

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, January 11, 2017

Present: Susannah Howe, Deirdre Arthen, Scott Remick, Dan Klatz, Amy Aaron, David Starr, Amy Reesman, Penny Leveritt, Charles Wiemeyer, Chris Greenfield, Steve Hoyt, Terra Missildine, Michael Filas

Regrets: Andi Porter

Facilitator: Scott Remick

Notetakers: Caroline Palmer

Guests:

Listkeeper: Scott Remick

Timekeeper: David Starr

Mission statement read by: David Starr

Topic	Discussion	Action (if necessary)
Announcements/Appreciations/Acknowledgements	<p><u>Announcements:</u></p> <p>Carla will be out starting 1/12 for 4-8 weeks to recover from foot surgery. Penny Giguere will be filling in 3 days a week to help Monique out in the office.</p> <p>Dan, Amy, and Deirdre sent out a letter regarding Martin Luther King Jr. Day that has been received favorably.</p> <p><u>Appreciations:</u></p>	
Any thank you notes needed?	Carla will be sent a get-well card after her surgery. Scott will send it on behalf of the Board.	Scott will send a get-well card to Carla after her surgery.
BoT Visibility this month?	<p>The Board will be present at the prospective families Open House next Thursday, January 19th from 6:30-8:00pm.</p> <p>The Board will discuss sending members to speak with parents at the sleepover.</p>	Terra will attend.
Minutes	December BoT meeting minutes reviewed.	<p>Scott moved to approve Dec BoT minutes as amended.</p> <p>David seconded.</p> <p>Minutes approved by consensus.</p>

Public Comment Period	None.	
Coordinator Supervision and Evaluation Proposal	<p>Larry Hunt, an independent advisor, made recommendations at the request of Domain Council.. The proposed plan states that Coordinator evaluations will take place every three years and will start in July with Coordinators setting goals for the coming year while concurrently performing a self-assessment for the last year. Supervision of this process will be done by the Domain Council. Board members will attend three morning coffee houses (October, January, April) to solicit community feedback about school management or other board issues.</p> <p>Self-assessment and goal-setting occurring simultaneously will allow for one to inform the other to stimulate continuous improvement. Coordinators will set goals every year and have questions present on the school satisfaction survey, but will only undergo full Board and Council evaluation every three years, as the process is quite involved. Only employees who are new to the school will undergo evaluation more than once every three years, and will undergo a yearly evaluation for their first three years with the school.</p> <p>The proposal is amended to state that the Board deserves the right to evaluate Coordinators as needed and to adjust the evaluation cycle as needed. Additionally, the Staff Survey will be performed annually in order to solicit staff feedback on a regular basis concerning Coordinator performance and will be used in evaluating Coordinator performance during whichever year a given domain's Coordinator is being evaluated.</p> <p>The Board moves to make a \$500 donation to the Fisher Home in lieu of payment to Larry Hunt for compiling recommendations regarding coordinator supervision and evaluation.</p>	<p>Susannah moved to approve the proposal as amended.</p> <p>Steve seconded.</p> <p>Proposal approved by consensus.</p> <p>Domain Council and Deirdre will generate questions for the School Satisfaction Survey.</p> <p>Susannah moved to approve the donation to the Fisher Home.</p> <p>David seconded.</p> <p>Donation approved by consensus.</p> <p>Amy A. will send a donation of \$500 to the Fisher Home on behalf of the Board. Susannah will write and send the note.</p>
American Flag/Pledge Mass Law discussion	<p>A law regarding the position of the American Flag in Public Schools and the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance is under discussion.</p> <p>The erection of a flagpole on the school's campus would require waiting until Spring and the ground's thaw. At a</p>	<p>Dan, Amy, and Deirdre will obtain flags for the outside of the school and for classrooms, as well as seek staff feedback for an approach to</p>

