

**HCCPS Board of Trustees
Meeting Agenda
March 9, 2016**

The Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School was founded in 1995 as a Massachusetts Public Charter School. Our mission is:

- ❖ To engage students in a school which uses experiential, hands-on activities, the arts, and interdisciplinary studies to foster critical thinking skills and a joy of learning.
- ❖ To sustain a cooperative, intimate community of students, staff, families and local community members, which guides and supports the school and its educational program.
- ❖ To cultivate children's individual voices and a shared respect for each other, our community, and the world around us.

Facilitator: Susannah Howe

6:30 Welcoming (read mission statement) (15 min)

Announcements, appreciations, acknowledgements
Agenda check; Appoint timekeeper, listkeeper
Thank You Note check – any needed?
BOT Visibility this month
Approve Minutes from Feb 10

6:45 Public Comment period (10 min)

6:55 Succession Planning: Susannah (20 min – discussion)

7:15 SPED Administrator Proposal: Dan (10 min – decision)

7:25 BOT Role in Hiring: Dan/Steve (15 min – discussion)

7:40 BOT Philosophy re Salary Scale: Dan/Steve (15 min – discussion)

7:55 Database Update/Catalog of Needs: Amy (5 min – update)

8:00 BOT Membership: Penny (5 min – update)

8:05 Budget Process Overview: Amy (5 min – update) → *time permitting*

8:10 Loan Update: Amy (5 min – update) → *time permitting*

8:15 New Business (5 min – identify only)

8:20 Committee Reports (5 min – questions only)

8:25 Meeting Wrap-up/ Evaluation/Minutes Finalization (5 min)

Confirm date/facilitator, snack bringer, newsletter blurb, agenda check for next meeting

8:30 Review Action Items in this meeting's minutes (5 min)

8:35 Adjournment

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, February 10, 2016

Present: Susannah Howe, Dianne Hobbs, Deirdre Arthen, Scott Remick, Dan Klatz, David Starr, Jesse Belcher-Timme, Penny Leveritt, Andi Porter, Terra Missildine, Amy Aaron, Charles Wiemeyer

Regrets: Steve Hoyt

Facilitator: Scott Remick

Notetakers: Alana Fichman

Guests: Amy Reesman of GABS committee, Ellen Ferris

Listkeeper: Scott

Timekeeper: David

Mission statement read by: Scott Remick

Topic	Discussion	Action (if necessary)
Announcements/Appreciations/Acknowledgements	<u>Announcements:</u> The USDA application for a loan to buy the building was submitted. <u>Appreciations:</u>	
Any thank you notes needed?		Board will send letter penned by Amy and signed by Susannah to Florence Savings Bank for the donation
BoT Visibility this month?	sleepover and Prisms Coffeehouse	Board will make a presence at the Prisms Coffee House. Penny will be at the K-5 sleepover.
Minutes	January 2016 and February 2nd emergency meeting minutes reviewed.	Scott moved to approve January minutes as amended. David seconded. Minutes approved by consensus. Scott moved to approve February 2nd

		<p>emergency meeting with amendment.</p> <p>David seconded.</p> <p>Minutes approved by consensus.</p>
Public Comment Period	None.	
Staffing Changes	Amy Aaron will retire at the end of next year.	
Succession Planning	<p>From the meetings held with the Coordinators, Domain Council, teachers, admin staff, Friends of Hilltown, and the board of trustees, some recurring themes emerged, such as: coordinators need more time for their jobs, a need for more defined roles, a need for backup assistance, a need for a SPED director, the challenge of having the community coordinator be a part time position, and the need for a maintenance person or janitor. Also the need to increase accountability was a recurring theme.</p> <p>3 preliminary plans outlined:</p> <p>Plan 1: An executive director with three full time coordinators. A SPED coordinator at halftime. A potential half-time janitor. <u>Pros:</u> BoT supervision of only one, plan could - in theory - add a staff person to free up some coordinator time. <u>Cons:</u> Stretches the budget, could be hard to find a director that is the right fit, biggest change from current plan.</p> <p>Plan 2: Admin and Education Coordinators at full time, shared supervision of a community associate at half time position, half-time SPED Coordinator, potential half-time janitor. <u>Pros:</u> More budget friendly. <u>Cons:</u> does not address need for more coordinator assistance, community person still overburdened and does not have an equal seat at the table.</p> <p>Plan 3: All three coordinators at full time. “Swing person” ¼ time in each arena plus extra time. SPED coordinator at halftime, part-time janitor possibility. <u>Pros:</u> more staffing to help coordinators, all domains equal. <u>Cons:</u> more budget costs, finding swing person who has all the skills to help coordinators could be difficult,</p>	

