages.
- JS attended the class of 92 reunion
  - Friday at Kenton station about 40 people came, including Caesar Wong, our guest. Interesting to see what Kenton station crew thought about having everyone there. Might be a nice model to offer to reunions.
  - Sat Picnic at Pier Park had 30 people and lots of kids. There wasn't an email sign up list. Joanne said she thought they would be willing to send out reminders to their facebook groups.
  - For 2013, we might want to contact them to offer sharing the blue lake space. Joanne did receive two donations from two classmates, \$120 dollars. She gave the money to Josh. Chris Turman \$100 works at Lattice Semiconductor. \$20 from Gary Paek who works at Intel.
  - Was the existence of the association a surprise to the classmates? Not sure. Surprised Tech Show is now in February. Even the message that Benson was saved as a four year school isn't out there.
  - Foundation setup: clarity about internships. Can go to these people with specifics on internships and can your companies participate?
- DB observations about his journey with the Alumni Association:
  - I got involved when there was just a group of people with the reunion scholarship fund, interested in having an alumni picnic to get people interested in contributing to the scholarship fund. Bob Hyland and others made that happen. Started talking about the fact that bad things were happening at Benson and that there wasn't an alumni association. Neal, Ken, Dale, and Tammy started talking about it and drafting the bylaws. Dick and Joanne came in, and the association was formed.
  - Dick was elected chair, Tammy used her connections at Benson to get us involved with site council and meet the teachers there. This helped the association learn about how the school works and the impact of no child left behind, funding woes, etc.
  - Benson was lucky they had Steve O there at that time as he kept the idea of CTE going. Without that the district may have closed Benson. He kept the

CTE issue on the table, even if he wanted to go in a direction different than we did. He also pushed the academics, which is important.

- Then Save Benson happened. Dick was instrumental in attending school board meetings, etc. Then after it was saved, we seemed to take on more of a 'booster' role, rather than a social organization.
- What I learned along the way:
  - Most of the board have or have had jobs in the private sector. Schools exist in the public sector. There are conflicting goals, etc. Getting anything done usually means working to get people in agreement.
  - By persuasion rather than directive.
  - Patience.
  - Persistence.
- Recognize there are different perspectives.
  - We see Benson from our alumni perspective. Long-term associations.
  - The teachers and the principal think they ARE the school. Possession is 9/10 of the law. They don't want outsiders coming in to tell them how to run the school.
  - In some respects, teachers and principals come and go, but the association will be around forever.
  - Students and parents have their own perspectives.
  - Parents have sway when their kids are there, but when their kids graduate, they generally lose interest.
- First few years, site council didn't want to hear much from Dale. Dick and Dale both have cache now, Rob is working on it. You have to spend the time to build those relationships.
- In the future, PPS is going to put most resources into neighborhood schools. Enrollment cap might creep up every year, not expecting big jumps.
- Portland is really proud of its neighborhoods, and this includes neighborhood high schools. Portland also doesn't view itself as an industrial city. Think high tech, intellectual, so there is some reluctance to embrace CTE.
- Doesn't think PPS is going to be a primary advocate for CTE in the near future. Benson staff and AA will be the primary ones to advocate. We can't look to the district to be the promoters - we will have to do it.
- The changes we would like to see at Benson can't be imposed from the outside.
  - Extreme example: If companies came down and said they were willing to put in 50 million to put in an aviation program at Benson, he's not sure they would take it. They would have to be persuaded.
  - Brett Anderson in automotive is trying to nudge into alternative fuel vehicles. If he hadn't thought of it on his own, we rushing in with the idea and money wouldn't have caused it to happen.
- Board diversity: need to get some minority members, to help reflect Benson student populations.
- Benson faculty: about 7 alumni, but none of them have joined the alumni association. Hard to get them involved in anything. They feel beat down? Too tired from school?

