

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

April 3rd, 2018

CALL TO ORDER –

Charles Matheus called the meeting to order.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC –

Public present: Alison Zych, Diane Cardell, Kyle Short, Jeanette Carey, Regina Wucinich and Steve VanUmmersen. Attached – Notes from open discussion.

Open discussion was then closed – Board Meeting started. Present: Charles Mentken, Charles Matheus, Melissa Wagoner, Sharon Felker, and Dawn Casey. Board Members not present for this meeting: Dr. Andrew Newton. Rosemary Dixon and Michael Spreng. (Alison Zych and Kyle Short, left the meeting).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES -

Consider approving minutes of February 6th, 2018 as distributed or with corrections as needed. Charles Matheus motioned to approve the minutes as presented, Melissa Wagoner seconded this motion and all approved.

STUDY and VOTING SESSION

2018-19 SPED Budget: Diane Cardell shared some thoughts on the need for SPED Aides. Charles Mentken noted the reality of our losing 30 students this school year. This reduces our budget by quite a bit bringing some concerns with this loss of funds and the needs that we will have for our Middle School. We certainly hope that the Middle School will help us increase our overall numbers going forward.

The budget was set at 170 this year. Next year we are projecting to set the budget at 160. This was based from our current numbers. We are at a deficit this year and we do not want to continue like this. This could shut us down in just a short amount of time.

Charles Mentken and Sharon Felker sat down and reviewed our numbers to bring to the board. This is in hopes of addressing concerns and to look at where we might be able to save. One of the things that we had shared last month was the possibility of cutting vision and dental from staff this year. This savings would be approx. \$14k.

We do have savings set aside for the expansion of our Middle School and other things should they come up. The Arizona Charter Board requires for us to have one month of expenses in reserve. We do have this and are aware that this number will need to increase with the opening of the MS.

Last month's meeting ended with the us wanting to have Ms. Diane Cardell present to share some needs and concerns in the SPED Dept. The questions and concerns have been the need to Aides and should we continue with 2 or 3? This year we had 4 for a Semester and then reduced to 3. We are also aware that the costs for Speech and Counseling will increase this year. It was brought to Diane Cardell's attention to please review our SPED count and needs from the current year and years past. In Diane's review she added the 504 Plans, this is where the IEP goes away but the student still has needs that we must meet. Diane provided reports (attached) and details that our numbers are higher than they have been and the need to increase or at minimum maintain with 3 SPED Aides.

In previous years we have had 2, last year 16-17 this number was increased to 3. Diane Cardell reviewed SPED codes such as OHI, ADHD, etc. and what services are needed with each area. We have a higher number of (A) Autism students this year. Students in this category require a higher amount of services and assistance. Some of our recent students had come to us from a self-contained classroom. It does appear that we are attracting these students. In a self-contained room they would have more aides for one to one and to assist these students as

needed. Our model encourages all students into the general population of a regular structured classroom. (More documents presented and attached to help understand and address these concerns).

Reports are submitted to the state that must match Schoolmaster and are reviewed to make sure that students are coded correctly and that their needs are being met. Our Aides are going into the classrooms and moving with our students. A 3rd document was presented that shows where the aides are throughout the day. Starting where the greatest need is and then moving as needed. Diane's 4th document shows that we have 25 SPED students that we project will return next year, she also estimates that we will 10 more in the incoming Freshmen class. Her numbers show that we will be funded at \$205k. However, this is FULL funding – not all of this money is for SPED. Kristy Aston with out outside accounting services projects the actual SPED funding to be approx. \$105. Diane, Sharon and Charles will meet with Kristy later this month to review and better understand how this funding needs to be broken out. Diane's concern is that some of our HIGER need students will return next school year. We want to be sure we are meeting all of their needs.

Melissa Wagoner noted that we need to look at the needs that Ms. Cardell has shared and still be very cautious and careful of what our budget can carry. We can continue with 3 aides but will this increase our deficit. We would also like to look at whether or not all aides should be PT or FT and if they should be offered benefits or not.

Charles Mentken shared that our package is competitive with the districts at present. HUSD and PUSD Aides get paid a bit lower and then have retirement taken out. Northpoint pays more but does not offer retirement. PT Employees would not receive benefits. We would also like to note that 24 days out of the year we have different things going on, so these days may be lighter. We also have Intensive day that could be more driving and attending instead of one/one in the classrooms.

Melissa Wagoner further noted the possibility to free up Diane's time a bit by splitting the 504 plans with teachers. This would be in hope of Diane having more time to aide and assist in the classrooms as needed. Diane mentioned the importance of always having staff in the SPED room so kids can come in throughout the day for quiet time or as needed. Charles Mentken addressed the importance of the files being kept up and the time it takes to do this. We have Kelly to assist and do our METs as needed but Diane does the IEPs. If we add insurance for two aides, this will be approx. \$14k added to the budget.

We project that our 9th grade will be full for the 18-19 SY. We are estimating that our count will be approx. 160 next year.

