APPROVED

Hill View Montessori

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday October 24, 2024 at 6:30 PM

Location
Hill View Montessori Charter Public School
75 Foundation Ave.
Haverhill, MA 01835

Trustees Present
J. Hood, J. Landry, K. Laureano, P. Carelis, R. Turner, S. Brush, V. Guzman

Trustees Absent
A. Roth, J. Edokpolor

Guests Present
G. Whitson, H. Herklotz, P. Arnold, Patrick Leary (remote), Sharon Blazejowski (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

J. Hood called a meeting of the board of trustees of Hill View Montessori to order on Thursday Oct 24, 2024 at 6:30 PM.

C.

HVMCPS Financial Audit Review

Sharon and Patrick from MP CPAs joined the meeting remotely to review the independent audit that they performed. Full report can be found in attachments

Highlights:

- No new accounting policies needed, existing were clear and appropriate
- No mistakes or failed corrections
- No Significant issues, or findings to report with audit
- Summary stated that liability to asset ratio was 8.23 to 1 and in "very good position"
- Net income decreased over prior year due to increased expenses

Member of board will need to sign off on audit report by November 1.

D. Public Comment

E. Approve Minutes

V. Guzman made a motion to approve the minutes from September 26.
S. Brush seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

II. Updates

A. New Business

B. PTO Update

Trees planted at school this month
Will be a flower fundraiser upcoming
Fundraiser for Logan M (not PTO)
Spot secured for HVM in Haverhill Santa Parade

C. Executive Director Report

No update on final tuition numbers. Still working on August estimate
Fully enrolled
1 withdrawal
Plans upcoming for roof project. Project plan should be coming next week

We lost a student to cancer (Logan) last month. Will be holding a walk-a-thon fundraiser afternoon of November 7. Proceeds to Jimmy Fund and Dana Farber. Board members encouraged to attend.

12 trees planted around perimeter of building. This was funded through DCR. Thank you to Francesca Buck for this initiative

MCAS: HVM not requiring intervention or assistance. Significant progress towards improvement goals and targets set by DESE. Supporting data included in attachments.

Key area for DESE is student growth percentage. Aim is 50 or above. This was discussed and examined by grade level.

MCAS results were disappointing overall, but according to Phil, this was a common occurrence across the state. There are opportunities for growth and improvement. Accountability committee will be focusing on ELA and how the curriculum matches up with the components of the exam, and/or other factors that could be affecting these results (Format of exam questions, etc). Are our internal math assessments accurately measuring results and preparing students for MCAS (STAR assessment allows students to listen to questions rather than read. This will be ending).

Discussion on math strategies as the Montessori approach to the subject can be unique. Still to be determined if this affects the testing results. Question on return on investment in PD that had been previously recommended.

Hannah Herklotz: Has been meeting with teachers to capture how reading is impacting students ability to tackle exam questions. Feedback from teachers was that students did well when questions were verbalized, but challenges related to reading comprehension and literacy. Even math questions on MCAS are text-heavy.

Question on change in format of ED report and reduced data. Phil said that this had been previously discussed with President and Board on Track and changed for this school year. Jeff L and Ryan T asked for more data going forward. Also question about notifications of employee departures.

D. Accountability

Finding in DESE goals: Create a calendar for data consumption by committee.

E. Committee on Trustees

Goals discussion.

Revised bylaws are actively happening. Discuss upcoming decisions on these items. This includes Phil's contract. Will be upcoming virtual executive sessions.

DESE Requirements: Board succession planning needs to be more formalized. Add non-voting members to each committee. Establish various scenarios and how they will be handled.

More encouragement for public participation, more board members recruiting folks, presence at school events, perhaps a table or shirts.

Strategic and continuous improvement planning to increase academic progress. Concerns that this was a vague requirement and that the board needs more guidance or examples to address this.

Discussion on "rainy day fund" and the challenge in getting commitment on that. Will reach out to Foundation with that idea.

Jeff Hood will research these items and bring back to board.

Question on what policies are under board purview. Request to add these to Board on Track. Kim will be asked to add files to the system. Difference between policies that need to be voted on or just observed. How often should these policies be reviewed?

Request for Mike from Board on Track to come to meeting and provide guidance on open meeting laws and internal policies.

Remote access policy for board meetings. Should this be included in our bylaws? Would create certain attendance disclosures, voting roll calls. Would not require physical quorum. No changes to posting or meeting minutes.

J. Hood made a motion to Accept board's ability to add virtual/hybrid attendance option to our bylaws.
P. Carelis seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

F. Development

First alumni event planning meeting occurred.

Tai Polanco had shared calendar of Chamber of Commerce. She will be attending some events, would like other representation at events she cannot attend.

YMCA educator of year event is upcoming. There will be board representation at this event.

There was discussion of anniversary event planning. Potential date of May 17 at Winnekenni Castle. Will be a bring your own picnic.

G. Finance

Revenue is still coming in at budget.

Salaries are trending higher as new/replacement hires are higher than budgeted. Other budgetary areas are lower which helps with an offset, but we are still over budget YTD.

Discussion regarding the challenge of sticking to salary budgets and pay scales. We have a general payscale, but it is difficult to maintain and stick to. Phil said he spoke to another charter school with similar challenges

Questions about tuition reimbursement and whether it would be advisable to have a policy requesting payback if they don't remain with the school for a set amount of time. Also questions on limits to tuition reimbursement policy and how it is budgeted.

We have 2 additional building substitutes right now but they are all actively working. There are a number of staff health and other issues necessitating these substitutes.

EE benefit plan came in below budget.

There were IT upgrades in excess of budget.

Other expenses were unfavorable due to timing but will even out over the course of the year.

We have not historically had an event that has required re-budgeting, have occasionally had to re-forecast.

Suggestion for foundation to invest cash to gain interest.

Cash flow: Cash is tight at the moment. See attachment for detail.

Question on release of ERTC funds, treatment of portion that was released last year and whether its cash or earmarked for roof project. Right now it is included in operating cash.

Question on what cash is used towards. A: In event tuition does not come in timely from state and we need to cover payroll. Operating cash has trended down each year.

Will need to look back at previous minutes to see if ERTC money was formally committed to roof via vote.

Need to examine how to adjust budget to continually meet DESE cash reserve standards.

Foundation: Didn't have a lot of activity at committee meeting.

III. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

Discussion on moving November meeting due to Thanksgiving holiday. Will instead meet on 11/21
There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
J. Hood

Documents used during the meeting

- HVMCPS_FY24 Audit_BOARD COMMUNICATION LETTER.102424.pdf
- HVMCPS_FY24 Audit_PRESENTATION SUMMARY.101924.pdf
- HVMCPS_FY24 Audit_DRAFT FOR BOARD REVIEW101924.pdf
- HVMCPS Board Minutes Draft Sept 26, 2024.pdf
- Executive Director's Report October 24, 2024.pdf
- HVMCPS Board of Trustees Goals for 24-25.pdf
- Hill View_Sept 2024_Financial Statements.pdf
- FY25_HVMCPS_CashFlowForecast_9.30.24.pdf