

# Notice of Public Meeting

<b>Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School: Annual Meeting</b>	<b>Date and time:</b> Wednesday, May 25, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.
<b>Location:</b> Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School, 1 Industrial Pkwy, Easthampton, MA 01027	
<b>Agenda:</b>  Songs + Music (Marguerite, Rashida + Students)  Welcome, agenda and procedure – Rashida Read Mission Statement - Member Approval of last year's minutes - Sara Scheiffelin, Clerk Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Statement from Board President (Matt)</li><li>● GABS Committee Report (Emily)</li><li>● Facilities Committee Report (Chris)</li><li>● Finance Committee Report (Rich)</li><li>● Personnel Committee Report (Sara)</li><li>● JEDI (Kathleen H)</li><li>● LRP (Dan)</li><li>● Friends of Hilltown (Myssie)</li></ul> Appreciation (Kathleen S.)  Proposal + Election of New and Continuing Board Members (GABS)  Group Activity (Rashida + Kathleen)  Adjourn	

**Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School**

**Annual Meeting**

Board of Trustees DRAFT Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, May 19, 2021, 6:30 pm

**Location:** By Zoom (pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law)

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Action (if necessary)</b>
<b>Welcome</b>	Deirdre Arthern welcomed everyone to the meeting and Marguerite Durant played “We All Come From Hilltown” with an accompanying video. Deirdre went over the schedule for the meeting and election procedures. Sara Schiefellin read the mission statement. Deirdre shared a student art show from the Purples and Prisms classes.	
<b>Approval of 2020 Meeting Minutes</b>	Noelle Barrist Stern asked if anyone had changes about the 2020 annual meeting minutes included in the meeting packet. No one did.	Tala moved to approve the minutes; Dawn seconded; the minutes were approved by consensus.
<b>Board of Trustees President Statement (Matt Dube)</b>	Matt made a statement on behalf of the Board and expressed gratitude for the Hilltown staff and parents during such a difficult year. He reminded everyone that Board and committee meetings are open to the public and encouraged people to attend.  Matt acknowledged Deirdre’s retirement, recognized her wisdom, kindness, and creativity, and thanked her for everything she has done for the school community. He expressed everyone’s sentiments that she will be missed.	

<p><b>Introduction of Governance Committees (GABS (Sara Schiefellin); Facilities (Joe Wyman); Finance (Rich Senecal); Personel (Kelly Woods); JEDI (Jen Matos))</b></p> <p><b>Friends of Hilltown</b></p>	<p>Sara presented GABS’s report. Joe explained the purpose of the Facilities Committee. Rich thanked the members of the Finance Committee for working so hard during a fiscally challenging and uncertain year. Kelly summarized the work the Personnel Committee has done this year. Jen explained the mission of the JEDI Committee and the work the JEDI Committee has done this year.</p> <p>Lara Ramsey thanked the Friends of Hilltown for everything they have done this year to express gratitude to the Hilltown staff. Carol McMurrich spoke on behalf of Friends of Hilltown and talked about how much the group focuses on building community and how hard they have worked and brainstormed during the pandemic. She asked anyone who is interested to join.</p>	
<p><b>Election of New Board of Trustees Members (Sara)</b></p>	<p>Sara presented the slate of candidates in three groups. The first group consisted of five people who would be new to the Board:</p> <p>(1) Kathleen Hulton; (2) Kate Ewall; (3) Emily Boddy; (4) Dan Klatz; and (5) Marguerite Durant.</p> <p>Kathleen said that she has been a Hilltown parent for ten years, she feels like she owes a lot to Hilltown, she knows a lot about Hilltown, and “as someone who does not really believe in much, [she] believe[s] in Hilltown.” She wants to do as much for other Hilltown families and for Hilltown staff as Hilltown has done for her family.</p> <p>Kate said that she has two children in the school, is always looking for new and different ways to be part of the community, and work with the other Board members.</p>	<p>Lara sent out a poll to the cooperative members attending the meeting to approve the first set of candidates. The first set was approved.</p> <p>Lara sent out a poll to the cooperative members attending the meeting to vote on the second set of candidates. The second set was approved.</p> <p>Lara sent a poll to the cooperative members attending the meeting to vote on the third set of candidates. The</p>