- School demographics: 75% minorities, 60% low income. There is not a huge parent base to tap into. We need alums with a little economic success, ready to give back.
- Unlike most HS, there is not an equal match between Benson and the space it occupies. The district feels they own the building, and Benson is only one tenant.
  - Teacher space is a problem, if Carol wants to use space differently in the building; she has to ask the district, etc.
  - This may affect the rebuild, as it has implications for how the district wants to use the space.
- We've gained a lot of recognition and respect, support of school. Participating in meetings, letters we've sent to the district, etc. Chuck participated on the review committee, etc. This has all been important.
- We need to be out there, involved, participating so that our organization is plugged in, in the mix of things.
- We need more advertising.
  - Dale: worked with a fellow that used to give speeches, ending with a ditty:
    - Late to bed, early to rise. Work like hell and advertise.
  - Nice that we advertised the completion of the Benson house and got a little PR. Past year had the best graduation rate in the city. How many people know? Kids that do go to college from Benson have a higher success rate. Who knows?
  - With 100 year celebration coming up, there is potential for good advertising there.
  - We can do things Carol can't do - call up the Tribune, call channel 6, etc. We need to do more of this. In the long run, it increases the enrollment and financial support of the school.
- We can come out with grand visions, but the real progress will come with small projects and partners. Stepping stones to grand ideas. Pep band is a small step, but the fact that we had a band at the basketball state tournament is great.
- Opportunities:
  - 100 year celebration.
  - Continuing to work well with Carol (principal) and going to her with new ideas to chew on.
  - PR for the school.
  - Alt fuel vehicles.
  - Donate a riding lawn mower?? Was mentioned at the picnic. We can help with that. Also a media opp.
  - We should regularly invite Carol to come to the board meetings. She could come every other month and share information. The dinner with her last fall was really helpful.
  - Need to enrich the db. - Target interests and combine with school needs.
  - Need minority participation.
  - PTSA involvement.
  - Continuing dialog with legislative reps.

- Build bridges with state department of education, like sustainability. Grant opportunities.
- We had success with OIT connections this year, and we need to continue with OSU.
- Can we pursue more one on one meetings with school board members? Meeting with Pam Knowles went well, very interested and receptive.
- The board thanked Dale for all of his service.
- Approval of previous board minutes:
  - JS sent in some minor corrections.
  - DS moved to approve the amended minutes. JP seconded. All approved. Max will send out final minutes.
- Treasurer's report:
  - Ken sent the information to Neal: \$3341 is the balance, not including picnic memberships or reimbursements.
  - Paypal is at 0, money transferred last Tues.
- Membership report:
  - 6 people enrolled at the picnic.
  - 169 members now.
- Report on picnic:
  - Overall it was very good. Good points:
    - It was great that Carol came and spoke and rubbed elbows. Means a lot to us. The VP was there also.
    - Matt Pelico came with the robotics club. Awesome. We could reach out to more kids next year.
  - Points for improvement:
    - Tapping volunteers earlier
    - A little less participation in the potluck. Maybe advertise it more.
    - No raffle: Interest didn't seem to be there.
    - Huge line of cars to get in.
      - Some of this due to the marathon earlier in the day.
      - Advertise other entrance?
  - Numbers down from last year, but it varies greatly year to year. DS: Good turnout for the weather. (Mentioned his company picnic 100 people signed up, only 50 came).
  - RJ: Can we tap the 8th graders? We know that at least one came; mother was not an alumnus so somehow the word went out.
  - Advisor wanted to know about bringing the robots to Kenton Station sometime. This is a great idea.
- New board members:
  - Welcome to the new board member here and to our guest. Other new members will be here in September.
  - We are informal most of the time, formal for voting.
  - Much of the work gets done in committees and then reported here.
  - Much effort over the last few years was saving Benson, Benson House, and the pep band.

- Involvement with PTSA - Chuck's involvement saved it, and we will continue to be involved.
- Teacher involvement: many teachers have bitter feelings about the district, get burned out.
- This is why the alumni association mission is important - the people can come and go, but the mission remains.
- KBPS: Off air now, going back on air in the fall with Kevin Flink teaching. They are looking at new curriculum. We could ask him to speak at Sept board meeting.
- We have accomplished having a great website. Thanks to Josh, who also does the PTSA website. The school's website has many facets. They focus on the graphic design part that meshes with the communication program they had. There's room to grow on the content management side. And now that there is no computer science side, the programming side is sliding.
- Josh puts up lots of information on our site from other areas of the school - car washes, teacher job openings, etc.
- Pep Band update:
  - DB: CH and DB talked to Carol about how to get more student involvement in the band. Talked about the problems about no club, communication with the students etc. Do we need someone to teach about playing in a group/music teacher or something? She is interested in getting a music program going. They will try and set up a meeting and talk about what they can do to get more student involvement.
  - Club issue: WD: if we have students that will continue to participate with us, the club can be a done deal. There is already a teacher coordinator volunteer. As far as contacting the students, that is an issue. Had we had a way to contact them we might have been able to prod them a little more.
  - Would private instruction be beneficial? WD: I don't think fitting in is the problem; the problem is no music experience. Some were starting from scratch.
  - MB: students will at least need to have basic knowledge of the instrument. Then we need to coordinate one on one tutoring - more experienced with less experienced.
  - JP: also could record practice tapes.
  - WD: Wayne will go in and do the CUB paperwork for the practice space. Rehearsal nights will be Wed nights. 7-8:30PM. and the weeks we will have a game, we don't necessarily have to rehearse.
  - Current uniform: PTSA scarves. Can talk about more - vests etc. JP: would the club status give us access to district instruments or music stands? Should check. Now our football games are at Marshal. Not sure why our field isn't being used. Josh was wondering if we can make that 'Benson' field.
  - Concessions? Interesting to find out what it would take to make Benson's field really Benson's field with concession stand, etc.

