

# **Howard Gardner MI Charter School**

## **Public Board Meeting**

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

The Howard Gardner MI Charter School (HGMICS) held a Public Board of Trustees virtual meeting via Zoom on Tuesday, May 18, 2021. Dr. Susan Trussler, President, called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM and then subsequently presided over the meeting. Dr. Trussler led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance and then took roll call for the board members and non-voting attendees.

The following Trustees attended: Dr. Susan Trussler, John Ezbiansky, Laila Kane, Stephanie Westington, Laurie Cadden, Sam Ceccacci, Susan Hennemuth, Aaron Nivert, and Dr. John Ruddy. Absent from the meeting: Dr. Fran Langan.

Also, in attendance: Dr. Marie George, CEO; TreeAnne McEnery, Principal; Chuck Wallinger, Business Manager; Joe Ross, Director of Facilities and Security; and Janet Kania, School Secretary.

Dr. Susan Trussler welcomed visitors and asked if any visitor had comments regarding May's agenda items. At this time, the visitors in attendance had no comments regarding the agenda and the meeting proceeded.

### **I. Minutes**

**Dr. Susan Trussler**

Dr. Susan Trussler presented the April 20, 2021 Board of Trustees meeting minutes and asked if there were any corrections or additions. With no corrections or additions, a **MOTION** to approve the April 20, 2021 Board meeting minutes, as submitted, was made by Dr. Clarence Lamanna, and seconded by Laila Kane. At this time, all Trustees present voted in favor of approving the minutes as submitted, with one Trustee absent.

### **II. President's Report**

**Dr. Susan Trussler**

Dr. Susan Trussler began her report by announcing this would be the last Board of Trustees meeting for the academic year. Dr. Trussler stated this is a busy time of the year with many exciting tasks at hand.

Dr. Trussler announced that the closing of the FNCB Bank loan for the building addition was held on April 28, 2021. The Fiscal Year Budget for 2021-2022 will be presented for approval at tonight's meeting. Graduation will take place on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Comprehensive Plan is now posted on the School's website for public review and comment.

Dr. Trussler announced the upcoming charitable NEPA Gives Program will take place on Friday, June 4<sup>th</sup>. This program supports donations to participating nonprofit organizations in a



community-wide fundraising effort. This year HGMICS will participate and the Hawk Foundation has generously offered to match the first \$2,500 donation received by HGMICS. HGMICS would like to raise at least \$2,500 at this event to develop a competitive sports program and School band. The Board of Trustees has graciously announced a 100% participation and support for this fundraising event along with Dr. George.

### **III. Finance/Facilities Committee**

**Stephanie Westington**

Stephanie Westington reported that the Finance/Facilities Committee met on Wednesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>. Discussions of old business from April took place regarding the integration of communication, security and networking systems. FNCB Bank renewed the annual line of credit. FNCB Bank's new loan that totaled \$4.5 million for the building addition and remaining mortgage for the existing building, was closed on April 28<sup>th</sup>. Baker Tilly submitted all IRS 990 documents for 2020. The proposed 2021-2022 budget will be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval at tonight's meeting. Costs were identified regarding additional costs for Phase 2 & 3 of the Master Plan that were additional to the FNCB loan and for priorities for the deferred maintenance.

At this time, Stephanie asked Chuck Wallinger, Business Manager to present the April 2021 Financial report.

#### **1. April 2021 Financial Report**

**Chuck Wallinger & Stephanie Westington**

Chuck Wallinger, Business Manager, reported revenues are \$616.78 below budget for April 2021. Food Service revenue is below budget by \$568 due to COVID-19. Student Activity revenue is below budget by \$3,000 due to field trips not occurring because of COVID-19. Contribution revenue is above budget by \$3,755 due to EITC (Educational Improvement Tax Credit) revenue. Expenses are \$15,005 below budget for April 2021. The Instructional costs were below budget by \$6,036 primarily due to COVID-19 salary and benefit costs in all-remote instruction. The Debt Service was below budget by \$7,357 due to the delay in the \$4.5 million dollar loan from FNCB. The Net Operating revenue for April 2021 of \$52,422 was above budget by \$14,389.

