

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

**Minutes of HCCS Board of Trustees Meeting – August 28, 2023**

In Attendance: Leona Florek, Janine Kent (entered at 5:18 pm), LiJun Ma, Lina Rivera (entered at 5:20 pm), Jean Swinney

Guests: Kyle Callender, Sonia Correa Pope, Mahdi Kansou, Ryan Meek, Tom Paquin, Vanessa Pillegi, Rob Todisco, Maria Rodriguez, Haley Saltares

Not Present: Rafael Rodriguez

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I. Meeting called to order at 5:09 p.m. by Leona Florek.

II. **Facilities**

Rob Todisco reported that they are almost complete on the new building and just waiting on last 5% of punch list plus installation of the upper bleachers- plumbing, lighting, HVAC are all complete; training for custodial/maintenance staff on systems in ongoing. He reported they are still negotiating with change orders, but waiting for punch-list to be complete and the project is still within budget.

Board members asked about work that had to be redone by architect due to ductwork specification (redesigned, remanufactured, and reinstalled) – Rob reported they will have those discussions after the the inspections, etc are done and full impact of the issue can be assessed. He reported mentioning the issue to them, but is waiting until the end of the project and expects by early October they will be deep in those discussions with the architect. Rob stated he will come to the board with a full report of the change orders and percentage of errors due to design mistake. He stated that through verbal discussions that KBA owns the mistake and that a plan B would be filing a claim against the insurance carrier for the architect. The board further discussed concerns about losing leverage and thanked Rob for his comments while still wanting to complete the project before having a confrontation.

Dr. Sonia Pope discussed having a grand opening pushed back into October. This will be discussed further in the next meeting.

Rob Todisco exited the meeting at 5:31 pm.

III. **Approval of Minutes**

**Jean Swinney moved to approve the minutes of the July 26, 2023 regular meeting with edit to “SABIS counsel” to “DESE counsel”. Seconded by Lina Rivera. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Kent - Aye, Ma - Aye, Rivera – Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

IV. **Board Reports**

Board Mail/Folder

None

Public comments/none.

V. **Finances**

Board members reviewed the financial reports for August and found no concerns. Maria reported that the new format will be ready for the next meeting. Dr. Sonia Pope reported that the financial audit is currently in progress. **Li-Jun Ma motioned to approve the financial report for August. Seconded by Jean Swinney. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Kent - Aye, Ma - Aye, Rivera - Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

Maria Rodriguez reported that the 403 B program needs to be tabled until next month and she will connect with Ryan Meek to create a final presentation.

VI. **Facilities (continued)**

Tom Paquin reported that there was no additional information to report in terms of facilities. The board continued discussion about holding back payment due to error in architect plans with duct work and a lack of the firm to clearly acknowledge guilt or negligence. The Board expressed hope that they would be more informed at the next meeting.

VII. **Membership**

Leona Florek discussed the need to talk further about recruitment of board members and a need to look at this more deeply.

VIII. **Old Business**

N/A

IX. **New Business**

● **Transfer Authorization**

Maria Rodriguez requested for the board to allow a money transfer from the checking to a money market account to generate more revenue to invest back into the school. Ryan Meek explained that moneies can be moved between the two accounts to maximize the greatest interest to be gained by Maria in a transfer role. They requested to seek authorization from the board for the Business Manager to be able to be transfer between the two accounts with a report of notification/document of activity when a board member signs checks. Janine Kent motioned to allow the Business Manager the permission to transfer inter-company funds between checking and money market accounts as proposed. Seconded by Li-Jun Ma. **Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Kent - Aye, Ma - Aye, Rivera - Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

● **Security/Custodian Need for Purple Hall**

Dr. Sonia Pope reported to the board that with the addition of the new building with four classes and the gymnasium (with 3 exit doors) there is a need for a security person to physically be stationed there in addition to the security cameras (internal and external). She requested the board for an addition to the budget to add a staff person during regular school hours to monitor this new addition. She answered board member questions about the restriction on the

external doors and how they are locked from outside, but can be opened from inside due to fire codes. There are also the doors that connect to the other building. Maria Rodriguez reported to board questions about budget for the role being approximately 40-45,000/academic year.

**Janine Kent motioned to add the security staff member position to the budget. Seconded by Lina Rivera. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Kent - Aye, Ma - Aye, Rivera - Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

- Yondr © Policy

Kyle Callender presented to the board regarding cell phone issues across the nation in educational institutions in regards to student attention spans and COVID-19 findings. He reported on a significant uptick in cellphone usage (videos, etc) hindering the academic environment in the classroom. He reported that Yondr was researched in local school systems with a finding of drastic positive change in the academic environment and student behavior. He explained the system to the board and they discussed the academic and behavioral improvements this system could bring to the school. Maria Rodriguez reported that Yondr was included in the budget (under \$11,000). The board, Dr. Pope, Mr. Calendar, and Mrs. Rodriguez discussed replacement fees. **Jean Swinney motioned to allow the purchase and implementation of the Yondr system for HCCS. Seconded by Li-Jun Ma. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Kent - Aye, Ma - Aye, Rivera - Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

- Technology Agreement

Dr. Sonia Pope reported on a technology plan for the school regarding ebook usage, access, and chromebooks. She reported that K-2 students will continue use of physical books, grades 3-4 will use digital books with addition of physical workbooks, and grade 5-8 will use all digital books. She explained that the school cannot ask for a technology fee, but there can be a \$150 for repair, \$250 for replacement for Chromebooks. The board discussed access and equity, home devices, and loaner chromebooks for students to bring home. **Li-Jun Ma motioned to implement the new technology agreement. Seconded by Janine Kent. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Kent - Aye, Ma - Aye, Rivera - Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

VII. Director's Report

- Enrollment is at 687 and on target for 702 for first day of school. Attended Holyoke Back-to-School community event. Retention numbers reviewed.
- A new HR person was hired; Finance audit began on Monday, August 21; all grants are completed and being submitted.
- Professional Development is ongoing: new SL Coordinator
- Student Life: Social/Emotional learning curriculum and appointed staff; new SL Coordinator has begun training
- Recent & Upcoming events reviewed

**Jean Swinney moved to accept the director's report. Seconded by Lina Rivera. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Kent - Aye, Ma - Aye, Rivera - Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Janine Kent moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Jean Swinney. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Kent - Aye, Ma - Aye, Rivera - Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

**The meeting adjourned at 6:33 pm.**

*As prepared by Elizabeth Pawlowski*

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Swinney

Holyoke Community Charter School Board of Trustees

MEETING ATTACHMENTS

Monthly Financial Report

July, 26 2023 Meeting Minutes

Technology Agreement

School Director's Education Providers Report