	<p>Emily has two children at the school. She said she was drawn to Hilltown because it reminded her of the community-based elementary school she went to. She started attending Board meetings during the pandemic and wanted to join the Board and be a part of it.</p> <p>Dan said that he loves the school and its mission and believes he has expertise he can contribute to the Board.</p> <p>Marguerite thanked the Board and committees for the work everyone has done over the past year. She is finishing her ninth year as a teacher at Hilltown. She works at Hilltown because she believes in its mission and wants to be “in the room where it happens.”</p> <p>The second group was made up of people who the Board approved mid-year and needed to be approved retroactively by the cooperative. The group consisted of:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(1) Kathleen Szedga; (2) Jill Richmond; and (3) Tala Elia</p> <p>Kathleen has a son at the school. She talked about how grateful she has been to everyone at the school, her belief in the school’s mission, and her wish to give back to the school community. Jill has a daughter who is graduating. She said how appreciative she is of the school and everything that the administrators and staff have done this past year. Tala has three children at the school. She said that the pandemic made her want to funnel her time to things that were important to her and best served the community.</p> <p>The third group consisted of reappointment of two Board members:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(1) Matt Dube; and (2) Joe Wyman (who was being approved retroactively to last year).</p>	<p>third set was approved.</p>
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<b>Expressions of Gratitude</b>	Attendees submitted expressions of gratitude in the chat.	
<b>Adjournment</b>	Meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.	



## Board of Trustees President

Annual Meeting Report

May 25, 2022

Dear Hilltown family,

On behalf of the HCCPS Board of Trustees, we are honored to update the school community on the achievements of the Board and Board committees during the 2021-2022 academic year. The primary duties of the Board are to guide the school's strategic direction and governance and to ensure the school's fiscal and legal viability, and we have worked diligently to accomplish these responsibilities despite the challenges imposed by the ongoing international pandemic.

First and foremost, the Board would like to express our appreciation for all of the incredible efforts our directors, teachers, and staff have made since the beginning of the pandemic to educate and engage our children and support our school community. The Board has proudly worked alongside these amazing professionals to support the school and community throughout the pandemic, forming additional subcommittees and working groups as needed to address issues and support decisions.

We would also like to acknowledge all parents and caregivers who have had to navigate additional disruptions and hardships. Our hearts go out to those in our school community who have lost family members, friends, and loved ones during these challenging years, or who are dealing with adverse health conditions due to COVID.

As for other work this academic year, the Board voted to make the special subcommittee focusing on Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) a permanent Board committee. This group has worked diligently to place JEDI issues front and center for our Board and community, and we followed through on our commitment to reserve space at each month's Board meeting for reports, recommendations, and Board-strengthening exercises from this important initiative. We thank the JEDI team for all of their ongoing work.

We also officially created a new Long Range Planning committee to map out a plan for the future of our school. This group of parents, teachers, and staff are already doing the difficult and important work necessary to ensure the continued success of our school, and we thank them for all of their efforts on our collective behalf.



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The Board returned to in-person meetings this year, but retained the option for all to join remotely if preferred. Our belief is that access, transparency, and participation is vital to the health and success of Hilltown. As always, the Board of Trustees and Board committee meetings are open to the public and all community members and we welcome you to share your voice.

We hope that this coming year is one of healing for all. We've collectively weathered many storms—from the pandemic to staff turnover to the chronic underfunding of schools—but we are incredibly lucky to be here together in this community, and it will take all of us working together to keep us strong into the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Dube, President

Kathleen Szegda, Vice President

Board of Trustees, 2021-2022  
Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School



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**Facilities Committee**

Annual Meeting Report

May 20, 2022

**Committee Members:** Joe Wyman, Kate Saccento, Chris Korczak, Nan Childs, Nicole Grinaski

The facilities committee is tasked with ensuring that the indoor and outdoor school facilities meet the needs of students and staff. We also work to ensure that the school building and grounds support the educational mission and vision of our school.

