

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, February 8, 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: Chris Greenfield

Topic	Discussion	Action (if necessary)
Announcements/A ppreciations/Ackno wledgements	<u>Announcements:</u> The Friends of Hilltown and Board of Trustees meeting is approaching: 6:30pm at the Click Workspace in Northampton on Tuesday, February 28th. <u>Appreciations:</u>	
Any thank you notes needed?		
BoT Visibility this month?	The K-5 sleepover is approaching; Scott and Steve will be attending. The Prisms Coffeehouse will be next week and will be attended by several members of the Board.	
Minutes	January 2017 BoT meeting minutes reviewed.	Scott moved to approve Jan BoT minutes as amended. Susannah seconded. Minutes approved by consensus.
Public Comment Period	None.	

<p>DESE Site Visit Report</p>	<p>Partially-met requirements are not of great concern - we are already aware of the other issues they stated. The percentage of economically disadvantaged and ELL students at the school is hard to change because of the lottery system, but a conversation could be had around actively recruiting applications from those populations. Transportation continues to be a factor in recruiting students from these populations and is the single biggest barrier to a broader diversification of our population.</p> <p>A bigger, longer-term Board issue could be the expansion of our applicant pool to Hampden county, though with the caps in place it would be a difficult process to undertake, and which the Board can cover in more depth at a later date.</p> <p>This site visit is the first check-in visit in four years and included more criteria for review than ever before and felt more formal than previous site visits.</p>	
<p>Coordinator Salary Adjustment Proposal</p>	<p>The recommendation proposes to raise Coordinator salaries to 95% of the average of salaries for local school principals for the fiscal years 2017 and 2018. Although this proposal is being made, it may not be able to fit into the next year's budget. It's also worth noting that Coordinator salaries will not be brought to 100% congruence with local principal salaries.</p> <p>In fiscal projections over the next 5-8 years, surplus is projected to diminish and would be impacted negatively by a 100% congruence. The purpose of this recommendation is to bring Coordinator salaries as close in line with the average of local school principals while limiting the negative long-term impact on overall school budget.</p> <p>The intent of the Board is to approve the actual adjustment of Coordinator salaries to 95% of comparable salaries, with the projection that comparable salaries will rise 2% each year and the Coordinator salaries will rise accordingly to maintain adherence to 95% of local school principal salaries.</p> <p>If the proposal is amended to include FY19, it will extend the assumption of a 2% increase in comparable salaries</p>	<p>Amy R. Moved to approve the proposal as amended.</p> <p>David Seconded Proposal approved by consensus.</p>

	<p>each year which could prove inaccurate.</p> <p>Change sentence “... up to 95% of the average salary for local school principals in FY 2017” to “BoT votes to increase the salaries by 2% to attempt to keep our Coordinator salaries at an estimated 95% of the salaries of local principals in FY18.”</p> <p>For this first cycle, a 2-year review process would provide an opportunity to closely reexamine this new process, with a goal of reviewing the salaries every 3 years as with other staff salaries.</p> <p>This change is retroactive to the beginning of FY 2017.</p>	
<p>Education Coordinator Hiring Update</p>	<p>The Search Committee had an internal and external search, reviewed applications, performed interviews, and are narrowing the applicant pool to determine who will be invited for interviews with teachers, parents, and the Board.</p> <p>Candidates will be interviewed by the Board and may be observed by the Hiring Committee. Board will provide written feedback to the Hiring Committee. The Hiring Committee will question references before ultimately bringing a recommendation back to the Board for the ultimate decision to be made.</p> <p>As many Board members as possible should be involved in the interview process, in order to satisfactorily represent all constituencies and opinions. It’s unlikely that the same parents or teachers will be able to be present at every candidate interview, but all candidates will be asked the same questions which are drawn from a pool of submitted questions. The same could be true for questions asked by and on behalf of the Board. Consistent presence of a static cast of Board members at interviews would help to provide an even and all-encompassing idea of the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate, rather than a partial view of the interview pool. Each candidate will be asked the same prepared questions in order to promote consistency.</p> <p>The candidate pool may be narrowed down after parent and staff interviews before candidates are presented to the</p>	

