

**Hill View Montessori Charter Public School  
Regular Board Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, September 14, 2006**

**Board Members Present:**

Shaw Rosen, Kelly Martin, Ed Maguire, Veronica O'Brien, John Michitson, Peg Roberts, David Kelly

**Board Members Not Present:**

Ross Povenmire, Nandesh Palanisamy

**Other Attendees:**

Heidi Steen – Johnsen, John Nolan, Nicole Maguder, Nancy Parshley (note taker)

**I. Minutes/Schedule**

Meeting began at 6:35pm. Called to order by Shaw Rosen, Board Chair

Motion to approve August's meeting notes made by Veronica.

Seconded by Ed.

No discussion.

All in favor 6. None opposed. Motion passed.

**II. Public Agenda Comments - None**

**III. Executive Director Report**

Peg reviewed the HHV Assessment Schedule.

Kelly asked if the Assessment Schedule allowed for enough time between the assessments to show adequate progress. She was questioning if there is enough time to measure the progress from the Fall to the Spring, meaning that some of the assessments don't take place until October or November and then others take place in March and May.

Peg addressed this concern by stating the Assessment Schedule was developed directly from the Accountability Plan, which was approved by the Department of Education.

Kelly asked, "Given the schedule, is there enough time given to the child, to show the progress?"

Peg responded, "Actually, We are doing them earlier this year. Also, we need time to tally the results."

Ed questioned if the Assessment Schedule is in response to setting academic goals and if the academic goals have input from the professionals, meaning the teachers.

Shaw responded by stating that the Assessment Schedule is in response to a BOT request, but it is also being used to inform instruction.

Peg noted that This is a "very aggressive" schedule, especially for a Montessori school. The staff is totally overwhelmed considering that they are not used to having to give formalized assessments. However, it is happening. Melanie has been working with the teachers to learn how to administer the DRA and the Terra Nova Assessments will be given next week. We put these assessments in place to show the school's accountability.

Shaw requested descriptions to tie back what each assessment is used for be placed in the schedule as it relates to the Accountability Plan.

Peg responded that this can be done.

Ed then asked about the Benchmarks. Are they separate from the assessments?

Peg responded yes, because there is no set time frame for them, they are on going. Each child works on them at his/her own rate and in any order they feel comfortable with. She explained that what is different this year is that all of the first years have been given a portfolio/binder to keep all of their benchmarks and information/work in. They are already working on them. This is different than last year because only the third year students received the portfolios. Now all children are working toward them. It's an ongoing process, which needs to be completed when the child is near the end of their third year.

Shaw requested that a statement be written to show how this works and how it can be shown.

Peg stated we can write a statement.

A discussion ensued and Shaw clarified some of the details for some of the board members.

Peg presented the preliminary DOE report findings for the Coordinated Program Review (CPR) done this past May.

The CPR assesses federally funded programs: Civil Rights, Special Education and English Language Learners Civil Rights – HVM was cited for accessibility issues. This was expected.

Special Education – this is always an issue for new schools. The DOE cited the same concerns/issues in several locations throughout the report, specifically the amount of Special Education staff available to operate the program successfully.

ELL – cited for not having a program, we had policies in place, but not everything in place. We need to train staff.

Overall – the DOE will not comment on how well or poorly a school does, but Nancy spoke to several other charter schools to see how we did in comparison. They told her we did well.

We received the Final Report and we need to do a Corrective Action Plan (CAP). Once it is approved by the DOE, we have one year to complete it. Peg will work with Shaw to complete the plan.

Ed asked about whether Peg would be changing the format of the Executive Director's report.

Peg stated yes and that she had already made some changes. She took of some of the items and will report on them quarterly.

#### **IV. Old Business:**

##### **A. Retreat/Goals:**

Shaw explained that Ed and John have been working this project.

Ed began by stating that there were 5 main objectives to address at the retreat.

Academics, Communication, Facilities, Resources and Staff Retention

His sub-committee only worked on Academics and Communication, he needs to talk to the other committees. His handout is only a snapshot of what he sees needs to happen. His sub-committee has not met yet. The sub-committee is made up of two members from each group involved at the retreat. We have the 2 board members, 2 teachers, 2 administrators, but we don't have the parents.

