

Cottonwood School Board Meeting – September 8

In attendance: Jeff Slinger, Dan Hunter, Joe Root, Carolyn Hauck, Susan Hathaway, Amanda McAdoo, Nicki Stewart, Greg Smith

Absent – Eddie Francis, Heidi Wigman, Chris Beckley (car trouble)

Minutes – Dan needs to be listed as being in attendance. Greg moves to approve minutes as amended. Joe seconds. Approved. **There is discussion about sending minutes of board meetings to teachers to keep them informed about our discussions and decisions.** There were no objections to doing so.

Financial report. Eddie's written report follows. **The board will vote on whether the report should be approved at our next meeting when Eddie is in attendance.**

June 2018 Financial Statements

- Balance sheet remains in good shape. \$524k in cash, \$211k in AR, only \$25k in AP/CC liabilities. Payroll liabilities are higher than what we typically see in a month due to accruing teacher salaries for the summer months (salaries relate to the school year, but most teachers are paid out over 12 months). Despite the higher payroll liabilities, still have \$615k in working capital (very liquid).
- June – Year-to-date Profit/Loss shows over \$185k in net income (vs. \$85k budgeted). This will get knocked down to nearly \$120k in net income after the August teacher salaries and benefits are included, so we should end nearly \$35k above our budgeted net income. The largest drivers include:
 - Income – State funding up \$69k (increased enrollment, change in rates); dissemination grant up \$115k (offset by expenses – in & out); contributions up \$22k; facility use fees up \$9k; fieldwork/supply fees up nearly \$7k; auction down \$30k
 - Expenses – Salaries up \$37k; repairs & maintenance up \$42k (HVAC & plumbing issues, work day and playground equipment); supplies & materials up \$29k (includes classroom supplies, \$15k on name change, \$5k on tech services, and \$6k on PYPA for student performances); professional fees up \$9k (primarily related to additional Anna time); dissemination grant up \$115k (offset by revenue – in & out); rent expense down \$30k
- Other Notes:
 - These are our final statements for the fiscal year and are unaudited. Audit fieldwork will begin next week or the week after. There will likely be some changes to the numbers prior to issuing the audited statements. Remember that the PERS accrual will be included in the audited statements but are not included in our internal statements.

- **Eddie will contact the audit manager to have him prepared to present the financial statements and audit letters at the conclusion of the audit. This will likely be at the November or December board meeting.**

Executive director/Curriculum director report. Enrollment—203 students this year in comparison to 205 last year. Two more may enroll in next week. CSCS needs to become known as middle school to Portland residents. The school has fewer applicants for these grades because of this. Joe asked whether we advertise in other charter schools that primarily serve K-5. Amanda said that we have. **She also observed that we need to locate a parent volunteer to do flyers for CSCS.** Staff retreat demonstrated their dedication to the school. It was a good community building time. Teachers appreciate being at the school despite lower salaries. Amanda noted that the school looks really good with classrooms being in better shape than has been the case in the past. Kindergarten assessments have been completed. Two nursing students will join the school for six weeks as part of their community health class. After completing a community assessment they are available to teach some classes. **It was suggested that they could potentially coordinate some immunization outreach. Jeff observed that they might also have some good information about safety Nicki said that it would helpful to share any written assessments they write with the board.** Before turning the presentation over to Susan, Amanda said that staff are working hard to make recess a safe and fun thing for kids..

Susan then described what has been happening in classrooms so far this year. She will meet with teachers as a group tomorrow. The curriculum is on its regular rotation. Partnerships with outside agencies like 4H remain strong. Art programming will be the same as last year. A new theater group will be joining the school. Santigie will be teaching music this year, something he is excited about. The faculty will be going to the Oregon Science Teachers Association annual meeting in Newport in October; four people submitted proposals and will be making presentations. Susan said that she is working to develop a guide to becoming more skilled at teaching in the field including things like how to teach students to walk appropriately in the community or be kind to chaperones. All classes—not only eighth graders and kindergarten students—will now have a buddy classroom. Seventh graders will take on a more general mentorship role, helping with reading and math. Teachers are working hard at promoting social-emotional learning, making use of picture books to raise important issues. Sarah is developing a process for evaluating PBE units (e.g, getting feedback from community partners students have worked with).

Amanda concluded this report, indicating that the entire SPED team is new with the exception of Santigie. There are 41 kids with IEPs at CSCS so the support of these professionals is crucial. Amanda emphasized the importance of board members attending the back-to-school night scheduled for next Tuesday evening, 6:30-8:00. **Amanda will send out the agenda in the next few days.** At the end of Amanda's report Dan asked a question about a corporate fund-raising letter and some issues about communication between the school and the fund raising

committee. **He will speak further with members of the fundraising committee to learn more about their concerns.**

Nicki asked about how after-care is working out. Amanda indicated that there have been some glitches in communication here, as well. Parents have not signed up children in the way the service providers anticipated. **Nicki suggested that changing the timing of announcements regarding registration could help; notices may have gone out too early in the summer.**

