

Honey Creek Community School

Minutes of November 18, 2015 Board of Trustees Meeting

Call to Order: Greg White called the meeting to order at 5:30p.m.

Recording Secretary: Karen Giltrow

Board Members Present: Karen Andrews, Sara Hoffman (arrived at 5:55p.m.), Megan Masson-Minock, Pamela Reister, Steve Rich, Linda Shirato, Greg White.

Staff and Community Present: Al Waters, Shellee Almquist, Sue Hofbauer, Mary Bassett, Karen Giltrow.

Board Spotlight: Yeo & Yeo Audit

Brian Dixon of Yeo & Yeo CPAs & Business Consultants reviewed the 2014-2015 school year audit.

Financial Statements

Unmodified Opinion with added Emphasis of Matter regarding adoption of new accounting standards.

Internal Controls

One material weakness due to cash reconciliations not completed in a timely matter due to issues with the new software program.

Compliance

One Material Noncompliance item was noted due to a budget category overage of \$25,000. Other items were under budget, so this basically sorted out in the end. Honey Creek's General Fund is at 18.9% as a percentage of expenditures. The state recommends maintaining at least 15% in the General Fund.

Consent Agenda: Greg White moved, supported by Karen Andrews to approve the consent agenda with the following two amendments:

Agenda Item Amendment to Act 451

The second sentence that read: **Site** or Ann Arbor based school board could create an empowerment zone and all schools that fall within that area would be under this zone was amended to read as follows: **The state** or Ann Arbor based school board could create an empowerment zone and all schools that fall within that area would be under this zone.

Agenda Item Amendment to Director's Report

The first sentence in the M-Step item under the Director's Report that read: State wide data included in board packet showed **our** proficiency rates are lower than 2013, as expected was amended to read as follows: State wide data included in board packet showed **the statewide** proficiency rates are lower than 2013, as expected.

Motion was approved by all board members present.

Director's Report: Written report in board packet. Al Waters reviewed the following:

Assessment

M-Step scores are embargoed and will be shared with the community when they are released. Terra Nova scores will be available after Thanksgiving.

Charter School Advocacy Day

Michigan Association of Charter Schools will host a Charter School Advocacy Day on December 3, 2015. This is an opportunity to speak with legislatures regarding school funding and upcoming legislation. Al Waters encouraged board members to attend the Charter School Advocacy Day and speak up on funding equity that is one place where charter schools are hit hard.

Finance Committee: No written report. Sara Hoffman noted the committee met and focused on assisting Shellee Almquist by working on the monthly reconciliations for the audit. Al Waters reported our school received the following:

- \$50,000 gift from the Honey Creek Foundation
- \$51,000 increase in our fund balance amount
- \$32,000 increase in the foundation allowance.

A discussion followed that included spending the funds from the Community Fund. Al Waters will report on at the next board meeting.

Foundation Liaison: No written report. Karen Andrews announced the Foundation board voted to give \$50,000 to Honey Creek Community School. Sara Brintnall resigned from the Foundation position leaving approximately \$18,000 to possibly hire someone else. A discussion followed and resulted in the board deciding to discuss what action to take at the board retreat in January 2016. Shellee Almquist noted \$5,000 of the \$50,000 Foundation gift will go towards purchasing new computers and the rest will be decided after the budget is looked at. The Foundation plans to present an oversized check reflecting the Foundation's gift of \$50,000 to the school at the Winter Music Performance.

Governance Committee: Pamela Reister distributed the board minutes from the October 28, 2015 Governance Committee meeting that included:

- Committee currently reviewing Employment Policies and Procedures for the Employee Handbook based on the Strategic Plan
- Privacy guidelines regarding emails in schools, advised to look at Federal guidelines on emails in schools
- Compensation concerns: will look at other districts in the area as benchmarks on starting salaries, how they handle routine raises, and raises based on additional education and training

- Compensation documents should reference how HCCS sets salaries, who do we measure ourselves against?
- HCCS Foundation was set up to help out with salary increases, suggest thinking of salary increases like any other monthly bill
- Discussed moving retirement and benefits to a management company and proposed getting numbers from management companies after the audit is completed

The governance committee also met today prior to the board meeting. Al Waters will bring the three administration position descriptions to December 16, 2015 board meeting.

