

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE EVERGREEN COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS August 21, 2014 – 5:30 P.M.

Meeting called to order at 5:35 p.m. by Dan Leroy.

Present: President Dan Leroy, Treasurer Aaron Slate, Secretary Kelly Stephenson, Ron Kelley, Murphy Doty, Laura Branch, Lori Hilliard, Ira Starr, Director Susan Gottfried, Michael Follo, Lynn Player, Eric Howard (entered at 6:02pm), Eben Heasley (entered at 6:09pm)

Absent: Vice-President Annie Jonas, Tyson Miller

AGENDA:

1. Visitor Recognition

The following visitors were recognized: Sarah Shoemaker, Kathy Norris, Eleanor Ashton, Laura Simmons, Shannon Simmons, Cameron Brantley, Gordon Simmons, Chris Weaver (entered at 5:55pm)

2. Minutes from Last Month

The minutes from the July Board meeting were approved with corrections.

3. Correspondences Received

There were no correspondences received.

4. Celebration of Success

The Certificate of Occupancy has been obtained for the Gym! Eleanor Ashton was thanked for the work she did fundraising for the gym. Steve Olin was thanked for his help with facilities, maintenance, and help with the gym project.

5. Presentation: Evergreen Business Model Review

Doty presented a review of ongoing work to revise the Evergreen Business Model. The goal of this Business Model Review is to discover sustainable alternatives to generate a budget surplus of \$250,000 - \$500,000 per year so that Evergreen can remain strong educationally, strong financially, and realize other needs for desirable programs and facilities. Supporting documentation is in the attached board packet. Two consultants will be sought (may be paid or may be pro bono). The hope is to have this process complete by the end of February 2015. This is a response to Strategic Planning process.

The Revenue and Expense sides of the budget will both be looked into. This is not a duplication R&D Task Force, but an expansion on the work that has already been done.

The Business Model Review team fielded questions. Doty, Kelley and Starr are working together on this project and welcome help from other board members. Please email a member of the team if you are interested in helping in this endeavor.

6. Action Items

a. Money Handling Procedures

The Classroom Money Handling Procedures section of the Staff Handbook has been revised, and the revisions were reviewed by the board. The proposed revisions are attached. **Gottfried made a motion to approve the Classroom Money Handling procedures of the Staff Handbook. Slate seconded. The motion was adopted.**

b. Strategic Planning Task Force

The work of the Strategic Planning Task Force is complete. **Leroy made a motion to dissolve the Strategic Planning Task Force. Starr seconded. The motion was adopted with Player and Heasley abstaining.**

The work of the Building Task Force is also complete. **Doty made a motion to dissolve the Building Task Force. Gottfried seconded. The motion was adopted.**

c. Compensation and Benefits

It would be beneficial to give associate teachers the opportunity to earn extra money in EverAfter but, if that pushes them over 30 hours per week, our policy as currently worded would require us to give them health/retirement benefits - which we can't afford. Since the state leaves it up to us to determine who is eligible, Susan proposes that we change our policy as shown below:

Compensation/Benefits:

The Employee is entitled to compensation that is paid according to the Employment Contract for the term of the agreement, unless the agreement is terminated by either party. Payday is on the 30th of the month, or in the event that these dates fall on a weekend or holiday, on the last working day prior to the 30th. Salaried employees returning to Evergreen for a second or subsequent year (unless paid from special grant funds or on a temporary basis) are usually paid for a 12-month period beginning on July 1 and ending on June 30. In their first year of employment, salaried employees are paid over an 11-month period.

Full-time employees in permanent positions are entitled to compensation in the form of an employer contribution to NC Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System (SERS) at the designated state rate. **Employees are also required to make a contribution to this plan at the designated state rate. The state-determined length of time for becoming vested in the SERS is currently 10 years.**

Permanent full-time employees and permanent full-time employees currently on sabbatical can be enrolled in the Teachers and State Employees' Medical Benefits Plan. Family members can be added to the policy at the employee's expense. (See State Health Plan Benefits Booklet for details.)

Full-time employees in permanent positions can elect to enroll in a Flexible Spending Account and enroll in one or more of the group insurance plans offered through Pierce Benefits. For more information, see the Business Manager.

Full-time "exempt" and "non-exempt" employees and part-time "exempt" shall acquire and use annual leave in accordance with the Evergreen leave policy. (See **1.8 Employee Leave Policy**)

Part-time (less than 30 hours) and hourly employees do not have the benefits of health insurance and retirement described above. Part-time "non-exempt" employees do not have the benefits of paid leave days. Part-time employees should submit time sheets by the 17th of the month for payment on the 30th of the month.

***This is the new language:

Time worked by part-time employees in the EverAfter and/or Evergreen Summer Adventures programs who also work part-time in the school program will not count toward meeting the "full-time" requirement for enrollment in the NC Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System or the Teachers and State Employees' Medical Benefits Plan.