	<p>teacher’s meeting, the topic of culture clash arose. Several teachers are concerned about leading the recitation of the pledge. Questions were raised about what other schools in the district do around this law.</p> <p>There is some concern that for the school to begin instating this law in school, it would lead to even more contention due to current political and social climates. There is sentiment that it is important for students to know what the Pledge is, as they will encounter it in various places in life. There was not an overwhelming sense of support for the suggestion at the teacher’s meeting.</p> <p>This is not an unenforceable law, but a law that the government chooses not to enforce strictly. Daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance could perhaps desensitize students to its importance through repetition and resentment. It’s possible that teachers could be permitted to have students to recite the Pledge every day as Hilltown works to promote a culture where all people can express their beliefs. There is concern over the difference between a local community school choosing not to follow this law and Hilltown choosing not to follow this law. It is challenging to make sure that the Pledge and its message are parts of the curriculum that students interact with, but it’s not easy to make sure that the message gets to youth on a regular basis.</p> <p>For those families and community members who are advocates of this law, it can be hard to feel welcome in a climate that doesn’t practice this ritual, and steps should be taken to ensure that all families and all children feel welcome and safe in expressing their beliefs. Some children in the school may not believe in the God cited by the Pledge of Allegiance and changing the requirements for its recitation could change the climate of the school in a negative way.</p> <p>There could be ways for students or interested participants to opt into interaction with the Pledge, rather than simply stating that we’re opting out of it as a school. It may be an appropriate step for the Board to instruct the Coordinators to grapple with this issue and how the presence of the American Flag and the Pledge of Allegiance can be implemented in the spirit of this law.</p>	<p>the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.</p>
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	<p>The legality of tailoring this law to a school’s needs and the scrutiny that charter schools are under make this decision a difficult one. It is important to have the American Flag on display at the school itself and in classrooms as necessary, as well as in the All-School space, but the presence of the Pledge of Allegiance can be individualized to this school and to the students in it to maintain the precedent of comfort and expression for all members of the community.</p> <p>If flags are present in the school, they should be well-mounted and placed in appropriate spaces in classrooms in order to maintain respect. Having a flag flying outside the school could provide a method for continuing discussions around civics and our position in this nation with students.</p> <p>Having an option to recite the Pledge of Allegiance for families and children that want to participate can make the school a more inclusive space. Part of teaching children to respect the community they’re in means teaching them to respect the larger community of the country we live in, which includes the law of the United States and observation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Talking about national duty is part of understanding your footing in the larger world. To not offer an opportunity for students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance is to remove a choice from their lives.</p> <p>A push to implement these changes at this moment could be strenuous for educators and students, as we are in a moment of transition that could provoke confusion and contention around adopting these measures. We as a school have created a pledge for Hilltown that strives to describe and encourage our specific vision for the school, while the Pledge of Allegiance involves the imposition of certain structures and religious beliefs on students and staff that may not subscribe to them.</p> <p>It’s uncomfortable to consider the imposition of the opinion of the majority on the minority based on differing beliefs. If the school abstains from following the law because of discomfort, where is the line drawn? As a school under scrutiny and going forward into a transition</p>	
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	<p>period with the Department of Education, it could be dangerous for the school to discard this law due to disagreement.</p> <p>This conversation could possibly be drawn into a larger community discussion, if the Board is uncomfortable with imposing a decision on this large a question on the community at large. If the Coordinators are responsible for asking the community to wrestle with and pull apart this question, the Board could possibly consult with legal counsel around what the repercussions would be for noncompliance with this law.</p> <p>As soon as possible, a flag should be erected or flown outside the school and flags obtained for classroom display, as compliance with that portion of the law is essentially unanimously agreed upon.</p>	
<p>Coordinator Salary Adjustment Proposal</p>	<p>The subcommittee has generated numbers on the adjustment of salaries for Coordinators. The initial proposal suggested adjusting the Coordinator salaries in the next year to reflect 92.5% of peer-level salaries, and 95% in the following year. The finance cmt is not yet prepared to make a recommendation. The proposal will be examined at the February Board of Trustees meeting.</p>	<p>Finance will discuss the Proposal and the formal proposal will come in February.</p>
<p>GABS topics: LRP/by-laws</p>	<p>LRP tracking tool: Clarification was made regarding readability and accessibility of information on how the LRP is presented. It may be advantageous for Board members to have time to digest and critique this layout and its implications over the next month and return to discuss it more deeply at the next Board meeting. The responsibility of GABS is to monitor the progress of long-range goals, and GABS would be responsible for sitting with the Board to discuss the LRP as well as providing recommendations on the progress of long-range goals. The LRP could be updated twice-yearly in April and December to reflect progress on goals represented in the plan, in order to bring topics that need addressing to the Board at two monthly meetings. If an item requires revision or removal, the Board will approve that action. Numbering individual goals within each heading could make it easier to reference them in shorthand.</p> <p>By-laws:</p>	<p>GABS will reexamine the LRP and by-laws to implement proposed clarifications and return in February for further discussion.</p>

