

Watershed Public Charter School September 2025 Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 30 · 6:00 – 7:30pm (Virtual)

Time zone: America/New_York

Google Meet joining info

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/urn-zjxt-bxy>

Or dial: (US) +1 573-667-3072 PIN: 108 946 579#

Board Member	Attendance
Baze, Crystal	Present
Freedman, Laurel	Present
Keniston, Charlotte	Present
Gilbert, William	Present
Magness-Hill, Sage	Present
Smolinski, Ann	Present
Thompson, Raven	Present
Ex-Officio Members	Attendance
David Miller	Present
Lori Widney	Present

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”*

Upcoming Key Dates:

October 2 – Schools Closed/Teachers on Duty (Yom Kippur)

October 10 @ 3:15 pm – 5:00 pm - WPTO Mum Sale Distribution

October 14 @ 5:30 pm – Governance Committee Meeting

October 16 – CBT Youth Environmental Education School-Wide Field Trips to Patapsco State Park

October 17 – Schools Closed for MSEA Conference

October 20 – Schools Closed/Teachers on Duty (Diwali)

October 28 @ 6:00 pm – October Board Meeting (in-person)

October 31 – 3-Hour Early Dismissal/1st Marking Period Ends

November 11 @ 5:30 pm – Governance Committee Meeting

November 17 – 21 – American Education Week

November 25 @ 6:00 pm – Board Meeting (in-person)

November 27 & 28 – Thanksgiving
Holiday/Schools and Offices Closed

Start Time: 6:02 p.m.-open session notes taken by Christina Sawyer

Public Comment

No public comment tonight.

Consent Agenda (2 min)

- Approval of [August 2025 Board Meeting Minutes](#)

Board Member	Vote to approve consent agenda
Baze, Crystal	Yes
Freedman, Laurel	Yes
Keniston, Charlotte	Motion to Approve
Gilbert, William	Seconded
Magness-Hill, Sage	Yes
Smolinski, Ann	Yes
Thompson, Raven	Yes
McGruder, Sasha	Yes

Old Business (10 min)

- Charter School Funding Advocacy Update- Dave provided an update on this issue. Dave ran numbers with a 5% admin fee instead of 2% fee to BCPS and said under that scenario, Watershed would operate until the 2029 school year when Watershed would then go into a deficit. Watershed still has low facility expenses even with new modulars. A statewide advocacy effort is launching tomorrow. On October 30th from 1-2 p.m. there will be an open session of the work group. MD Charter School Advocacy Day in Annapolis will be on either January 28 or February 11, 2026 and there will be a networking event after that. More information about charter school funding advocacy will be shared with the Board and then distributed to families via Turtle Talk when Dave receives it.
 - [MAPCS Sept 2025 Advocacy Overview handout.pdf](#)
 - #mdcharterschoolscount
- Chesapeake Bay Trust Youth Environmental Education Grant - Watershed was awarded a grant for ~\$5k to support a field trip for the entire school. Great opportunity for our students by partnering with Patapsco Heritage Greenway. The field trip will happen on October 16 in Patapsco State Park's Avalon Area with elementary grades going in the morning to spend the day outside at the park and with the older grades going in the afternoon. Students will learn about

macroinvertebrates in the water, participate in bio blitz, collect sea glass and trash items for a mosaic to be displayed at school and there will be a station for games. PHG has been very helpful in planning this for us and credit to Laura Guelcher for spearheading this for the school.

- Maryland Nonprofits – Board Excellence for Nonprofits with Staff Training: October 29, 2025 4:30 pm – 7:00 pm (virtual)- 3 board members should be set for that- Sasha, Will and Charlotte. Dave will follow up with MD Nonprofits to ensure that the Board members are ready for that training as none had received any communication from MD Nonprofits as of today.

New Business (15 min)

- Board Giving- Charlotte said that she and Raven have been reviewing Board documents and noted that Watershed doesn't have an official policy regarding board members giving financially. Board giving shows caring about the space and demonstrating a financial commitment to the work. It gives a talking point for board members and makes for better askers. Funders expect to see 100% giving from board members, yearly. Not asking for a lot but what the board members can give with a check made out to Watershed or via PayPal info.
- 8th Grade – Celebrations, Preparation for High School and Tracking - Lori said the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) is trying to create an opportunity for stakeholders to create a sustainable expectation for 8th grade farewell. A lot of celebratory aspects- would love an experience that includes families as much as possible. Preparation for high school and tracking- this would fall on school counselor and records secretary but at a school like Watershed where students come from all over the county, all 26 students could go to a different high school. If they go to their zoned high school, it will be easier to track them but if they go to a magnet high school, that would have to be something done over the summer to see where they land. The goal is to have the first meeting in November to discuss 8th grade farewell celebrations. Dave said that this could be a fundraising event for the board. Charlotte would like some way to meaningfully celebrate each of them. Laurel said that having alums come back after some time spent in high school and say what worked well and what didn't in preparing them for high school, would be beneficial.
- December Board Renewal Celebration- Every year the Board celebrates the anniversary of the board and renewal of the school's charter. Both Sage and Charlotte said that they would be willing to host. Charlotte is suggesting a progressive dinner and Ann loves that idea too.

