

The Elmwood Village Charter School
Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, April 22, 2009

Trustees Present: Mimi Barnes-Coppola, Marguerite Battaglia-Evans, Shirley Courton, Liz Evans, Kathy Franklin-Adams, Pam Pollock, Kelli Simpson, Paul Souter

Trustees Absent: Kitty Herrick, Regan Ihde

Others Present: John Sheffield, Director; Lisa Kirisits, Accountant; Sylvia Johnson, prospective parent.

Liz Evans called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

1. Liz presented the agenda for the meeting. There were no additions. Approved.
2. Minutes from the meeting held on March 18, 2009, were presented. **Shirley moved and Kelli seconded that the minutes from 3-18-09 be accepted as submitted. Approved.**
3. Budget for 2009-2010

Lisa Kirists, accountant for EVCS, presented a budget for 2009-2010. She noted that the budget had been difficult to prepare. Preliminary reports had estimated an increase of 15% in State Aid for Charter Schools. However, the latest figures indicated that funding was likely to be frozen at last year's level. Lisa states that she prefers "a conservative budget which counts on a safe level of income and allows for a worst-case scenario for expenses." Hence, many adjustments had to be made. Notably, the hoped-for 4% increase in teacher salaries was reduced to 3%. Lisa conceded that this was probably a safe figure for now, but warned that salary increases might become a problem in the future. **It was moved by Pam and seconded by Kelli that the 2009-2010 budget be accepted as prepared. Approved.**

4. DIRECTOR'S SUMMARY

Enrollment

Current EVCS enrollment is stable at 170 students. The recent lottery for September, 2009 admission to the school had approximately 200 applicants. There were 96 applications for 14 available kindergarten seats. Of the possible 25 seats, 11 will be filled with siblings of current students.

Academics

School report cards were issued today. However, information will be released to the public at a later time.

Calendar

John presented a calendar for the 2009-2010 academic year based on the previously approved start date of September 1, 2009. **It was moved by Kathy and seconded by Kelli to accept the proposed 2009-2010 academic calendar. Approved.**

Site Visit

Sue Gibbons and other representatives of the NY State Department of Education visited EVCS Wednesday, March 25, 2009, as part of the school's third year charter review process. They observed classroom operations and other school activities and held separate group meeting with teachers, parents and the Board of Trustees. John stated that the visit went well and that a full report will be forthcoming.

Boys and Girls Club

Kelli is working with the Boys and Girls Club after-school program to facilitate a smooth transition from school to after-school. Parents are requesting follow-up to assure consistency regarding use of the Responsive Classroom Program, suspension policy, and other issues.

Financial

a. The Buffalo Board of Education has sent EVCS a bill for the costs of the salary and benefits of the service provider who provides speech and language therapy to our students whose IEP requires it. This person, a 26-year veteran, was randomly assigned to the school and has a high salary and benefit cost. Other related services, occupational therapy and physical therapy are provided by OTIS and are charged at a flat rate. The speech bill will be contested on grounds that there is no contract that specifies this fee. Also Buffalo states that we must notify them by May 1, 2009, whether EVCS will require the service of their related service providers for the 2009-2010 school year. A lively discussion ensued regarding what our reply to Buffalo should be, whether we should seek legal advice, and whether we should explore hiring our own related service providers or contract with an agency. Results of the discussion:

-Mimi moved and Kathy seconded that EVCS inform Buffalo that we are unprepared to respond to their inquiry by May 1, 2009, as we are still exploring our options. Approved.

-Liz moved and Paul seconded that the Board empower John to consult with well-known disabilities lawyer, Bruce Goldstein, about our options and our obligations. Approved.

-Pam moved and Kathy seconded that John consult with area agencies about the cost of contracting speech services. Approved.

-Marguerite moved and Paul seconded that John contest the fee that Buffalo proposes to charge for this years speech services. Approved.

b. John reported that two EVCS parents had applied for and received small grants for the school. Patty Gonzales was responsible for a \$1000 library materials grant. Amy Vanderkov won a \$400 grant for Earth Day activities.

Other

The New York State Education Department has invited John to be a peer reviewer for PCSP grants. This is quite an honor as it indicates satisfaction with the aspects of our own grant. However, it will require John to be absent from school for 2 ½ days. Norma Fletcher will substitute.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT

EVCS Treasurer, Regan Ihde, was absent. **Pam moved and Paul seconded that the financial report be deferred until the May 20, 2009, meeting. Approved.**

6. OLD BUSINESS

a. The Task Force on Middle School Expansion continues to explore possibilities. Two community meetings, March 27 and March 31, 2009, were well attended by residents of the Allentown, Kleinhans and Days Park Communities. The Task Force continues to seek information from the city about probable costs to lease or buy the School#36 property. It was noted that we need information about comparable properties. What have

other vacated city schools sold for. What is the worth of the land and the school building?
Pam moved and Paul seconded that the Task Force be authorized to spend \$150-\$200 to get an estimate of the worth of the School #36 property. Approved.

b. Liz suggested an individual to fill the position on the Board of Trustees which was left vacant by the resignation of David Rodriguez. This person has a background in education but is currently in business and involved in Rotary. There have been six letters from parents interested in serving as parent representative to the Board. Each will be asked to submit a 300-word statement. Statements will be printed and sent home to each parent for voting.

7. NEW BUSINESS

Concern was expressed about reports of a freeze on funding for Charter Schools. Perhaps this could be ruled unconstitutional because it amounts to discrimination against Charter School Students. It was emphasized that Charter Schools are Public Schools in that they are open to all students without cost to families. Calls to the New York State Charter Schools Association resulted in a statement that “they are working on it”.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mimi and seconded by Kathy. Approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Pamela Pollock

FUTURE DATES:

-Next meeting of the EVCS Board is Wednesday, May 20, 2009, at 6:00 p.m.