	<p>division of swing-person’s time and supervision could be difficult.</p> <p>Comments:</p> <p>Facilities director/janitor is a position with a specific skills set and should not be handled by coordinators at a higher pay. Facilities staff would be very beneficial. T.M. Could be worth exploring a maintenance service, but would likely be much more expensive than having someone on staff.</p> <p>A lot of support for a SPED administrative position.</p> <p>Swing person would be potentially difficult to find someone with that broad of a skills set to cover all that the Coordinators do.</p> <p>Finding a swing person, which would require a broader skill set, should be a last resort.</p> <p>Should there be shared management structure? Has been from the beginning. Plan 1 stands out from the rest.</p> <p>Should decide whether 1 coordinator or more than 1 before finding other details.</p> <p>Plan 1 with an executive director makes it so board only has one person to supervisor. If biggest motivation is to ease the board’s supervision by having only one person to supervise...that might not be enough of a reason to go with Plan 1. Plan 1 is quite different than the original mission and feel of how the school runs.</p> <p>The idea of one executive director is about more than easing the board’s supervision levels, but also about helping the coordinators with some of their work load.</p> <p>“School leader” sets the tone of a school. More efficient, “buck stops here” model. Departure from current model. Just having more people is helpful. Decisions in schools can happen “on the fly” due to immediacy of certain situations. Agrees that flexibility within the roles is good, and that the positions can be replicated.</p> <p>For the record, coordinators do disagree some of the time, and while the back-and-forth is potentially inefficient, it can lead to better decisions.</p> <p>Having three coordinators is part of the personality of the school. If issue is of accountability, we could change the relationship of coordinators to the board rather than bring in an outside director.</p> <p>Structure should reflect mission and values. Board was more heavily involved in the earlier years of the school.</p>	
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	<p>If there is an executive director they should come from a community background due to school’s mission. Site manager could fulfil duties of sanitation in addition to other tasks. Dissatisfied with all three plans at present.</p> <p>What is board looking for when they say “increased accountability”?</p> <p>Board is responsible for supervising three coordinators and doing reviews. Accountability not large enough issue to change the structure of the school.</p> <p>Community coordinator should be built up rather than ½ or less, due to school growth, very important to develop. Could each coordinator have their own half-time assistant?</p> <p>Having a part time maintenance person doesn’t seem feasible. Could it be combined with something else?</p> <p>Hard to see benefits of one director. “Accountability” seems more like dissatisfaction with final decision rather than the way decision is made. One person could result in more issues being brought to the board. Cooperative management essential element of the school.</p> <p>Parents have difficulty in bringing up issues to administrators and the board. Success with current plan is due to long-term working relationship. Difficult to plug people into current plan. Director could help with parent concerns.</p> <p>Multiple coordinators with support is more sustainable over time. When one director is replaced it could completely alter culture of the school.</p> <p>Should be an assessment in what are the key issues that need to be addressed.</p> <p>Question: Could there be more details provided on the reasons and examples of the theme of the need for more accountability that came from the Succession Plan meetings?</p>	
<p>BOT role in hiring</p>	<p>moved to the March meeting</p>	

GABS update and BOT recruitment	Sent 8-9 applications to those interested, 1 candidate, another potential. School need publicity materials, new brochure. Possibly create a marketing budget for cost of printing?	GABS will continue to work on these materials, and will come up with an amount for the budget for design and printing.
Site Update	Some impending projects include shelves in the attic, covering lower half of walls in All School, bridge connecting the play structure elements. Also a combination of plantings and some sort of physical barrier along back “kids playground” along O’Neil St.	
Political Update	No public meeting planned with Senator Rosenberg yet- he apologized about what was in press. Raising the cap on charter schools will not affect Hilltown Charter School itself, though the campaign has increased negative press towards charter schools.	
New Business - Identify only	Question of board meetings in morning versus evening? Question of visibility. Full-length morning meetings would be hard for some current BOT members; the emergency meeting only worked so well because it was 15 minutes long.	
Committee Reports - Questions only	Equity team has been meeting for about two years, sporadically, currently working on self-assessment. Activities have included research on books in classrooms that diversify reading material, potential trainings, and discussions of hiring strategies to diversify staff.	
Meeting Wrap-Up/ Evaluation	Next meeting is scheduled for March 9, 2016 at 6:30 pm. Snacks: David Starr Drinks: Jesse Belcher-Timme Newsletter blurb: Penny Facilitator: Susannah	
Review Action Items:	Alana reviewed action items with the board	
Adjournment	Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM	

Attachments :

BOT Meeting Agenda; January 2016 BoT Meeting Minutes Draft;
February 2nd Emergency Meeting Minutes Draft; Initial Report to
BOT Re: Succession Plan; SPEDPAC January 2016 Meeting Minutes;
GABS January Meeting Report; Domain Council Minutes 02-02-2016;
Personnel February Meeting Minutes; Domain Coordinators Report,
February 2016

Tentative Agenda for March Meeting: BoT role in hiring, domain
Council philosophy for salary scales, continue succession
planning conversation; SPED admin position?; database update
from Coordinators, budget process overview?, possible site
update, proposal for, "What happens when a coordinator asks for
a waiver?"; building purchase update?



