

## **Howard Gardner MI Charter School**

### **Public Board Meeting**

Tuesday, October 17, 2023

The Howard Gardner MI Charter School (HGMICS) held a Public Board of Trustees Meeting on Tuesday, October 17, 2023. Stephanie Westington, President, called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. Stephanie led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance and took roll call for the board members and non-voting attendees.

The following Trustees attended: Dino Galli, Suzanne Ambrogio-Jaffe, Al Dorunda, Wayne Evans, Dr. Clarence Lamanna, Dr. Catherine Richmond-Cullen, Sam Ceccacci, Michael Barbetti, and Susan Hennemuth. Absent from the meeting: Laurie Cadden.

Also in attendance: Joe Ross, CEO, and John Marsico, Business Manager.

Stephanie Westington announced that no visitors were present.

#### **I. Minutes**

**Stephanie Westington**

Stephanie Westington presented the September 19, 2023, Board of Trustees Meeting minutes and asked for approval. A **MOTION** was made to approve the September 19, 2023, minutes, as submitted, by Dr. Clarence Lamanna and seconded by Susan Hennemuth. All Board of Trustees members present voted to approve the September 19, 2023, minutes as submitted with one Trustee absent.

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

**Stephanie Westington**

Stephanie Westington welcomed everyone in attendance to the October Public Board meeting. Stephanie, on behalf of the entire Board, congratulated Principal TreeAnne McEnery on being invited to participate in the Global School Dialogue and Roundtable Presentation during the Third International MI Education Forum on December 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> in Hong Kong. This event brings together principals and educators from innovative schools worldwide to share insights on best practices in MI education.

She announced the golf tournament went off without a hitch on Sunday, October 8<sup>th</sup>. It was a great event, a little chilly, but overall, a very successful day. She took the opportunity to recognize the school staff and administration for all their hard work in coordinating a fun event. She further thanks the board, sponsors, players, and everyone who supported the event! The staff at Pine Hills did a fantastic job and were very accommodating.

President Westington proceeded to give a couple of shout-outs. Andrew Filler, Senior ELA teacher has been invited to present at this year's National Council of Teachers of English conference in Ohio. She congratulated Cathy Opshinsky, Director of Student Services, Jade Flynn, School Counselor, and all of those involved in the PBIS program. HGMICS was recognized for implementing this program with fidelity during the 2022-2023 school year. Jade will represent our school at the 2023 PAPBS Network and MTSS Implementation Forum in Hershey this November.

### **III. HGMICS Educational Session- "United Nations Environmental Initiative Melissa Cruise**

Melissa Cruise outlined her desire to start this program at HGMICS. She will focus on composting lunch scraps from the cafeteria. The program involves nine students and started as an after-school club. These students have developed a phased entry into this program. It will start with Senior and Upper students who will eventually be introduced to the different pods as the program matures. Compost that develops because of this activity will be used as fertilizer in the student garden.

Dr. Richmond-Cullen commended Ms. Cruise for her efforts and indicated this is a great example of incorporating the full scope of multiple intelligences into an educational session. She stated that this program is great and recommended the school should publicize the program. Wayne Evans inquired when the compost will start. Ms. Cruise provided a timeline and let the Board members know where more information could be found. Susan Hennemuth, Suzanne Ambrogio-Jaffe, and Stephanie Westington all remarked on what a fantastic opportunity this project will present to our students. Trustees provided venues to use if there is extra compost created such as the Abington Community Gardens and the Cedar Avenue (Scranton) Community Garden.

### **IV. Finance/Facilities Committee**

**John Marsico**

#### **September 2023 Financial Report**

Michael Barbetti stated that he and John Marsico have revised the September Financial Report. It has been streamlined to include a comparative report from the current fiscal year to the same period of the 2022 fiscal year. This change will provide a more concise and meaningful report. Fiscal year-to-date revenues for the period ending 9/30/23 were \$1,431,767 as compared to \$1,496,592 for the same time in 2023. Revenues for the period ending 9/30/22 are higher than the period ending 9/30/23 due to the influx of ESSER II revenue realized in August of 2022. Fiscal year-to-date expenses for the period ending 9/30/23 were \$1,572,983 as compared to

\$1,517,673 for the same period in 2022. Expenses were higher, due in part to the addition of a Speech Pathologist to the staff. Additionally, enhancements to landscaping and the security for the building were made in 2023 and food costs have increased as well. Our legal expenses have also increased due to the Title IX investigations. Finally, an effort was made to spend down the Title I/II/IV and ESSER II grants by 9/30/23.

The fiscal year Net Operating (Loss) for the period ending 9/30/23 was \$(141,216), as compared to Net Operating (Loss) of \$(21,081) for the same period in 2022 for reasons noted above.

