

# 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, November 19, 2020, at 8:30 a.m.**  
**14 New Bond Street, Worcester, MA 01606**

## *Meeting Minutes*

Board Members Present: Maureen Binienda, Chair, Superintendent of Schools, Worcester Public Schools  
Dr. Ruthann Goguen, Superintendent of Schools, Webster Public Schools  
Dr. Kristine Nash, Interim 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  
Daniel Schaffner, CPA, Fritz DeGuglielmo LLC  
Paulajo Gaines, Educational Collaborative Coordinator, DESE  
Mike Kelly, Director, Robert Goddard Academy, CMC  
Evelyn Marrone, Director, Woodward Day School, CMC  
MaryEllen McGorry, Principal, Rockdale Recovery High School, CMC  
Elizabeth Driscoll, Assistant Director, Robert Goddard Academy, CMC  
Maureen Rose, Assistant Director, Robert Goddard Academy, CMC  
Gina Bilotta, Clinician, Robert Goddard Academy, CMC  
Cassandra Briganti, Clinician, Robert Goddard Academy, CMC  
Jamie Walsh, Clinician, Robert Goddard Academy, CMC  
Ashley Connor, Teacher, Robert Goddard Academy, CMC

- 1. Superintendent Binienda called the Meeting to Order at 8:36 a.m.**
- 2. Approval of the October 22, 2020 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes (voting item)**  
Dr. Goguen made a MOTION to approve the October 22, 2020 Board of Directors meeting minutes.  
  
Superintendent Binienda seconds the MOTION.
- 3. Director of Finance & Operations Report**
  - a. FY20 Audit Presentation - Fritz DeGuglielmo LLC**  
Mr. Schaffner presented the key highlights of the FY20 audit and he commended Mrs. Tefft for her efforts.

Mr. Schaffner reviewed a matter from the prior year audit that was considered immaterial to the overall financial statement. He confirmed that the Collaborative appears to have put the proper controls in place to ensure funds are used in the appropriate year.

Mr. Schaffner explained that operating revenues increased slightly due to the combination of increases in tuition and enrollment. Additionally, operating expenses increased due primarily to the increase of rental and property costs. He added that there is a net surplus of over \$1.2 million which is due to the COVID shut down beginning in March 2020. This surplus is expected to go towards the FY21 budget.

Dr. Goguen inquired about the status of the OPEB committee. Mrs. Tefft informed the Board that the process was started under the previous Executive Director and is something they will actively reengage in moving forward.

Overall, Mr. Schaffner recommended the following actions noting they are not material to the financial statements:

1. The Collaborative currently does not have a written set of accounting policies and procedures that clearly define the duties and responsibilities of each employee within the Collaborative, especially in the financial management and internal control system. The Collaborative does have controls and procedures in place to maintain effective internal controls. However, those controls and procedures are not in a centralized written format. Management and the Board of Directors should develop and implement written policies and procedures for each function and process in the financial management system.
2. The size of the Collaborative's finance and administrative staff limits its ability to segregate duties and implement effective controls. This situation dictates that the Board of Directors remains significantly involved in the financial affairs of the Collaborative to provide oversight and independent review functions to maintain proper internal controls. Management and the Board of Directors should review the size of the administrative staff, and the staff's relevant duties, in relation to other Collaboratives and adjust as necessary.
3. During the course of the audit, we noted that the Collaborative only records governmental fund and fiduciary fund activity in its financial software and excludes other government-wide activity such as capital assets and OPEB activity. Separate records are maintained to identify these items, but the financial software should record all government-wide activity of the Collaborative. Management should implement procedures to record such activity. In addition, the Collaborative should reaffirm its capitalization policy (currently stated at \$5,000) via board vote.

**Board Acceptance of the FY20 Audited Financials (voting item)**

Dr. Goguen made a MOTION to approve the FY20 Audited Financials.

Dr. Nash seconds the MOTION.

**Board Acceptance of the FY20 Uniform Financial Report (voting item)**

Dr. Goguen made a MOTION to approve the FY20 Uniform Financial Report.

Dr. Nash seconds the MOTION.

**Board Acceptance of the FY20 Cumulative Surplus @ 6.30.20 (voting item)**

Dr. Goguen made a MOTION to approve the FY20 Cumulative Surplus @ 6.30.20.

Dr. Nash seconds the MOTION.

