

**GREEN WOODS CHARTER SCHOOL
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Board Meeting Minutes
January 27, 2010**

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm by Dennis Winters, Board President.

Dana Lotkowski and Kim Birkmire led a brief ceremony to share their remembrances of Glenn Vickers, and to present a commemorative plaque given to Deb Vickers in memory of her husband and GWCS board member.

Tom Schrand, Board Secretary, called roll.

Present: Joan Carr, Rick Meketon, Tom Schrand, Laura Schwingel, Julie Stapleton Carroll, Barry Sunshine, Dennis Wesley, Dennis Winters

Public in attendance: Kim Birkmire, Dana Lotkowski, Kelly Barbella, Joyce Clugston, Mark Clugston, Steve Tilney, John Birkmire, Emilie Nichols, Barb Smith, Jennifer Harrell, Micah Gold-Markell, Gary Millen, Melanie Dudek, Christopher Crockett, Kevin Godshall, Paul Lotkowski, Megan Keel, Jill Dougherty, Mark Wainwright, Christy Coughlin, Anne Marie McNichol, Melinda Coughlin

Rick Meketon moved to approve the minutes, and Dennis Wesley seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

President's Remarks:

Winters announced a board training session on Saturday and urged members to attend. He announced a generous donation to GWCS from the Kelly-Holbrooke family.

He also announced a forum being held by SCEE next week to plan for the Center's future.

Winters asked Gerald Santilli to provide an estimate for services to complete the policies for GWCS.

Santilli said that he expected that it would cost not more than \$5000. A draft of the policies should be available for the March 2010 meeting.

Stapleton Carroll mentioned that many of the policies have already been drafted, and may only need to be assembled and organized.

Business Report:

Gerald Santilli reported on the balance sheet, the budget to actual profit and loss sheet, and disbursements. Problems with federal stimulus funds from last year have been resolved and the funds due to GWCS have been released. There is now a retroactive November 1, 2009 deadline for covered expenditures.

GWCS has received some revenue above budget due to extra students and out of district students.

Extra expenditures were noted for additional music instruction hours and extra substitute teacher costs.

The opt-out policy for employee benefits has boosted the budget.

CEO Report:

Wallace thanked HSC for funded a field trip to see Body Worlds. GWCS is still seeking funding for the straw bale house project. Other activities as described in the CEO newsletter.

Winters directed board questions to Wallace about the already existing school policies. Stapleton Carroll offered to compile the existing policies, and Wallace accepted her offer. Schwingel asked

whether we could examine policies from other charter schools. Wallace said that there are templates for policies, but they would have to be customized to GWCS, which can be time-consuming. Winters asked whether the existing policies had ever been officially adopted by the board. Wallace said that she believed that they hadn't been adopted. Wesley recommended developing a plan for quickly adopting the policies. Wesley, along with Stapleton Carroll, agreed to review the existing policies to determine how to prioritize and expedite their approval. Meketon asked whether we can adopt new policies without knowing the status of the previous policies. Wallace and Stapleton Carroll said that the approval of the new policies could be presented as replacing any existing ones.

Schwingel asked about the board training session scheduled for January 30th and whether there was an agenda for the meeting. Wallace said that she had emailed a schedule, but the board members reported that they hadn't received it. Schwingel also asked whether the costs for this session had been approved by board. No one was certain what the spending limit was for an expense like this. Winters suggested that the board was behind in training. Schwingel stated that she would like to have some input into the agenda.

Santilli stated that his schedule for the retreat was that board governance would be covered in the morning, and finance and legal issues in the afternoon, with a discussion of optimal school size. Act 22 and PDE regulations would be covered by a consultant. This was intended as a first retreat, with additional training to follow. Winters emphasized that training was critical for the board, and stated that the agenda should be set by the experts. Sunshine agreed with Winters' statement and recommended that it be held on schedule. Stapleton Carroll said that the training was important, but had process concerns, since the agenda and expenses of the event weren't discussed. Schwingel also noted that the content of the meeting had never been specified. Schrand stated that the date had been discussed, but details about the time and agenda had not been finalized or announced. Meketon suggested setting a fixed date for annual training events, to allow for orientation of new members as they join the board in the summer. Sunshine called for a meeting this year, rather than a piecemeal approach. After exploring alternative dates, the board decided to stick with its original date and to distribute the meeting materials to members who couldn't attend. Stapleton Carroll reiterated her concerns about the process. Winters accepted responsibility for not bringing the cost to the board's attention.

