

**The Elmwood Village Charter School**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**Wednesday, March 17, 2010**

**Trustees Present:** Marguerite Battaglia-Evans, Mimi Barnes-Coppola, Shirley Courton, Liz Evans, Concetta Ferguson, Kitty Herrick, Paul Marzello, Pam Pollock, Paul Souter

**Trustees Absent:** Kathy Franklin-Adams

**Others Present:** John Sheffield, EVCS Director; Michael Ferdman, Partner, Hiscock & Barclay; Timothy Greenan, representing attorney for Sam Savarino

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

1. Minutes from the meeting held on February 17, 2010, were reviewed. **Kitty moved and Concetta seconded that the minutes be accepted as presented. Approved.** Minutes from the Special Board meeting held on March 8, 2010, were also reviewed. **Paul Souter moved and Kitty seconded that the minutes be accepted as presented. Approved.**
2. The Board reviewed the financial statement for the eight months ended February 28, 2010. An increase in net assets of \$58,134 versus a budgeted decrease in net assets of \$73,943, resulted in a favorable variance of \$132,077. **Shirley moved and Pam seconded that the financial statement be approved as presented. Approved.**
3. John stated that there were several confidential student and personnel matters that needed to be discussed. **Pam moved and Concetta seconded that the Board enter executive session to discuss the confidential personnel and student issues. Approved.** Discussion ensued. **Marguerite moved and Shirley seconded that the Board exit executive session. Approved.**
4. DIRECTOR'S SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Academics

- a. The state has announced ELA and Math Field Testing for all students in grades 3-8 to occur May 12, 13 and 14. This date was changed from May 4, which is the day before the NYS Math Assessment and one of the few make-up days for the NYS ELA Assessment. EVCS will participate in the field testing.
- b. A letter went out to all parents regarding attendance, particularly during the state assessments. It had been brought to John's attention that a number of families were planning extended vacations from spring break through the ELA testing. John met individually with three parents to persuade them to change their travel plans.
- c. The results of the mid-term Everyday Mathematics Assessment have been compiled. The results are being used to help teachers shape instruction, and to identify students who may need AIS in math. It has been noted that, even with early interventions put in place for transfer students, that transfer students in fifth and sixth grades are still experiencing difficulty with Everyday Mathematics. Both the fifth and sixth grade teachers have identified those students, met with their parents, and enrolled them in after-school tutorials.

Finances and Facilities

- a. John has forwarded each Trustee a copy of a letter he drafted, on the advice of EVCS Attorney, regarding unusual charges added to our rent. The charges included accounting fees, legal fees, and property management fees incurred by 124 Elmwood LLC. These

new expenses totaled \$6,656.88. Our attorney advised John that these expenditures are overhead items, or the cost of doing business, and not related to the operation of the property. Michael Ferdman asked to see the draft letter, considering other issues that EVCS is confronting, but did not comment on the draft.

b. EVCS was served legal papers earlier today pertaining to a lawsuit brought against the school by a Medaille Graduate student who allegedly fell on our stairs. John is currently working with the insurance company on this matter. He also notified Julia Spitz of 124 Elmwood LLC of the claim.

c. The new fence has been completed and EVCS is getting positive feedback from the neighbors.

d. John will make one last push this week to get parents and other stakeholders to write their elected state officials urging them to reject the Governor's proposed funding freeze for charter schools.

#### Professional Development

On March 15, 2010, Jessica Gainey, kindergarten teacher, participated in a workshop on literacy centers for kindergarten. On March 17, the following teachers participated in ongoing training on the Writer's Workshop Model: Rob Campbell, sixth grade; Jessica Gainey, kindergarten; and Rachele Schneekloth, second grade. On March 31, all teachers will participate in a Responsive Classroom workshop led by Andy Steck.

#### Charter Renewal

a. On March 17, teachers gathered to work on curriculum changes for the charter renewal application. Teachers focused on improving alignment between the standards and the content strands, cross-curricular integration, and vertical alignment of the curriculum. Josette Smith had completed the task for fourth grade earlier and helped to facilitate the work with other teachers.

b. Changes have been made to the charter in the renewal application that reflect changes in legislation and regulations. These are noted particularly in the areas of special education and board governance.

c. Later this month John will ask for letters of support for the renewal of the charter. These letters should come from community members, students, parents, and partner agencies.

d. Soon, a draft of the application will be given to all trustees and work sessions will be scheduled as EVCS moves to finalize the application.

#### Enrollment and Lottery

At last count, 15 siblings have been enrolled for the 2010-2011 kindergarten class. This leaves only 10 seats available for all other applicants with more applications arriving daily. The lottery will be held on April 12, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. Assistance from board members would be appreciated. This year the lottery is on the first day of spring break so teachers will not be available.

### 5. NEW BUSINESS

#### a. Board Professional Development Opportunity

Since Andy Steck will be at EVCS on March 31, doing a half-day workshop on Responsive Classroom for the teachers, it was suggested that we invite him to present on that topic to the board in the evening. The response was generally favorable. The invitation will be made. Further information to be forthcoming.

b. Board's Role

There were questions about the board's role in the charter renewal process. John and Anne Wechsler are doing most of the revisions. The teachers are working on curriculum and alignment with the standards as noted earlier. The board's role will be in matters of governance. Meetings will be scheduled soon.

c. Public Relations

There was discussion of how supportive the students and their families and, in fact the entire community had been during our efforts to acquire the School #36 property on Days Park. There was a strong presence at the City Council Meeting at which the purchase offer was accepted. Neighbors expressed feelings about stabilization of the community and possible increase of property values with our school present. It was agreed that letters on school letterhead should be sent thanking the individuals who backed this expansion of our school. It was also suggested that our neighbors might be invited to some of our school events such as the school-wide play, or graduation. Our 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation on June 23, will highlight the arts factor and showcase results from the NYSCA grant.

d. Dual Campus

There was a brief discussion on how we might operate in both buildings. Plans will be formulated and submitted to the Board for their consideration. There are many possibilities which will require careful consideration.

6. **MEDIATION PROPOSAL**

We were briefed by our lawyer about possible legal steps that might be taken by our landlord and possible responses EVCS might make. Mike Ferdman suggested that mediation between EVCS, Sam Savarino and West Buffalo Charter School might be preferable to a lawsuit. He felt that a trained mediator might help all parties see the others' viewpoints. He stressed that mediation was a non-binding process. The Board affirmed that charter schools should be supportive of one-another. Mike indicated that he would continue with this line of inquiry and report back to the Board.

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Pamela Pollock

**FUTURE DATES:**

- Next regular meeting of the EVCS Board is Wednesday, April 21, 2010 at 6:00 p.m.
- Future meetings: May 12, 2010; June 16, 2010; July - NO MEETING; Aug. 18, 2010