Education Domain Proposal to the Board of Trustees

Date: March 5, 2015

Priority level: High

Approximate time needed for discussion: 10 minutes

Proposal to be presented by: Dan Klatz

Proposal drafted by: Dan Klatz

Text of proposal:

As we have expanded our student population, both the number and percentage of students with disabilities has increased. At this time, we have 39 students enrolled in Special Education, 5 additional students on Section 504 Accommodation Plans, and another 6 students who are currently in process of being evaluated. The needs of some of our students are fairly labor intensive, and the current teaching staff of 3 full time teachers is collectively managing challenging teaching and administrative load. In addition, I am spending the largest amount of time I have ever needed to allocate to supporting the program administratively. In essence, we have grown beyond our current teaching and administrative capacity.

I propose the creation of a new full time position of Special Education administrator/teacher. The duties would be roughly 50% for each, but would vary based on enrollment, individual situations, and overall needs in the Special Education program. The SPED Administrator would oversee the Special Education program, supervise the teachers, and act as the official “authorizer” for Special Education services.

This proposal is consistent with the findings from the succession planning team, the Long Range Plan of 2011, and the identified needs of staff and parents.

Goals to be achieved by proposal: Greater capacity to meet the needs of students, the administrative and regulatory requirements of the Special Education program, and broader administrative needs of school.

Potential problems/dissenting views: The biggest potential issue is sorting out exactly how much time will be necessary for administration and how much will be available for teaching. It is possible that the administrative portion will take more time than I currently project, and that would need to be addressed.



Personnel Committee Proposal to the Board of Trustees

Date: March 4, 2015
Priority level: Medium
Approximate time needed for discussion: 10 minutes
Proposal to be presented by: Dan and Steve

Committee members drafting proposal: Steve Hoyt, Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Carla Clark, Dan Klatz, Sam Charron

Text of proposal: Revised approach to salary compensation as follows:
The goal for salaries, adopted the the spring of 2005 has been:

HCCPS teacher salaries will be at the average level of six comparable local districts; Hadley, Hatfield, Petersham, Williamsburg, Southampton, and Ware.

The comparison will be made by looking at minimum and maximum salary averages, and projecting a comparable salary scale for HCCPS teachers.

We propose the following goal:

Every three years, the BOT will obtain data regarding the salary scales at the following comparable local districts; Hadley, Hatfield, Williamsburg, Westhampton, and Chesterfield/Goshen as well as data from the following Charter Schools: PVPA, Four Rivers, PVCICS. Hilltown Salary scales will be developed that are within 90%-110% of the average salaries from these districts, and implemented whenever financially feasible during the following three years. For non-scaled positions, every attempt will be made to obtain similar data, and apply the same goal.

Goals to be achieved by proposal: Clarity, flexibility

Potential problems/dissenting views: Doesn't guarantee salaries will be at full parity in any given year.



Domain Coordinators Report to the Board of Trustees March, 2016

1. At the end of this month, we will be administering MCAS tests in English Language Arts. We chose MCAS over PARCC in December. The MCAS test is being revised for 2017. This year, they are using a modified test which contains PARCC questions. Teachers have been reviewing the materials, and are preparing students for these different types of questions. Results will not be available until September.
2. We are currently interviewing candidates for our 2 full-time DIAL/SELF AmeriCorps members for 2016-17. It is a good selection and we will have made offers by the time of the Board Meeting.
3. Enrollment for next year is moving more smoothly than usual. At this point in time we only have 2 students leaving, other than grads, both of whom are moving out of the area. This is certainly the lowest attrition rate in recent memory. All open spots for next year are filled with plenty of waiting list applicants interested should anything open up during the spring or summer.
4. State Senator Humason, Easthampton's senator, is visiting school on Monday March 7. We look forward to showing him around.
5. Saturday Feb 26 Amy met with Senate President Stan Rosenberg along with leaders from PVPA, Four Rivers, Holyoke Community Charter School and PVCICS. IT seemed clear that Senator Rosenberg is looking for a compromise position that the Senate might pass in order to avoid a ballot vote. We did not learn anything specific about what that compromise might look like. The areas of concern are finance, governance transparency and recruitment and attrition as it relates to high needs populations.

