New Heights Board of Trustees

February 28th, 2019

Starting Time: 5:30pm

Dinner Served: 5:00pm

Location: 1690 Main Street, Brockton, MA

1. Call to Order (5:38pm)
2. Roll Call
   1. Rick Schwartz
   2. Maria Fernandes
   3. Pat Gray
   4. Vinnie Marturano
   5. Stephen Bernard
   6. Taisha Crayton
   7. Emmanuel Daphnis
   8. Michael Sullivan, Absent
   9. Ollie Spears, Absent
   10. Nick Christ, Absent
   11. New Heights Staff Present:
       1. Executive Director Omari Walker
3. Reading and Approval of Minutes from January 16th, 2019
   1. Motion to Accept by Maria, Seconded by Rick, Pat abstains to vote due to absence at January Meeting, all others vote to accept.
4. Reports of Officers, Boards, and Standing Committees
   1. Chairperson’s Report (N/A)
   2. Executive Director’s Report
      1. Summer Bridge
         1. Summary of program goals over two previous years
         2. Summary of challenges in administrative management, appropriate staffing and time for curricular planning, funding
         3. Details decisions made pertaining to the program with the College Working Group this week.
            1. Potential for MCC to fund through grants
            2. MCC will pay stipends to NH Staff to attend
            3. STudents will be responsible for own transportation
            4. Reduction of program to 15 each of freshmen, sophomores, and juniors

Acceptance into program has not been set but will be competitive

Rick expresses discomfort with use of GPA and similar standards as sole basis for selection; O. Walker describes how NHCSB demographics counter current belief of “who is most susceptible to success”

Maria states support for competitive entrance in program; states some students believe the program is a requirement; recommends the school invite students and families to complete surveys for feedback on program

Rick asks if it is an option for more than 15 students per grade to attend the program if they pay their own way, MCC grant money could then be a competitive scholarship for 15 students in each grade;

O. Walker shares discomfort with creating income divide between students; a general discussion of struggle in urging families to self-identify income and race through Free and Reduced Lunch and other programs ensues; describes measures taken to increase form returns, including contests, direct calls home, etc;

Pastor Manny suggests to hold 1:1 conversations with parents to discuss financial impact

Taisha asks who is responsible for writing grants (Dr. Geier); asks if Free and Reduced Lunch Form can be part of enrollment packet, with acceptance to school not being granted with an incomplete enrollment packet

O. Walker clarifies that completion of Free and Reduced From may grant free access to food due to self-reported low-income, but this form *does not* be the deciding factor in the state identifying a student or family as low-income

Rick warns against all-or-nothing mentality in terms of funding the program; Pat shares her belief that “if people have to pay for something they are more invested”

* + - 1. O. Walker rescinds recommendation to the Board to suspend the program for one year in favor of the plan at IV.B.1.c) above
    1. Staff Employment Letters
       1. O. Walker reports that the letters and transparent pay scales have effectively, positively shifted morale; Thanks Board for approving that motion
    2. Randolph Student Enrollment
       1. AT inception of Charter, our three regions were specifically selected to become part of our region so that we could serve students in the lowest 10% for achievement; the schools in this lowest 10% have a high number of seats available for students from their town to leave for Charter Schools
       2. Last year, Randolph made commendable gains and is no longer in the lowest 10%, and as a result;
          1. The town has reduced its number of students who can leave for Charters
          2. Charters that do not have Randolph in their Charter will not receive money from Randolph for accepting a Randolph student
          3. Charters that do have Randolph in their Charter will receive reduced tuition for any new Randolph students who come to the Charter (currently enrolled students will continue to receive standard tuition)

Significant financial impact to budget

The law states that we can choose to

Not accept these students in these instances, unless they are siblings of current students

To waitlist these students

Hold lotteries that prioritize Brockton and Taunton residents

Accept randolph students as usual and accept budgetary cut

Accept Randolph students but discontinue paying for Randolph transportation to offset lower tuition

* + - * 1. Discussion of current enrollment percentages by town, extrapolation of the sending districts of next lottery, financial impact
        2. Maria suggests using careful language that would demonstrate a focusing of efforts on Brockton and Taunton
      1. O. Walker requests the Governance Committee meet to discuss this matter and make a formal recommendation to the Board at the March Meeting.
    1. MCNC Conference
       1. O. Walker details networking that occured; expresses interest in partnering with other colleges to complete out-of-country service projects and requests Board participation at any such project

