

Central Massachusetts Collaborative

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Dr. Susan Farrell, Executive Director
Beverly Tefft, Finance Director
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Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, March 24, 2022 at 9:00 A.M.
14 New Bond St., Worcester, MA 01606

Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present: Maureen Binienda, Chair, Superintendent of Schools, Worcester Public Schools
Dr. Ruthann Goguen, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools, Webster Public Schools
Michael Lucas, Superintendent of Schools, Oxford Public Schools

Also Present: Dr. Susan Farrell, Executive Director, CMC
Beverly Tefft, Director of Finance and Operations, CMC
Joseph Meichelbeck, Treasurer, CMC

1. Superintendent Binienda called the Meeting to Order at 9:10 a.m.

2. Approval of the February 17, 2022 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes (voting item)

Superintendent Lucas made a MOTION to approve the February 17, 2022 Board of Directors meeting minutes.

Superintendent Binienda seconds the MOTION.

3. Director of Finance & Operations Report

a. Warrants

Mrs. Tefft presented two warrants for the month of February 2022.

b. Financial Statements @ 2.28.22

Mrs. Tefft reviewed the FY22 year-to-date profit and loss statement for the period ending February 28, 2022. Revenue is reflective of billing through February 28, 2022.

Non-member census has remained steady. Projected surplus at this point in the year hovers at \$1.6m due to continued staffing shortages and employee benefits coming in under budget due to this staffing issue. Mrs. Tefft suggested a future discussion(s) take place relative to making a transfer to the OPEB Fund before FY22 closes out. Board members were in agreement with this suggestion.

c. Superintendent Goguen asked about using the surplus to prepay rent for the upcoming year. A discussion was held and Mrs. Tefft will research and report back with an answer.

The listing of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

- d. The Balance Sheet as of February 28, 2022 was also presented. CMC's cash balance remains strong as does Accounts Receivable.
- e. CMC has engaged the services of Tyler Technologies to guide us with the implementation of a new accounting software product, namely, Infinite Visions. The Collaborative has used Quickbooks for well over fifteen years and this system simply no longer meets the demands of a \$20m organization. Infinite Visions is a well known product used in many MA school districts. The Business Office staff participated in a virtual demonstration in January.

4. Treasurer's Report

Joseph Meichelbeck reported that a new OPEB Trust has been established. Funds sitting in the former account, held at Hometown Bank as Certificates of Deposit, are being transferred to the new account as the CD's mature. Two CD's remain and will be maturing in May. At that time, all funds will be in the new account and different investment vehicles will be looked into.

Criteria for OPEB eligibility: employees must be vested in their respective retirement systems and be active on the Collaborative's health insurance at the time of retirement. A discussion of the Oxford and Worcester School system's eligibility requirements and procedures took place.

5. Executive Director Report

a. Student Enrollment Report

Dr. Farrell reported the total census for CMC is currently 426 students. A discussion was held regarding maintaining accurate census and attendance data. WDS enrollment has increased rapidly over the past few months. Dr. Farrell and Special Ed Director, Tammy Murray are working with WDS administration to monitor intakes and attendance at WDS.

b. Staffing Report

Dr. Farrell reported on open positions and new hires. CMC hired eight new staff over the past month and continues to recruit for open positions. Filling positions will allow CMC to increase out of district enrollment. Due to staff shortages, CMC is prioritizing member district students for any open seats in programs and is not currently accepting non-member students.

c. Program Updates

Dr. Farrell shared highlights from CMC programs.

Hartwell Learning Center students enjoyed healthy Dr. Suess treats made after a unit was presented on his work. This month, Central MA Prep students focused on Cyberbullying and a trip to the Altitude Park in Marlborough. Rockdale High School students participated in the Rock to Recovery program provided by Korn guitarist Wes Geer. Woodward Day School held a probability fair. Four students from Robert Goddard Academy and two students from Central MA Academy have been accepted to college. THRIVE students are working on vocational tasks with staff from Easter Seals.

Superintendent Binienda suggested that the students take summer courses at QCC to get them used to the college process and terminology to prevent drop-outs.

A discussion was held on vocational training opportunities for students. CMC pursued a planning grant from DESE but was not approved for this year. CMC continues to work with DESE and will reapply when all requirements needed to qualify are met. One of the items required is offering AP classes which the Collaborative is working on. The board

shared that our teachers can be certified to teach college courses at the collaborative in which the students earn credits from QCC while still in High School. CMC will look into this option.

Paul Barry will be invited to the next meeting to report on the vocational program.

d. CMC FY23 Draft Budget

Staffing levels for FY23 are expected to remain stable. The only recommended change in staffing is to convert an instructional assistant position from each program to a Program Safety position. Ideally this candidate will have a criminal justice (police or prison) or military background and will participate in advanced crisis management training that will complement the Crisis Prevention Systems currently in place.

The Board inquired about the Recovery High School grant. Dr. Farrell stated DESE has confirmed that the funding for RHS will continue and a new RFP is expected to be released soon.

e. CMC FY23 Tuition Rates (voting item)

Dr. Farrell shared the proposed FY23 tuition rates. Rates are based on the proposed staffing needs and overhead costs of running each program. The increase in rates is 4.5% for member districts. Non-member rates increased by 2%.

A discussion occurred regarding the desire of the Worcester Public Schools to reduce student enrollment at the Collaborative by 120 students. The reduction would occur via the elimination of Woodward Day School. Worcester Public Schools is in discussions relative to supporting suspended students within their own district. If this occurs, CMC would reduce staffing and subsequently reduce the CMC budget. The Board discussed should Worcester reduce enrollment by the elimination of WDS, the volume discount for Worcester would change.

Superintendent Goguen made a motion to approve the FY23 tuition rates.

Superintendent Lucas seconded the motion.

6. Member Requests/New Business

None

7. Executive Session

Superintendent Goguen made a MOTION to enter Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to contract negotiations for non-union staff with no return to open session.

Superintendent Lucas seconds the MOTION.

8. Adjournment

Superintendent Goguen made a MOTION to adjourn the meeting.

Superintendent Binienda seconds the MOTION.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:13 a.m.