The school had \$1,228,615 in cash at the end of April 2021. At this time, this is the largest amount in the history of the School. This is approximately \$187,446 more than the balance at the end of March 2021. This represents 161 days cash on hand, which places the school in a positive solvency position. The FY 2020-2021 Scranton School District payment of \$475,761 was made in April 2021 and places the district in an up-to-date payment status. The remaining current promissory note balance of \$321,477.03 on the current FNCB loan was disbursed on April 30, 2021 as part of the closing disbursement for the \$4.5 million dollar loan.

Stephanie Westington asked if there were any questions at this time regarding the Financial Report. With no further discussion, the **MOTION** to approve the Financial Report through April 30, 2021 as reported was made by Susan Hennemuth and seconded by Sam Ceccacci. All



Trustees present voted in favor of approving the Financial Report as submitted, with one Trustee absent.

## **2. HGMICS Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-2022**

**Stephanie Washington**

Stephanie Westington stated that the HGMICS Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 was review in detail by the Finance / Facilities Committee. At this time, Stephanie asked Dr. Marie George to present the details of the HGMICS Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-2022. Dr. George presented the HGMICS Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 in great detail to the Board of Trustees. Stephanie asked Chuck if there had been any additional information that needed to be reported. Chuck added the debt service appears as interest only full fiscal year and the depreciation expense has been decreased as per the Executive session which took place last night.is not a line item and reported to the State but an internal line item. Chuck replied that Dr. George covered all main aspects of the Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-2022.

Stephanie Westington asked if there were any questions at this time regarding the HGMICS Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-2022. With no further discussion, the **MOTION** to approve the HGMICS Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 was made by Laurie Cadden and seconded by Dr. John Ruddy. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the HGMICS Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-2022, with one Trustee absent.

## **3. HGMICS Fund Balance Allocations**

**Stephanie Westington**

Stephanie Westington stated that the HGMICS Fund Balance Allocations was reviewed by the Finance / Facilities Committee. Stephanie asked Dr. George to present the HGMICS Fund Balance Allocation categories.

- An Unassigned Fund Balance of \$517,934
- A Committed Fund Balance of \$425,000 associated with the completion of the construction project and the new key system
- An Assigned Fund Balance of \$251,967 for the anticipated renovation of the existing building including a new roof for the existing building. (Phase III of the Master Plan)

Stephanie Westington asked if there were any questions at this time regarding the HGMICS Fund Balance Allocations. With no further discussion, the **MOTION** to approve the HGMICS Fund Balance Allocations effective July 1, 2021 was made by Laila Kane and seconded by John Ezbiansky. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the HGMICS Fund Balance Allocation, with one Trustee absent.

Dr. Trussler thanked everyone involved for their hard work in the process of developing the HGMICS Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 as well as the Fund Balance Allocations.



#### **IV. Academic Committee**

**Sam Ceccacci**

In the absent of Dr. Fran Langan, Sam Ceccacci reported that the Academic Committee met on Tuesday, May 4th. Continued discussions took place regarding the Schoolwide Title I program with an emphasis on the staffing that would be needed in such situations. Positions discussed included Title I Coordinator, Title I STEM and Literacy Specialists, STEAM Instructor, and Instructional Assistants formerly known as Classroom Aides. The committee spoke about a Schoolwide Advisory group that would convene to assist with family engagement, parent education, and training needs. In addition, discussions took place regarding a feasibility study for a second language to be offered and the need to integrate cultural diversity into the curriculum in addition to the languages offered. The diversity topic would be part of the curriculum as a point of strength.

#### **V. Development Committee**

**Susan Hennemuth**

Susan Hennemuth reported that the Development Committee met on April 27<sup>th</sup> via ZOOM with Julie Imel to discuss public relations and early details of the October Golf Tournament.

In addition, strategies to promote NEPA Gives Day were discussed. Email, ZOOM, Facebook, etc. will be used to encourage both families and stakeholders. Susan reported that the Development Committee will meet again next Tuesday to firm up plans to get the NEPA Gives Day information out. The Hawk Foundation will match donations received up to \$2,500 from this fundraising opportunity. Further information will follow.

The Development Committee are exploring grant opportunities to help fund soft costs for the building addition.

#### **VI. Nominating Committee**

**Laurie Cadden**

Laurie Cadden reported that the Nominating Committee met. Four agenda items discussed was the full slate of officers for the 2021–2022-year, Dr. Trussler and Dr. Langan will be rotating off the Board of Trustees, two new Board members will be taking their places, discussions regarding Committee and schedules for the 2021-2022 year, and the bi-laws will be reviewed and revised if needed.