1. Reports of Special Committees
   1. Academic Excellence Committee (Pastor Manny)
      1. Pastor Manny details a discussion by the committee concerning desired components for a dashboard to be presented to the Board on a regular basis as a part of the monthly Board Update document
      2. Rick presents the concept of developing “10 Facts You Need to Know About This School”; expresses dire need for staff training on Edwin Platform
      3. Discussion of need of Dean of Data and Assessments
   2. Ad Hoc Building Subcommittee (Taisha Crayton)
      1. Building Needs
         1. O. Walker describes gives general overview of use of Bank Space for Admin and parking, in conjunction with continuing a build-out at 1690 Main and use of landlord’s parking upon removal of his business from the premeses
         2. Review of Building plans presented by architect this morning, which were then graciously provided to us
      2. ZBA
         1. Did not make Feb 14 deadline for filing for March 12th meeting will have to file in March to get into April’s Meeting
         2. O. Walker recounts unclear verbal reports form landlord concerning the landlord’s lawyer
            1. it is believed that the ZBA will not accept the use of the landlord’s spaces while his business is still located here
            2. It appears as though the attorney has advised against submitting the plan to rent spaces from the bank next door, with no explanation as to this advice; O. Walker has spoken to a colleague who states that the ZBA commonly accepts such plans
         3. Pastor Manny seeks the advice of Stephen, a member of the ZBA; Stephen believes that it will “be difficult” and he will have to recuse himself which will pose a challenge in what will be “a matter of convincing”; states that as the rented spaces are tied to the owner, it is very difficult for the ZBA to make a decision that would be in direct conflict with this idea of
         4. Maria asks Stephen if any other ZBA Members plan to recuse themselves, based on a history of public vocalizations against the school as evidence that objectivity cannot be maintained; Pat echoes concern; Steve states he cannot speak to this
         5. Manny asks that if the landlord has signed a P&S and has a closing date, are these evidence enough of the landlord’s intention to move out of this building; O. Walker agrees to ask landlord
      3. Lease Options and Terms (Executive Session)
         1. Rick motions to enter; Pat seconds
         2. Roll Call:
            1. Rick Schwartz
            2. Maria Fernandes
            3. Pat Gray
            4. Vinnie Martuano
            5. Stephen Bernard
            6. Taisha Crayton
            7. Emmanuel Daphnis
         3. Session begins (7:14pm)
            1. Landlord is willing to accept an additional $140,000 per year over the next seven years, as he believes it is what he needs to be net positive after taking the construction loan and paying taxes on our rent payments.

Rick clarifies that this $140,000 sum is $40,000 over what was originally anticipated

* + - * 1. Landlord will expect additional rent in the form of previous agreed upon per state-assigned pupil facilities rate, however, as a show of good faith, will remove the clause that should the state increase the per-pupil amount rent would increase proportionally as well.
        2. Option to purchase amount has increased to $5,250,000 from $4,750,000, contingent on the completion of the proposed construction; date to invoke this option has been extended to begin no earlier that 12/31/19 and no later than 6/30/21, contingent on the landlord’s purchase of the Cushing St property, with the understanding that any costs paid by the school towards the construction project between 7/1/19 and 6/30/21 be deducted from the stated purchase price of $5.25M
        3. Fallback option is reviewing plans for 661 Centre St, which is considerably more costly in construction, rent, utilities
        4. Stephen Bernard expresses discomfort with making a decision in such a limited time frame, requests more information including an updated budget which will include “operating and capital” and a follow-up meeting in two weeks.
        5. Rick moves ot exit, Pat seconds
        6. Roll Call:

Rick Schwartz

Maria Fernandes

Pat Gray

Vinnie Martuano

Stephen Bernard

Taisha Crayton

Emmanuel Daphnis

* + 1. Next Steps (Not Discussed for time)
  1. Finance Committee
     1. January Financial Report (Not Discussed for time)
     2. FY19 YTD Report
        1. Accrual Budget v. Cash Budget
        2. Settlement Impact on Budget
        3. Rick notes that much of the variance was either approved by the Board or anticipated after changes in state-determined-rates
        4. Discussion of items not displayed on budget
           1. Increase in Title I
           2. Transportation Reimbursement
           3. “Savings” from salaries due to maternity/medical leaves paid by STD
  2. Fundraising Committee (N/A)
  3. Governance Committee
     1. Vinnie agrees to previously mentioned calling of meeting to discuss Randolph
     2. Board Calendar: Mike had previously recommended meetings reschedule to 4th Tuesday
        1. Pat moves that the Board Meetings be moved to the 4th Tuesday of the month, beginning in March; Seconded by Maria; no discussion, vote passes unanimously

1. Special Orders
2. Good of the Order
   1. Announcements
3. Adjourn
   1. Rick motions to Adjourn, seconded by Vinnie, no discussion, passes unanimously (8:01pm)