

Valley Inquiry Charter School

June Meeting Minutes

June 9, 2025 | Zoom Meeting, 6:30 PM

Board Members

Board President & Chair	Cammi Carriere
Vice Chair	Terry Rohse
Treasurer	Stephen Staten
Secretary	BJ Foster
At-Large	Ed Austin
At-Large	Carol Kruse
At-Large	Mary Sinclair
At-Large	Garrick Williams
At-Large	Vacant
Non-Voting Member	Lacey McNay

Meeting Agenda Minutes

6:34pm Call to Order

6:34pm Approving meeting minutes

May 12, 2025 minutes: Terry motions to approve minutes as written. Garrick seconds motion. Vote: 8 yes / 0 no / 0 abstain. Motion passes.

May 21, 2025 special meeting minutes: Terry motions to approve minutes as written. Ed seconds motion. Vote: 8 yes / 0 no / 0 abstain. Motion passes.

June 5, 2025 special meeting minutes: Garrick motions to approve minutes as written. Carol seconds motion. BJ said anyone not present at the meeting should abstain from the vote. Motion tabled.

June 5, 2025 special meeting minutes: Garrick motions to approve minutes as written. Terry seconds motion. Vote: 7 yes / 0 no / 1 abstain.

6:37pm Principal's Report

Lacey: End of year events: Spring concert/auction, end of year IB attribute assembly, field trips for all grades, talent show, fifth grade graduation, kinder graduation, field day – mission impossible.

6:42pm IB/staff

Staffing updates: Hired assistant principal Katherine Fuller. Comes with IB experience from teaching in Indonesia in a K-12 IB school. Graduating with masters in educational leadership, excited to welcome her. Thank you to Ed for representing board on hiring committee.

Sophie has been a fill in and has taken the 4th grade vacancy for next year. Graduated from OSU's double degree program.

Andrew Schmitt will be joining as MYP coordinator and part time PE & Health teacher for grades 6-8.

Professional Development: IB World Conference / inservice week in August.

Safety Committee: Meeting on Thursday this week to do an audit of current safety policies & procedures. Board member and a few parents have volunteered to review the work and offer feedback. This will be ongoing work this summer due to MYP expansion logistics.

Enrollment: K 26/1st 27/2nd 28/3rd 28/4th 27/5th 25 (Total: 161) Looking at full enrollment for the fall for the elementary program. Projected numbers as of 6/9/2025 are: 6th 50 (20 returning 5th + 30 lottery, 22 Waitlist); 7th 31, 8th 10 (Total 91) Operationally can make this work, we aren't doing self-contained classes, so doesn't mean one class of 50 kids. Likewise PE classes may have mixed ages. Logistics will be figured out with scheduling, can handle this many students even if there is no attrition.

Steve: 20 of 25 returning is amazing.

Cammi: Ms. Purkey has done an amazing job of getting our spots filled.

Lacey: Ms. Purkey does a lot of work to get this done.

Stacy Boost: Excited about all the hiring that has been done and push to increase IB. We have only one student remaining to finish state testing with, excited for what next year holds.

6:52pm

Treasurer's Report

Steve: It has been a busy 3-4 weeks for staff between field trips, talent shows, concerts, graduations, etc. Have attended many which all went well. On top of hiring and middle school preparations, there are a lot of cool things coming together so kudos to Lacey and the staff team.

We are still in the purchasing process for the middle school and the treasurer's reports have been a bit light as a result. No concerns about execution of current budget to date. Reconciliation report for May should be coming through shortly, no major concerns. Will be discussing 25/26 budget later.

6:54pm

Open Comment

Cammi: Moved this section earlier so that parents have a chance to speak up if they have anything they wish to ask or share.

Rebekah Benham (chat): I'm just curious if there are any elementary staff changes next year? Is everyone returning?

Lacey: We should have a full report of that soon, but not quite done with meetings and their intent to return letters.

Crystal (chat): What was the parent review thing mentioned?

Steve: May have been the safety committee?

Kassy Selby: It has been an amazing year, thank you for all your hard work. Thank you to Cammi and Lacey for reaching out and working together with PTC, is so different from what we've had in the past to all align on the same page. Some of the most parent turnout, great fundraising and excited to continue forward.

Cammi: Excited to see what we can accomplish next year.

