

Approved minutes of HCA May 11, 2022 Board Meeting

Board Members Attending: Cynthia Shelmerdine, David Jean, Sally Mackenzie, Peggy Muir, Ed Harris, Barbara Merson, and Kathy Wilson.

Also in attendance: Scott Barksdale, HOS; Amy Bundt, Director of Finance and Operations; Jana LaPointe, former Maine Charter School Commission member; Kate Wing, HCA parent.

Cynthia called the meeting to order at 4:33 pm.

Cynthia welcomed members of the Board and participants. Kate Wing joined us as a potential Board member.

The consent agenda (minutes of the three April board meetings) was adopted.

Cynthia mentioned the message she will send to people who pledged money to HCA. It will contain information about how to submit the money. Barbara said that the money has to be recorded in the FY it is received even if it is for next year's budget.

Finance and Facilities

Dave said that we are tracking on the year's budget. Amy said the problem is that ESSER funds are slow to come in. The money has to be spent in order for an invoice to be sent to DOE. Furthermore, only one invoice at a time can be sent. DOE is short staffed, so it takes 45-60 days to receive the requested money.

Barbara asked Scott for an explanation of certain expenditures. He explained that certain items were bundled together as they moved from Quick Books to this P & L report. E.g., insurance for Board liability and legal fees. Barbara said the increase in such things as the auditing fee and insurance indicate it's time to seek bids for these items. Scott added further complications relate to the timing of teacher contracts-- Aug 31-Aug 31--so they don't conform to the fiscal year. Amy said she would reach out to other schools to see how they deal with contracts.

Barbara said that the quarterly report is a public relations document. There must be notes/memos in the document to explain what she highlighted as concerns. Cynthia agreed.

Barbara said she is the board treasurer at another school. She suggested providing a pro forma document in addition to this P & L quarterly accounting to show how it actually compares to the budget. She said give the Commission more information to make sure the financial situation is as clear as possible.

Dave said he wanted to be clear that there is no error in the financial statements as they appear now. The costs are captured in the general ledger. People will always focus on the bottom line. Barbara said she was concerned about negative reactions to the bottom lines.

Dave said doing a pro forma creates a challenge because the categories change. He agreed that in hindsight a different approach might have been more effective, but providing a pro forma at this point would create a lot of extra work. Barbara said we have to keep potential for critique in mind. Cynthia said we need to be extra careful.

The quarterly statement as it appears now has to be expanded and explained, so it is not ready for a Board vote. Amy will ask for an extension from the Commission preferably until the June Board meeting. Cynthia said we will have a Board meeting before then if need be.

Budget for next year

Scott said next year's budget would be ready for the finance committee meeting on June 7. Cynthia said the Board will vote on that budget on June 15.

Teacher contracts were due today, so he will have definite numbers to work with. He said there will be some reduced staffing. He expects there will be a handful of openings. Ed asked about teachers leaving. Scott anticipated three quarters of the Division 1 staff will leave; perhaps one half of Division 2/3. Kathy asked if some were going to leave anyway. Scott said about a third are leaving because of the uncertainty of the last few months.

Looking at next year's budget, Barbara said it is hard to figure out because there is only one point of data per category. She asked for a budget comparing this year's to next year's allotments.

Update on the School

- Scott said the faculty complimented both Cynthia and Amy for their work over the last few weeks.
- Eight students left for the model UN at USM this afternoon.
- There will be a talent show at Division 1 in the next few weeks.
- Celebrations of learning for both schools will be June 9. Cynthia urged board members to try to attend.
- The school returned to required masking on Monday. The school nurse is out for the rest of the year. Without a nurse, the school doesn't have the capacity to do pooled testing. (State pooled testing has ended.) Students ask for a rapid test if they feel ill.
- Enrollment at the moment is 169 students. So far, 124 students are returning next year; 20 new students have enrolled. Enrollment in grade 5 is low. The MCSC vote should encourage parents to enroll young students.
- Sally said the parent enrollment committee will meet on Thursday evening to discuss action steps.

Peggy reminded Cynthia that we send cards to graduating seniors. Angie will send each member a list of names to whom we will send congratulation cards.

Calendar for next year

The only change to the calendar as presented was to indicate that Board meetings will be on Zoom with some meetings possibly occurring in person or hybrid.

On a motion by Cynthia with a second by Peggy, the board vote unanimously to accept the calendar for SY 2023-24.

Executive Committee

Cynthia said the Board evaluation developed by Barbara, whom she thanked for her good work, has been completed. She said it will provide some food for thought about how we work. At a summer retreat, the date for which Cynthia has send a doodle poll, will consider the assessment and comments. Barbara urged the Board to look at the results and develop some actionable items for consideration.

Both Kathy and Peggy encouraged the Board to orient new members more effectively. Cynthia said Epicenter provides helpful information to Board members. She urged all members to be sure to register for Epicenter.

Two members are leaving the Board: Ed Harris has termed out; Peggy has completed her first term.

All officer positions are open for next year. Please indicate to Sally if you have an interest in being considered for any position.

Sally will send out conflict of interest and board responsibility forms to members to be returned by the June meeting.

Public Comment

Jana LaPointe spoke about heavy lift HCA faces. But, she said, HCA has a strong board. She said it's important for board members to continue to refine our understanding of board roles as well as the requirements of our contract renewal. She wondered if the performance goals might need some honing. They may be too lofty. She was sending her \$5K check to the school and urging people at her company to look closely at the school.

She said it's important to emphasize to parents that they have a choice. Charter schools have a place in Maine. The school needs to keep the community behind us.

Cynthia then turned to Kate Wing who commented that the way a budget is presented is important. She has been on both sides: employee and board member. Board training is essential. Members need to understand day-to-day operations as well as be involved in

strategic planning. She also said, as a parent, she is concerned about the proposed sped staffing for next year. Frankly, she said, she has looked at other opportunities for her daughter largely because she has not received the services she is entitled to. She will meet with Cynthia to talk further about her concerns.

On a motion by Peggy, seconded by Ed, the meeting adjourned at 6:39pm.