**Fix it Fridays**

Members of the facilities committee organized Fix it Fridays. The Fix it Friday events are opportunities for volunteers to come into the school and make minor repairs to the school building. These events happen as needed and volunteers are recruited through the school newsletter.

**Reseeding the playfields**

The facilities committee is working with our lawn care company to get the fields reseeded. That should happen over the summer.

**Conservation Commission**

One member of the committee attended a conservation commission meeting in Easthampton. She was able to get permission to put down boardwalk material on the nature trail and to remove invasive species.

**Play Structure**

The committee is beginning to work on a plan to repair or replace the current play structure. The structure is over ten years old and is beginning to deteriorate. We are going to form a subcommittee to make a plan and get feedback from students and community members on what kind of structure they want.





**Finance Committee**  
Annual Meeting Report  
May 25, 2022

**Committee Members:** Kate Saccento, Carla Clark, Richard Senecal (Committee Chair; Treasurer), Lisa Plaza, Maureen Mahar, Andrew Tilbe

The Finance Committee is tasked with monitoring the school's finances, including budgets, expenditures, capital repair and replacement initiatives, and audits. Our mission is to help ensure the school's fiscal viability and health for the short and long term.

Our committee chair also serves as Treasurer.

Hilltown is in very strong financial shape, and able to meet the needs of our school and its facilities.

A high level description of **FY '22 Finance Committee** work is listed below:

**Quarterly Financial Review**

The committee looks at the financial budget and balance sheets quarterly to monitor the school's ongoing fiscal status. We are able to adjust for any new facilities concerns and changes to revenue--kids club and lunch receipts, Friends of Hilltown contributions, and PPE (Per Pupil Expenditures), and more, and keep our Board of Trustees informed as to any adjustments of note.

**Annual Budgets**

We work closely with Kate Saccento and Carla Clark to review yearly budgets for the coming fiscal year. Our role is to review line-by-line costs and revenue, and then present our recommendations to the Board of Trustees. One of the greatest challenges for the Finance Committee is forecasting next year's budget, mostly due to the fluid pandemic situation. The Finance Committee will review state revenue projections and take appropriate action as needed in order to position HCCPS to continue to provide the best education for its students.

**Long Range Plan Monitoring:**

One facet of our mission is to be mindful of the mid- and long-term plan, in addition to the current financial picture. We work closely with the Board of Trustees and other committees to build a strong

fiscal foundation for our school and its students.

### **Audit Review**

Annually we review the audit findings from our outside accountant and take into consideration any recommendations for future years. Our Treasurer signs off on the audit, and the committee presents its findings to the Board of Trustees. Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School has a successful audit this fiscal year.

### **Fiscal Year 2023**

The Finance Committee (Committee) will continue to actively work on balancing the budget throughout the year. The Committee hopes to have funds in the budget to add programs that staff have recommended in order to further student education and mental health during the next fiscal year. It is likely that the Committee will be discussing long range planning with the Long Range Planning Committee in the event that funds are needed for any projected projects.



# 2021-2022 Friends of Hilltown Report to the Community

Friends of Hilltown is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose purpose is to raise money to sustain the programs and curriculum of the Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School (HCCPS)

Above all, we want to thank **YOU** for your generous donations and for generously giving of your time & energy.

Friends of Hilltown (FoH) is a group of parent volunteers entrusted with raising and distributing money to support HCCPS in our shared mission to sustain experiential, hands-on activities, the arts, and interdisciplinary studies to foster critical thinking skills and a joy of learning.

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## ***Funds raised during the 2021-2022 school year***

You may note a significant decrease in funds raised when compared to pre-pandemic years. We decided to keep solicitation to a minimum again this year and have the totals below to report.

- Direct contributions: We are proud to report that \$4,285.00 was donated this year, without a robust campaign this total is impressive and we are grateful to all donors.
- Sell merchandise; Dean's Beans coffee, tote bags, Klean Kanteen travel mugs, & stickers. No merchandise was sold this year.
- Corporate non-profit programs such as Amazon Smiles (\$2,68.53), PayPal Giving Fund, and BoxTops for Kids.
- Usually, we host community fundraising events such as coffee corner at the Winter Fair and an annual silent auction party. Sadly, we weren't able to host fundraising events this school year. We look forward to planning for next year.

