

**Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School**

Board of Trustees Meeting Minute – Thursday February 6, 2025, 6:30pm (Approved)

**Location:** Zoom Only (School was closed for a snow day)

**Present:**

**By Zoom:** Chris Kusek, Emily Boddy, Kathleen Hulton, Grace Mrowicki, Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Neal Teague, Kelly Vogel, Kathleen Szegda, Kylan Mandile, Kate Aleo,, Steve Sell, Andrea Hermans, Ben Carlis

**Regrets:** Lily Newman, Tala Elia

**Guests:** **By Zoom:** Rani Gould, Ali Urbano

**Facilitator:** Kathleen Hulton

**Notetaker:** Emily Boddy

**List keeper:** Grace

**Timekeeper:** Kate

**Mission statement read by:** Kylan

Topic	Discussion	Action (if necessary)
<p><b>Welcoming (read mission statement) (Kathleen H.)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Announcements, appreciations, acknowledgements</li> <li>● Agenda Check: Appoint timekeeper, list keeper</li> <li>● BOT Visibility this month</li> </ul>	<p><b>Announcements, Appreciations, Acknowledgements:</b></p> <p>Appreciation to KATHleen for ensuring we aligned with OML in shifting to online only.</p> <p><b>Agenda Check -</b> Facilities proposal will be presented by Kelly, not Kathleen.</p> <p><b>Board Visibility:</b></p> <p>Coffee Hour, hosted by the BoT on February 12. Kathleen will email as a follow up regarding logistics.</p> <p>MCPSA Advocacy week, Tiff has been emailing opportunities all week.</p>	
<p><b>Approve minutes from previous BOT meeting, 1/16/25</b></p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>Kylan motioned to approve 1/16 meeting minutes; Kate seconded; the Board approved meeting minutes by consensus.</p>

<p><b>Public Comment</b> (Kathleen)</p>	<p>None.</p>	
<p><b>Teaching and Learning Updates (Rebecca)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● General Updates</li> </ul>	<p>Staffing Update:</p> <p>Nicole on mat leave shortly. Steve Hoyt as a building sub has been very helpful. Brenda, helping with Special Ed, is training to take over some morning office duties. Also, new technology system will help facilitate subs.</p> <p>Rebecca speaking with teachers about grade realignment, and will speak at greater length in the agenda item about grade realignment. This has been a collaborative process to create a system that maximizes art program, meeting and collaboration time and other issues.</p> <p>TMI PD was excellent, and has enabled conversations since. Hoping this PD will help lay groundwork for PD around school culture, community, climate.</p> <p>PD coming up soon where Jess will do training on systemizing the way behavior is logged, adding a tiered system of consequences.</p> <p>Student council is active:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student JEDI community wants to implement education for upper grade students around harmful language. Considering using a modified student climate survey to use as a baseline, and inform the experience of students around hearing harmful language. Emilie Woodward is their advisor. There is collaboration with the Board JEDI committee as well.</li> <li>- Dance committee starting collaborating well to plan an end of February dance.</li> </ul> <p>Safe Passage Say Something Youth programming for 8th graders will launch after Feb break.</p> <p>Power Up program for 7th graders is still underway.</p>	

<p><b>Head of School Updates (Chris)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Family and Community Engagement</li> <li>● General School Updates</li> </ul>	<p>Details included in the Domain Director Report.</p> <p>Facilities - sprinkler system is expensive to fix, and there will be ongoing costs with an aging system. The cost to replace is prohibitive. Discussed hiring an engineering firm to conduct property condition assessment of the school.</p> <p>Leaders are tracking the impacts on schools based on the new Administration.</p> <p>Expresses gratitude for those who came to the TMI evening screening. And to the partners, with whom we plan to partner moving forward. The PD day that followed was powerful, and plan to capture that and bring it forward.</p> <p>Recent PD training on Multi-tiered system of support system, as mandated by PCRS. More to come on this.</p> <p><b>Community and Family Engagement Updates:</b></p> <p>MLK Jr Celebration was a success, with good parent feedback.</p> <p>Bingo night - 58 people attended. Steph Mattrey hosted the event and was really grateful to see all three domain leaders present.</p> <p>Main goal of Advocacy week is to increase the Facilities payment Charter schools receive.</p> <p>Prisms Dance.</p> <p>Prisms thinking about a Parents Night Out.</p> <p>Coffee Hours Feb 12; Feb 28</p> <p>Art Spark April 11.</p> <p>Admissions - Zoom info session went well, mainly Kindergarten, some upper school families.</p> <p>More advertising for the in-person sessions: Hilltown Families (Hilltown Alum family); Facebook; Flyers around the Community</p> <p>Working with the Charter School's marketing group, and will have some coverage of our Pedal Powered smoothie maker.</p>	
--	---	--

