

The Elmwood Village Charter School
Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, December 21, 2011

Trustees Present: Mimi Barnes-Coppola, Marguerite Battaglia-Evans, Leah Eagan-Stoddard, Liz Evans, Concetta Ferguson, Kathy Franklin-Adams, Pam Pollock, Matt Ryan

Trustees Absent: Catherine Herrick, Frank Housh

Others Present: John Sheffield, EVCS Director

Liz Evans called the meeting to order at 6:14 p.m.

1. Liz presented the agenda for the meeting. There were no changes. Approved.
2. Minutes from the Board of Trustees Meeting held on November 16, 2011, were presented. It was noted that they were incorrectly dated. **Matt moved and Leah seconded that the minutes be accepted as corrected. Approved unanimously.** Minutes of the special meeting held on Friday, December 9, 2011, were also presented. **Matt moved and Leah seconded that the minutes of the special meeting be accepted. Approved unanimously.**

3. FINANCIALS

The financial reports for the four-month period ended October 31, 2011 and for the five-month period ended November 30, 2011 were presented. A decrease in net assets of \$89,901 vs. a budgeted decrease in net assets of \$309,139, was reported. This resulted in a favorable variance of \$219,238. **Matt moved and Concetta seconded that the financial reports be accepted.**

Approved unanimously.

4. EXPANSION/FACILITIES UPDATE

Facility

- Roof: HHL has inspected the existing roof and reported that it may be possible to upgrade rather than replace it.
- Heating system: Allied Mechanical stated the current system would be costly to upgrade and costly to operate. It might be possible to use a gas powered external unit to pump in heat until an improved system is installed. Rental of such a unit for the three winter months was estimated at approximately \$40,000. The Facilities Committee is investigating possible energy incentives for both temporary and permanent heating systems.

- General Contractor: HHL has provided EVCS with a list of possible contractors. Time is a factor if the school is to remain on track for September occupancy. **Matt moved and Pam seconded that the Facilities Committee be empowered to recommend a contractor, subject to retroactive approval by the full Board. Approved unanimously.**

Neighborhood relations: Deb Ellis has given the school a list of questions and concerns on behalf of area residents. Representatives from the school (Director, Board, Community Association, HHL) hope to meet with the neighbors (Days Park Block Club, Allentown Association, Kleinhans Community Association) on the first Wednesday of January, 2012. Time and place have not yet been determined. This will be an opportunity to ask questions and share information and concerns. Representatives from the neighborhood will also be invited to the January Board meeting.

Financing

-Projected Operating Budget for 7/1/2011 - 6/30/2016 was presented and reviewed by the Board. The Board also received a summary of several bank proposals for financing the expansion project. Both M&T Bank and Northwest Savings Bank expressed interest in working with EVCS. After discussing both proposals, **Mimi moved and Concetta seconded that the Board accept the Northwest Savings Bank proposal to finance the acquisition and renovation of the former School #36 Building. Approved unanimously.**

5. DIRECTOR'S SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Busing

On December 15, 2011, John met with Al Diamico, Director of Transportation for the Buffalo Public Schools, to discuss the request for student transportation made on behalf of the families of EVCS. He was willing to honor the request, but stated that all schools requesting busing from this point forward would have to be "late start" schools. This means that students would arrive at school between 9:00 and 9:15 a.m. pushing EVCS dismissal time to 5:00 p.m. On December 19, John sent a letter outlining reasons why EVCS cannot change its schedule and how the change would cause undue hardship to the school and to the families of EVCS. The letter was sent to Mr. Diamico and copied to Amber Dixon and Louis Petrucci in both electronic and hard copy format. There has been no response to this correspondence to date. John has since contacted Cliff Chuang, Director, Charter School Office, and representatives from the New York Charter School Association, to determine if the school has any legal recourse. This particular situation is without precedent, and it is unclear whether the district is acting within its rights. Cliff Chuang, Director of the Charter School Office, is conferring with SED attorneys for an interpretation of the law, which states that districts must provide busing to charter schools in the same manner that they provide busing to non-public schools.