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## ***Distributed funds during the current school year:***

Grants: Each year we have the privilege of awarding grants to teachers and staff. These 3 grants ensure that a total of \$10,000 is available to teachers and staff during the school year to support emerging curriculum that cannot otherwise be funded through the general school budget. All of these grants are available on a rolling basis for the entire school year.

**Amplifying Voices Grant** supports the incorporation of social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion into existing or emergent curriculum

- One grant was applied for and awarded to Prisms instructors for the purchase of 70 copies of Stamped: Racism, Antiracism and You by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi, as a text to be used in an interdisciplinary unit on the social construction of race.

**Arts Grant** supports curriculum in the arts

- One grant was applied for and was awarded to Seana Lamothe to support costuming and set needs for the musical program.

**Curriculum Support Grant** supports general education needs

- This year we had no applications.



## 2021-2022 Friends of Hilltown Report to the Community

Distributed Funds Continued:

Spirit lifting projects for the Hilltown staff:

Kept the kitchen stocked with grab & go snacks and seltzer. Thank you to all community members who helped us keep the staff room stocked.

Morning Community Coffee Hours: co-hosted morning coffee & tea times with Rashida

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### ***Anticipated support the school for the 2022-2023 school year***

Thanks to our community's participation and your many contributions throughout the year, we anticipate that between \$14,000 - \$15,000 will be available to HCCPS for the next school year..

\$4000-\$5000 of these funds will be used as outlined in the school's 2022-2023 budget. We are still working to decide where these funds will fall within that budget. An end of year e-newsletter from FoH with updates and details is forthcoming.

\$10,000 will be available as grants (see above for details) for the school year.

On going projects: In early 2020, FoH funded the purchase of 4 wireless microphones with supporting equipment, which have been used during in-person events this year! We plan to fund the upgrading and integration of new audio equipment next year.

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Reported with heaps of gratitude by Myssie Casinghino on the behalf of the Friends of Hilltown

Myssie Casinghino, parent to Cora (purples) and Nico (alum)  
Carol McMurrich, parent to Fiona (purples), Maeve (reds), Aoife and Liam (alumni)  
Dawn Graichen-Moore, parent to Iris (yellows)  
Helen Korczak, parent to CJ (reds), Emerson (yellows) and Benny (future student)  
Melissa Flanders, parent to Emmett (reds) and Hudson (blues)  
Phil Thurston, parent to Hale and Stanley (prisms)  
Kim Sager-Cutt, parent to Anthony (prisms), Lewis (oranges) and Steven (yellows)  
JP Stracco, parent to Celia (greens)

We would appreciate more members.

Please consider joining; help host events, decide on grants, distribute coffee orders, bring your ideas.

Our last meeting of the school year is Mon, June 6 @3pm or email [friends@hilltowncharter.org](mailto:friends@hilltowncharter.org)



## Governance & Board Sustainability Committee

Annual Meeting Report

May 25, 2022

**Committee Members:** Emily Boddy (chair), Rashida Krigger, Sara Schieffelin, Kate Ewall, Kelly Vogel, Sarah Buttenweiser

The Governance & Board Sustainability Committee (“GABS”) is tasked with ensuring: (1) that the Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School governance complies with state law; and (2) the sustainability of the Board of Trustees through recruitment and succession planning for officers and committee chairs. GABS: recruits Board members and assists with recruiting committee members; provides orientation and training to new Board members; ensures adherence to the Hilltown By-Laws and assesses the need for and proposes changes to the By-Laws; and ensures that Board members and committees are known to the school community and that their roles and responsibilities are clear. The GABS Committee Chair also serves as the Board Clerk.

### **Orientation for New Board Members**

GABS held one orientation for new Board members. The orientation covered a range of topics, including: Hilltown’s mission and philosophy, obligations and responsibilities of Board members, the Open Meeting Law, and the consensus process.