Friends of School update – Carolyn Hauck. She and Coral are just getting started. Former members of this committee are no longer participating, so it will be important to recruit more volunteers. One of their plans is to rotate meetings from the west side to east side in an effort to increase participation. Carolyn indicated they are trying to pare down the work of the committee to hosting fun events aimed at raising money for the school. Amanda said that posting signs on the school's fence about the timing of Friends meetings/events could be a way to encourage more attendance. Using commonly known language like PTO might also help more people understand the purpose of the group. During back-to-school night, Carolyn and Coral will let everyone know about committee. With regard to the Fall Social, they don't have it together enough to do a barbecue. They are looking for some kind of fund raising scheme. They will invest in the all-winter dance and charge for this. They won't charge for the fall event. Dan suggested trying to recruit more intentionally for Friends—getting dates to people about the events. He emphasized, as well, that we need to make sure we don't burn people out doing this work. **Dan also asked that someone pull together contact information for fifth grade parents who will be helping with fund raising efforts in the spring.** He also said that the fund raising committee has hired an auctioneer who will do this for \$1000 with no proportion of sales. **Susan observed, as well, that we need to find someone who will coordinate teacher appreciation (birthdays, lunch at end of year); this person would essentially be a room parent.** Nicki suggested placing sign-up sheets in classroom for this role. **Susan asked whether there is a list of tasks for room parents. Nicki said to check with past room parents. Caroline said that she will take care of this.**

Committee updates

Facilities – Jeff noted that the facility committee has two primary responsibilities: developing the playground and exploring options for when the current lease is up in February 2021. With regard to the lease, a move does not have to be immanent since the school has two five-year options with regard to the current location—options that would take us to 2031. Rental prices will be determined through negotiation with the owner or through arbitration. Dennis will speak with the owner about the possibility of extending the lease to June 2021 (to match the end of the academic year) and try to feel him out with regard to anticipated rental increases at that time and his interest in continuing to make the property available to the school. Jeff noted that we need to do some master long-term planning about what makes financial sense when we are paying so much for rent. Are there other options? How do we shave that number? If rent keeps increasing, it puts more weight on the need to raise additional funds. This is an important long-term decision and the facility committee is not big enough to take it on. **Jeff**

said that he will call a special board session to discuss this issue and choose a Thursday afternoon or evening when this can happen in the next month.

Fund raising - Dan said that the next meeting will be held on Friday September 21. Planning is going forward for the spring fund raiser. They have got a location, auctioneer, and a plan to do corporate asks. They are working on developing a theme and hope to have this decided by the next Tuesday. Dan doesn't think we should have trouble raising \$40K. The committee will begin collecting auction items (like Blazers tickets) now.

Financial- Bruce and Eddie met last week to discuss the financial statements and the monthly reporting process along with the financial policy manual. Eddie noted that we are now on the same page as it relates to the policy manual and will hopefully have a working draft at the October meeting.

Mission – Greg shared a calendar of board commitments over the course of the 2018-2019 academic year. He asked whether board members would be willing to include two of three additional visits to the school as discussed at the board retreat in January. These three visits could be to (1) attend a faculty meeting (Friday afternoons), (2) serve as a chaperone on a field trip, (3) visit classrooms for a morning (time to be scheduled). Board members were agreeable to this suggestion. He also reported on a second meeting of the Equity/Diversity/Inclusion committee at the end of August and said that this group will be meeting again on September 18. Additional committee members will be recruited during Back-to-School night. He and Ashley Shambaugh (a parent) will speak to parents about this possibility that evening.

Marketing – **Chris identified a need to recruit a parent with marketing expertise and has drafted language that will go in next newsletter about this.**

Nicki observed that we need to recruit more committee members, potential board members, and members of the Friends committee at Back-to-School night.

Nicki moved on to the agenda item regarding ED Evaluation. This is something that has occurred annually via a survey. This year, she would like to include the development of specific goals for the ED that would be incorporated in the evaluation, the format of which will remain the same. Rachel Hall, a parent with experience in doing this kind of work, has recommended that the board brainstorm ED goals. With Amanda's help, group determined a preliminary list:

- Need for policy update (last time this happened was in 2014)
- Identify what we are out-of-compliance with (e.g., Title IX coordination, Information about civil rights on each website page)
- Fundraising
- New facility
- Identify attendance or achievement areas that need to be addressed after reviewing school report card (e.g., raising math scores)

- Improve recruitment for middle school students
- Office restructuring

Nicki will send out this list to the entire board to determine if anything is missing. Exploring this topic led to a discussion about fundraising. Dan argued that it may be premature to evaluate Amanda's work in the area of fundraising. His primary concern is developing a framework that will allow for both maintenance of the corporate sponsorships we currently have and bringing in new sponsorships. He noted that the problem at the moment is that everything is "fly by night." He felt that for this year, the most we should expect of Amanda is that she act as the face of the school at meetings with potential funders. **During this time, the fund raising committee will develop a framework that can move this work forward.**

Nicki moved on to a discussion about the contract with Sarah Anderson regarding dissemination work now that the grant has concluded. Amanda noted that the ownership and use of materials created during this process continues to be hang-up. The gist of the conversation about this was that it will be important to come up with contract language that allows both Sarah and the school to have access to the materials created during this time. It was also suggested that planning at least one professional development experience to be held at the school and co-led by other faculty members will be important. The dissemination activities need to be seen as something mutually shared with the school community rather than solely the responsibility of Sarah Anderson.

The meeting adjourned at 6:05.

Respectfully submitted,

Greg Smith (back-up secretary)