Communications and Outreach Committee: Written report in board packet. The report included:

Internal Communications

- Family Contributions Survey will be stored with the committee and tailored reports will be sent to the Foundation and PTO committees

Liaison with Faculty

- Faculty divided over the anniversary celebration
- Some teachers would like to see the Honey Creek newsletter, Board minutes and PTO minutes posted on a bulletin board
- Faculty agreed a spotlight feature would be a great way to acknowledge our amazing teachers
- Identified ways to market Honey Creek Summer Camp by highlighting the following: drop-in option, long and flexible hours and days, weekly field trips, specialty camp with option of extending hours, indoor swimming pool, outdoor time in a large natural outdoor setting

Liaison with PTO/Foundation

- Foundation will attend PTO meetings per committee recommendation
- Encouraged Foundation to use the promotional video on their website as a tool when dealing with potential donors
- Worked on changing language around from the focus on survival to a focus on thriving
- Discussed the Foundation gift to Honey Creek and how to present it at the Winter Performance along with emphasis on the need to continue giving year to year
- Christine Kelley and Al Waters will attend a PTO meeting in support of the Honey Creek Anniversary party

Parent Communication

- Will look at the November 2015 edition of the Honey Bunches of Notes newsletter and determine if any changes should be made
- Email “primer” was created by Catie Wells to go out annually

Website/Electronic Communication for Internal Users

- Sub-committee recommendations on current website design process graphic and the following areas of concern;
 - Establish one website as the official location where there are links to diverse tools
 - Join mailing lists for scrip, aftercare, and events
 - Create and promote multiple, repetitive communication channels (text messaging, email, website updates for snow days, etc.)
 - Survey showed most of the community prefer email for communication with 10% not wanting to use email
 - Survey: if there is a problem, it is not enough communication
 - Some communications are from organizational structures, such as committees and some are sanctioned and supported. Not all are using the same methods.

External Communication

- Annual Update
 - Christine Kelley will ask Erin Peterson to research and write up accomplishments, how we compare, and state of finances.

Branding Committee: Steve Rich has been in contact with an artist that came up with twelve different Honey Creek logos for consideration by the board. The logos were included in the board packet. He would also expressed interest to create a phrase that describes Honey Creek. A discussion followed that included the concerns that there should be consistency with all spirit wear using the same logo. The phrase being used for the Honey Creek Anniversary spirit wear “integrating life, learning and community since 1995” was brought up. Steve Rich will meet with Christine Kelley to get her ideas and feedback.

Faculty Liaison: Mary Bassett shared the staff’s appreciation to the board for keeping the potential raises in mind.

Old Business:

Media Center Staffing

Al Waters reported Margaret Wessel-Walker will be leaving in December and we need to have a plan on how the Media Center will be staffed. Mary Bassett reported the faculty is divided on whether or not to hire a certified media specialist. Feedback showed some faculty wanting a certified Media Specialist to fill the position and some faculty saying we’re fine now, but not great and could save money by not filling the position.

A discussion followed and Al Waters requested to run an ad now for a certified media specialist, and should no qualified applicants come forth, then we bring in someone for the full 16 hours to help our students. He also recommends moving forward with doing the search now, and making the decision in January for a certified librarian after Shellee Almquist has more information in the budget next month.

Facilities Lease

Al Waters reported the new lease came in yesterday and was forwarded to board.

The new lease includes;

- reduced annual rent by \$15,000 per year for shared spaces
- one year notice for opting out instead of five years
- lowered monthly payments to 10 times instead of 12
- approved repairs to the facility by Honey Creek can be deducted from the rent

A discussion followed with Al Waters recommending to move ahead with the new lease. Megan Masson-Minock moved, supported by Karen Andrews to approve the facility lease, with a condition the administration will talk to the WISD about what the amount of the first payment will be and any agreed upon changes will be written in the lease.

Motion was approved by all board members present.

New Business: Greg White asked the board if anyone would like to take over the board presidency. A discussion followed.

Other Items of Business by Consensus of the Board: Steve Rich asked about the history of Honey Creek's music and art programs. A discussion followed.

Board Kudos To:

- Shellee Almquist for a great audit!
- Wellness Committee for hosting a Parenting Class for Honey Creek parents.
- Jamie Griffith for the fantastic employee lounge makeover!
- Our Fall Sports Coaches: Kristyne Cole (Cross Country), Shellee Almquist, Tim Andrews, Tammy Hall & Kristin Litchard (Field Hockey), and Christianne Myers, Jason Tallant & Carisa Wilder (Soccer).

Preparation for Board Communications: Christine Kelley will prepare a summary of the board meeting for the Honey Creek newsletter.

Public Participation: None

Adjournment: Greg White moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:22p.m.