

FINAL

Centre Learning Community Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes: Regular Meeting

Date/Time/Place: Wednesday, November 17, 2010/ 6:30 p.m. / CLC – Big Room

Trustees Present

Jackie Dillon-Fast, Community Rep.
Brian Rowan, Teacher Rep.
Carl Cotner, Community Rep.
Andrea Kennedy, Teacher Rep.
Gail Boldt, Family Rep.
Ron Boyles (alt. for Lisa Maras) Fam. Rep.
Katherine Watt, Community Rep.
Tonya Daher, Community Rep.

Trustees Absent:

Amanda Dietrick (Student Rep.)
Lisa Maras (Family Rep.)
Patty Webb (Alternate)

Public Present:

Kosta Dussias, Business Manager
Pat Hunt, Educational Compliance Officer
Donna Fischer, Teacher
Nicholas Cotner, CLC Graduate

- I. Jackie Dillon-Fast called the meeting to order.
- II. Trustees unanimously approved Oct. 20 Regular Meeting minutes, with minor typographical changes. Trustees unanimously approved Oct. 26 Special Meeting minutes.
- III. Brian Rowan presented a PowerPoint on what worked well at the October meetings, copy attached hereto.
- IV. Trustees discussed the process for Bylaws Review.
 - A. Tonya Daher reported that she emailed [Guy Ciarrocchi, Esq., Executive Director, PCPCS \(PA Charter Coalition\)](#) and learned that there are no state grant programs to support charter school bylaws revisions and that some foundations offer support, but no grants. (copy of email attached)
 - B. Gail Boldt reported that she contacted, met with and obtained CVs for Patricia Best, former SCASD Superintendent, and James Hartman, director of the Pennsylvania School Study Council, for information about their willingness to provide training to the Board on by-laws revision.

Dr. Best offered to facilitate a small group meeting of CLC teachers, administrators and Board focused on our top five questions. Dr. Best also provided Gail Boldt with a list of useful reference handbooks.

Mr. Hartman offered to:

1. Do some background research to familiarize himself with charter school law, and then read the current CLC Charter and bylaws and provide feedback on clarity of provisions (no charge).
 2. Meet with a small group of administrators, faculty and board members, facilitating a discussion of issues related to revisions (no charge)
 3. If needed, facilitate additional meetings to produce a comprehensive Board policy manual. (Cost: \$500 membership in the PA School Study Council.)
- C. Pat Hunt noted that membership in the organization – offering training programs, technical support, etc. - would be very useful for CLC.
- D. Jackie Dillon-Fast and others supported document review by non-attorneys, but repeated belief that a legal review is important.
- E. Trustees drafted and unanimously approved (8-0) the following proposals:
1. **That the seven by-laws review questions in the August 18, 2010 minutes be submitted to Kim Colonna, Esq. of McNees, Wallace and Nurick, LLC, and funded out of the CLC 2010-2011 budget at a cost not to exceed \$750.**
 2. **That Gail Boldt make contact with Dr. Jim Hartman of the Pennsylvania School Study Council; forward the CLC Charter and original and current By-laws to Dr. Hartman; and schedule an exploratory meeting, focused on CLC's needs, between Dr. Hartman and up to 11 CLC representatives, said meeting to last no more than two (2) hours.**
- F. Other possible non-lawyer resources include Pat Lowry, Superintendent of the Williamsport School District, and John DeNunzio.
- G. Discussion of putting amended Section 8.11 on the web version of the CLC bylaws. Katherine Watt to forward text to Brian Rowan; Brian Rowan to update bylaws at CLC website.
- V. Role of Charter School Board of Trustees/Review of work-in-progress 2010-2011 Board Goals
- A. Discussion of how this Board has only six meetings left, we've already started some projects and there are others we're interested in investing time in. How

much can we reasonably accomplish in the given time? Are our ambitions greater than our energy and time? How do we prioritize?