Ed presented his draft. He stated that academics are a concern. We need to know where we're at, and follow a standard procedure, but we need input from the administrators and teachers to make it a SMART goal that is functional. More discussion ensued.

Peg then addressed the part of the academic goal that stated the curriculum alignment needs to be completed by September 30, 2006. She stated that it is not going to be done by that date. It's an ongoing project.

Shaw asked if there is a timeline for when this project will be accomplished.

Peg explained the original alignment was done by one of the founders. During the first year the teachers went through the entire curriculum and checked to see what wasn't covered in the state's standards. HVM purchased a Montessori Curriculum and last year the teachers started making up specific lessons to fill in the wholes. During the DOE site visit this past January, they stated that we did not have enough information. The DOE informed us we need to state the specific standard and which lesson is being taught to cover that standard. Peg stated, "This is the standard and this is the lesson. This is a very lengthy project. It took River Valley three years. Melanie and I are setting up a schedule on how to attack it. ELA & Math are the first two focus points." Peg and Melanie are going to be breaking them down into much smaller chunks before presenting it to the teachers.

Kelly asked if there's any way to collaborate with River Valley.

Peg responded, "Yes. We've already spoken with them, but haven't had the chance to actually work with them."

John – Communication objectives – presented his handout. Addressed who are the stake holders, who is receiving the communication, who is sending it, who are the possible collaborators, what are all of the possible variables. Tactics – taken second page of "BOD" suggestions coming out of the retreat. See what other schools are doing in this arena. John mentioned he found an article from the DOE website. He stated that Randy ? from Haverhill was on the committee. John stated he picked out some of the things that might

apply to us. We need to cross reference – to see if we’re on the same page (from the retreat and from the DOE report). He continued to explain his handout.

A conversation ensued mentioning the methods of communication, the issues involving the communication problems, content of the communications. Power School and the Wednesday notes were mentioned as examples being used.

Peg explained about Power School, what it is and how HVM got it.

Veronica made a comment about using consistent formats and keeping a standardized look for meeting notes, forms of communication, etc. She stated she would look for the formats and original fonts provided by Allison.

Shaw thanked Ed and John for all of their good work!

## **B. PR/Development, Finance and HOPE Joint Meeting**

Shaw asked if there was any objection to skipping forward to the Parent Teacher Communication Update. All members agreed.

Peg – Melanie has been working on revising the ILA and some other things from the last meeting. She’ll be able to present them at the October meeting.

## **C. Committees/Task Force Membership**

Shaw presented a handout, showing all committees are staffed as much as they need to be. Ed & John are on a committee. Trustee Committee needs a list of people with areas of expertise in specific areas to assist on these.

Peg – we need more people from the community involved.

Shaw – “I need to communicate to the committees as to their needs and to have them complete an assessment as to what will benefit them the most.”

## **V. Break** – began at 7:45 and ended at 8:00 PM

## **B. PR/Development, Finance and HOPE Joint Meeting**

Next Steps, recommendations: Peg asked about the notes from the Hope Joint Meeting. Kelly stated Allison was going to compile the information (brainstorming notes/results). Do not have for this meeting.

Ed asked if we had a time frame and if we’re under the gun to get this done (new building?)

Peg – The money depends on what happens, but we definitely have to have it done within the next four years. It could be before then. It’s based on a \$3 Million building.

Ed – “How does it get paid down? Is it fundraising?”

Peg – The money is in the budget and it’s ongoing.

Kelly – We want to make sure we have the money behind us, but ultimately we want to build our dream building.

Peg – HOPE has about \$30,000 right now.

Kelly – We need about \$600,000 for the down payment. This is not going to be a burden on the parents.

Ed questioned if HOPE is the organization that owns this project.

Peg stated the fundraising is HOPE’s responsibility.

Kelly stated that the PR committee needs to work to make HOPE’s job easier, by making it known who we are and what we’re doing.

A discussion continued.

Shaw asked; are there any lessons to be learned from other Charter schools that can help us?

Peg stated the first thing we need to do is a feasibility plan, what is doable in this city? We need to raise 80% before we can go public, we need to determine who the players are, etc.

Shaw stated the most important thing is to have an overall master development plan. What are the next steps?

Peg – needs to get feed back from Allison, have another meeting within the next couple of weeks.

