

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

**Minutes of HCCS Board of Trustees Meeting – September 25, 2024**

In Attendance:           Leona Florek, Elizabeth Pawlowski, Jean Swinney, Rafael Rodriguez, Lina Rivera, Janine Kent (entered at 5:36 p.m.)

Guests:                   Sonia Correa Pope, Mahdi Kansou, Ryan Meek, Maria Rodriguez, Vanessa Pileggi, Kyle Callender

Not Present:             N/A

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I.       Meeting called to order at 5:33 p.m. by Leona Florek

II.      Approval of Minutes

**Jean Swinney motioned to approve the minutes of the August 28, 2024; regular board meeting as presented. Seconded by Elizabeth Pawlowski. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Pawlowski – Aye, Swinney – Aye, Rodriguez – Aye, Rivera – Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Leona Florek motioned to approve the minutes of the minutes of the August 28, 2024; finance committee meeting as presented. Seconded by Jean Swinney. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Pawlowski – Aye, Swinney – Aye, Rodriguez – Aye, Rivera – Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

III.     Board Reports

Board Mail/ Folder

    None

Public comments/none

#### IV. Subcommittees

##### i. Finance/ Facilities

Maria shared that the committee met prior to the meeting and the committee reviewed the month's report, with no questions. She shared with the board that the school received approval for the meal program grant was still being processed by USDA. and is shown in the reports. The auditors will be attending next month's meeting to present their report.

**Lina Rivera motioned to approve the year-to-date vs actual budget. Seconded by Janine Kent. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Pawlowski – Aye, Swinney – Aye, Rodriguez – Aye, Rivera – Aye, Kent – Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

Maria shared that the committee had spoken about the schools next capital project. The idea that has been talked about based on feedback from parents during orientation nights is a soccer field. The school was able to spend the soccer program and the rental of the indoor field via the ESSER III grant. The committee has compared similar projects to get an estimate of the potential cost of the project. A meeting was scheduled with David Fine and Ryan explained that if the board goes through with the project, it would be a synthetic field off of the far side of the gym.

The steps that would be taken if the board decides to go forward with the project are that he would recommend that the school engage an attorney to support with a request for qualifications (RFQ). He shared that for a land improvement project it is a public works project in Massachusetts which goes through a different set of rules than one like the gym. The biggest difference is that there is no requirement for a project manager for this type of project. Another difference that he shared is that there is no requirement for a sealed signed proposal for the design team that supports the project. He said that the retainer fee is around \$3,000- \$5,000 dollars for an RFQ.

Once an RFQ is issued, the school can call different designers that will come to the board for approval, who will then engage in a contract with the school. The design implementation and contract with the designer will have a cost of about \$7,500- \$10,000 dollars. They'll come in and survey the lot then set up an RFP which will go out for a competitive bid. Ryan shared that there are only a handful of installers that do this kind of project in installing a synthetic field and timing is critical.

Maria asked the board if they were interested in this project and taking the next steps. Ryan shared that the cost of the project is projected by a project that he had worked on a couple

years ago. If that is the case the school would be able to use its current savings balance to pay for the project once it gains approval from the bank.

In response to Leonas's inquiry about board members' opinions, Elizabeth asked if students would have outdoor time on the field. Sonia explained the focus on structured activities like a soccer club which would allow for that time outside. Kyle also mentioned there might still be space for grass on the field. Lina, as a parent, highlighted her child's soccer interest, noting the field could enhance student engagement and teamwork. Rafael questioned the choice of synthetic over natural grass, to which Sonia and Kyle explained that the rocky, sandy area makes growing and maintaining grass difficult, requiring a complete overhaul. Janine asked about income generation, and Maria confirmed the school could outsource the field since it's funded by the school, allowing for use during and after school hours.

Elizabeth asked if the board felt confident that the school has the standing and funds for this project. Lina responded that Ryan and Maria made her feel comfortable since the school has enough funds to cover and that they have very low interest with the loan they have right now. Ryan said that these assumptions are being made on a projected cost and that the school won't know until the RFP and sealed bid goes out. If it comes in out of the projected cost the school will have to go back to the drawing board and see if the project can still continue.

**Lina Rivera motioned to pursue this project. Seconded by Jean Swinney. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Pawlowski – Aye, Swinney – Aye, Rivera – Aye, Kent – Aye, Rodriguez – Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

ii. Executive

Sonia shared that during the meeting the executive committee will be reviewing and making comments to the bylaws.

Sonia presented the results of the board self-evaluation to the full board. It was found that the board agreed with most statements, those that needed clarity were reviewed. The questions that did need clarity were answered that they agreed once they received the review. Leona shared that it is important to make sure that these topics are universally understood and reviewed regularly.

Sonia then went over the board calendar, the executive committee wanted to recommend to the full board that the December meeting be cancelled. She shared a reminder that in the past the December board had been cancelled due to the holidays. All executive committee members agreed and wanted to bring it to the full board meeting for approval.

**Elizabeth Pawlowski motioned approval of the calendar, emitting the December meeting date. Seconded by Leona Florek. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Pawlowski – Aye, Swinney – Aye, Rivera – Aye, Kent – Aye, Rodriguez – Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

The 20 years of service event presentation will take place at the next meeting. There will be a presentation of different packages at the next meeting.

V. **Membership**

**Lina Rivera motioned to renew Rafael Rodriguez’s term for an additional three years. Seconded by Jean Swinney. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Pawlowski – Aye, Swinney – Aye, Rivera – Aye, Kent – Aye, Rodriguez – Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

Sonia shared that Li-Jun has been in contact with her and has said that at this time she has commitments that make it hard for her to attend meetings. She shared that she would stay connected with the board as soon as she has finished with her commitments and potentially resubmit a letter. Sonia let her know to send a letter and that she will be placed in the board system as completed her term.

VI. **Additional Staff**

Sonia shared a case at the school that may lead to the need for additional staff and it is a tentative topic as of right now.

VII. **Directors Report**

Sonia shared her report detailing this month's enrollment, academic updates, student life highlights, discipline reports, and professional development within the school. Elizabeth inquired specifically about the academic section and early literacy initiatives. In response, Sonia confirmed that the program is up and running, highlighting the role of a reading intervention coach who trains teachers on the Appleseeds program. This evidence-based initiative has generated excitement among students as they engage with the materials.

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

**Meeting adjourned at 6:54 p.m.**

*As prepared by Haley Saltares*

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Swinney

Holyoke Community Charter School Board of Trustees

Meeting Attachments

August 28, 2024, Meeting Minutes

August 28, 2024, Finance Meeting Minutes

School Education Providers Report (September)