B. Goals identified at August meeting:

1. Simplified, clear governing documents
2. Having a mission statement
3. Successful rechartering
4. Holding an annual meeting
5. Having board ways of working become routine and efficient
6. Clarified responsibilities – (staff and board)
7. Getting to the point where the board can take on tasks such as funding professional development.
8. Supporting staff in positive ways
9. Supporting community (students, parents, staff, teachers, board)
10. Understanding channels of communication – when and who to ask about issues.
11. Increasing parental involvement
12. Communicating opportunities for parent involvement
13. Enhancing a climate of welcome and familiarity.

C. Trustees agreed to include Goal Prioritization in the December agenda.

VI. Administration of Medication during School Hours Policy (cont'd from Sept.)

- A. Discussion about whether the Board can play a role helping parents set up a parent system for medication administration during the day, since new state mandates bar school staff from administering medications. Concerns about liability.
- B. Trustees agreed that Gail Boldt and Lisa Maras, as Family Representatives, should obtain all parent emails from the teachers, and draft an email about the new state-mandated medications policy, email to be sent out to all parents after review by Kosta Dussias and Pat Hunt, who will be primary contacts for parents with concerns about the new policy.

VII. Special Committee on “Unfinished & Incorrectly Finished Board Business”

- A. Discussion of purpose of review and possible name change. Trustees agreed to rename the project the “Secretary’s Inventory.” Katherine Watt agreed to complete the review and circulate the report before the Board’s December regular meeting.

VIII. Recruitment and Retention

- A. Discussion about how to increase recruitment and retention to fill vacant seats in the classes. Very high priority for administrators, and Board interested in making it a high priority also. Ron Boyles noted that Lisa Maras asked him to pass along her goal of implementing exit interviews to find out more about why students leave CLC. Ron Boyles also noted that when he discusses CLC with friends, many mistakenly believe the school charges tuition.
- B. Kosta Dussias noted that staff has been discussing the issue for two months and that upcoming advertisements in the movie theaters around Christmas holiday season will emphasize that CLC is a tuition-free public school.
- C. Pat Hunt noted that two of CLC's main selling points are that it's a free public middle school and that it offers free before and afterschool care. She noted that word-of-mouth has been the best advertising for CLC, historically, and added that Siobhan Lynam had contacted the Centre Daily Times to have CLC listed in the Family Pages.
- D. Brian Rowan noted that teachers have sent emails to parents about the issue, urging parents to let people know there are current openings.
- E. Trustees agreed that the Board wants to support recruitment and retention efforts, and that Gail Boldt and Lisa Maras should add information about the issue to the email about the new medications policy that they will be sending to parents. The email should inform parents that they may:
 - 1) Send ideas about recruitment and retention to their Family Representatives;
 - 2) Attend the December board meeting, which will include a brainstorming session on the issue; and/or
 - 3) Join the subcommittee to be established by the Board in December.

IX. Board-Staff-Parent Communication Cycles

- A. Discussion of how to better inform parents about the issues before the Board. Trustees agreed that Gail Boldt and Lisa Maras should send monthly emails to parents containing *very brief* digests of past month's minutes and upcoming meeting's key agenda items, and that the same information should be printed and sent out to parents in Friday folders. To meet the deadline for Friday folders,

Lauren Burke would need the information no later than the Wednesday one full week before each Board meeting. Jackie Dillon-Fast agreed to send a short, basic agenda to Gail Boldt and Lisa Maras prior to that Wednesday deadline (Dec. 8 for the Dec. 15 meeting) so they can coordinate dissemination of the information with Lauren Burke.

- B. Discussion of creating a publicly available online folder containing the support documents for each meeting: full agenda plus budget summaries, reports, etc., not including legally private documents such as employment contracts, which would only be circulated by email to Trustees. Trustees agreed that Brian Rowan should create such a GoogleDocs folder for Board business.
- X. Charter Renewal Process update
- A. Kosta Dussias reported that the charter renewal letter was mailed out during the last week of October but no further action has been taken by SCASD. District officials are scheduled for a visit Dec. 8 and the renewal decision will be made within 75 days of the letter's mailing.