#### **VII. Personnel Committee**

**Dr. Susan Trussler**

Dr. Trussler reported the Personnel Committee met. Recommendations were made with respect to salaries and benefits for next year. These recommendations were passed along to the Finance / Facilities Committee. Teacher salary step scales were increased from 90% to 95% of the average of Scranton and Abington Heights School districts. A title change for Aides, to Instructional Assistants, will be effective as of the 2021-2022 school year with a 5% increase in their salary step scale. All other employees will receive a 2% across the board increase in rate. Patty Biko has been promoted from Operations Coordinator to Operations Manager. TreeAnne McEnery, Principal will receive a merit raise.

The Personnel Committee is conducting a feasibility study for reducing the cost of health benefits for family members. The feasibility study is anticipated to be completed in December, 2021. Further information on rates for the upcoming year will be examined and discussed.



The Personnel Committee reported two resignations. The first resignation is Michael Rescigno, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Math teacher. Michael has resigned effective June 4<sup>th</sup> and will be taking a teaching position in the Philadelphia area. The second resignation is Chuck Wallinger, Business Manager, who resigned effective June 3<sup>rd</sup> and will be taking a position with a former employer. Dr. Trussler, on behalf of the Board of Trustees and HGMICS wished both good luck and success in their future endeavors.

## **VIII. School Matters**

### **1. Principal's Report**

**TreeAnne McEnery**

TreeAnne McEnery, Principal reported the following:

- \* Continuity of education & Closing of the 2020-2021 School Year: The week of May 10<sup>th</sup> was the last week of new instruction for grades 3-8; the week of May 17<sup>th</sup> will be the last week of new instructions for grades K-2; on days of no PSSA testing, students may be engaged in enrichment and close-of-year activities; Trimester III Progress Reports will be released to families on May 28<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM
- \* PSSA : 2020-2021 PSSA & Algebra Keystone will be completed the week of May 17<sup>th</sup>-May 21<sup>st</sup>; sixteen students were excluded, 11 of whom are all-remote students.
- \* 2021 Field Day: "The Amazing Race" will encompass a scavenger hunt throughout the city of Scranton – all-remote Field Day will be held Saturday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, all families and students are welcome to participate; At-School Field Day will be held Tuesday, May 25<sup>th</sup> at Connell Park. Joe Ross and Brian Kubilus helped organize the location for the At-School Field Day; the School will provide lunches for students; the Parent Forum will donate water; the rain date is scheduled for Wednesday, May 26<sup>th</sup>
- \* PBIS: the PBIS team met last week and completed its annual self-evaluation. Overall scores are favorable; next year's goals will focus on reviewing, analyzing discipline data, and how to address discipline.
- \* Educator Effectiveness: all 2020-2021 formal observations are completed, including final meetings with differentiated supervision mode staff; Fall 2021 instructional staff goals are identified; 82-1 Forms are printed; all staff met objectives on student achievement and growth; all teachers completed a Student Learning Objective or SLO for 2020-2021.
- \* Academic and Enrichment Summer Programs begin on June 7<sup>th</sup>. A total of 25 students registered for the Academic Summer Program; 17 for Session I & 13 for Session II. A total of 60 students registered for the Enrichment Summer program that includes great outside participation activities for students and was welcomed by both parents and students.
- \* 2020-2021 After School Enrichment, Co-Curricular, general programing: the School plans to offer in-person after-school programs 2021-2022; enrichment and tutoring will continue, and new initiatives such as a band program and sports will be highlighted.



## 2. CEO Report

**Dr. Marie George**

Dr. George began by recognizing all of the administrative and teaching staff who made this year such a success and went above and beyond to deliver a high level of education to our students. Dr. George reported the following:

