

**Holyoke Community Charter School  
2200 Northampton Street  
Holyoke, MA 01040  
Board of Trustees**

**Minutes of HCCS Board of Trustees Meeting – May 22, 2024**

In Attendance: Leona Florek, Janine Kent, Lina Rivera, Jean Swinney (entered at 5:38), Elizabeth Pawlowski

Guests: Kyle Callender (entered at 5:36), Ryan Meek, Sonia Correa Pope, Maria Rodriguez

Not Present: Li-Jun Ma (Leave of absence), Rafael Rodriguez

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I. Meeting called to order at 5:32 p.m. by Leona Florek

II. **Approval of Minutes**

**Lina Rivera motioned to approve the minutes of the April 24, 2024, Finance Subcommittee meeting. Seconded by Janine Kent. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Rivera – Aye, Pawlowski – Aye, Kent – Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Elizabeth Pawlowski motioned to approve the minutes of the April 24, 2024, regular board meeting as presented. Seconded by Lina Rivera. Each member voted by roll call. Kent – Aye, Pawlowski – Aye, Florek – Aye, Rivera – Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Janine Kent motioned to approve the minutes of the May 7, 2024, board retreat meeting. Seconded by Elizabeth Pawlowski. Each member voted by roll call. Rivera – Aye, Florek – Aye, Pawlowski – Aye, Kent – Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

III. **Board Reports**

Board Mail/ Folder

None

Public comments/none

IV. **Finance Subcommittee Report**

The committee met and reviewed the financial statements. Lina had a question about the extended day revenue, the school is getting more than what was budgeted for. Maria explained that since extended day is being held before and after school there is more revenue coming in. She also stated that there was a question about the cost of books and how the tablets are included in that item. Maria stated that the tablets were a one-time purchase, and that the book content is downloaded on the tablet. Elizabeth asked if all books were accessible on the tablet or if there were print books being distributed? Dr. Sonia Pope responded that there are still some books being printed. The grades K-3 are still receiving printed books since they need more hands-on learning, and their workbooks and anthology books are still being given to them in print. Elizabeth then asked about the history books which are provided through a third party and how that is being handled. Sonia responded that they are still ordering those hard copies.

**Lina Rivera motioned to accept this month's financial reports. Seconded by Janine Kent. Each member voted by roll call. Kent – Aye, Pawlowski – Aye, Florek – Aye, Rivera – Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

*Jean Swinney entered at 5:38 after the approval of minutes and financial reports.*

#### V. **Facilities**

Kyle Callender presented during the finance committee meeting and presented the findings of the reverse lockdown to the board. He shared that during the training they discovered that the students were struggling to re-enter the building in the purple hall due to limited access through the doors. The outside keys are on a master key system which means that they open the outside doors and are not kept by the teachers. When the reverse lockdown drill took place there was a very slow time of students getting back into the building, because of the key issue, a bottleneck situation happened due to limited door access.

His proposal is a key card entry which will help alleviate the situation in. It allows quicker access with a simple swipe, it also gives all staff members availability to the building during Student Life times, it also eliminates the human error of not grabbing the key prior to going outside. Kyle researched the key cards and learned that the cards can be programmed to work during certain times and can program different users. The program will be able to supply 250 key cards per system which taps right into the school's system. He said that the program is very user friendly and that it would cost about \$20,000 to do the purple building doors in entirety.

Sonia Pope asked for this proposal to be tabled to have more time to research different systems and gain more insight into it.

Elizabeth Pawlowski mentioned questions to think about, including being able to add a time frame on when the staff card is useable. She was wondering about how the system works if an employee is terminated and how quickly the card can be disabled. She also mentioned what would be the case when substitutes are covering classrooms and didn't pick up the master key, how would the key card work?

Kyle Callender stated that if keys were given to all staff, key cards can be manipulated to be only active for a matter of minutes and can also be deactivated right away. He stated that the substitute would also

have a card that would be active, and if they are no longer an employee it will be deactivated as soon as possible.

This proposal is going to be tabled to a future meeting to allow time for research and analysis.

Ryan said that he thinks one of the biggest exposures for schools is doors being propped open, as doors age, they don't close properly. The reverse lockdown is newly being ran and he thinks reaching out to police and local communities about the matter would be a good idea.

Kyle then mentioned that three HVAC units recently went out, the old gym and a few classrooms were affected. They were able to temporarily turn them back on, but someone is coming in to check them out soon.

#### VI. **Plan for the Next Five Years Edit**

Sonia reported the changes that were made according to the suggestions made by the board during the retreat meeting.

Leona asked if the revisions were edited and read the way the suggestions were made. Elizabeth and Janine appreciated the revisions.

#### VII. **P3 Open Request/ Project Closeout Proposal Update**

Maria shared with the board that since the last meeting she had reached out to legal counsel (David Fine) and received a quick response. She said that he collected a few sets of documents including the schools' contracts as well as the change order and other forms of agreement that the school had for the gym construction.