MD (chat): Thank you staff for everything you do. We appreciate all of the hard work you guys are putting in. Thanks Cammi for helping take on the JRH school with the staff. I don't think we could have gotten this far with the leadership we have in place now.

Crystal (chat): Can you guys share what auction money went towards or who one could ask?

Kassy: Very open at this point due to lots of potential with the expansion.

Carol: Kassy was saying the amount raised, how does it compare with years past?

Kassy: We haven't had a spring auction since I was here, but I was very happy with that number.

Garrick: My wife is on the PTC, and it was very successful for a single event. So much stuff donated by the community, much more than I expected.

Rebekah Benham (chat): How should middle school parents expect to be updated over the summer on construction progress and other planning? Parent square?

Lacey: Will be adding a middle school tab on the website for info and Parent Square as well.

Cammi: I will be out there often taking pictures.

Kassy Selby: Want to give feedback; could have been more transparency on what categories of things we are spending money on for expansion. Like, we spent on this category or this category, a sense of whether we're on point with spending.

Have been at board members where the whole budget was shared, realize more vague as a result of real estate transaction but would like more transparency.

Steve: Board's role is to set the budget and staff execute on it, so we don't get too much into the receipting, but more on reasonability checks. From my view, purchases are reasonable and within budget. Happy to dive in if there are specific questions. We don't want to share how much we have sitting in our bank account as that can impact negotiations, but otherwise should be able to be transparent.

Kassy: Would be nice to know things like, "we spent on staff development" even if we cannot get into the specifics.

Terry: BJ, didn't you give some details on line items?

BJ: I tried to highlight major transactions that were beyond daily expenses and what budget categories they fell within, but was very time consuming.

Terry: One gave very little detail, another was very meticulous.

Steve: Happy to give more info as we begin wrapping up these transactions.

7:11pm

Proposed 25/26 budget

Steve: If we have any notable variances from what we showed to investors, we need to be able to explain that. We talked about near full enrollment, and because we've had a great enrollment drive, we're very close to that number and able to move forward with a budget that is very similar. Have moved to 90% of ADMw with potential to move to 95% once we take over remaining services. Probably won't hit 100% enrollment so we are budgeting for a bit less. Set at 90% currently and anticipated enrollment numbers.

Salem-Keizer funding sheet has the estimated ADMw at 259 at 11,240 per student. Staffing costs are largest budget item. Some detail removed to not display staff earnings, but discussed stipends. SIA grant and literacy grant, all in staffing costs are just over \$2M. District funding around \$2.6M. Expense line items include:

- PYP/MYP dues \$20k
- Professional development \$20k,
- Audit/tax prep \$25k
- Copier/laminator/shred/water \$27.5k
- Quickbooks \$10k
- Consumables \$20k
- Curriculum materials \$20k
- Charter insurance \$50k
- Government fees \$1.5k
- Subscription/dues/benefits \$10k
- Consulting \$20k

- Legal fees \$10k
- Custodial \$55k
- Facilities/maintenance/monitoring \$27k
- Utilities \$35k
- Payroll \$3.6k
- Mortgage payment \$452k
- Technology \$11k

Grant income: \$62,546 early literacy success initiative, Early Literacy grant \$62,546; SIA grant: \$146,235.

Potential for additional grant revenue due to middle school. Total funding is just over \$2.8M and total expenditures right at \$2.8. Over budget by around \$4k, but have \$141k when we get to 95%.

Have comfort with it coming a little over budget due to standing up a new program and having high one-time expenses. Even if we don't hit the benchmarks for getting to 95% ADMw, we are only slightly tapping into reserves.

Cammi: What about capital expenses?

Steve: Capital expenses not covered in our operating budget.

Cammi: Our legal fees have been higher this year due to the anticipated purchase as well.

Terry: Budget coming in over budget seems a bit scary. Is this flexible?

Steve: Lacey responsible for staying within this budget, if one line item already spent, can approach the board for extra flexibility. However, once it's set, adding additional dollars to the budget is a decision the board would have to make.

BJ: I haven't seen in the past 7 years a year where we maintained 100% enrollment in the K-5 grades. Did we model average enrollment into how our budget is impacted?

Steve: Not the best records due to transition to our own staffing and COVID, so not reliable for forecasting.