	<p>Recommended By-laws changes:</p> <p>reflect the update in methods of communication, and these changes will be cleared with legal counsel before being brought to the community at the Annual Meeting. The law currently permits the use of tele-conference to engage absent Board members with group meetings, but if the framework and technology are not in place it can be hard to have effective interactions. There may be a benefit in placing an upper bound or limit on how often this can occur in order to make tele-conference the exception rather than the rule. It's not legal to vote by proxy through an intermediary.</p> <p>include the addendum of tele-conference being used only when necessary to reach a quorum decision in a timely manner. If the Board agrees, it would only be used sparingly and situationally. The inclusion with limits of tele-conference could be a valuable tool in explicitly necessary situations. GABS will play with the wording to prioritize in-person communication and bring the proposal back for the next meeting's discussion.</p> <p>remove 'telegram' as a viable method of communication, replacing it with 'written notice' as a more broad description of communication.</p> <p>reflect the yearly service of voting community members as 40 hours over a 12-month period.</p> <p>Redundant by-law Article 2 Section II cut due to redundancy.</p> <p>rules regarding who may call a special meeting of members of the school, giving power to the President and Vice President of the Board rather than a full majority of the Board. The language will be further clarified and brought back.</p> <p>include an attendance expectation in the by-laws for Board members. Exceptions will be included for extenuating circumstances, but accountability can be encouraged by making a certain expectation known.</p>	
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<p>BOT and Committee Goals update</p>	<p>BoT: Accomplished Admin. Coordinator transition. Have accomplished roughly 50% of overall management and stop-gap emergency plan for Coordinators. Continuing work on other goals.</p> <p>Finance: Made good progress in 5-year budget projects, perhaps 1 meeting away from presentation of information. Working on reallocation policy in next meeting. Transition plan ongoing. No concrete discussion on financial security options. Not likely to continue addressing cash investment opportunities. We are liable for taxes this year, which have roughly doubled.</p> <p>On-Site: Not much traction on play structures. Solar plan still in the works regarding commitment to Solar Sense plan with past developers. Urban power not a good fit for school. Capital replacement plan going well, consultant to be brought in to examine school to give us a breakdown of what needs to be replaced and a timeline. Whole site master plan has been put on hold.</p> <p>GABS: Reviewing by-laws currently. Currently exploring proposals coming to Board for approval. Resource notebook ongoing. Haven't looked at Board recruitment, would love to solicit ideas. Talked about Orientation plan and it needs further work. Currently in throes of long range plan.</p> <p>Personnel: Currently working on discussion around capping sick-time benefit for employees. Continuing to address other goals. Will work to design staff survey.</p>	
<p>Site Visit report</p>	<p>Tabled until next meeting to allow for more time to read and parse through the report.</p>	

New Business - Identify only		
Committee Reports - Questions only		
Meeting Wrap-Up/ Evaluation	Next meeting is February 8th, 6:30pm Snacks: David Starr, Drinks: Terra Newsletter blurb: Penny Facilitator: Scott	
Review Action Items	Reviewed action items with the board.	
Adjournment	Meeting adjourned at 8:33PM	

Attachments:

Jan BOT Meeting Agenda; December 2016 BoT Meeting Minutes; GABS Dec 2016 Meeting minutes; Current by-laws for review; LRP Tracker Tool DRAFT 2; 2016 Hilltown DESE report Card; Domain Coordinator Report, January 2017; Domain Council Meeting Minutes, December 13, 2016; Domain Council Meeting Minutes, January 3, 2017; Personnel Meeting Minutes, January 2017; SEPAC Meeting Dates, Spring 2017

ADDENDUM:

Pledge/Flag Recommendation-Chris Greenfield, Jan 2017; BOT and Committee Goals 2016-17

Tentative Agenda for Feb 2017 Meeting:

DESE Site visit update

Q2 financials

Budget revisions

Coord salary

By-laws

Search committee update