She reached out and said that there were two issues brought to the lawyer that the school wanted guidance on. One being the architect error in design and the cost associated with the school. David reviewed the documents and had a meeting with the OPM to discuss the issue. During this meeting P3 stated that Kaestle Boos acknowledged that they made a mistake at the time and that P3 have tried to create a monetary resolution to offset the cost of the architectures design error.

To move forward with the claim, the school has to be able to prove there was intentional negligence, which in term means the school would have to contract another architect to review the whole project in order to certify that that is what happened.

She stated that his recommendation was for the legal counsel to send a demand letter to the architects seeking payment and see their response.

The second issue was the request from the general contractor for additional funds. Legal counsels' suggestion was for the school to settle for the amount that the OPM is suggesting being the minimum percentage of the total cost that the contractor is looking for.

Leona asked a question about whether the school had already spent the amount of money put forward. Maria responded that yes, they had paid the legal counsel the retainer fee of \$2,500 dollars. Elizabeth

stated that based on what she has heard, she is not sure if the cost of trying to find an expert to determine if the architect was at fault would result in an outcome the school wants based on the language that was used.

Jean recommends that the school not send a letter to the architect and go forward and make the payments as recommended.

**Jean Swinney motioned that the school pays the suggested amount outstanding to the contractor as recommended by the OPM and legal counsel. Seconded by Leona Florek. Each member voted by roll call. Rivera – Aye, Florek – Aye, Kent – Aye, Pawlowski – Aye, Swinney – Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

VIII. **403B Plan Update**

Maria sent the board the plan changes for the new plan starting on the first of July as well as a summary of the changes. She shared that during the finance committee Janine wanted to make sure that nothing changed regarding the forfeitures.

Elizabeth asked for clarification on what the vesting portion of the plan changes mean. Maria stated that in order for a staff member to be fully vested (have the right of the 3% match) they need to work from the day they were hired until five years to be fully vested.

IX. **2024-2025 Academic Calendar**

Sonia presented the 2024-2025 academic calendar that was shared with the board and went through key highlighted dates that will change as the dates become available.

**Jean Swinney motioned to approve the 2024-2025 Academic Calendar as presented. Seconded by Janine Kent. Each member voted by roll call. Rivera – Aye, Florek – Aye, Kent – Aye, Pawlowski – Aye, Swinney – Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

X. **Board Succession Plan**

Leona referred that further discussion be done on the succession plan during the executive committee meeting along with onboarding information and bylaws that will be reviewed. Janine requested that the items be presented in a red line format to see what has been added/ edited.

XI. **Directors Report**

Sonia presented this month's report.

- Enrollment is steady at 690. Marketing videos are continuing to be made and calling great attention to the school in terms of recruitment. A second lottery is being planned for August, intent forms have shown that as of now all students are coming back, this can change depending on different situations which will leave the school with some openings.
- The strategic plan is being aligned with the directors' report which now shows the board the academic progress of each grade throughout the year, so the board can see progress on a month to month basis via a summarized table. She clarified that the empty spaces are due to the students not having an exam during that period of time. Leona said that she did see an upwards trend throughout majority of the grade levels.
- Professional development throughout the staff, succession planning, renewal orientation are a couple of the PDs that have been attended. A school wide 403B plan and benefit presentation took place during the schools common planning time which takes place every first and third Wednesday of the month. Elizabeth asked for clarification regarding common planning time and Sonia responded that it is a time for updating all staff on any updates or training.
- The Student Life Organization held a staff appreciation week the week of May 6-10 different tokens of appreciation were given staff wide to thank them for everything they do in the school. A prince and princess dance as well as a sports day took place for students. The sports award ceremony was held for all students involved in sports, the gym was packed, and the gym was gorgeously decorated by Kyle Callender for the event.
- Sonia went through the recent and upcoming events including the Honoring Our Family Event as well as the kindergarten and eighth grade ceremonies which are taking place on June 15<sup>th</sup>.

Elizabeth asked a question about the Civics MCAS and if the SABIS curriculum is aligned to it. Sonia responded and said that they did a great job aligning the curriculum with the MCAS, she stated that the students responded that they felt confident in their performance due to the similarities of their learning and the MCAS.

**Janine Kent motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Elizabeth Pawlowski. Each member voted by roll call. Rivera – Aye, Forek – Aye, Kent – Aye, Pawlowski – Aye, Swinney – Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

**The meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.**

*As prepared by Haley Saltares*

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Swinney

Holyoke Community Charter School Board of Trustees

#### Meeting Attachments

April 24, 2024, Meeting Minutes

April 24, 2024, Finance Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

May 7, 2024, Board Retreat Meeting Minutes

2025-2025 Academic Calendar

Board Succession Plan

School Director's Education Providers Report (May)