### **Board Recruitment**

Throughout the year, GABS worked to recruit new Board members. The recruitment process involves GABS speaking with potential Board members, soliciting and reviewing potential members’ interest forms and resumes, arranging for potential members to attend Board meetings, and proposing candidates to the Board to put forward for a vote at the Annual Meeting.

GABS recruited non-board members on to several committees, which has supported the board immensely in our work.

GABS was pleased to propose the following candidate to the Board, which in turn is proposing him at the Annual Meeting, Andrew Coate. If elected, Andrew will join the board effective July 2022.

GABS proposed a policy, which the board approved, to clarify the process of recruitment and board member recommendations. GABS created a clear and transparent outline of the process for joining the board.

### **JEDI Integration**



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GABS is working in partnership with the JEDI committee on an amended board interest form and updating all informational materials/website. We seek to increase clarity and inclusivity in our recruitment process, and with the ultimate goal of creating a more diverse board.



## **Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee**

Annual Meeting Report

May 25, 2022

**Committee Members:** Kathleen Hulton (Chair), Rashida Krigger, Meg Taylor, Cinzia Pica, Angelique Baker, Kathleen Szegda (Former Chair, Resigned)

The Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee's ("JEDI") overarching goal is to ensure the incorporation of a JEDI lens into Board of Trustees governance activities and functions.

JEDI: 1. Advises Board of Trustees Committees on incorporating JEDI into their work; 2. Recommends and coordinates ongoing JEDI education and training for the Board of Trustees; 3. Supports Board of Trustees JEDI engagement with school community; 4. Researches and recommends JEDI best practices related to governance or Board of Trustees activities and 5. Coordinates JEDI activities with staff Equity Committee and administration to ensure continuity of JEDI activities across the school community at student and family, staff, administration and Board levels.

### **Establishment of the Committee**

A major activity of this committee this year has been to work on the committee's establishment, to define its parameters, and to establish its primary areas of focus.

### **Coordination with JEDI Activities Across School Community**

JEDI worked with Administration research an equity assessment of Hilltown practices and policies. Hilltown will use funds from ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund) to have an equity assessment performed by the Equity Literacy Institute in Fall 2022.

### **Advise Board of Trustees Committees on Incorporating JEDI**

This year, JEDI worked primarily with GABS and the Long Range Planning Committee. JEDI collaborated with GABS to identify ways to increase accessibility to the Board. JEDI provided input on proposed mechanisms of making recruitment more transparent and accessible, focusing on the Board Recruitment Form and other steps in the process of Board recruitment. JEDI's work with the Long Range Planning Committee is ongoing and involves ensuring JEDI concerns are incorporated into the plan guiding Hilltown's next 5-7 years.

### **JEDI Education for Board Members**

Early in the year, JEDI members discussed possible topics and methods for incorporating JEDI education and training into monthly Board meetings. Beginning in the fall, JEDI members began presenting on different topics and facilitating conversations about them at every Board meeting. The committee chose to focus this year's education on naming elements of dominant culture,



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identifying how these elements affect Board processes and practices, and providing remedies and alternatives in areas where the usual ways of conducting business may foster exclusion or the silencing of alternative perspectives and voices on the Board.

**Miscellaneous**

JEDI will survey the Board in June to gauge the extent to which Board members experiences of inclusion and equity on the Board this year, and work to institutionalize this as a yearly practice.





## Long Range Planning Committee

Annual Meeting Report

May 20, 2022

**Committee Members:** Dan Klatz, Lara Ramsey, Kate Saccento, Rashida Krigger, Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Gina Wyman, Lily Newman, Polly Normand, Helen Korczak, Kathleen Hulton

**Overview:** The Long Range Planning Committee is tasked with examining all aspects of the school to determine a strategic direction for the next 5 years. Areas examined include the financial well-being, the organizational viability, and the academic success of the school as aligned with the school's mission. This committee is not a standing committee of the board, rather it is an ad hoc committee for the purposes of determining the long range strategic plan. This year the committee completed the following:

### Survey of School Staff

Staff were surveyed on the following questions:

- What makes Hilltown a good place to work?
- What makes Hilltown a good place for kids to learn?
- What do you think would make Hilltown a better place to work?
- What do you think would make Hilltown a better place for kids to learn?

