

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, March 8, 2023, 6:30 pm

Location: HCCPS and Zoom

Present: **In-person:** Kate Saccento, Sara Schieffelin, Rashida Krigger, Laura Davis, Gina Wyman, Emily Boddy, Dan Klatz, Andrew Coate-Rosehill, Chris Korczak, Matt Dube, Kathleen Hulton, Tala Elia, Kate Ewall

By Zoom: Dan Klatz

Regrets: Kathleen Szegda, Rich Senecal

Guests: **In-person:** Ben Carlis

By Zoom: Melissa Flanders, Myssie Casinghino (FOH), Carla Clark, Janice , Alison Bent, Tiffany Ross, Natalia Korczak, Emilie Woodward

Facilitator: Tala Elia - 7:30 departure, handed off to Matt Dube

Notetaker: Emily

List keeper: Rashida

Timekeeper: Chris

Mission statement read by: Sara Schieffelin

Topic	Discussion	Action (if necessary)
Announcements, appreciations, acknowledgments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tala announced Kathleen S temporary leave, members should refer questions to Tala in Kathleen’s absence. - Thanked Matt for facilitating the last meeting - Rick Stultz, grandparent, part of the facilities committee. Has been continuously helping with fixes, volunteers often and quickly. - Tala will leave at 7:30 and pass the meeting on to Matt. 	
Any Thank You Notes Needed?	Thank you note for Rick Stultz, signed by the BoT	Thank you note for Rick Stultz signed from the BoT. (completed)
BOT Visibility This Month?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - March 28, meeting of the Cooperative at 6:30. Childcare will be available on a limited basis. - Rashida sent an email to the BoT re: MA Public Charter School Advocacy Week. Encouraged members to sign up, and bring others into the action. - Spring Clothing Swap, April 4. Gear/Clothing drop off April 3, all organization happens evening of 3rd. Volunteers needed. 	

Minutes	No edits or changes	Matt motioned to approve the Jan. meeting minutes; Sara seconded; the Board approved the Jan. meeting minutes by consensus.
Minutes (Board Retreat)	No edits or changes.	Andrew motioned to approve the Jan. meeting minutes; Kathleen seconded; the Board approved the Jan. meeting minutes by consensus.
Public Comment	None	
Charter School Financing and Budget FY23 (Update) Kate (30min)	<p>Budget FY23: Kate gave a brief summary of discussion from last month's BoT meeting regarding budget/numbers being lower than expected. Finance decided to wait to bring revised budget until April, in order to work through some issues first.</p> <p>Carla was able to move things around so that our negative is less than originally anticipated. We are not concerned with financial viability of our school, but it is not our typical practice to be in the negative. We should be back on track next year, ending with a zero or a surplus.</p> <p>Finance will send a revised budget to the board for the April meeting.</p> <p>Charter School Financing: Kate presented a PP presentation (included in board packet)</p> <p>Discussed Guiding principle, how we decide our budget over time.</p> <p>Highlights: We spend 85% of our budget on personnel, eg TA in every class, which is a shift to support our students and staff. We also have specific student support TAs. This impacts the way we think about the budget - tend to be conservative in other areas.</p> <p>Discussed the Recommended timeline, and the usual timeline about how we determine per pupil spending.</p>	Finance will bring FY23 revised budget proposal to the BoT in April.

	<p>Discussed 4 components of Charter tuition - general overview of how all charter schools are funded. Discussed Tuition History, most interesting rows are FY23, FY24 - how we build out our budget. Highlighted an error/discrepancy and Kate is in touch with the state for clarity. Discussed Background on Recent + Updated Grants. Highlighted FY23 Q2 trends in charter schools across the state. Charter school enrollment is down, but HCCPS has a healthy waitlist this year and next.</p> <p>Discussed Considerations for Budgeting FY24. Highlighted the prospect of freezing salaries, or pausing the step increases for staff. Carla will prepare models to look at regarding decisions and impact. Will likely need to make decisions re salary and benefits, as there aren't many areas where we can 'shave', and all costs are going up. Might need to increase special fundraising for special trips, for example.</p> <p>These matters will be discussed with staff.</p> <p>Finance will discuss and send proposals to the board.</p> <p>Matt asks about health insurance and whether we should be shopping for cheaper providers offering equal services. Historically, broker has given other options in terms of provider and structure, but the way the school has maintained reasonable costs is high deductible plans and school underwrites the deductible, which has proven value.</p> <p>Member raises point about reflecting step increases of staff, even if there isn't reimbursement, so that the time will be reflected and impact eligibility when salary freezes end.</p>	
<p>Admissions Update (Update) Kate (10 min)</p>	<p>Kate reports a successful 'admissions season'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 236 applications presently 66 K, 45 6th grade. - K, 20 spots, 6 siblings, 11 spots new families, 3 families still deciding. - Tours are in progress. - 2nd grade, one spot available, filled by non-sibling - 6th grade, 9 spots available, 3 spots siblings, 4 spots new families, 3 families deciding. <p>203 students on the waitlist.</p>	