Committee Reports:

- Finance – The committee is meeting with Wallace and Santilli in February. Winters mentioned that funding is still being sought for the straw bale project.
- Nominating – Sunshine introduced Micah Gold Markell as a nominee for board membership. Markell introduced himself to the board, mentioning his interest and family background in education. He is the founder of Solar States, which has educational initiatives in addition to its core business. In response to the communication problems highlighted in the current meeting, Markell suggested using a centralized communication system, like Google Wave, to facilitate board interaction and record keeping. Sunshine moved to accept Markell as a board member, Meketon seconded. Markell was unanimously elected.
- Facilities – Winters was notified today that the SCEE lease is ready for the board's consideration, but it was too late for this meeting. Peter Bloomfield has been contracted by SCEE to calculate

the square footage necessary to meet both organizations' needs, with a doubled student body. Winters noted that the current size is unsustainable based on its current size—we need to double at least. John Howard will use the footage figures to calculate the cost for a new building for the additional students. Santilli recommends no further investment in this building if GWCS can't get an agreement that they would be able to sell us the Boy Scout tract. We believe we have enough finance capacity to handle repairs to this building and to build a new facility. Santilli noted that financing for rehabilitation to the current building would probably not be possible. Santilli said that our cost for the Bloomfield work would not exceed \$5000, despite an earlier estimate of \$18,000. Schwingel asked whether we had gotten legal assurance about the Boy Scout tract; the answer was no. Meketon pointed out that much of this work had already been done by Bloomfield.

- Curriculum & Accountability – Schrand asked for the committee to schedule the mid-term meeting with the CEO that its August assessment report had called for. The committee members and CEO agreed to meet at 7 pm on Feb. 10.
- Strategic Planning – Sunshine reported on a meeting with the church that claims to own part of the Boy Scout tract. The church can't locate its deed but will be surveying their property to determine the property line. Stapleton Carroll asked about the board's approved plan for the strategic planning process. Schrand echoed Stapleton Carroll's concerns. Sunshine acknowledged the need for a strategic plan but claims that it has already been established. Wallace stated that the faculty and staff have already developed outcomes and that opening up the process could lead to recommendations that the school cannot fulfill. Facilities, financing, and academic program have to be addressed in a strategic plan. Wallace says that the main issue is facilities and size, and that we already know this. Santilli wants to use board training session to discuss the optimal size for the school and how to get there. A financial-facility plan should be the main result of a strategic plan. Sunshine says that the board does not have the time to go through this process. Schrand asked Santilli how necessary it is to have a strategic plan in terms of gaining loans and funding. Santilli indicated that the most important aspect is a financial-facilities plan. As part of his contract, he will formulate the multi-year financial plan. Finding banks is not part of his contracted services, but he can handle that as well. Schwingel pointed out the need to integrate the academic program with the facilities plan. Wallace stated that we already have the answers to most of the questions that Schwingel is asking. Santilli suggested waiting until we have a clearer picture of our expansion plan before issuing an RFP for a strategic plan to create a package to sell. Wallace also expressed support for this approach. Schrand agreed that the timing might be a factor for waiting, but expressed frustration that these issues hadn't been raised when the board initially approved the strategic plan process. Santilli acknowledged that he hadn't realized the level of uncertainty in the relationship with SCEE, or he would have suggested delaying the strategic planning process. He also recommended an interim plan, for the period before expansion. He can help us with this. Stapleton Carroll suggested that we go ahead and vet the proposals that we have already received, so that we're ready to move forward when the SCEE questions have been resolved. Meketon suggested waiting until the financial plan is ready. The Strategic Planning committee will plan to meet to discuss further options.
- Home and School - Melanie Dudek reported that HSC will help organize a bullying and teasing workshop on March 18th. Turn Off Your TV Week is coming in April and HSC will be developing a

program for that week. Spring book fair will be coming up in April, with a buy-one, get-one-free promotion. A spring Phillies game is also being planned.

Old Business: Santilli distributed a policy on HSC fundraising and disbursement of funds. He recommended not requiring board approval for HSC spending. Wesley recommended changing references to Controller to Business Service Provider. Santilli suggested that the Board and HSC review the policy before approving. Winters called for review and approval by the February meeting.

New Business: Winters read a letter from Jill Dougherty praising Kim Birkmire's work.

Public Comment on Agenda Items: Christy Coughlin praised the Board's progress in recruiting and training its members.

Resolutions:

1/27/10 - 1, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees accepts the December 09 Financial Report. Stapleton Carroll made the motion, Wesley seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

1/27/10 - 2, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees approves a contract for Elizabeth Pearson as a long-term Kindergarten substitute. The date of the contract is November 16, 2009 through March 27, 2010.

Stapleton Carroll made the motion, Schrand seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

1/27/10 - 3, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees approves the GWCS Three Year Professional Education Plan as submitted to the Department of Education on 1/26/10. (Exhibit A)
Schrand made the motion, Wesley seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Public comment on non-agenda items: Kelly Barbella read a prepared statement requesting additional special education staffing at GWCS. A copy of the statement and a physician's letter were provided for the Board's records. Anne Marie McNichol also testified to the need for more support for special needs students. Melanie Dudek also shared her concerns about the demand for more reading support. Mark Clugston asked for comment on what he considered inappropriate remarks at the December meeting. Winters acknowledged that the remarks were inappropriate and would not be allowed in the future.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:52 pm, followed by an executive session.