**b. Warrants**

Mrs. Tefft introduced two (2) warrants for October 2020 which will be sent to the Board for signature.

**c. FY21 P&L @ 10.31.2020**

Mrs. Tefft summarized revenues and expenses for the time period ending October 31, 2020. Overall enrollment has held steady and Mrs. Tefft is pleased the Collaborative currently has sixty-eight (68) out of district students. Mrs. Tefft stated general expenses are trending low due to COVID. She also presented the Board with separate COVID-related expenses for review.

**d. FY21 Balance Sheet @ 10.31.2020 (DRAFT)**

Mrs. Tefft presented the draft FY21 Balance Sheet. Overall, the Collaborative is trending well and expenses are lower than usual for this time of year due to COVID.

Superintendent Binienda inquired about current unemployment claims at the Collaborative. Mrs. Tefft explained that the Collaborative has received many fraudulent claims which are being investigated for accuracy. Superintendent Binienda stated that many districts are experiencing similar increases in fraudulent claims.

**4. Executive Director Report**

**a. Acceptance of Donations (voting item)**

Superintendent Binienda made a MOTION for the Board to accept the following donations:

- \$6.00, donated by the Stop & Shop Community Bag Program

Dr. Goguen seconds the MOTION.

**b. Student Enrollment Updates**

Dr. Farrell introduced the student census for November 2020 which remains at four-hundred thirty-six (436). She is pleased that enrollment is holding steady and the Collaborative has a total of sixty-eight (68) out of district students. Enrollment has increased at the Woodward Day School and the Collaborative continues to receive 45-day assessment requests.

**c. Staffing Updates**

Dr. Farrell presented the November 2020 staffing updates. CMC continues to have difficulty recruiting for open teaching and instructional assistant positions. Dr. Farrell and the leadership team are working hard to realign salaries to be presented in an upcoming Board meeting. Additionally, Dr. Farrell was pleased to announce the addition of two (2) new technology staff to assist with the growing technology demands.

**e. Annual Report (voting item)**

Dr. Farrell presented the 2019-2020 CMC Annual Report for approval.

Dr. Goguen made a MOTION to approve the 2019-2020 CMC Annual Report.

Dr. Nash seconds the MOTION.

**f. COVID Updates**

Dr. Farrell informed the Board that the Collaborative has worked hard to implement strict protocols regarding health and safety for all staff and students. Staff must monitor themselves for symptoms daily, and students with the assistance of families, must also be monitored daily for symptoms. Staff and students are required to stay home if feeling unwell. CMC has signage to remind staff and students of best practices to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID.

CMC's nursing staff has monitored all staff and student health daily including recording all possible cases of COVID, reporting positive results, and tracking close contacts within CMC. To date, forty-one (41) students have been sent home or called out with COVID like symptoms. Twenty-four (24) tested negative, four (4) were cleared by their physician and thirteen (13) chose to stay home until well. Nine (9) staff were sent home or called out due to COVID like symptoms, all have tested negative. Two (2) students tested positive in September, one (1) remote, and one (1) on-site student. Two (2) students tested positive in October, one (1) remote and one (1) on-site student. Two (2) staff tested positive in November with one probably case pending results.

Dr. Farrell explained the many cases of close contacts resulting in students or staff requiring individual quarantine. These exposures also resulted in several classrooms and one cohort switching to remote learning models for a two (2) week period.

Superintendent Binienda inquired if the Collaborative leadership has reviewed the new COVID guidance regarding testing types. Dr. Farrell confirmed she works closely with DPH and they are hoping to set up a mobile testing unit using PCR testing.

Dr. Goguen explained her district's weekly dashboard which now tracks remote students who test positive.

Dr. Farrell explained the Collaborative continues to stay focused on how to remain open safely. There continues to be fear within the community and Dr. Farrell would like the Board's guidance moving forward. If COVID continues to spike, the Collaborative may need to consider changing our learning model. Dr. Farrell commended CMC staff for their continued vigilance in preventing further COVID 19 spread within our programs and buildings.

**5. Member Requests/New Business**

Dr. Goguen suggested a review of the FY21 budget to meet auditor recommendations for the Central Office. Dr. Farrell commended Mrs. Tefft for her hard work during a difficult time. The Finance Subcommittee will meet to create a proposal for the February 2021 BOD meeting.

**6. Executive Session**

No Executive Session held.

**7. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:42 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lynn NeJaime