The school had \$714,407 in cash as of 9/30/23 as compared to \$909,784 as of 9/30/2022. This decrease is primarily because of the increases in expenditures during the 1<sup>st</sup> three months of fiscal year 2023 and the additional expenditures as noted above.

The school continues to make principal and interest payments on the Construction Loan of \$25,035.47 per month. The amounts being applied to principal and interest each month are based on a 20-year amortization schedule for a \$4,500,000 loan at an annual percentage rate of 2.99%. The amortization schedule was provided by Baker & Tilly and is being compared and reconciled, if necessary, monthly to the Construction Loan bank statement. The principal balance outstanding after the September payment is \$4,346,724.

Michael Barbetti entertained a **MOTION** to approve the Financial Report through September 30, 2023, as reported and submitted. The motion was made by Dino Galli and seconded by Sam Ceccacci. All Trustees voted in favor of accepting the September 2023 Financial Report, as presented, with one Trustee absent.

## **V. Academic Committee**

### **Dr. Clarence Lamanna**

Dr. Lamanna reported the Academic committee met on October 3, 2023. Topics discussed were service learning, drug/alcohol education, and a review of school policies. The committee wants to see an emphasis placed on service-learning opportunities for our students. Ideas were discussed and it was reported that we are a work in progress in this area. Suzanne Ambrogio-Jaffe indicated she would like to have Drug/Alcohol presentations for students and families. Recommendations were made to involve Parent Forum to increase parental involvement.

The following policies were submitted for review and discussion: Field Trip Policy, Independent Education Evaluation Policy, and the Positive Behavior Support Policy. In

the field trip policy, it was noted to allow students to bring cell phones on the field trips. Use would be covered under the Acceptable Technology use policy. The other two policies do not have any changes. Dr. Lamanna indicated reviewing these policies is indicative of a best practices strategy to have policies in front of the Board on an annual basis.

Dr. Lamanna entertained a **MOTION** to accept the Field Trip Policy, as submitted. The motion was made by Michael Barbetti and seconded by Wayne Evans. All Trustees voted in favor of approving the policy, as presented, with one Trustee absent.

Dr. Lamanna entertained a **MOTION** to accept the Independent Education Policy, as submitted. The motion was made by Susan Hennemuth and seconded by Suzanne Ambrogio-Jaffe. All Trustees voted in favor of approving the policy, as presented, with one Trustee absent.

Dr. Lamanna entertained a **MOTION** to accept the Positive Behavior Support Policy, as submitted. The motion was made by Michael Barbetti and seconded by Wayne Evans. All Trustees voted in favor of approving the policy, as presented, with one Trustee absent.

## **VI. Personnel Committee**

**Sam Ceccacci**

Sam Ceccacci indicated the Personnel Committee did not meet. However, after the scheduled meeting, there were two employee requests for leave under FMLA. These changes and two stipends were identified in the October 2023 Personnel Report.

Sam Ceccacci entertained a **MOTION** to approve the October 2023 Personnel Report, as submitted. The motion was made by Suzanne Ambrogio-Jaffe and seconded by Dino Galli. All Trustees voted in favor of approving the policy, as presented, with one Trustee absent.

## **VII. Development Committee**

**Susan Hennemuth**

Susan Hennemuth indicated the Development Committee met on October 12, 2023. They discussed the possibility of engaging Valley In Motion to gather information on a Public Land Trust. The conversation would consist of further development of the lower lots. Golf tournament proceeds of \$19,571 were discussed. Preliminary discussions were conducted about starting a possible annual fund. The target month would be February. Susan mentioned she is going to research a Gift Receipt policy that will ultimately be presented to the full Board for adoption. The Committee also discussed possible candidates for the HGCS Foundation Board.

## **VIII. School matters**

**Joe Ross**

Joe Ross stated that the golf tournament was a huge success. Kudos to Deana Bonacci and Renee Dougherty for their hard work in organizing the tournament. He also thanked the Board, all the sponsors, players, and staff that supported the event.

Joe Ross deferred to the written administrative updates for detailed reports but did state that the school was preparing for the Food Service review, which will be conducted in two parts. The off-site portion will take place in November and the on-site portion will occur in January.

## **IX. New Business**

**Stephanie Westington**

Wayne Evans commented on how good the exterior doors looked painted in colors to match the Multiple Intelligence wheel. He recommended that we add the icons associated with each color. Joe Ross will investigate the possibility of adding these icons.

## **X. Adjournment**

At 7:50 p.m., Stephanie Westington called for a **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting. The **MOTION** was made by Sam Ceccaci and seconded by Al Dorunda.

The next Public Board meeting will be held on **Tuesday, November 21, 2023**.