	<p>Board for interview. It could be advantageous to block out an entire day for candidate interviews rather than spreading the interviews out over multiple days, and this would enable candidates to all be interviewed by the same group of people.</p> <p>Some interview questions are provided beforehand to candidates, while others may be asked for the first time during interviews. The questions asked during the parent interview will be provided in advance. The candidates will also be asked to participate in a hands-on problem-solving activity with staff during the teacher interview. Search committee questions were not provided in advance of that interview. The Board will have the opportunity to see all questions that have been asked at previous interviews in order to generate questions that will cover unexplored territory.</p> <p>Board interviews will have questions generated with a Board focus, to help explore that facet of an applicant's candidacy.</p> <p>It may be possible to streamline the interview process in order to give the Hiring Committee the data they need to make this decision more quickly, at the advantage of both the Board and the candidates themselves. Candidates could be invited to be interviewed by staff, parents, and Board members all in the same day; to experience a day in the school in both formal and informal settings; and to be offered or not offered the position at the end of the day. However, having a 4th interview separately with the Board could provide structure and consistency with the members of the Board who could be present for interviews. It can be hard to gather a static number of Board members on multiple days to perform interviews, so there may be advantages to scheduling one longer session of interviews on a given day.</p> <p>In respecting the intent of the policy, we balance the Board's legitimate need to interview the strong candidates and the need to trust the Committee and its processes. The Committee is the body who has all the information about candidates, and their opinions on who the Board should interview should be respected.</p>	
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	<p>It's important to have some form of filtration in this process, and it is critical that there is reduction of the applicant pool at each subsequent layer of the process, as it is beneficial for both the Board and for applicants.</p> <p>The contacting of references seems to be relatively late in this hiring process, but that can be beneficial because the level of nuance needed to ask targeted questions can be gained through repeated interviews with a candidate. Another reason to ask references at the end of the hiring process is to preserve the current employment of the candidates and only contact references when it is a good likelihood that a job offer will be made.</p> <p>The length of the hiring process is protracted but the candidates who are most invested in this job will likely make themselves available for the duration of the hiring process. The policy currently states that the candidates will be interviewed by the Board of Trustees, not a selection or subset of the Board of trustees. There needs to be a decision made on who needs to be present at the interviews and the length and time of the interviews. The Hiring Committee needs to know the number of candidates that the Board feels is appropriate to be interviewed. Logistically, an early morning or end-of-day meeting could be easiest for Board members to make, and the number of candidates brought to the Board will be impacted by the method of interviews taking place, whether they be held all at once on a given date or at multiple times for different candidates. There are mixed opinions on the format of interviews, but a need for Board involvement is generally agreed upon.</p>	
School Satisfaction Survey	<p>The survey is ready to go, pending Board commentary.</p> <p>Under section 3, question 4, the response structure doesn't match all other questions on the survey. It should be changed for clarity and consistency.</p> <p>This information will be used to help evaluate the Coordinators, so it's within the Board's interest to ensure that the questions represent what we want to know. The size of the survey could be daunting, but it's been steadily shrinking since its first iteration this year. The length of the survey could cause fatigue and disinterest; it may be to the benefit of participation rates and engagement to send it</p>	<p>Deirdre will modify the structure of one question on the survey and advertise that completion of the survey will count as 1 hour of volunteer time.</p>

