

Draft minutes HCA Board of Directors Meeting April 29, 2020

ZOOM

Present: Nancy Anderson, David Jean, Ed Harris, Sally Mackenzie, Margaret Muir, Sue Priest, Cynthia Shelmerdine, Alan Youdsnukis, Barbara Merson.

Head of School, Scott Barksdale Finance Director, Andrew Smaha

Members of the public: Bob Kautz, Nichi Farnham

Cynthia called the meeting to order at 4:32 pm

The consent agenda (March minutes) was adopted.

Update from Head of School

-Scott said that graduation will still be held on June 5. Student council members along with school leaders are developing plans. Student council held a successful Spirit Week this week. The BOD agreed that at the May meeting we would organize to send congratulatory notes to the 18 graduates.

-Scott talked about recruitment of students for SY 20-21. At the moment we have 150 students enrolled. The target number is 205. Five fifth graders are enrolled; the target number is 11. These numbers are where HCA is usually at this time of the year. More register in the summer.

--Scott presented the HCA Learning Plan for the shutdown of the school and the move to online learning. This plan will be submitted to the Charter Commission. BOD minutes reflecting our acceptance of the plan will be sent to the DOE.

--Scott indicated that attendance has been 40-60% each day. The ramp up was difficult but now, on Zoom, routines are established and students and teachers are working. Scott has been able to observe classes for about 25 minutes and to provide feedback and support to teachers. Peer observations will occur as they would during the regular school year.

--Eighth grade students are working on their passage contracts. Tenth graders are likewise working on standards for passage to Division 3. Soon-to-be graduates have likely completed their work and are taking courses at SMCC, fulfilling internships, or working at jobs. The goal is not to penalize any student for not fully engaging. Standards will be there in the fall to complete. Some students have flourished in this situation and completed more than they might have during the trimester.

--Scott described the plan for a June term. Division 1 students will still have math, literacy and investigation (by choice) blocks. Division 2 will be devoted to passage camp. Seniors will have graduated.

--Some questions prompted Scott to describe how “hot spots” have helped some students connect to the internet. Some students who had not been engaged have. Nancy said to be happy with the “baby steps.” Scott described how staff members have provided supports for those in difficult family situations. Feedback from parents has been positive and supportive.

The roll call vote on the Learning Plan (on a motion to accept by Peggy; seconded by Ed) resulted in unanimous acceptance of the plan.

--Scott then described the plan to “date” Expeditionary Learning (EL). Tier 3 money would provide some of the money for this form of professional development. Connection with EL makes sense because many structures and philosophical underpinnings of HCA align with it.

Dating means submitting an application to the organization for an opportunity to see if our school will work well with them. They provide consultation, coaching, and a network of support. Ed offered encouragement to the proposal. Alan cautioned that the work with EL not be an added burden to teachers. Scott explained that the framework of EL is very much in line with what teachers need to understand and implement more fully the HCA teaching and learning model. Cynthia said she has a sense from the meeting that this is a good plan to pursue.

--Scott's final presentation had to do with a plan for implementing a hybrid or blended learning module to HCA's instruction based on the experience of the on-line learning used this trimester. He thought it would allow greater flexibility for Division 3 students and perhaps provide an option for other students under certain circumstances. Alan said to be careful of adding too much to teachers' plates in an already stressful situation. He noted it's challenging to teach this way and there is a pedagogy for it to do it well. His caution was to ensure all teachers were involved in the planning, not just the leadership team. Scott noted it would require a significant investment in technology to do it well.

--Adding such a component to HCA curriculum and instruction would require approval of the Charter Commission. Bob Kautz suggested that an in-process proposal could be presented to our review team for preliminary, tentative approval in early June.

Votes on the calendar for next year and the Enrollment Policy were moved to the May meeting. Peggy noted that she was uncomfortable with the "preference to BOD members' children" line in the present language of the policy. That language is in the law, but we are free to remove it.

Finance Committee

--Andrew presented the proposed budget for SY 2020-21. He described the process and noted areas of change from last year. He elaborated on the rationale for changing the number of faculty members in each division, adding a teacher, the need for a dean of students and studies and a new SpEd director.

--After a thorough presentation, there were few questions. Ed asked about applying for professional development money from the Charter Commission for EL. Andrew explained how he is always looking for grant opportunities to support what we do. Lately he is exploring ways to support nutrition needs

Ed made the motion to approve the proposed budget; Peggy seconded.

On a roll call vote, the proposed budget was approved unanimously.

--Andrew noted that the Q3 actuals will be available for the May meeting.

Advancement

--The advancement team has worked on a letter to be sent to all of our friends and donors on May 1. It's an update on what and how the school is thriving during the shutdown. The goal is to remind people of HCA's presence and progress. Another letter will be sent in a month. The letter is very long. Dave said if they have to scroll, people won't read it. The letter contains much good information, including feedback from parents, so the decision is to put the entire piece on the website, but to reduce its length. Cynthia, master editor, will do the cutting.

The Charter Commission Webinar

This month's recording will be available for those who didn't see it. Cynthia said there were some interesting ideas. One is to have the board complete a form on steps for communicating in certain circumstances. This "homework" will be on the May agenda. The next Webinar is on May 18th.

Members of the public thanked the Board for observing our meeting.

HCA BOD went into an executive session on a separate Zoom. Purpose: Appendix E: Maine Revised Statutes, Title 1, Chapter 13, Section 405, A.1: personnel matter (Head of School evaluation). The motion to enter the executive session was made by Sue; seconded by Nancy.

The meeting came out of executive session, and adjourned at 6:45 on a motion by Peggy; seconded by Nancy.