Personnel

-Two new AmeriCorps members began service at EVCS this week. Kristine Berlinger will be the new AmeriCorps assistant in fourth grade. She is a graduate of Edinboro University with degrees and certifications in elementary and secondary education. She is currently working on her Master's degree in literacy at SUNY Fredonia. Peter Stoll will be replacing Lakaii Jones at the middle school. His primary responsibilities will be to administer the Successful Reader AIS program in the morning and to assist in a classroom in the afternoon. He is a graduate of Canisius College with a degree in history. -Kate Smidt is still out on unpaid leave as a result of her car accident. John requested approval to pay Kathleen Stanek an additional \$45 per day until Ms Smidt's return. The \$45 is the difference between Ms. Stanek's rate of pay as a teaching assistant and the daily rate for a long-term substitute. **Marguerite moved and Pam seconded that the proposed change in daily pay rate be approved. Approved unanimously.**

Facilities

-John reported that Noel Sutton, the new owner of the former Claiborne Liquor store, is requesting that EVCS transfer to him the deed to approximately four feet of the driveway leading to the EVCS parking lot across the street. The request was made so that he can install drain tile to alleviate a water problem in his basement that he claims is caused by the EVCS parking lot and/or driveway. To date he has not produced evidence to support

his claim. According to the EVCS attorney, such a move would require mutual consent by EVCS, Sam Savarino and the mortgage company. Mr. Sutton has been in contact with Mr. Savarino and the attorney. Mr. Savarino indicated that he will meet with John to discuss the situation. The recommendation of the Facilities Committee was to grant Mr. Sutton permission to run the drain tiles without transferring the four feet of property. Mr. Sutton has indicated that he will report the problem to the City Building Inspector if EVCS does not comply.

-Sam Savarino has also indicated that the bank is requiring or requesting that EVCS make additional repairs to the parking lot and driveway across the street. No details have been conveyed at this time, either verbally or in writing. EVCS has made repairs to the parking lot in the past.

-Autistic Services and College and Career Girls Prep Charter High School continue to express interest in subletting 124 Elmwood Avenue. Autistic Services is in the process of petitioning the State for additional facilities funding. They are interested in a long-term lease. Girls Prep intends to restructure their budget to include money from their PCSP Grant to lease the building for three years. At this point, Girls Prep does not have a charter and cannot enter into a commitment, but they are eager to show their authorizer that they have a potential site by January 17. John suggested that he write a letter stating that representatives from College and Career Girls Prep Charter High School have been involved in discussions with the Board of Trustees of Elmwood Village Charter School regarding the possibility of subleasing 124 Elmwood, and that the Board of Trustees is giving their proposal full consideration, but can neither enter into a commitment with the school, nor reject other proposals, until the school has been granted a charter.

Academics

-A memo from the NY State Education Department was released this week outlining additional changes to New York State Assessments and a revised testing schedule. The memo stated that the testing program this year will be more comprehensive because of the need to better determine student learning and to improve future assessments. The memo addressed an increase to the number of test questions, field testing questions being embedded into the test, changes to the scoring calendar, and changes to the scoring rubrics.

-At a recent workshop at Erie I BOCES, it was communicated to school administrators what the expectations are for classes that do not have a State Assessment. This includes special subjects. For courses in K-8, without an assessment, Student Learning Objectives will need to be developed, and students will need to be tested at two points in time to assess both growth and achievement. Results from this data will not only be used to assess student progress, but factor into teacher evaluations as well. There are only two vendors on State Education Department's list of approved vendors that offer tests in science and social studies: the Iowa and the Terra Nova. These changes go into effect for the 2012-2013 school year.

-The Buffalo School District is requiring additional clerical and administrative documentation for speech services for the Medicaid billing, from which the school receives no benefit. At this point, John is opposing this cumbersome and unnecessary requirement because of the cost the school will incur by having the speech therapy vendor comply. His position is that EVCS will provide documentation for Medicaid audits upon

request, and not provide hard copies of daily therapy notes for every student receiving speech therapy.

Professional Development

-On December 12, John participated in the most current professional development for administrators regarding the new requirements for teacher evaluations.

-Title I staff, special education teachers and some teaching assistants will participate in a workshop to refresh their skills on the Orton-Gillingham approach to teaching reading for the most at-risk students. This is a follow-up to a training provided several years ago. The Orton-Gillingham approach is a sequential, phonics-based system that teaches the basics of word formation. The method accommodates and utilizes the three learning pathways: visual, auditory and kinesthetic.

Funding Application - The application for E-Rate Funding to offset some EVCS telecommunications costs has been filed.

6. OLD BUSINESS

Professional Development - A Board professional development session was scheduled for this evening. The topic of discussion was to be "Goals set forth in the EVCS Charter.

Due to the lateness of the hour, **Liz moved and Pam seconded that the professional development portion of the meeting be postponed until January. Approved unanimously.**

7. NEW BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

John announced that grant proposal to secure funding for the elevator in the new building had been denied. A new grant proposal will be submitted.

A motion to adjourn was made by Pam and seconded by Mimi. Approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Pamela Pollock

FUTURE DATES:

Meetings at 6:00 p.m.:Jan. 18, 2012; Feb. 15, 2012 ; Mar. 21, 2012; Apr. 18, 2012; May 9,2012*; June 20, 2012; Aug. 15, 2012

* 2nd Wednesday