	<p>Majority of applications continue to be from Northampton + Easthampton. Increases in Holyoke and Springfield, but they are not part of our charter. (We have inquired many times to include those communities, but they are not in Hampshire/Franklin and have an abundance of charter schools.)</p> <p>We will not know applicant demographics until they are attending.</p> <p>DESE puts out a list right before spots are offered to tell us towns with caps - strongly recommended by the state that these towns are not served. We did not offer new spots to families in Hadley because it would negatively impact Hadley’s education system. The decision was communicated to the Hadley family who would’ve been offered a spot.</p> <p>Gratitude expressed to the team, Kate and Monique for the work put into this process.</p>	
<p>JEDI-Defining “Equity” (Discussion): Kathleen H, Rashida (30 min)</p>	<p>Rashida presented the task to discuss what Equity means to the community. Kathleen clarified that we will return to the term Justice again with the invitation to the community.</p> <p>What does equity mean to people? What does it mean to you? How have your views been shaped? What do you think it looks like at Hilltown?</p> <p>Webster’s definition of Equity: “justice according to natural law or right. specifically : freedom from bias or favoritism.”</p> <p>Members discussed their understanding of the term.</p> <p>Member opinion on equity for Hilltown: school should strive to be fair and unbiased in its’ programs, policies and procedures. Beyond that, what fair means, is being defined in each program and policy and procedure. It’s hard to talk about fairness in a general sense. Fairness is about everyone getting their needs met, which is rarely ‘equal’. An eye towards fairness requires being aware of the needs in any policy, program or procedure.</p> <p>The budget process will be an opportunity to look at fairness in the way money is allocated.</p>	

	<p>As a school, we should be thinking about equity quite broadly. Notes that the 40 hours requirement was removed in the name of equity, and perhaps that wasn't the right decision. It's hard, but it's a primary tenant of the school, that makes the school go round.</p> <p>The community was invited to speak and make comments re equity.</p> <p>Member notes that the purpose of this meeting is to come up with shared definitions, and clear that this is going to be an ongoing conversation.</p>	
<p>Open Meeting Law Remote Participation Changes (Discussion and Decision): Emily (10min)</p>	<p>Emily presented changes to OML, how they will affect our meetings, full board and committees (reverting to pre-pandemic OML rules regarding remote meetings.)</p> <p>Discussed how the Owl will be used with regards to public and board member participation. Dan raised questions, so Emily will call AG for clarity.</p>	<p>Emily will call AG to confirm best practices when using Zoom.</p>
<p>GABS Update (Discussion, 15 min)</p>	<p>Entire board should be reviewing by-laws each year. GABS is currently reviewing in meetings.</p> <p>Date of Annual Meeting: May 24th. Time TBD 4 applicants to the board so far: Ben Carlis (P), Kelly Vogel (P), Lisa Hamilton (Com), Lily Neuman (P)</p> <p>Chris and Sara terms are ending and will not serve again. Awaiting intentions of others with terms ending.</p> <p>Annual Meeting thoughts, seeking feedback. Plan to have adult-centered event, but ensure that childcare isn't a barrier to attendance. Performances from older groups, possibly Choir, art show in the all school space, nibbles/treats (potluck?) and non alc drink.</p> <p>Tension between getting people there (young kids performing) and not having an overwhelming situation and having adults really able to be present in the meeting and with community.</p>	
<p>Committee Reports -- Questions Only</p>	<p>None.</p>	
<p>New Business</p>	<p>Fy24 Proposal; lunch program update</p>	

Meeting Wrap-Up/ Evaluation	Next Meetings: Wednesday, April 12th, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. in-person and on Zoom Facilitator: TBD Snacks: Matt Drinks: Rashida Newsletter blurb: Matt	
Review Action Items	Reviewed action items.	
Adjournment	Meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.	Chris motioned to adjourn the meeting; Sara seconded; the meeting was adjourned.

Tentative Agenda Topics for the April Board Meeting:

Finance will bring FY23 revised budget proposal to the BoT in April; lunch program update