<p><b>Board Goals, Lily</b> (Update)</p>	<p>Lily not present. Kathleen gave an update on her behalf, that we will come back to this next meeting.</p>	
<p><b>Spring Board Retreat with Julia Bowen, Kathleen.</b> (Update and Discussion)</p>	<p>Julia Bowen knows our school well, and will host a retreat for us through the MCPSA.</p> <p>Kathleen and Julia have developed a rough plan for: what should and could be the board’s role in overseeing/working with school leadership on Academic Performance?</p>	
<p><b>FY25 Q2 Financial Review/ Budget Review, Chris and Kylan</b> (Update and Decision)</p>	<p>Chris summarizes the documents included in the board packet pertaining to this matter.</p> <p>We are in good financial shape, which is great news. We are on or better than on target.</p> <p>A budget adjustment with tuition payments based on factors in the formula, which means more revenue than we expected. We have drawn down as many grants as we can based on advice due to new Administration.</p> <p>The Finance committee opted to adjust some budget items.</p> <p>Adjusted stipends, as may need more than expected due to Realignment</p> <p>Added increase to our budget for health insurance.</p> <p>Added to our Data Management service, so we can switch from Reddiker to Infinite Campus. Recurring cost is similar to current, but there is a big up front cost to train staff and move data over.</p> <p>Increased PD line.</p> <p>Increased Landscaping Costs</p> <p>Increased Educational Supplies</p> <p>Increased funds towards minor repairs and furnishings, get ahead by July 1 to meet needs of new class set ups.</p>	<p>Kylan motioned to approve FY25 Q2 financials; Kate seconded; The Board approved by consensus.</p> <p>Kate motioned to approve the FY25 Budget Revisions; Kathleen seconded. The Board Approved by consensus.</p>

	<p>Budget would cover the Engineering Assessment, as Chris mentioned in his updates.</p> <p>Surplus: Previously, BoT voted to draw down from the reserve for the playground projects. Due to local union helping with demolition work, playground coming in under budget at \$171k. Finance Committee seeks to put \$50k back into the reserve for a lesser impact on the Reserve.</p> <p>Kylan remarks that Chris and Carla did a great job realigning the budget.</p>	
<p><b>HoS Evaluatin</b>, Kathleen (Update)</p>	<p>Leaders are doing a more informal check in with Chris as a mid year eval. The Board will check in on several points. One data points will be a survey to the board. Surveys will be analyzed and presented at the next board Meeting. (Surveys to stakeholders will be part of the end of year assessment.)</p>	<p>Board members will receive a HoS survey to complete ahead of the next board meeting.</p>
<p><b>Grade Realignment Implementation</b>, Chris and Rebecca (Update and Discussion)</p>	<p>Kathleen prefaces with, we will not be making decisions tonight. Notes that, looking ahead in this item, we will be looking at Wednesday release times as it is connected to Grade Realignment - 5th/6th now merged. This is also in the LRP.</p> <p>Chris summarizes that Grade Realignment will be implemented for Sept 2025 start. Adding a TK would be explored starting in March for earliest Sept 2026 implementation.</p> <p>Process: Rebecca and Chris have met in small groups, individually, full faculty meetings to get feedback about implementation timeline, and the how. Recognizing there will be many iterations/'drafts', with feedback, as we move towards full implementation. Rebecca echoes that it has been a process of listening - balance between what is best for the</p>	

	<p>school, and what individual needs and perspectives are. It has been a good process.</p> <p>Member asks what staff are sharing are the bigger challenges:  Rebecca responds that teachers have had a lot of autonomy, and a challenge has been that it makes it hard to share resources like special ed teachers and specials' teachers. Trying to think through fitting what teachers want to do into a uniform schedule. Chris responds that the amount of programming at Hilltown (eg Arts), is both excellent and challenging with scheduling. Wanting to strike a balance that is equitable for staff and benefits kids.</p> <p>Member asks if there are thoughts about how grade realignment might affect testing - MCAS, fastbridge. Important to keep site of goals during tumultuous process.  Rebecca responds that some of the realignment was about maximizing the benefit and preparation for testing, eg grades 2nd/3rd together due to mismatched MCAS needs.  Chris adds that academic performance as a proxy is top of mind is organizing schedule, implementation, restructuring. It is allowing us to allot budget to Math Specialist, for example. Considering how to support ELA standards in writing by having writing labs, for example.</p> <p>Member asks how leadership will communicate with kids about the way things will shift in the new structure.  Rebecca shares that they will speak to kids about the details as they become clear and concrete.</p> <p>Member asks what the approach will be to supporting teachers working with new grade levels, content.  Rebecca explains that Illustrative Math as a continuation across grades, highly rated, user</p>	
--	---	--