	out in shorter installments. Completing the survey will count as an hour of volunteer time as an incentive to participation.	
BOT Communication Protocols	A prospective parent who had been at the Open House sent an email to all BOT members that contained a lot of specific procedural questions. Board members should not feel obligated to respond individually; this is within Amy's domain and she can answer questions regarding how the lottery works. If there is a concern about responding or a comment to be made, the Coordinators can be contacted regarding making a response.	
FY17 2nd Quarter Financials	<p>Finance has reviewed these numbers and found nothing of concern. Occupancy is higher because the budget was for one month's rent, where we paid two and a half. 'Other income/expense' is money that is used for particular one-time expenses, like this summer's renovations.</p> <p>Balance sheet: differences from last quarter include a zero balance for Property 1-3 Industrial Parkway. The committee has no issues to raise with these figures. The undesignated fund balance is money earmarked for one-time expenditures.</p>	<p>David proposes to accept the 2Q balance sheet and Revenue and Expenditures</p> <p>Susannah seconded</p> <p>2Q financials approved by consensus.</p>
Budget Revisions	<p>Finance went through the original budget and revisions were proposed based on known factors. The hiring of a new TA in October affected budget line 23. We are benefiting from additional funding on lines 1-3 and a slight decrease on line 4. Small tweaks were made based on actual data as opposed to projections. Water and sewer rates have gone up and we used more water this summer than expected as a result of the drought. Since buying this property, we will be monitoring an interest line and depreciation line. Those lines together are roughly what our monthly mortgage is, but this number must be present on our balance sheet.</p> <p>We don't pay depreciation, it just happens - but that has to be on the books. We can know exactly what we're paying in interest in a given year and how much we pay towards principle, and there is a formula for depreciation calculation. Capital expense can't be included in the operating budget, but both depreciation and principle are very close and balance in a practical way.</p> <p>Line 86, column C seems much higher than expected. What is certain is what we spent on rent and will no longer</p>	<p>Scott moves to approve the adjusted FY17 budget as amended to reflect the approved Coordinator salary adjustment.</p> <p>David seconded.</p> <p>Adjusted FY17 budget approved by consensus.</p> <p>Susannah moves to retroactively approve the payment of real estate taxes and interest out of the contingency fund as a</p>

	<p>be paying. Column C assumes payment for one month's rent and 11 months mortgage.</p> <p>If adjusted to reflect the approved adjustment of coordinator salaries, the revision could be approved as amended.</p> <p>We do have to pay taxes this year, and they are higher than expected, and will be upwards of \$48,000. We have paid to date around \$6,000. Because they are clearly a one-time expense and because we were no longer tenants when we paid the last quarter and the quarter we're in now, the finance committee feels that they are not an operating expense and belong "below the line" in other Other Board Approved Expenses. The initial payment came out of the Contingency Fund.</p>	<p>one-time expense, and then to restore the contingency fund back to 12% of the operating budget by transferring the remainder from the Undesignated Fund Balance.</p> <p>David seconded.</p> <p>Movement approved by consensus.</p> <p>Amy will modify the repeated line numbers and column titles in the budget sheet.</p>
New Business - Identify only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changes in job titles for the current Coordinators, and for future tenants of those positions. - A discussion of moving ahead this year with researching the acquisition of a data management system for the school, which will involve some cost. 	
Committee Reports - Questions only	Surprised by low math score from grade 6 - is that something that we should be concerned about, impacted by the influx of new 6th graders entering the school? Yes!	
Meeting Wrap-Up/ Evaluation	<p>Next meeting is March 8th, 6:30pm</p> <p>Snacks: David Starr, Drinks: Michael</p> <p>Newsletter blurb: Penny</p> <p>Facilitator: Scott</p>	
Review Action Items	Reviewed action items with the board.	
Adjournment	Meeting adjourned at 8:46 PM	

Attachments:

Feb BOT Meeting Agenda; January 2017 BoT Meeting Minutes; 2nd Q Financials; Proposal re: Real Estate Taxes; Domain Council Meeting Minutes, January 25, 2017; Domain Coordinator Report, February 2017; Finance Committee Meeting Minutes, February 2017; FOH Minutes, December 13, 2016; FOH Minutes, November 22, 2016; IOWA Test Report; On-Site Committee Meeting Minutes, December 6, 2016; Blank Parent Satisfaction Survey, 2016-17; SEPAC Meeting Minutes, January 30, 2017

ADDENDUM:

FY2017/2018 Coordinator Salary Proposal

Tentative Agenda for March 2017 Meeting:

Changes in coordinator job titles

Moving ahead with researching and purchasing data management system

By-laws changes

Search committee update

Recruitment

Board book updates

Plan for Annual Meeting

Pledge of Allegiance update