- Schoolwide Title I Comprehensive Plan (2021-2024) – the Comprehensive Planning Committee; following a year-long collaborative process, submitted the final draft of the Schoolwide Title I Comprehensive Plan which is now available for the required 28-day public review/comment period and is posted on our website. In addition, the School's Induction and Professional Development Plans are submitted along with the Comprehensive Plan and also appear on the website. All plans will be submitted to the HGMICS Board of Trustees for approval at the June 15, 2021 Board meeting and then submitted to the PA Department of Education (PDE) by June 30, 2021.
- Schoolwide Advisory Group – the Schoolwide Advisory Group, comprised of seven members, includes Laila Kane, Dr. Fran Langan, TreeAnne McEnery, and 3 parents will convene on June 8<sup>th</sup>. The Advisory Group will assist in promoting family engagement, parent education and staff training related to the schoolwide program. Staffing requirements related to the Schoolwide program were reviewed with the Academic and Personnel Committee and will be introduced to the School community. The positions include a Schoolwide Coordinator, Literacy and STEM Specialists, STEAM instructor and realignment of the Aide position to Instructional Assistants.
- Annual Golf Tournament – the Annual Golf Tournament will take place at Pine Hills Country Club, Taylor, PA on October 10<sup>th</sup>, updates to follow.
- NEPA Gives and Extra-Curricular Initiatives – HGMICS will participate in a community-wide fundraising effort sponsored by the Scranton Area Foundation on June 4, 2021. Our goal is \$2,500 and if reached, the Hawk Foundation will match that amount. This Day of Giving will allow HGMICS families and friends to donate toward two new extracurricular initiatives that are slated to begin in the 2021-2022 school year. Julie Emil will roll out this fundraising event which is 100% supported by the Board of Trustees. Fundraising efforts will support sports and band program and will be initiated with a fall, winter, and spring – soccer, basketball, and cross-country and be led by Brian Kubilis, Physical Education/Health Teacher. Steve Kurilla, Music Teacher, will start a school band for students in grades 5-8 with instruments that include clarinet, trumpet, French horn, trombone, and percussion. Financial support to properly launch each program is the School's focus for this day of giving on June 4<sup>th</sup>.
- Cyclical Monitoring for Continuous Improvement (CMCI) – the School's six-year review of the Special Education Program was held the week of April 26<sup>th</sup>. Preparations for the weeklong visit included the completion of a Self-Assessment, Educational Benefit Review, and Surveys to teachers and parents/guardians. The outcome of this review, which was led by Dr. Juanita Kirton from PDE's Bureau of Special Education, has not yet been received.
- Fiscal Year 2021-2022 School Budget and Fund Balance – A zero-based approach was taken by budget managers in developing this year's school budget for operations, facilities, technology, student activities and purchasing. Joe Ross and Patty Biko were instrumental in reviewing all teacher's needs for the building addition. Led by the



Principal, all faculty were also involved to determine instructional needs for next year. Academic, Personnel and Finance Facilities Board Committees were engaged in the process of completing a \$4.3 million budget for 2021-2022.

- Construction Project – the closing on the FNCB \$4.5 million loan was held on April 28, 2021. The \$500,000 obligation will be met in May and then a monthly draw down on the loan will begin, based upon submittals from the prime contractors. The site work on the lower lot is currently underway. This construction project is providing learning opportunities for our students. Upper and Senior science students are using recently purchased drones, with attached cameras, to record the construction in progress. Brian Long, Sordoni's Superintendent for the project, has made himself available to meet with students and teachers – an excellent example of our apprenticeship model.
- State of the School – the State of the School webinar for the HGMICS community was held on May 19<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM. Updates on the Strategic Plan (2019-2021), reflection on this year and preparations for the 2021-2022 school year were presented by TreeAnne McEnery, Joe Ross, and Dr. George. For those that were not able to attend, a recording of the session is available.
- Well wishes were expressed to Michael Rescigno, Math Teacher and Chuck Wallinger, Business Manager as they prepare to depart from HGMICS. Both opened positions will be posted on our website. In addition, the search for the new position of Director of Student Services is in process; phone interviews have been conducted. Viable candidates will be invited for an in-person interview between June 2<sup>nd</sup> and June 8<sup>th</sup>.

## **VIII. New Business**

**Dr. Susan Trussler**

At this time, with no new business from the Trustees, Dr. Trussler asked if there was anyone in the audience who wished to voice any additional concerns or comments. Without hearing any, Dr. Trussler called for a motion to adjourn.

### **Adjournment**

At 7:57 PM, no further items of business or comments raised. A **MOTION** to adjourn was made by Stephanie Westington. Adjournment was accepted by all of the Board of Trustees present, with one Trustee absent. Dr. Trussler thanked everyone for their hard work.

The next HGMICS Public Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, June 15, 2021 at 7:00 PM.**