Lacey: In conversation with ODE, haven't yet been able to apply for grants, but this summer will be working on those grants. Will bring in an influx of funding which isn't in this budget. Historically, funding that was brought in during middle school program was felt.

Steve: Enrollment is our main lever to pull for funding. If 8th grade is sitting at 10, if additional families want to come in, changes from \$88k shortfall to \$38k. The 95% ADMw will also make a big difference, as will SIA middle year grants. There is a potential with full staff to drop into reserves, but also potential for enrollment to improve or a good grant to help pick up costs.

BJ: Are costs for services that we need to take on to achieve 95% ADMw already built into this budget, or are those dollars things which we would have extra expenses related to?

Steve: As best as we know, those expenses are included.

Lacey: Once Ms. Purkey joined the team, our waitlists have been very healthy, and postcard campaign was successful. Could be worth looking into another elementary postcard even ahead of kindergarten enrollment.

Cammi: Are TAG stipends included?

Steve: Yes. Thought there would be some hard staffing choices to make, but the 91 enrollment really gives that flexibility.

Cammi: If some staff moved to Middle School, would that help?

Lacey: There are some positions that we can play with that might be full time or might be part time. Some wiggle room in teachers that will cover both age ranges for certain classes.

BJ: Will be important to make sure messaging is clear about what is actually happening, vs. looking like 50 kids in a single classroom, or that scare might lower enrollment.

Lacey: Good point, we will be clear about the different model in the middle years program.

BJ: Feeling good about the budget with the ability of expanding the budget with the ADMw increase and grants, as well as reigning in costs with FTE adjustments if needed.

Garrick motions to adopt the 25/26 budget. BJ seconds motion

Vote: 8 yes / 0 no / 0 abstain. Motion passes.

7:45pm

Expansion/Environmental updates

Cammi: Some movement in the right direction.

Lacey: SKSD is the property owner. The Phase 2 was a due diligence report, and was based on the residential level context, where someone might be living there for 30 years. They wanted to look at a school context and the long and short of it, the student exposure, construction worker exposure, etc. Student exposure does not exceed level that needs to be reported. Still doing CMMP (Contaminated Media Management Plan). They have several other facilities in the district that have these. SKSD is using a template that did have to be submitted to the state, even though we don't hit that threshold. Willing to work with us on closing dates, takes around 3 weeks, can build it into closing agreement. They took the screening report numbers and applied to school setting.

BJ: I'm assuming we would still be keeping students from doing things like digging in these areas and such, to make sure they aren't increasing exposure levels.

Lacey: Correct, plan has additional considerations for construction workers and such, as their exposure levels would be higher than those for students. Would still make sure student activities aren't disrupting those areas.

Cammi: We're expecting additional recommendations, then we will need to have a meeting to give clear guidelines to Andy Metcalf construction.

Steve: As a parent, happy to hear water was clear and that potential to harm to students from soil turned out to be very low. As a board member, glad we took abundance of caution with fencing until we knew more. Would like some sort of filtration system put on our well so that we have peace of mind that there's already a filter between the well water and the school itself.

Lacey: Gretchen has done water testing all year, requirement to have one more this calendar year, can touch base with her as we are hopefully getting ready to transfer ownership.

Cammi: Testing should be part of our CMMP as well.

Lacey: We have had quarterly testing all year, all results have been coming back clean.

Cammi: Shooting for June 13 closing, when our land use approval will be finished. Will need to get a plan ready for Central GeoTech and construction.

Cammi: Any public questions/comments?

Reuben: What was meant by taking over district services? Does that include special education?

Cammi: No, SKSD will retain special educational services. Lunch, custodial, technology, facilities, etc.

Garrick: Also alarm services.

7:59pm

Board position renewals

Terry: Would like to go to executive session for board position renewals. Article 4.02-1 of the bylaws says it's a board function. Haven't discussed as a board who would like to be in what position, is internal board function and doesn't belong in a public meeting.

Steve: Don't know that we can go into executive session without noticing it properly. Names and votes would have to be in public session.

Terry: Would like to table discussion until we've had discussion. Not comfortable with making an informed vote without some discussion. May need to be a special meeting as it cannot wait until September.

Ed: Cammi, you mentioned that we have a special session next week anyway, can this be included in that?

Steve: There is an ORS that covers hiring an executive so this may fall into that.

Terry: We're an anomaly as most boards do not elect their own membership.