- Long Range Planning: DS
  - Long term planning committee's year of meetings culminated in a recommendation to the school board to bring forward a bond measure: Fabian middle school and Franklin, Grant and Roosevelt.
  - Relationships in the urban core need the extra time for nurturing. There had been discussion of including Benson in the 1st round, which would have been unheard of a few years ago.
  - There is very real potential that assuming it gets passed, partnership work will begin immediately. PAC is being formed, leasing office space, OPOS - Our Portland Our Schools. They will be the spokespeople promoting the bond measure. (School board was sued for trying to promote the last bond measure).
  - It's a little over four years until the 2nd round, but there's a ton of work that needs to happen before that, one step at a time.
    - Langley associates are a property management group for properties in the Lloyd district. Dick has convinced them there is a strong relationship between what happens at Benson and their properties. They are excited about being involved, and can be a link to their tenants - other partners.
    - PGE is already helping with the technical drawing class curriculum.
  - We are making progress, timing is good. The stature of Benson is so much differently perceived now, it's encouraging.
- Technical Drawing: Meeting on the 23rd to set the curriculum. Starting small - just a few freshmen. Dick will help with some of the instruction.
  - DW: Bradley, nuclear engineer, would be interested. Will pass info to Dick.
- Foundation:
  - Rob, Neal, Ken, Dale have had several meetings on the Foundation.
  - 1st draft on the Federal form, 3rd draft on bylaws, corporate paperwork is sitting in the school, so we're waiting for Carol to get back from vacation
  - Plan on filing with the Feds at the end of this month, will need the \$750 then. After that, the time frame is uncertain.
  - We need our 501C-3 approval before we start to fund-raise.
  - Now it's concentrating on who we want to be on the board and the direction of the foundation.
  - RJ asked DW to speak about it with Sam Adams, etc.
  - We need a threefold brochure on the Foundation, marketing materials etc. Logos, banners, etc.
- Events trailer and Ambassador program: DW:
  - Don: Events trailer. He's been getting it working. Street fair last Sat. Event Trailer has made between \$400-600 in the last few months. The Concordia newspaper wants to do a front page article on it. Sam committed money, he wants to help with last Thursday so he goes but gets pulled aside a lot. He's going to put him inside the trailer for the next event so he gets an idea of how it works.
  - High probability on Michelle Obama coming in May coincides with event trailer opening with Benson, etc.

- He has the teaching guidelines for the Ambassador program. Other parts of the training aren't written out yet, but the basics are there. The excitement in the city right now is huge. There is progress - people in the city are calling him back and working out the details.
- Don will get it typed up and email it to Max in the next week or so. Max will email it out to the board to review before the next meeting.
- Benson cleanup Aug 25th. Details on the PTSA website.
- Benson needs help with enrollment. 23rd: 12th graders in the morning, 9th graders in the aft. 24th. 11th graders, 10th graders. Josh will forward it to the group list.
- Scholarship name update: Josh: two pieces to updating the name. Official name:
  - In order to get it changed with the OCF... we're not the first group to want to change the name, but there has been a procedure in place for the last week. We need to give them a letter from the board.
  - They wanted Dale's signature on the document. Josh created a draft.
  - "Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Scholarship Fund"
  - We are still going to use them for collecting the funds for the tax donations. They prefer to do the collecting, so we will have people write checks to them, and we'll be added to their website for online donations.
  - Josh moved to change the name, Rob seconded. Motion passed. Dale signed the letter. Josh will get it in.
- Self-propelled lawn mower for Carol: This idea was brought up by Carol at the picnic. She is frustrated with the district's grounds-keeping schedule and pledged to mow the lawn herself if she could get a self-propelled mower.
  - NG looked on craigslist. \$200-300 range.
  - MB moved that we offer to purchase a lawn mower for Carol, up to \$300 if she agrees. DS seconded.
  - Discussion:
    - WD suggested that a used mower is a risk, and that we need a new mower with a warranty.
    - JS: Where do we put the energies? Maybe we want to get rid of the lawn rather than maintain it.
    - JP and RJ: \$750 is probably what you're looking at for new mower with the power to do that space consistently.
    - RJ: Lots of irritation about the district not maintaining its property.
    - DW: not concerned with used lawnmower - he and the kids can fix it.
    - It was agreed that further discussion was needed, so MB withdrew her motion.
    - Dale will email Carol: Alumni Association is considering helping with the lawn mower. How committed is she and what does she really want? We could price it. We could also put it on the website; maybe we have someone that can donate it. He'll inform us by email what she says.