XI. School Happenings

- A. Student Council – Brian Rowan gave Amanda Dietrick's report:
"Student Council will be putting finishing touches on the CLC newscast in hopes of debuting it at the Specials assembly. They organized a bathroom painting project for the girls' bathroom in the long hallway, including persuasive proposals for staff, sending a letter to all families requesting donations (even though we did not receive any); designing and painting murals that represent the spirit of CLC to hang; planning to paint at least part of the bathroom on Tuesday, Nov. 23 after school. Whole student body and staff is very proud of Rockband class's incredible performance at the dance."
- B. ECO Report – Pat Hunt reported:
 - 1) Current enrollment is 92, she has been meeting with prospective students.
 - 2) Mark and Morgan's class recently visited Shaver's Creek Environmental Center and will be preparing an interactive children's museum for Dec. 17.
 - 3) Brian and Siobhan's class recently completed their court/crime scene investigator project.
 - 4) Donna and Kelly's class recently visited an iron mining quarry in Spring Mills, collecting fossils for their geology project.

- 5) Amy and Amanda's class has been working on American history prior to the Revolutionary War, colonial government, etc.
- 6) The 8th grade class raised \$800 from the Haunted House to offset the costs of the yearbook. The school dance raised \$300 and featured a rock band of kids in the rock band specials class.

XII. Business Manager Report – Kosta Dussias reported:

- A. That the school is in better financial shape this month than last month, although still running a small deficit of approximately \$7,000 (due to underenrollment)
- B. That the CLC audit and tax returns are nearing completion.
- C. That the Board needs to approve the IDEA grant contract (attached) to obtain grant money for CLC special education programs.
- D. That the Board needs to make a decision about new signage for CLC.
- E. That he puts as much money in the reserve fund as possible because of upcoming large expenses, including a second mortgage payment of \$180,000 due in November 2011 and replacement of the 30-40-year old roof.
- F. That he recommends transferring money from the "Technical Services" line item in the 2010-2011 Annual Budget to "Accounting/Legal Services" for the initial fee for Attorney Kim Colonna's bylaws review.

XIII. Trustees unanimously approved (8-0) the following proposals:

- A. That the Board as the Charter School's governing body, has adopted the terms of the 2010-2011 IDEA Agreement, and has authorized Business Manager Kosta Dussias, on its behalf, to enter into this Agreement.**
- B. That the Board authorize Business Manager Kosta Dussias to contract with Altoona Neon and Sign Service to install a new CLC sign on the side of the school building, and obtain proper permits from Ferguson Township, at a combined cost not to exceed \$1,500.**
- C. That the Board authorize Business Manager Kosta Dussias to transfer \$750 from the 2010-2011 Annual Budget Technical Services line item (No. 348) to the Accounting/Legal Services line item (No. 330) to pay for legal counsel Kim Colonna, Esq. of McNees, Wallace and Nurick, LLC, to answer the seven by-laws review questions in the August 18, 2010 minutes.**

XIV. Wrap-up

- A. Jackie Dillon-Fast agreed to contact Kim Colonna and ask her to respond before the Dec. 15 Board meeting.

B. Carl Cotner, Katherine Watt, Gail Boldt, Lisa Maras and Kosta Dussias should coordinate final revisions to 2009-2010 Annual Report by email before Dec. 8

C. December 15 Tentative Agenda Items:

1. Bylaws – reviewing responses from attorney
2. Election Planning (election process begins January 2011)
3. Strategic Planning Committee appointments (two Board members)
4. Gail Boldt's report on Jim Hartman's response to Board's request to schedule a training
5. Recruitment and retention brainstorming
6. Gail Boldt and Lisa Maras' report on parent responses to the first email newsletter, esp. on medications policy
7. Long-term prioritizing
8. Brian Rowan and Kosta Dussias' presentation of the history and purpose of parent surveys, Board input for January parent survey

XV. Meeting adjourned. Next meeting December 15 at 6:30 p.m. at CLC.