Gottfried fielded questions.

Gottfried made a motion to approve the aforementioned changes to the Compensation and Benefits policy. Hilliard seconded the motion. The motion was adopted.

d. Vote on New Hires

Gottfried presented the following new hires and position changes for consideration:

April Fox Dorion – EC 1:1 Associate. April has worked with children with exceptional needs in a variety of day care, school and community settings. She began working at Evergreen as a substitute teacher in 2012, working primarily with children with special needs both one on one and in the EC classrooms, and spent the last months of the 2013-2014 school year working in EverAfter. April is also a freelance writer, and is pursuing a Master's Degree in special education. Five of her six children are former Evergreen students.

Jessica Lombardi – Part Time 2nd grade Associate Teacher. Jessica has a B.A. in Art and Mass Communication with a focus on Photography and Film Production. She received her K-6 Elementary Education license from UNC-Asheville and student taught in a second grade classroom in Buncombe County.

Jeff Armstrong – 6th grade ELA and Social Studies Lead Teacher. Jeff recently earned a BA in Education from Mars Hill University. Jeff was an Associate Teacher at Evergreen for a few months last year and also did some substitute teaching. His wife, Ona teaches kindergarten at Evergreen and his two sons attend Evergreen.

Dan Mussulin – Full Time 7th grade Associate Teacher. He graduated with a degree in Adventure Recreation from Ohio University. He has worked with all ages of youth in a variety of settings from the wilderness to the classroom. He is a former EverAfter co-director and staff member.

Erin Hebbe – Full Time Development Associate. Erin attended Savannah College of Art and Design in Savannah, Georgia but ultimately received her BBA in Business Management and Entrepreneurship from Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw, Georgia.

Previously Employed but New to Positions:

Sarah Holland - Interim K Lead (moved from K Associate). Sarah earned her BA from Connecticut College where she majored in Psychology-Based Human Resources, minored in Dance, and received her elementary teaching certificate. She studied the cross-cultural experience and treatment of exceptional children in Copenhagen, Denmark and taught at an early childhood development center in a township south of Cape Town, South Africa.

Heather West – 1st grade Lead (moved from 1st grade Associate). Heather received her Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education in 2011 and took a position as Interim 6th grade Associate in January 2012, she was then given the opportunity to work as a first grade Associate for two years alongside Misty.

Sally Boerschig – 2nd grade Lead (moved from 2nd grade Associate). Sally has a B.A. in Russian and International Development and an M.S. in Environmental Education. She has taught in many settings including teaching English in Taiwan; teacher training in Russia; teaching at a Montessori school in North Carolina; global rivers education in Detroit, Michigan, and working with a non-profit in Durham, NC where she worked with school groups, did state-wide teacher training and provided community education.

Melanie Derry – Interim 3rd grade Lead (moved from 4th Associate). Melanie earned her B.S. in elementary education (with a minor in photography) from Appalachian State University in 1993. She has worked at an independent school as an assistant teacher and lead teacher in grades one and three, served as a counsellor and the educational coordinator at Camp Woodson, worked as a pastry chef at West End Bakery and has been an Associate Teacher at Evergreen for the past 8 years.

Jason Carter – 7th/8th grade Science Teacher (moved from Interim 7/8 Math teacher) Jason has a B.A. in English and Math from University of Alabama. He participated in the N.C. TEACH program through WCU to get his licensure in math and science (grades 6-9), and has continued his education with coursework through UNCA. He had taught for four years in Buncombe and McDowell counties (science, math, and social studies) when he came to Evergreen in 2005, and has sponsored student activities such as Science Olympiad, Envirothon, MathCounts, and Roots & Shoots.

Cathe Bradshaw – Part Time Title 1 Teacher (moved from 2nd grade Lead). Cathe completed most of her liberal arts education at East Carolina University and then received her B.S. in Elementary Education with a minor in philosophy and concentration in early childhood from UNCG. She has been a lead teacher at Evergreen for the past 11 years. She has served as School Improvement Team chair for years.