Ed – is this something you do or is it done by a group? (Master Development Plan)

Peg – this shouldn't be done in isolation, do it as a whole group.

Kelly asked if there are many grants available for buildings.

Peg stated there are a lot out there, but don't we don't know who will fund a Charter school. We know they'll fund private and non-profits, but charter schools are different.

Shaw – need to meet within 2 weeks, have ideas ready to start, need all of the notes and bring to the next BOT meeting, along with an outline for a plan to get going.

## **VI. New Business:**

### **A. Scheduling Town Meeting**

Shaw stated we don't have a plan approved, but the consensus is that we to do it. Need to set a date. Asked how do we determine what the subject its?

A) Do we set a specific subject/theme? Or B) Do we call it a town meeting, but have it be a meeting where the entire community could meet to discuss a topic, have a forum, open event, etc.?

Veronica stated we could post something on the website asking, what would your idea of a town meeting be? Then take the feedback and then set up a meeting.

Kelly stated she loves the idea of a rotating forum, but thinks the parents want to hear from the board what its goals are, rather than asking the parents for their ideas.

Veronica asked John Hergot what he thought. He responded the first meeting would be to discuss the topics and then set up a schedule.

David then stated that there were a lot of disappointed people at the retreat, we are still gathering information, and he thinks we should develop a plan and follow through on it. "I think this is what they are really expecting. I think this sets up a lot of false expectations for people. At least if they know we are sitting down and are addressing what it is that their kids are learning and how we are assessing it, it will be a good beginning."

Peg – we are setting up Parent Education Nights to address this. I didn't think this is what a "Town Meeting" was for, but if this is what they want, then this may be what we want to address, having a main topic and combining it with a parent education night may be a good idea because if we have too many meetings people aren't going to show up.

A conversation continued about what is it the BOT is addressing and how to schedule the meetings.

### **B. Student Presentations in Board Meetings**

A short discussion about when the children should present, what age group, where to present and what would they present was held.

Shaw asked if there should be a vote on the motion.

Peg asked if they could vote on a recommendation, not on the presentations actually happening because she needs to talk to Melanie.

Shaw – leave it as we have a consensus to have this happen, but we will wait for an update.

## **VII. Committees/Task Forces**

### **A. Site Task Force Report**

Veronica stated she and Peg have met many times with City Hall to discuss the modular units. We may have a potential problem with pipes running underground in the parking lot. "We are in a holding pattern!" We were just notified of this on Tuesday. People have changed their minds after telling us we were all set. There are 9 city departments involved in this and it's really hard to get them all together at once. We're working on it.

Shaw motioned to accept the report.

All in favor = 6 None opposed. Report accepted.

### **B. ED Evaluation Task Force**

Kelly stated the ED Task Force measured Peg on a leadership matrix, staff survey, etc. It was very time consuming (she spent 40 to 50 hours on it). Some of the criterion was not met. The Task Force is looking for help to determine if the tools are appropriate, are they the right ones, etc.

David stated there is very strong disagreement on the materials being used, we end up with 1000's of pieces of information and then we need to filter this. Its way too complicated, too obtuse, it doesn't happen all at once, the information comes in at different times. It's not effective. In the interest of hiring and firing, we can do what ever we want. The board decides by votes, there's no come back. "In the process, we have created a process that is so painful, so deceitful, that it's hurtful.

John asked if the BOT sets objectives.

David stated, Peg sets her own and the board may add some.

Peg stated she wasn't given any goals, so she made her own.

John stated that there should be three or four things that the board assesses.

A discussion ensued.

Shaw asked if there was a consensus to make a motion to state that the tools we are using are cumbersome.

### **VIII. Training None**

### **IX. Public Comments and/or correspondence**

Shaw stated the Annual Report had been accepted by the DOE.

John Hergot asked if there is parent access to Power School.

Peg state that there is, but right now we are working on refining the pages, so that they reflect the correct information are parent friendly to use.

### **X. Executive Session**

Veronica requested that the board go into an executive session for the following reason:

To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if an open discussion may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the governmental body with a person, firm, or corporation.

Shaw called a role call vote.

Unanimous

BOT went into Executive Session at approximately 9:15 pm.

### **XI. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 10:18 pm.