Reports

- [September PTO Report](#)- Bernadette (PTO Co-President) said that their Mum fundraiser raised \$806 and the Chuck E. Cheese fundraiser gave the PTO \$397. Upcoming PTO events include: General PTO Meeting on 10/7 meeting, mum fundraiser pick-up on 10/10, 10/15 fundraiser at Owings Mills Honeygrow, and Fall Fest on 11/7 from 3:15-5 p.m. with food, fun and games. The Watershed Board is more than welcome to run a table and/or game during Fall Fest with a Fall Fest planning meeting scheduled for 10/9.
- [September Teacher's Report \(5 min\)](#)- Ann said teachers have anxiety about the move-in time and are also excited- can see the fence. But there is also a PTSD-sense of "can we really trust it's

gonna happen?” regarding the upper school modular coming to campus. The star on a graph in Ann’s presentation shows how staff are feeling- anxious, concerned, grateful, feeling appreciated, motivated to get it going. Ann said that staff’s biggest stressor is around the move-in date and time. Staff is cramped in terms of space and when they have meetings at the same time it is often difficult to find space. No ability to prepare for future classes since spaces are used for multiple purposes (such as an art class in a homeroom class) Ann went to the move-in committee meeting and her intention is to go to all of the meetings. Teachers do feel appreciated. We have had some really positive professional development lately and looking forward to one on Thursday as well. Ann gave 4 writing samples from Ms. Anderson’s ELA classes; 2 were long-term Watershed students and 2 were new to the school. 2nd grade is looking for plastic wrap and playdough donations.

- [Principal report September 2025](#)- Lori said that our attendance is 97% attendance- the highest we’ve been at, teachers are maintaining a flexible mentality about space- using outside in the garden to extend teaching space. The beginning of the school year is really focused on professional development- project implementation while increasing teacher ability to be responsive to real time student performance- they will be doing this outside at Patapsco State Park on October 2 during a staff professional development day. 417 students is Watershed’s enrollment level for this year. STAR assessment is a new computer based assessment test that BCPS wants Watershed to consider taking in the fall, winter and spring. It is a data rich assessment. ILT is still working to understand the reports. STAR is being used to determine principal effectiveness and student progress. There are district and statewide benchmarks and students seem to perform less well on statewide but meet the district benchmarks. Laurel asked if BCPS is really asking Watershed to use it or telling. Lori and Dave said we have leeway to choose. STAR is still adding buttons and reports. We will have to use the CBMs to be in compliance with the Ready to Read Act. The Department of Ed has determined that students must meet a certain benchmark by the end of 3rd grade to move on to 4th grade. This will impact Watershed’s current 2nd graders and younger. We are being proactive with our wonderful K-2 teachers giving a strong foundation.
- [September 2025 Executive Director's Report](#) - Dave said that 25-26 enrollment has closed as of today. The goal was 420 students but Watershed ended this enrollment period with 417 students, which created a deficit of \$36,516 (based on per pupil amounts). Jenn, Christina, Laura, Dave made calls for enrollment. Dave said that Watershed budgeted a surplus for this year and having less than 420 students ultimately takes Watershed down to a \$127K surplus. So this is an impact but we were prepared for that. We did grow from 366 students from last year to 417 students this year and this is as big as the school will be. Watershed begins 26-27 enrollment on October 1. There are yard signs available, flyers to local businesses and preschools and our website to advertise. Virtual lottery drawing this year and the school will have 5 open houses. Charlotte asked about the possibility of overenrollment. Laurel asked Charlotte to grab the open house dates to add to Board Members calendars to demonstrate a presence. Lori said that we have a significantly healthy waitlist then we hit a wall in one grade, we adjust in another grade level. Lori said that we are looking for those spaces and we are pushing where we can to maximize enrollment. Lori also said that the teachers know that the classes that they have today

are the classes that they will have for the rest of the school year. Laurel said part of this relies on the relationships with families and understanding how they are feeling about being at the school. Grants review- A Harpers journalist will be at the Oct 16 field trip funded by Chesapeake Bay Trust; Watershed is still waiting for DOE approval to move forward with planning and design process and noted that HVAC equipment does have long lead times; Dave worried about making sure we get moving soon on design so HVAC installation can happen next summer. Watershed just found out about Baltimore County grant opportunity today and Christina will be attending a meeting next Monday re: possible playground improvement. Partnerships- Blue Water Baltimore, BCPS Curriculum Night, Alliance for the Bay, Towson University. Upper School Modularity Project Update- due to get an updated timeline on Friday from New Edge. Right now we are awaiting Environmental Impact Review (EIR) comments and had to file a deed to the property for forest buffer and forest conservation. Watershed will engage with Pete Gutwald again once we have EIR comments. We are starting construction site prep- fencing and construction trailer which has meant some changes to entrance and dismissal. BGE contract is near execution for additional power; should have extra power by the end of November. The Upper School Move Committee met with teachers and parents and it was a good response and discussion about how to make this move work as smoothly as possible; talked about the dates and the timeframe for how to move and had some creative ideas on how to work the school schedule. Dave will report back after the Upper School Move committee's October 16th meeting. Watershed has now engaged an owners representative from Site Insight to take the load off of us internally, to manage quality control inspections and manage the permitting process as well as punchlist items. Aiming for late November/December to start construction. Loan closing docs have been prepared and looking to circulate for signatures in the next week- the church has to sign off on a leasehold mortgage (collateral for the loan- an interest in Watershed's lease), New Edge, Wilmot, and Watershed also must sign. Targeting a late October loan closing concurrent with building permit. Charlotte asked about challenges in the past with timeliness getting things signed by the church. Dave said that's why we are giving the church a 4 week turnaround time period. Dave said that we have had so much interaction between our attorney and the AOB attorney to help move the process a little quicker. Facilities updates- installing intercom system, door hardware and door closer repairs, IPM. Discussion of budget and cash flow with more details in the Executive Director's report.

Open session adjourned at: 7:30 p.m.

Recorded vote to close the meeting: Date: _____; Time: _____; Location: _____
Motion to close meeting made by: _____; Seconded by _____;
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)___ "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 -