

The Elmwood Village Charter School
Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, March 19, 2014

Trustees Present: Marguerite Battaglia, Roy Clay, Concetta Ferguson, Kathy Franklin Adams, Andrew Mouw, Pam Pollock, Matt Ryan, Natalie Stoyanoff

Trustees Absent: Mimi Barnes-Coppola, Jennifer Bernacki Smith, Leah Eagan-Stoddard

Others Present: John Sheffield, EVCS Director; Liz Evans, EVCS Operations Manager; Colby Smith, EVCS Owner's Rep; Lisa Kirisits, EVCS Accountant

Concetta Ferguson called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

1. Concetta presented the agenda for the meeting. There were no changes. Approved.

2. Concetta introduced and welcomed new members to the EVCS Board of Trustees, Andrew Mouw and Natalie Stoyanoff. **Matt moved and Kathy seconded that Andrew Mouw be elected to fill the vacant position as Treasurer of the EVCS Board of Trustees. Approved unanimously.**

3. Minutes from the Board of Trustees meeting held on February 12, 2014, were presented. **Marguerite moved and Roy seconded that the minutes be accepted as presented. Approved unanimously.**

4. EXPANSION/FACILITIES UPDATE

-Colby Smith, EVCS Owner's Rep, stated that the budget for the upcoming construction has been under revision. In January the estimate was at approximately \$2.6 million. Further refinements have reduced the budget by \$300,000.

-All designs and specifications will be submitted to the city on March 13, 2014. The current building is a "Type A" construction. As long as all new construction complies with the "Type A" model no sprinklers will be required. This will result in a cost avoidance of \$225,000.

-The project is currently out to bid. The bid due date was postponed to March 25, 2014, to allow time for more bidders. It was believed that the greater number would result in more competition and less padding of bids. Numbers should be available on March 24, 2014, and should be ready for analysis the following afternoon.

-Mr. Smith volunteered to attend any neighborhood meetings to explain and answer questions regarding the construction project. It was agreed that he would consult with Matt first as Matt is a member of the community and has been serving as liaison between EVCS and the neighborhoods.

5. FINANCIAL MATTERS

-Lisa Kirisits, EVCS Accountant, reviewed the financial statements for January and February, 2014. She described "a healthy balance sheet." For the eight months ended February 28, 2014, EVCS showed an increase in net assets of \$188,219 vs. a budgeted decrease in net assets of \$169,242. The result was a favorable variance of \$357,461. **Matt moved and Kathy seconded that the financial statements for January and February, 2014, be accepted. Approved unanimously.**

-Lisa also noted that it becomes more difficult to balance the budget each year when there has been no increase in funding levels from New York State. EVCS has been able manage due to the funds generated by additional students as long as the school grows. She presented two options proposed by Northwest Savings Bank for the coming construction loan:

Option #1-The loan will go to permanent finance in September, 2015, with the term loan becoming part of it. This will then expire on August 1, 2017, with an expected 5 year

extension. Lisa noted that this may strain the operating budget, but did not feel that it should be a significant concern.

Option #2-This option is similar to the first. However, the term note is for a larger amount and the bank will want it back faster, requiring a higher cash outflow from EVCS. She felt that this might strain cash reserves.

Some discussion ensued. Matt was of the opinion EVCS has a healthy operating budget and that option #1 would leave the school in a better financial position at the end of five years. **Matt moved and Marguerite seconded the EVCS Board of Trustees accept option #1, borrowing \$1.4 million and using the higher level of cash reserves. Approved unanimously.**

-Lisa and Karen Burhans have been researching the possibility that EVCS might be able to provide employer contributions to a 403(b) plan for those non-instructional, full time employees who are not part of the NY State Teacher's Retirement System. **Matt moved and Kathy seconded the following resolution: Resolved that the EVCS Board of Trustees approves in concept an employer 403(b) contribution (amounts or percentages to be determined) for full time, non-instructional employees who are not eligible for the New York State Teacher's Retirement System. Approved unanimously.**

-Several other potential expenditures were discussed:

-Liz noted that state and federal reporting requirements are increasing rapidly and consuming many hours of time with manual data entry. It may be necessary and cost effective to replace current manual data entry with a supported system.

-John reminded the Board that for several years EVCS has outsourced related services of occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy and IEP mandated counseling. Counseling is currently maxed out at a rate of \$55 per hour. He will be looking into the cost effectiveness of hiring a staff counselor.

6. John reported that Sue Gibbons from the NY State Board of regents expressed excitement that the EVCS Board of Trustees will be considering possible replication.

7. Discussion of the Board Governance Plan was tabled in order to allow Board members additional time to review the document.

8. ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

Leah noted that the annual campaign begins tomorrow, March 19, 2014, with participation in the United Way "*Spring It On!*", on-line donation event. In addition, students and families will also be encouraged to participate by decorating paper fish and returning them to school with a donation of any size as they did last year. The goal is for everyone to participate and feel a part of the effort.

9. RECRUITMENT/ NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Mimi reported that there have been a number of very qualified candidates to serve as parent representative to the EVCS Board of trustees.

10. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Academics

-Professional development: On Friday, March 21, 2014, students will be dismissed at 12:30 pm to allow an afternoon of teacher development. Mrs. Wechsler will be working with ELA teachers on Common Core writing development. Mr. Sheffield will be working with other teachers on six academic intervention strategies from *Teach Like a Champion*. All members of the instructional staff are required to participate in this professional development.

-State Assessments:

* New York State testing will take place during April and May 2014. English, Language Arts exams will be given April 1,2, and 3; Mathematics tests, April 30, May 1 and 2.

There is real concern about parents who opt out of the tests. A charter school that does not have 95% participation may have its charter in jeopardy. In addition, the school uses information from student test results as a tool to improve instruction for all. As a way of alleviating some of the anxiety that parents fear their children might experience during State Assessments, John suggested that the Board suspend its policy prohibiting teachers from proctoring their own students during State assessments. State Regulations now allow teachers to proctor assessments administered to their students. As always, two teachers will be assigned to every testing room. **Matt moved and Concetta seconded that the EVCS Board of Trustees amend its current policy to allow teachers to proctor their own students during assessment. Approved unanimously.**

*New York State Assessments will once again be scored with ASAP Consulting. The collaborative includes schools from Buffalo, Rochester and Syracuse. Teachers do not score assessments from their own schools. Teachers from EVCS will travel to Rochester for the collaborative scoring.

*A letter will go out this week explaining to parents how State assessment results are used at EVCS. The letter will also explain that, since teachers do not teach to the test, the students will not notice their teachers conducting dedicated review sessions during class in preparation for these assessments.

-State Education Department Visit: On March 6, 2014, Sue Gibbons and a team from SED visited EVCS. The team included a data specialist. Curriculum, data and data reporting requirements for charter schools were discussed during the meeting. It was very productive.

Personnel

Laura Lester, third grade lead teacher, and Tricia Tangeman, kindergarten lead teacher, have requested extended, unpaid maternity leave to the end of the school year under the Family and Medical Leave Act. **Marguerite moved and Pam seconded that the extended leaves be granted for both teachers as requested. Approved unanimously.**

Charter Renewal

Members of the leadership team continue to work on pieces of the charter renewal application, and meet frequently to discuss each section. On Saturday, March 22, 2014, the team will have a work session to begin to edit and blend the various pieces.

Weather Related Closings

On March 12, there was another weather related school closing. This necessitated converting the scheduled teacher recording day on June 26 to an instructional day. The addition of this instructional day will keep the school in compliance with the charter.

High School Placements

*Mr. Campbell continues to work with families of eighth grade students to help the students secure seats in their first or second choice high schools. Initial acceptance letters once again show that EVCS students will be attending selective high schools in the fall. Already two students have been awarded full scholarships to three private high schools.

*The high school information night has been rescheduled for April 23, 2014. During this session, discussion will focus on information about various area high schools, the high school application, important deadlines, and the high school application process. Parents will receive information on local public, charter, and private school options. This information is particularly important for parents of sixth and seventh graders, as the high school application process begins early in a student's eighth grade year.

Eighth Grade Class Trip

The eighth grade will be going to Toronto for their class trip on Wednesday, June 18, 2014. Highlights of the trip will include Medieval Times, the CN Tower and a museum. The Parent Association contributed \$1000 toward the trip. In order to finance the trip, students will do two fund-raisers, parents of each student will make a \$25 contribution, and the school will pick up the balance.

11. NEW BUSINESS/ ANNOUNCEMENTS

-John announced that the lottery for students entering in September, 2014, will be held at 6:00 pm, on Tuesday, April 8, 2014. Applications must be postmarked by March 31, 2014.

-EVCS hosted the most recent meeting of the Days Park Block Club. April 2, 2014, was selected a date for post-winter park clean-up. It was suggested that a different pick-up location for Boys and Girls Club students might alleviate traffic congestion. Feasibility of a joint EVCS/Days Park Block Club barbecue was discussed. The school parking lot may be available for Allentown Art Festival Parking by the Block Club, depending on the status of construction at the time. There is an article on the EVCS construction project in the *Allentown Neighbor*.

Marguerite moved and Roy seconded that the meeting be adjourned. Approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Pamela Pollock

FUTURE DATES:

-Meetings at 6:00 p.m. - April 9, 2014*; May 7, 2014*; June 18, 2014

*2nd rather than 3rd Wednesday