- New officer elections:
  - New Chair:
    - NG nominated RJ. DS seconded. MB: When we think about the Chair, it's got to be someone who can socialize and speak well. RJ will do a great job.
    - It was moved and seconded to close nominations. NG moved to elect RJ as the new Chair. JP seconded. Motion passed.
    - It was agreed Dale would finish the meeting.
  - New Vice-Chair:
    - Nominations for Vice-Chair were opened. NG nominated DB.
    - JP read the description: primary focus is reunion relations and contact db.
    - Nominations were closed.
    - NG moved to vote on the nomination and WD seconded. The motion to elect DB passed.
- Other officers, continuing terms:
  - MB will continue as Events chair.
  - DS will continue as Long Term Planning Chair.
  - KB will continue as treasurer, Joanne helping.
  - JP will continue as Scholarship chair.
  - WD will continue as Band chair.
  - Membership: RJ will head with Ray S and Mike Landstrom as committee members.
  - Site council: DB will continue to go. He suggests another person attend. Once a month, 3 hours a day, during a work day. Sometimes at night, and sometimes decide that day whether they are having it or not. RJ volunteered to attend also.
- Everyone thanked Dale for his service. NG remarked that we couldn't have had a better leader for our formative years. Passion and commitment.
- MB will type up the minutes from the annual meeting and send them out.
- Thanks to Caesar for attending.

## OLD BUSINESS

- Band uniform ideas: vest?
- Band information needs to be in the welcome packet for next year:
  - Should we be a band club? Spanish teacher adviser. This may solve contacting the kids issue for reminders about practices, etc,
  - What information: meeting times and place, possible events
- We need a plan for collecting info about alumni job skills/employers, as a way to find new business partners for Benson:
  - DB and JP to meet on ideas to build out the alumni DB on skills and employers. DS: try and hook up with advisory boards for the CTE programs, which exist but are ad hoc. Graphics instructor said she had the advisory board but she was possessive about it. DS: If we go through Carol, then we could act as intermediaries.



- We need a plan for communication to talk with political figures at all levels: mayor, county, state. Lay out our vision of mixed use development and business partnerships.
- JP reports that there is more memorabilia in the back room where the yearbooks are stored. We need to think about how we can preserve this history.
- Ray to help coordinate PR releases to the Portland Tribune, Willamette Week and the Oregonian about what is currently going on at Benson.
  - JS met with a class of 2012 transfer student, who said he transferred out because they lost the architecture program. Said he would be interested in telling his story of missed opportunities. He was doing an office tour.
- Opportunities for alums to help:
  - JS – There is a health Corps program funded by Dr. Oz. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> year. Coordinator on campus is doing things to keep kids healthy, does classroom stretching, yoga during study hall, etc. She could use more support. Materials, time, garden.
  - JP – does internship framework exist? Dale: PWA does the internships. They present a framework with commitments to businesses, so they can evaluate it annually.
- Ideas of alumni support:
  - Ben Fleske OMSI – Josh to contact
  - OSU Extension – 4H support – Rob to contact
  - NASA space camp scholarship for two students? Max to investigate
- Benson and the State of Oregon received the sustainable program grant and they've been working on the study for two years but haven't finalized it. Dale to contact Tom Thompson with the Oregon State Department of Education and Reese Lord, who was working for the Mayor but is now at Systems, a private group of Educational Consultants.
  - 7/2012: Sustainable program grant: DS says Tom Thompson still working on it. Still needs to be finished.
- We need to formalize the role of PTSA liaison.
- Once the Foundation has 501C3 status:
  - We could ask that it be listed as a flight miles donation option at various airline websites.
  - Instrument and cash donations to the band will be tax deductible.
  - We can consider going for the Bill and Melinda Gates grants.
  - We could consider moving from the district funding the Benson house construction to the Foundation, that way profits from sale would be reinvested in the school itself.
- RJ: thoughts to recruit:
  - Dig deeper into matches of people with majors. Mission based approach to recruiting.
  - Start with communication about supporting the station. Rob will draft and send to Dale and Josh, for showing to Carol for approval.
- Outreach and Partnerships - RJ

- OSU not reaching back yet. U of O is waiting on the results of their program with Jefferson.
- OIT/Oregon Tech
  
- The meeting dates for the rest of the year are scheduled for 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursdays 5:30 – 7:30PM.
  - At Dick's work:  
Group MacKenzie  
1515 SE Water Ave. Suite 100 (by OMSI)  
(Doors locked by 5PM; be ready to wave at the window and have a phone number handy)
    - September 13<sup>th</sup>
  - At Benson library:
    - October 11<sup>th</sup>
    - November 8<sup>th</sup>
    - December 13<sup>th</sup>

Respectfully Submitted,

Maj Britt (Max) Baker  
Secretary  
BPHS Alumni Association