

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

**Minutes of HCCS Board of Trustees Meeting – September 22, 2021**

*\*In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30A, Sections 18-25 and Governor Baker’s Emergency Order in response to COVID-19 allowing remote meetings of public bodies. (<https://www.mass.gov/doc/order-suspending-certain-provision-of-open-meeting-law/download>), this meeting was held via Zoom video conference.*

In Attendance: Leona Florek, Jean Swinney, Jay Breines,

Guests: Li-Jun Ma, Ryan Meek, Tom Paquin, Vanessa Pileggi, Sonia Pope, Maria Rodriguez, Christi Seiple-Cole, Amy Wesley

Not Present: Cynthia Dennis, Janine Kent

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I. Meeting called to order at 5:11 p.m. by Leona Florek.

Roll call of all attendees; each attendee spoke his/her name.

Public comments/none.

**Board Mail**

None

II. Approval of Minutes

**Jay Breines moved to approve the minutes of the August 25, 2021 regular meeting. Seconded by Jean Swinney. Each member voted by roll call. Breines – Aye, Florek – Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

III. Facilities

Tom Paquin reported that there was request for a Trunk or Treat to use the school parking lot for a safe community trick or treat for 40-50 people. The Board discussed mask requirement and benefits for the community and students. **Jay Breines motioned to approve the use of the school parking lot for the community trunk or treat. Seconded by Jean Swinney. Each member voted by roll call. Breines – Aye, Florek – Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

Tom Paquin reported that the building inspector came this week. The school passed the inspection and an occupancy certificate will be issued.

Tom Paquin reported that a meeting between Orlando Annuli, P3, Kaestle Boos took place this week. The contractor will get started with the foundation for the new building in April. Before that there will be some work on wiring and sprinkler system. The actual building may not begin until September. Board discussed penalty clause with deadlines. Tom reported they will get the schedule to Ryan Meek.

## **Finances**

Leona Florek reviewed the financials. The Board inquired as to how the lower-than-expected enrollment will impact tuition payments. Dr. Sonia Pope reported that this was the first year in sixteen years that enrollment has been below target. She reported that many families left HCCS due to having to move during COVID for financial/family support reasons (out of state, etc.). Sonia reported that Maria Rodriguez has ascertained that the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief III (ESSER III) funds can be used to fund teacher salaries due to budget deficits; therefore operating budget will not be impacted. The federal grant will be used as a subsidy for the state tuition payments that will be lower due to enrollment issues from COVID. The board discussed enrollment trends across the state and effects of COVID-19, including staff:student ratios.

The board inquired about plowing bids. Tom and Maria reported that they have received only one bid from the current company (Split Excavating). Board discussed lack of bids due to COVID 19 staffing shortages.

**Jay Breines motioned to approve the financials. Seconded by Jean Swinney. Each member voted by roll call. Breines – Aye, Florek – Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

## **Salary review**

Amy Wesley presented to the board, reporting that she and Sonia worked to create a summary of the salary review. Amy reported that the review found that HCCS salaries align with the high side for highly-qualified teachers. The review also found that other districts were offering incentives that charter schools are unable to afford. Amy discussed charter schools funding, financial feasibility study on potential increase on starting teacher salaries with considerations for enrollment, enrollment cap, gym project, and enrollment development in post-COVID era. The Board thanked Amy and Sonia for their work on this analysis.

The Board discussed salary levels, benefits, school hours, exit interviews, needing to remain competitive especially in terms of COVID, and teacher growth and performance. The Board will make this a topic for the retreat and discuss further the possibility of creating a study group or sub-committee to look at teacher salaries and funding.

### IV. **Membership**

N/A

### V. **New Business**

N/A

### VI. **Old Business**

The board discussed the need to reschedule the board retreat. The retreat was rescheduled to take place over two evenings on October 27 and November 17 after the regular board meetings. The meetings will be extended to 8 pm to accommodate the retreat agenda items.

### VII. **Administrative Reports/School Director**

Director's Report - Dr. Sonia Pope reported:

- Review of enrollment discussed earlier; reviewed recruitment efforts
- COVID 19 report: data on positive cases, quarantine cases, and close-contacts reviewed; weekly reporting to DESE on a school level; Board asked about staff vaccinations
- Academic Update: Open positions reviewed; virtual parent orientation; monthly staff meeting held in September; What-I-Need (“WIN”) intervention period – long term to close academic gaps (support from SABIS); E-books
- Professional Development is ongoing
- Student Life Organization (SLO): prefects active in SLO; Ice Cream Social Meet and Greet for teachers and parents and students
- Student Management (SM): no suspensions; social/emotional and discipline issues are being handled pro-actively and SM staff/counselors are working to support students in transition back into the school building and environment after 1.5 years of virtual learning
- Facilities: fire drills conducted; Fresh Fruits and Vegetables program has begun; daily sanitization of all classrooms/common areas
- Recent/upcoming events reviewed
- SABIS support reviewed in the areas of Academics, IT, HR, and Finance

**Jay Breines motioned to accept the Director’s Report. Seconded by Jean Swinney. Each member voted by roll call. Breines – Aye, Florek – Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

Leona Florek reported that Dr. Sonia Pope was honored at a Hispanic Heritage Month event in Holyoke as the longest serving Latina principal in the city. The board members congratulated her on this honor.

**Jean Swinney motioned to adjourn the meeting. Jay Breines seconded. Each member voted by roll call. Breines – Aye, Florek – Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

**The meeting adjourned at 6:302 p.m.**

*As prepared by Elizabeth Pawlowski*

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Swinney

Holyoke Community Charter School Board of Trustees

MEETING ATTACHMENTS

August 25, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Monthly Financial Report