

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, October 14, 2015

Present: Penny Leveritt, Susannah Howe, Steve Hoyt, Dianne Hobbs, Deirdre Arthen, Scott Remick, Amy Aaron, Charles Wiemeyer, Andi Porter, Alana Fichman, Dan Klatz, David Starr

Regrets: Jesse Belcher-Timme

Facilitator: Susannah Howe

Notetakers: Alana Fichman, Penny Leveritt

Guests: Terra Missildine

Listkeeper: Susannah Howe

Timekeeper: David Starr

Mission statement read by: David Starr

Topic	Discussion	Action (if necessary)
Announcements/Appreciations/Acknowledgements	<p><u>Announcements:</u></p> <p>Reference sheet passed around for editing</p> <p>Governor Baker has proposed legislation that will increase the number of charters in the state.; If legislature does not pass the bill there is the potential for a ballot initiative in 2016.</p> <p>In a letter from the Nton superintendent to the legislative hearing re proposed charter expansion some area charter schools cited for not accommodating students with special needs; Hilltown not included.</p> <p>We will not receive a donation from Baystate Health for Give to Grow.</p> <p><u>Appreciations:</u></p>	
Any thank you notes needed?	Susannah Howe and Andi Porter sent a thank you to Easthampton Savings Bank for their generous donation to Give to Grow. There will be media coverage with ESB sometime this fall.	
BoT Visibility this month?	upcoming visibility opportunities (through November:) If there will be a Community Team morning drop-in coffee, it will be good to have a board member present.	Susannah will send out a request to board members to join in at next Community Team Coffee.

Minutes	September 2015 minutes reviewed. Small edits made.	Charles W moved to approve 9/9/2015 minutes. Steve H seconded. Minutes approved by consensus.
Public Comment Period		
Committee Goals for FY2016	<p><u>Personnel Committee:</u> Revise the current sick bank policy and help with succession plan, review teacher, TA, and administrative salary scale; will gather info on salaries from other districts. Create a summer hiring policy for new positions. Policy review.</p> <p><u>On-site Committee:</u> Playground, planting, and artwork. Continue to improve functioning of the HVAC system and school wide systems in general, support BOT building purchase, work with faculty for input on improvements.</p> <p><u>Governance and Board Sustainability:</u> Accessibility and upkeep of board documents; first draft clerk handbook, make fluid; facilitate long range plan updates, succession planning process; develop Board Recruitment tools.</p> <p><u>Finance:</u> Analysis of renting vs. owning building. Review of fiscal procedures pending audit report</p>	Andi will bring Friends of Hilltown goals to November meeting.
Development Associate Position Proposal	<p>Agreement on not filling vacant position. Proposal made to not fill role for FY 2016.</p> <p>Question about when improved structure could be created for any Development person to work more efficiently.</p> <p>Could use funds to provide analysis of the Development needs of the school.</p> <p>We will not know actual tuition rates from DESE until end of December and we might need additional SPED staffing,. Amy recommends holding off on any discussion of fund reallocation until we have more hard budget data.</p>	<p>Susannah moved to approve Development Associate Position Proposal.</p> <p>David Starr seconded.</p> <p>Proposal approved by consensus.</p>

<p>MCAS Update</p>	<p>Students take MCAS beginning in grade 3 with English Language Arts and Math. Science and Technology tests are only taken by 5th and 9th graders, in addition to ELA and Math. Changes in test scores are less significant, as they are tempered by small school size.</p> <p>2015 (last school year) Math scores are better than 2014, which is good to know considering a new math curriculum has been in place over the past few years.</p> <p>Level 2 school: achieving at a high level but not closing gaps between low and high achievers.</p> <p>State could change from MCAS to PARCC; PARCC done on computers, results sent online, longer test, compares students nationwide. The PARCC test has received bad reviews from several educators in the state.</p> <p>Question about last years 4th grade test scores. High needs group.</p>	
<p>School Security Update</p>	<p>External doors are not always fully latched shut-human error, and windows are occasionally left open overnight. Plan for shades for interior windows for security will be in the next month. No serious safety issues with building, Nearly all repairs/maintenance issues are the school's responsibility.</p> <p>When we are ready to do a security drill with students families will be notified beforehand.</p> <p>Critical Issues Team will convene later this fall to revise Emergency Plan.</p>	
<p>Audit Signer Designee</p> <p>Sick Bank Request Signing Designee</p>	<p>Finance Committee meets with the auditor 10/23/15. Audit must be submitted to the state by Nov. 1st. A BOT member must accept audit on behalf of the board. Suggested that treasurer accept audit.</p> <p>A BOT member must sign anticipated sick bank withdrawal request; suggested someone from personnel.</p>	<p>David will accept audit on behalf of the board.</p> <p>Steve will authorize anticipated sick bank withdrawal request on behalf of the board.</p>

<p>Building Ownership</p>	<p>Amy queried several charter schools, some of whom own their building and some of whom have the 501c3 own the building. Summary: if funding source or lending agency requires 501c3 to own building then a 501c3 necessary; if no requirements, no reason for school not to own the building.</p> <p>Amy handed out an example Pro Forma with a high end purchase price at an interest rate of 5% over 30 year term loan. In the example given FY17 potential savings could be almost 100K if we were to own the building vs rent.</p> <p>Easthampton’s population size should qualify for USDA loan (<30,000) which other area charter have used. On-site committee’s position is to pursue purchase of the building if affordable.</p> <p>Building was purchased for approximately \$700,000 about 3 years ago and we assume that the renovations cost the owners at least at least \$1,000,000. Suggestion was made for friendly conversation with the owners, initiated by Amy, with follow up from the board once numbers are on the table.</p> <p>Will eventually need to gather loan program options; would require hiring an experienced consultant for help with the process.</p> <p>When numbers are on the table, “real estate negotiation” will require executive sessions.</p>	<p>Amy will contact one of the building owners to ask their starting sale price for the building.</p>
<p>December Meeting Date</p>	<p>Choral gathering should not interfere with potential for quorum. Meeting will stay on December 9th.</p>	
<p>New Business - Identify only</p>		
<p>Committee Reports - Questions only</p>	<p>Resources for special education stretched. Next year’s budget should include more staffing. There is no dedicated administrator for special education which is tightly regulated by state/federal regulations. Currently the special education teachers are stretched because they are also doing the bulk of the administrative work.</p>	

	41 students designated as needing special education services. That is 19.4% of our total population and higher than the state average.. Higher percent in grades 6-8.	
Meeting Wrap-Up/ Evaluation	Next meeting is scheduled for November 18th. Snacks: David Starr, Drinks: Scott Remick Newsletter blurb: Penny Facilitator: Susannah	
Review Action Items:	Alana reviewed the action items.	
Adjournment	Meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM	

Attachments:

BOT Meeting Agenda; September 2015 BoT Meeting Minutes Draft; GABS Committee Goals for FY16; On-Site Committee Goals for FY16; Development Associate Position Proposal; Domain Coordinator Report, October 2015; 2015 MCAS report; October 2015 Security Report; Give to Grow Update; On-Site Committee Meeting Minutes, September 2015; Finance Committee Meeting Minutes, September 2015; Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes, September 015; Domain Council Meeting Minutes, 9-15-15; Domain Council Meeting Minutes, 10-6-15; 10/7/15 Hilltown SEPAC Meeting Minutes; GABS Meeting Report 09-2015

Tentative Agenda for November Meeting:

- 1st quarter financials
- On-site committee visit to board meeting
- long-range plan status updates
- Continue conversation on buying the building
- Discussion/update on development? (If meeting with Deirdre occurs).
- Succession planning update