### Survey of Caregivers

Caregivers were surveyed in the following areas:

- Caregiver Support and Collaboration
- Academic Program
- Culture, Community and Social Emotional Learning
- Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- Leadership and Operations

### Full Board Focus Group

At the February Board meeting, the full BOT offered thoughts on key strategic priorities.

### Next Steps

The Committee is developing draft strategic goals which will be shared with staff in June. Following feedback from staff, the Committee will revise these goals for presentation to the full Cooperative at a meeting next Fall. Based on feedback from that meeting, a final version will be presented to the Board later in the Fall.

**Personnel Committee  
Annual Meeting Report  
May 25, 2022**

*Committee Members:* Sara Schieffelin (chair), Carla Clark, Tala Elia, Nicole Grinaski, Emily Lees, Andrew Coate, and Lara Ramsey

The personnel committee is charged with developing and applying policies related to hiring staff and managing the conditions of employment that fit with the school's charter and mission. This charge is reflected in the responsibilities and goals of the committee:

1. Research relevant issues and make recommendations to the Board on possible resolutions.
2. Investigate ways to improve the working conditions of staff to encourage good morale and limit staff turnover, within the practical constraints that exist.
3. Create standards for handling personnel matters that can be clearly and fairly applied to individual situations.
4. Ensure that relevant labor law and regulatory guidelines are honored.
5. Maintain committee membership such that non-parent input is available for balance and objectivity.
6. Maintain minutes of proceedings so that a record is available concerning the decision-making process.

*Consistent with these responsibilities and overarching goals, the committee set and focused on the following goals for the FY22 year:*

**(1) Reviewing staff salary scale**

During FY22 committee work toward meeting this goal has included:

- TA and teacher salary scales were reviewed with the aim for Hilltown to be at 100% of the median salary for comparable schools.
- Instead of the usual three-year proposal, the committee offered a one year proposal to the BOT, with rationale being that there was not yet enough data from other schools to make an accurate projection and the economy is unstable. More data from other schools will be available next year.
- Committee began discussion about administrative salary scales. Decision to continue current system of Director of Administration looking at each position individually (and not do scales).
- Committee drafted a proposal regarding TAs who become interns at Hilltown with the goal to incentivize TAs to continue with their education and remain at Hilltown during their internship.
- Created a proposal to add a longevity bonus for employees who have been at Hilltown five years.
- Next Step: committee will review salary scales again next year and propose three year projections.
- Next Step: formalize benefit(s) for TAs who return as Teaching Fellows
- Next Step: determine whether Longevity Bonus needs to be added to the Employee Handbook. Determine whether adding a 5-year bonus needs to be approved by the Board.

**(2) JEDI as it relates to increasing and retaining diversity of Hilltown staff and teachers.**

During FY22 committee work toward meeting this goal has included:

- Ongoing independent research and sharing by Committee members and staff regarding best practices in hiring and assessment.
- During the hiring process, utilized guidance that was gained last year by the committee with regards to promotions, candidate process logistics, committee prep, skill rubric development, and interview question framing.
- On-going discussion about JEDI principles as they relate to personnel matters and decisions.
- Shifted responsibility for auditing employee handbook for equity issues to outside consultant group with expertise in equity audits around school policies.

### **(3) Review and Update of Employee Benefit Sheet**

During FY22 committee work toward meeting this goal has included:

- Wrote and administered a survey to staff about benefits to assess what staff's priorities are with regards to benefits.
- Updated the financial information about Health Insurance benefits.
- Moved some "benefits" to a new category called "attractions."
- Created onboarding packet for use with new employees. Collated information to share with prospective employees.
- Next Steps: improve presentation of printed information shared with prospective employees

### **(4) Increase Bereavement Benefits**

- Wrote a proposal to increase bereavement leave benefits.
- Next Steps: revise this proposal per suggestion of the BOT.