Gottfried made a motion to approve the new hires. Starr seconded. The motion was adopted.

e. Budget Changes

The Finance Committee brought forth a motion to approve the attached budget line changes to the 2013-2014 budget. Gottfried fielded questions. The largest change reflects revenue from the contingency fund to cover costs of the gym renovation. **The motion was adopted.**

7. Discussion Items

a. Sabbatical Policy

Gottfried and G. Simmons presented proposed changes to the Sabbatical Policy. The sabbatical policy was reviewed this summer to determine if it needed to be changed in light of the fact that 75% of those who took a sabbatical last year did not return this year. The policy as written gives the Executive Director sole discretion for approving a sabbatical. Gottfried plans to communicate with those currently on sabbatical as well as the rest of the staff what the intent of the sabbatical policy is (i.e., to give employees time to rejuvenate and return to Evergreen with fresh perspective and new skills, thus benefitting the employee and the school) and to build a culture around that intent so the benefit does not become a step out the door. We have employees who are taking a sabbatical sign a document of Sabbatical Leave Understandings that includes the term, info about carrying over leave days, state health plan benefit that the school continues to provide, and a statement that if the employee doesn't return they will repay the school for the insurance benefit. The loophole that needs to be closed is for an employee who might return without true intent to stay for the year and only does so for a short period of time in order to not have to repay benefits. The Business Manager suggests the following language be written into the Sabbatical Leave Understandings:

6. Non-Return or Resignation Prior To Expiration of Employment Contract after Return

a. (no change)

b. If Employee resigns or is discharged for just cause prior to the end of Employee's employment contract for the 2015-2016 school year, Employee shall reimburse School for all amounts paid by School for state monthly contributions for the Employee for the state health plan during the term of this sabbatical minus a credit, if any, earned by Employee; such credit shall be earned and calculated on a pro-rata basis as follows: days employee works divided by work days in the 2015-2016 contract year, multiplied by total paid by School.

c. Such reimbursement shall be made within sixty days of 1) notification of intent not to return to work for School in 2015-2016, 2) non-acceptance of an extended employment contract, 3) notice of resignation of Employee, 4) notice of discharge of Employee, or 5) upon such other terms as mutually agreed upon by School and Employee.

(This is a straight pro-rata calculation. We can re-word so that they get full credit after x% of the work is completed (60%? 75%?).

note

Discussion ensued with some concern expressed with the number of sabbatical leave-takers who did not return this year. Clarification on payment of health insurance for those who do not return was needed. Much was learned with this first year of offering sabbaticals. There was also discussion regarding the pros and cons of guaranteeing the same position upon return. It was suggested that the full Sabbatical policy be placed in the board packet next month.

b. Evergreen Pay Scales/State Pay Scales

At the August Finance Committee meeting, there was discussion around pay scale philosophies for non-state salary scale employees. The committee requested feedback from the board about "why we pay people what we pay them". As Gottfried will be creating pay scales for everyone it begs the question (before she puts work into pay scales) of whether or not the board wants pay scales to all be tied to state, some be tied to state, none be tied to state, etc. "Tied to state" doesn't necessarily have to mean "equal to state."

Board members discussed the pros and cons of tying salaries to state pay scale, and also salaries of those staff/administrative positions which cannot be tied to state.

A straw vote was taken to determine if those present would like to see all positions salaries related to the state scale. Gottfried will take into consideration items from this discussion when putting together the pay scales.

8. Committee Reports

a. Finance

Clarification was needed regarding collection of fees owed by parents for Fieldwork. Some was not collected, and some was collected in an account which was not tied to the budget by Acadia (such as payments in the form of credit cards).

b. Director

Clarification was needed regarding L. Simmons not included in new position – she was in same position, different class.

c. Board Staff Liaison Report

No report this month. Weaver will no longer be board-staff liaison, another member will fill this position at next month's meeting.

d. Development

Kelley gave a report on reflections from the recent Development Retreat. In particular focus was board member involvement in development. Donors who were thanked via phone call within 4 days after giving gave up to 42% more the next time they donated. Board members agreed to help in this capacity, and also with ideas for new donors.

e. Nominating & Evaluating

There was no Nominating and Evaluating Committee Meeting.

f. Facilities / Master Plan / Building

Facilities brought forth a motion that the board approve to “Not Pursue Liquidated Damages From the Contractor”.

The contractor experienced delays, however the majority of the work has been completed and it is anticipated that the final completion date will be on or before August 22. Student use of the gym is scheduled to begin August 25. Discussion ensued.

The motion was adopted.

Facilities offered to provide a closeout presentation to the board at the September meeting.

g. Grievance

The Grievance committee met.

h. School Improvement Team

No clarification was needed.

i. Executive

No clarification was needed.

j. Diversity

There was no Diversity Committee meeting.

9. Personnel or Legal Matters (*closed session*)

Hilliard made a motion to enter closed session to discuss privileged information. Starr seconded. The motion was adopted.

Heasley made a motion to come out of closed session, Leroy seconded. The motion was adopted.

Branch made a motion to approve the July 2014 closed session minutes. Howard seconded. The motion was adopted.

10. Items for Next Month's Agenda

Next month's agenda shall include: Motion re: letter to Acadia, Gym Project Close-Out Report, Business Mode Update, Sabbatical Policy (include policy in board packet)

11. Reflection

Howard was thanked for his work on the Grievance Committee.

Meeting adjourned by Leroy at 8:26pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kelly Stephenson