Charles Mentken shared that in every interview we like believe that everyone has and "IEP" as all have strengths and weaknesses. Diane Cardell shared that without any doubt we have and will continue to make sure all our students' needs are met as well as make sure that they are not "labeled". Charles Matheus mentioned that SPED is a strong and important part of Northpoint. Our Aides are engaged and caring, it shows. So with all of that shared it seems the minimum requested is for at least 1 FT and 2 PT. We may need to increase this as needs are presented. It was also noted/mentioned that we may want to offer our Aides some training to better prepare them and strengthen their skills for working with our students and Staff.

Disneyland Intensive – Tabled till next meeting.

Intruder/Active Shooter Procedures – Tabled till a later date.

ACLU Violations

Documents presented (attached) a letter from the ACLU and Northpoint's Violations. The ACLU is engaged in exploring every school – specifically charters in the state of Arizona. They have identified every school and the issues that they found. This is all based on "every child is entitled to free education".

They went to all the school websites and pulled information as well as making calls and asking questions. 73 Schools did not share information with them. Reports note that some schools had actually limited the amount of SPED students they would take, this is not ok.

On our website we request disciplinary records. This is not ok. We also have asked for an IEP or 504 and this is not ok. However, it is ok to ask for said documents if you are more specific in why you are requesting this information. All of these issues have been corrected on our website and the handbook has been pulled for review and repair. We can not leave any person feeling unwelcome here. The letter from the ACLU threatened litigation. Charles Mentken wrote a letter to them addressing their concerns and our movement to correct. It seems a real concern for school of possible litigation. So all the addressed concerns have been taken care of and Charles noted that he “wrote an awesome letter telling the that they really do not know who we are and the truth is that they really don’t. All they needed from us was to let them know that their concerns have been addressed and corrected.

The issue we are left with is our fees and deposits. FREE public school. The document (as shared) states that any fees tied to credit courses are illegal. This means that no fee should be charged for computers or related material that is needed for school work. Our reason for charging for computers it to help off set the salary of our IT/Tech that is here approx. 30 hours a week. Charles researched into this with detail finding other reports that we can charge fees but we need to be open to parents and students that any/all fees can be waived. That all should have access to this form/request without discrimination.

Northpoint is not a “regular school” in all that we like to offer to our students. We have been charging since the beginning. We have fees for Wilderness, Fieldwork, Intensives, Computers, Uniforms, Art and Science Lab. Most of these are credit courses.

We have always had a fee waiver available. We have not always had it posted and more recently have shared this as needs are presented. We have not ever denied a fee waiver or payment plan if requested. Is this explicit enough? Charles Mentken feels that we should create a legal document for all parents/guardians to sign that explains are fees and their options. His concern is that parents could come back and request for monies already paid. And that we may have many more that don’t pay and the school would need to cover the costs. This could impact our budget and we may need to look at this further. Our website says that waivers and payments are available but we are not sure that this covers us. Charles Mentken feels that if we asked students and parents today – they would not be aware that they didn’t need or have to pay. This could cause some issues with the programs that we offer. Charles has had parents share with him that they did not send their students here because of our costs. And then we have the issues with uniforms, can we require them to wear uniforms that cost?

Charles Matheus shared the concern then with subsidy of our program costs and the overall budget. Financial concern and the Legal concerns. Charles Mentken is very concerned for possible legal issues that could put the whole school in jeopardy. Also the need to drop our one to one program. We don’t need to change this all now but we do need to talk bout it. We have fundamental components and how do we work around that. This is why Charles Mentken feels that we may want to have a contract and be very explicit in all of this.

FINANCIAL REPORTS/REVIEW/APPROVE

Financial Reports - Cash Flow – Reviewed and addressed above.

INFORMATIONAL REPORTS

Enrollment Update - Enrollment is at 153

Middle School Update – We have about 15 enrolled in 8th and 7 or 8 enrolled in 7th.

High School Update – Noted above.

Intruder/Active Shooter Policy – Tabled until a later date.

MEETING DATES

ADJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourned at 6:48

Notes from Public – Open Discussion
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Staff member Kyle Short (for staff) shared concerns about our financials and the savings that we have and the lack now. He shared that it was communicated to Staff that we were going to cut corners here and there saving money with not being part of EL. Is is our 2nd year of not being part of that.

He notes that he thought this separation from EL was temporary and that they may not let us back in so it brings up contract (work agreement) concerns. That we were given raises but see days added. Also that staff is unhappy with the INS plan. He agrees that we do need to be careful but is there other ways that we can save? Cutting staff ins really really shouldn't be part of this. Full benefits is a huge benefit and keeps Northpoint as a higher choice. Without benefits not being offered, this could take teachers away or have them looking elsewhere.

Kyle also shared that if we decided to cut benefits he would like for us to consider offering employees the option to take a "lump sum" in place of insurance.

Alison Zych requested for students to join the Board. She has a couple of students that may be interested. She will help them gather their info to present at a future board meeting.

Diane Cardell wanted to echo with what Kyle shared. Stating that she feels it attracts more quality staff by offering full benefits. At HUSD she was given a greater raise each year and the fact that we have added more days to this work agreement – are all things to be looked at. The whole package really does come down to the penny on what you might want to do. Life costs sure add up so it all counts.

Board Member Dawn Casey asked what do we think about Short wanting us to give them the 5k and they do with it what they want? It needs to be discussed and equitable. Our numbers go up and down so its a bit challenging to know what to do.

** Documents as noted above attached to Minutes and Agenda in the Business Office.