	<p>friendly. There will be some shifts with content. There are some 'funky' things that will need to be ironed out, but some of the work done two weeks back around curriculum across grades will help. There will be stipend time for teachers to work this summer on collaboration. Leaders are also looking at new curricula particularly for 6-8. Chris adds that a commitment was made to all grade level teachers that for the rest of this year to pivot to focus PD and faculty meetings on this work for teachers to work in teams to figure this out.</p> <p>Member asks, if staff retention will be affected, will staff numbers shift? Chris shares that every iteration of the schedule brings up additional questions about schedule. How we utilize staff that are part time or have roles that are fluid shift. How those staff get utilized and when is enabling optimization of our staffing model.</p> <p>Member asks about the 2nd/3rd grade band - uniquely placed as shifting up together. Rebecca and Chris respond that 5th/6th in similar position and that teachers are reviewing this. Better to wait until concrete answers so that kids don't get attached to ideas that are thrown out.</p> <p>Wednesday Dismissal: Became clear to potentially shift dismissal times this year, due to creating a new schedule and also because 5th and 6th merging. This is an opportunity to align the k-8 schedule. The administration would like to adjust the dismissal time across grades and recommends that all dismiss at 2pm so that integration meetings can still happen. Our early Weds dismissal can be a deterrent to some families where this feels prohibitive, so this is an issue of equity.</p>	
--	--	--

	<p>Member expresses appreciation for the consideration due to the reduced financial burden on families.</p> <p>Member asks if Kindergarten and possible TK will have different end times to ensure stamina of youngest learners. Leaders respond that there could be flexibility around the release times of our youngest students.</p> <p>Member asks about buses and how that works with new schedule. Leaders imagine this is flexible with Easthamton bus and PVTA.</p> <p>Member asks why we wouldn't have a 3pm release. Leaders respond that we still need time reserved for staff to meet in ways district schools can't for our integration meetings across all teachers.</p> <p>Member expresses support for early release to enable teachers to have the time they need. Appreciates uniformity across k-8. Supports an earlier, uniform release time. Suggests tapping into funding streams for families with concerns around paying for after care. Encourages consideration to keep earlier release time so teachers have the time they need. Suggests a DESE grant to support the subsidy for after care.</p> <p>Member recognizes the challenge that half days present AND in service to the mission, can we find ways to solve for concerns while maintaining this important commitment to arts integration.</p> <p>Community member asks whether there might be opportunities for more STEM in our school with the changes that are happening? This will be considered in the months to come.</p>	
--	---	--



	<p>Chris adds that in addition to financial and equity, the school is prioritizing the potential addition of a drama program, so having extra time will enable for this type of programming. Recognizes the tension between staff time for integration and concerns that teachers have about not having enough student facing time to get through curriculum.</p> <p>Kathleen reiterates that we will come back to this topic, no decisions made now.</p>	
<p><b>Facilities Committee Proposal</b>, Kelly (Discussion and Decision)</p>	<p>Proposal is in the packet.</p> <p>Kelly went through the proposal to remove facilities as a board committee. Full explanation in the board packet.</p> <p>Kathleen added some context: that it is unusual to have a facilities committee, as she learnt during the Charter Renewal process. And we are one of the only charter schools without an Academic Excellence committee, which is one of the main charges of charter school boards. We also have a larger issue in the LRP to look at the structure of the board and committees.</p> <p>Kelly adds that Hilltown also doesn't have facilities people in house.</p> <p>Chris expresses appreciation for the facilities committee work over the years. Parent volunteers will still be in a position to help with facilities issues, eg Fix It Fridays.</p> <p>Kathleen adds that she and Kylan discussed having a person doing the 'fix-it' work attend Finance meetings for continuity and communication. Kelly confirmed that they have a person who is willing to do that.</p>	<p>Emily motioned to approve the proposal as presented; Ben seconded; The Board approved by consensus.</p>

<p><b>Annual Meeting, Emily (Update)</b></p>	<p>Wednesday March 26 at 6:30pm  GABS meeting is next week and we will finalize our discussion topic.  Chorus, Harmonies and Rock Band have been invited to attend, to be confirmed.  Please plan to be at the meeting early to help set up and to stay a little after to help clear up.  Please spread the word in your discussions and chats with community, including at our upcoming coffee hour.</p>	
<p><b>Committee Reports - Questions, Kathleen H.</b></p>	<p>None.</p>	
<p><b>Meeting Wrap-up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Minutes Finalization</li> <li>● Snacks + Drinks for next meeting</li> <li>● Newsletter Blurb</li> <li>● New business for next Board meeting</li> </ul>	<p>Next Meeting: <i>Wednesday, March 12 at 6:30pm</i></p> <p>Facilitator: Kathleen H  Snacks: Kate  Drinks: Grace  Newsletter blurb: Emily</p> <p><b>New Business:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mid Year HoS Review Discussion</li> <li>- Board Goals (Lily)</li> <li>- Begin conversations regarding how new Administration policies and actions may affect our school</li> <li>- Annual Meeting</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Review Action Items</b></p>	<p>Reviewed action items.</p>	
<p><b>Adjournment</b></p>	<p>Meeting adjourned at 8:29pm</p>	<p>Kelly motioned to adjourn; Kate seconded; the meeting was adjourned.</p>