APPROVED

Hill View Montessori

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

NOTE TIME CHANGE 7:15

Date and Time
Thursday May 1, 2025 at 7:15 PM

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

Trustees Present
G. Kumar, J. Edokpolor, J. Hood, J. Landry, J. Rocker, K. Laureano, P. Carelis, S. Brush, V. Guzman

Trustees Absent
A. Roth, R. Turner

Guests Present
Becca Paul, G. Whitson, H. Herklotz, Hailey Moschella, Melanie Pond, N. Dolan

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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 May 1, 2025 at 7:15 PM.

C. Public Comment

Becca Paul: Feels strongly in support of HVM participating in the 1st annual Haverhill Pride Parade and wants the school to be transparent about it. Feels that this will help show support for LGBTQ community and especially the youth who are vulnerable and helps with the mental health aspect.

Melanie Pond: Also advocated for school participation in pride parade. To support families and help them know they are safe both at school and outside. Not a political statement, shows that we support for who they are.

Hailey Moschella: Organizer of Haverhill Art Walk and co-creator of the Pride Walk. Wide support from city government officials, public safety officers, etc. She is also a parent of a HVM student. Would like to see HVM represented and help us be more recognized in greater community

D. Approve Minutes

J. Landry made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 03-27-25.
S. Brush seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

II. Updates

A. Participation in Haverhill's Pride Parade

Ginger spoke about learning of the event and was/is in support of idea. Internal leadership was in agreement

Committee was formed as a result of school-wide interest. Ginger is in support of anything that supports marginalized youth in the community.

Mental Health: Suicide rate 4-5x within LBGTQ youth compared to peers. This event is an important step in helping improving and supporting mental health in the community.

Only reservation is if participation jeopardizes any federal funding or has financial consequences. Ginger checked with the state to see if there were any legal concerns with participation. Boston public and MA Teachers Association participate in similar events.

Committee is going to take any safety risks into consideration. The event is going above and beyond safety-wise with at least 20 police present. Also looking into plain-clothes marshals for additional safety.

Question on whether or not there will be a bar crawl: Not currently. There may be something similar but doesn't seem like there will be an organized multi-location event.

Unsure how many attendees to expect as this is the first event.

School will not be treating this as a field trip, inviting families to participate rather that school/teachers being responsible.

Discussion about whether or not to have the HVM banner in the parade.

Question on how this would be messaged to school community/families. Veronica suggested just mentioning participating in all events of art walk rather than the parade specifically. Ginger countered that being transparent would be preferable. Paul shared that there shouldn't be concerns with federal funding/DEI executive orders.

Jeannette shared that Drag queen events at story time have gone on without incident.

No one on board opposed HVM participation in pride event.

B. PTO Update

Setting up a photo booth for Rock n roll bingo

Organizing a staff lunch thursday and spa day Friday for teacher appreciation week

Francesca is stepping down from PTO, children are changing schools. The PTO needs some help getting additional members.

Paint night 5/9

Planning for field day June 5th

C. New Business

D. Board Chair Update

Jeff will be reaching out to members individually to check in

Discussion on board survey that recently took place. Feedback:
-Focus on strategic planning
-Jeff will ping people regarding findings.

E. Executive Director Report

Ginger spoke on a few items from her update:

-Art show raised over $1,000 more than double last year's event.

-17 8th graders accepted to Whittier Tech

-MCAS started in APRIL. 3 topics down, math to go.

-3 ED candidate visits took place

-Tomorrow Nancy from Walnut is organizing city hall trip for 3rd graders

- Logan Millers birthday in May, Monday 5/12 students asked to wear Bruins colors. Logan's family will be there for a group photo.

-Leadership team has been busy with staffing plan. Contract work starting this month.

Question from Jeff Hood on finance budget in regards to staffing for this school year (memo from last month). The shortfall was fixed quickly and not a current issue.

F. Accountability

Will be meeting next week.

Staff survey will be going out. Slightly modified for next year.

Kristin submitted some new questions for parent survey. Allysha will be working on putting it all together in optimal format.

Ginger requested letting staff know when they will receive follow up on survey results, even if not until fall. Many important topics like payscale from last year's survey have been addressed.

G. Development

Looking forward to anniversary picnic event this month. Presentation being planned for middle of event. (12:30). Several staff working on this.

Will discuss rain date at next meeting.

H. Finance

Did not formally meet in April.

Nothing unusual in March finances.

Have been able to realize some savings from scale backs in several areas.

snow plowing expense was high ($16,000).

Anticipating/planning some significant financial changes next year to keep spending in control and within budget going forward,

Question from Jeff Hood about architect fees ($10k), Will be paid with ERTC funds

Is there a calendar with timelines and action items regarding capital project? Jennifer from vendor was supposed to provide this, will follow up on this item.

Proposed budget presented to board this evening. Controlled increase on salaries. Still carrying some previous student loan reimbursement agreements, but those will eventually phase out.

Jeff L was able to knock down pricing for Board on Track. Also moved some items around with supplies.

Awaiting update on grant information.

Capital lease and rent number seems high, will look into. Expect interest to be lower, refinance will be interest only for 2 years.

Question on parking lot repair bill and who is responsible. This will be explored. Plows did some damage and they will be responsible for it.

Goal was to have $50k budget cushion, but difficult with some of the professional development commitments that are temporary. Working on a formal policy for this for the future (cap, agreement/application, retention requirement)

Health insurance renewal was higher than anticipated (17%). Working with broker to bring that down, should come in closer to 12%. Jeff is overestimating in budget.

I. Capital Project Update

A ton of work has gone into this with numerous people involved. Review of refinance documents, state requirements for access to funds for capital project. Bid type is known as an "optional" to give us some flexibility.

Foundation has approved current draft. At minimum, mortgage will refinance at lower rate. There are expenses associated and also extends term to 30 years.

Jeff Hood wants to assure that the plan is affordable long-term. Based on assumptions regarding funding, DESE, govt, etc (all uncertain) Veronica feels it is viable, but it is hard to say so confidently since there are so many unknowns. Pay scale plan helps make expenses much more predictable. Multi year contracts with staff and vendors should be avoided if possible.

Jeff H: Need to focus on putting money aside whenever possible for capital projects.
J. Hood made a motion to Approve 18 votes from the "School Board Votes" document regarding the capital project as attached to meeting agenda without amendment.
J. Landry seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

J. Search Committee Update

3 finalist candidates came in for school tour and board interviews over last 3 weeks. Staff were surveyed on each candidate and then asked to rank options including remaining with current leadership trio. It does not appear that any of the finalists are viable ED candidates.

Fourth option pitched with a 4-member leadership team rather than an ED. Discussion on how this would be accomplished (amend charter), and what the job description would look like for this 4th role and who would be best suited for it.

Next steps: create a job description for the 4th role and review to determine if any of current candidates would be viable candidates and then determine next steps.

III. Closing Items

A. Next Meeting

Next meeting 5/22

B. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 9:22 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

J. Hood