

Minutes HCA Board of Directors Meeting March 18, 2020-- Zoom virtual meeting

Present: Nancy Anderson, David Jean, Ed Harris, Barbara Merson, Margaret Muir, Sue Priest, Cynthia Shelmerdine, Scott Barksdale; Andrew Smaha from the Leadership Team

Absent: Sally Mackenzie (excused), Alan Youdsnukis

Cynthia called the meeting to order at 4:45pm

David and Nancy could not join the meeting at 4:30; that meeting was cancelled and a second attempt made, to include a phone number. This did not work either, so both joined the meeting on speaker phones.

The consent agenda (February minutes) was adopted.

Update from Head of School

-Scott summarized the school's response to the coronavirus pandemic.

On Friday 13 March students and families were told the school would move to virtual learning for at least a week, and students were sent home with library books, electronic devices as needed, and school work. 2/3 of Div. 1 were in attendance, only 1/4 of Div. 2/3 since the day's field trips had already been cancelled Thursday night.

Baxter Academy had already made this move. After a conference with the Commissioner of Education on Saturday, a number of school districts followed suit. It is now anticipated that school buildings will be closed for at least a month, maybe two.

Faculty and staff met at Div. 2/3 on Monday to work out plans for virtual classrooms. Scott had a useful conversation with the head of Maine Virtual Academy, who stressed that sending out packets for asynchronous learning at home is not very successful. A better model is to schedule group class time so that the class concentrates on specific work for a specific period (45 minutes to 1 hour). HCA is following that model, using Zoom, virtual whiteboard, and other tools.

Trimester 1 begins on Thursday 19 March. Students have already had crew meetings. 4/5 of the students and families have been contacted by phone or email; staff will work to communicate with the rest this week. There will be three classes per day, and attendance will be measured by presence and by work completion.

A drive-through pickup for technology / books / food took place on Wednesday 18th at Div. 2/3. Similar hubs will take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays for meals, books, academic work in Lewiston, Lisbon, Bath, Topsham and Harpswell. Students who need home deliveries will receive them.

A paper mailing is being sent out to inform families without internet of local wifi hubs that are opening up.

-Andrew reported on the business and finance side:

He has been working on the business side to identify needs for food, social services wifi, etc. and ensure they are met. On the finance side, he has been monitoring DOE for information about funding (e.g. for lunches and technology expenses related to closings), allowable expenses, rules concerning Human Resources. Faculty understand that they will continue to work, and to be paid.

-In response to a question about enrollment, Scott expressed hope that our rapid and constructive response to the coronavirus and our virtual learning plan will be noticed and have a positive impact on enrollment. It is especially important to recruit 5th graders, since money has been allocated for 11 and will drop if that target is not met.

-In response to a question about how the Board can help, Scott said that if manpower is needed to deliver supplies he will let us know, and that we could provide virtual audiences for students to present their class work.

-The Board expressed its admiration for the creative energy with which HCA is coping with the rapidly evolving circumstances of the pandemic.

Finance

-Andrew reported that the budget for the year is on track, and work on next year's budget is under way.

Academic Oversight Committee

-Ed summarized a productive meeting about Special Education, with Deryl Holt, Mel Christiansen Fletcher, and Amanda Sommi. Deryl walked us through the IEP referral process. We also discussed the need and opportunity for faculty staff training in behavior management and safety training; some of this can be done on a contract basis, and both our Tier 3 funding and professional development grants can pay for such training. It is agreed that training needs to happen through the year to be effective. It was noted that MaineCare covers behavioral health professional work.

The faculty also advocated for more Ed Tech support. In discussion, Scott pointed out that there may be more effective ways to address the same issues and reduce pressure on over-extended teachers. Cynthia suggested that if so, that should be a topic to communicate and discuss with faculty.

Other items

-Cynthia reminded members of the Board Training Webinars: 4-5 pm on 3/30, 4/27, 5/18, 6/15 and another date TBA. An invitation is sent out for each session by Angela Irwin. You must click

on the link in that email to register; then you will receive information about how to join the meeting.

-Nancy reported that Donna Frisoli of Harpswell Community Television is interested in joining the Board. Ed suggested Scott pursue HCT's invitation for students to use their facilities/ technology.

The meeting adjourned at 5:52 on a motion by Peggy, seconded by Ed and Sue.