Carol: As a new board member with not a whole lot of experience on how this works, I would like more time to be informed on the process itself. Otherwise my vote doesn't mean much.

Terry: BJ and I started long ago, and I would still prefer to know why someone wants to be more than a member at large. We've had some votes that had minimal discussion but we need the process, which is vaguely outlined in our bylaws.

Steve: Would be good as we have an even number of board members so there could be a tie.

Terry: Would also appreciate having Lacey there.

Cammi: We will have a special meeting for that next week.

8:07pm

Summer board training

Cammi: Promised new board members there would be a formal training. Presented two different options. One is having Matthew Lowe provide board training as he has done for other charter schools. He has two different price points of \$2400-3200 for in-person or \$800-1600 for Zoom.

Option two is to have OSBA which costs \$885 plus \$100/hour extra in-person.

Terry: Find in-person valuable.

Steve: I also feel that way.

Cammi: To build team for middle school transition, would be amazing.

Terry: Have worked with OSBA before, they do fine but feel Matthew would be better. Training would have to be during the week, would be tricky for working board members.

Garrick: Can schedule around it. Last week of July is not great. Traveling one week in August but otherwise open.

Carol: My hours are very flexible, only can't do Sunday evening. Have a couple of trips planned around 7/13, don't have anything in August.

Terry: I can throw out some potential dates via SurveyMonkey.

Steve: If Carol brings cookies I can miss work. Want to extend invite to Lacey and possible assistant principal.

BJ: Tuesday afternoons are my only easy time to schedule during the work week, otherwise pretty difficult as fiscal year end is looming and reporting ramps up after that.

Mary: Can do afternoons but have to know in advance as very busy at work, commute to Portland so the later in the afternoon the better.

Terry: If we can keep it at 2-3 hours.

Steve: We got another board member application, and never formally dissolved the old committee. Thoughts?

Terry: Change in board membership during the midst of a financial transaction isn't ideal. Might run through part of the process but not make a decision on membership until that is all resolved.

Steve: Takes a while, would likely be well after transaction closes.

Cammi: Ed, are you still fine participating?

Ed: Yes.

8:18pm

Next meeting info

Cammi: Should we schedule a meeting July 7 or just have special sessions?

Garrick: I will be out in the beginning of July.

Carol: I'm fine either way.

Steve: Could just have an info session with no voting items.

Terry: Cammi, let's chat about July 7 meeting with a construction update. I'm available any time.

BJ: Do we have a date confirmed for a special meeting next week?

Steve: We'll leave that as to be determined.

Next monthly meeting: TBD.

8:23pm

Meeting Adjourn

Chat log:

18:31:01 From Beth's iPhone to Everyone: Hello, good evening! Will tonight be recorded? Unfortunately, I'm having connection issues.

18:32:13 From Windrider to Everyone: I am here

18:32:40 From Mary Sinclair to Everyone: Hi

18:34:39 From Windrider to Everyone: Hi Mary

18:55:26 From Rebekah Benham to Everyone: I'm just curious if there are any elementary staff changes next year? Is everyone returning?

18:55:33 From Crystal to Everyone: What was the parent review thing mentioned?

18:56:39 From Crystal to Everyone: Yeah I think so

18:56:45 From Crystal to Everyone: Sorry am multitasking

18:57:26 From Crystal to Everyone: Okay thank you! Also will we be updated on who isn't returning?

18:58:18 From MD to Everyone: Thank you staff for everything you do. We appreciate all of the hard work you guys are putting in. Thanks Cammi for helping take on the JRH school with the staff. I don't think we could have gotten this far with the leadership we have in place now.

Rebekah Benham, Stacy Boost: (heart)

18:58:59 From Crystal to Everyone: Can you guys share what auction money went towards or who one could ask

19:02:29 From Rebekah Benham to Everyone: How should middle school parents expect to be updated over the summer on construction progress and other planning? Parent square?

19:03:44 From Rebekah Benham to Everyone: Excellent. Thank you!

Stacy Boost: (heart)

19:36:31 From Reuben to Everyone: Historically have 100% of applicants in June arrived in September? Isn't that also assumed as baseline?

19:45:43 From Windrider to Everyone: i need to step away for a minute

19:49:32 From Windrider to Everyone: I am back

20:23:34 From Beth's iPhone to Everyone: Good night all. Thank you for all the updates.