DOMAIN COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES
2.24.16

Attending: Susannah Howe, Dan Klatz, Amy Aaron, Scott Remick

8:30 am – Meeting began

Topics discussed: March BOT meeting agenda, SPED Administrator, Succession Planning, Loan Update, Deirdre's Waiver Request

March BOT Agenda: We planned the agenda for the regular February BOT meeting: succession planning, SPED admin proposal, BOT role in hiring, salary scale philosophy, database update/catalog of needs, GABS/BOT membership, budget process overview, loan update

SPED Administrator: As discussed in previous BOT meetings, SPED workload is increasing, especially in the older grades, resulting in a need for increased staffing. Dan will bring a proposal for a new SPED Administrator position to the BOT in March.

Succession Planning: Given the discussion about succession planning at the Feb BOT meeting, an important question to address is whether the BOT wants a shared management structure or not. This will be a topic for the March BOT meeting, with the goal of getting affirmation of a specific management approach. We discussed the timeframe for succession planning – ideally, we aim to have BOT approval of the general leadership structure in April, so a specific plan can be approved by the end of this academic year. Implementation planning would then follow.

Loan Update: Documentation has been submitted, but the paperwork needs to go to the Federal level because our request is for more than \$3 million. There is some leeway in defining "rural". Laura Baker is optimistic about the outcome, but it is likely that we won't make the March 30 date. Amy thinks we should know by April. Initial budget planning for now will assume that we do get the loan.

Coordinator Waiver Request: Susannah and Scott discussed Deirdre's request for a waiver and agreed that she could take the requested days in May using her vacation time. We will bring a draft policy for future such waiver requests to the April BOT meeting.

Next Domain Council meeting: Tues, Mar 1 @ 8:30 AM

9:45 am – Meeting ended

Respectfully Submitted,
Susannah Howe

DOMAIN COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES
3.1.16

Attending: Susannah Howe, Dan Klatz, Amy Aaron, Scott Remick, Deirdre Arthen

8:30 am – Meeting began

Topics discussed: BOT roles/membership, initial budget planning

BOT Roles/Membership: The BOT will likely be losing one member whose term is over, but there are three people interested in serving, so the BOT may be alright for membership next year. GABS will discuss possible roles and bring updates on membership to the March BOT meeting.

Initial Budget Planning: We began initial budget discussions, noting the lines in the operating that would likely increase (PPE, health, some supplies) as well as potential capital expenses (playground, internal rooms/furnishings, possible activity bus). Salary is still an unknown given ongoing discussions by the BOT and Personnel. We began discussions of staffing structure for health education, PE, and Kids Club, as well as possibilities for facilities management, additional administrative support, and overlap salary for the Administrative Coordinator position given Amy's upcoming retirement. This discussion will continue in subsequent Domain Council meetings.

Next Domain Council meeting: Tues, Mar 15 @ 8:30 AM

9:55 am – Meeting ended

Respectfully Submitted,
Susannah Howe

HCCPS Budget Process Summary

The actual timing of each step in the process varies, depending on factors like relocation, building purchase, state budget delays, program changes, significant staff expansion, etc. This outline explains the collaborative approach to creation of the operating budget.

1. Administrative Coordinator begins drafting budget based on projected enrollment goals for the coming year. Tuition is estimated with a small percentage increase based on historical averages. A cost of living increase is applied to non-personnel lines in the absence of firm numbers. A historical average is used for projected increase to health insurance. (March)
2. Domain Coordinators discuss staffing and programmatic requirements for coming year (March)
3. Draft #1 is revised and presented to Domain Council. Proposals from Personnel are discussed at this time. (late March/early April)
4. Revisions made based on Domain Council input (draft #2)
5. BOT provides guidance re: approach to salaries and raises (April)
6. Draft #2 is reviewed by Finance Committee for fiscal viability
7. Revisions based on new information (e.g. new health insurance rates, DESE tuition projections, grant levels) are made ongoingly.
8. Draft #2 shared with BOT for feedback /questions. This is done to give the BOT an opportunity to weigh in and be appraised of potential deficit concerns early on. No decisions at this time (April- May)
9. Domain Council and Finance make revisions based on BOT input and new information.
10. The budget proposal is shared with staff and interested community members, primarily to answer questions and increase understanding of the process. (May)
11. Final budget proposal presented to BOT for approval (June).
12. When DESE grant and tuition numbers are solidified in the summer the BOT approves revisions.