

# **Board Meeting Minutes**

## **W-A-Y Academy Flint**

### **(Regular Board Meeting)**

**Date: September 21, 2023**

**Members present: Howard Buetow, Lori Wright, Kelli Glenn, Venetta Watt Tucker, Sanford J. Edwards III**

**Others present: Shelli Smith, Isaiah Pettway, Alexandra Guzman (via zoom), Sherry Lynem (via zoom), Melissa Weisburger**

**Meeting Called to Order @ 6:30 pm**

#### **Roll Call Attendance**

**Howard Buetow (Genesee County)- Present**

**Lori Wright (Genesee County)- Present**

**Kelli Glenn (Washtenaw County)-Present**

**Venetta Watt Tucker (Genesee County)- Present**

**Sanford J. Edwards III (Genesee County)- Present**

#### **Approval of the Agenda**

- Motion moved by Kelli Glenn /2<sup>nd</sup> by Howard Buetow
- Roll Call Vote: Lori Wright (Y) Howard Buetow (Y) Kelli Glenn (Y) Venetta Watt Tucker (Y) Sanford J. Edwards III (Y).

#### **Call to the Public:**

- Read by Lori Wright-no public present or commenting.

#### **Consent Agenda**

- Approval of August 17, 2023 Regular Board Meeting Minutes.
- Motioned by Kelli Glenn /2<sup>nd</sup> Howard Buetow

Roll Call Vote: Lori Wright (Y) Howard Buetow (Y) Kelli Glenn (Y) Venetta Watt Tucker (Y) Sanford J. Edwards III (Y).

- . Motion carries.

#### **Correspondence**

- Superintendent Pettway introduced a bill of attorney fees, tied to the lease negotiation. This was during the process of reauthorization with the ESP agreement. He's stated it was in the amount of \$12,389.50 and believes there is one more bill pending for Dickerson and Wright.

#### **Old Business**

- None

#### **New Business**

#### **Discussion Items**

## **Educational Service Providers Report**

- **Superintendent's Report**

*Isaiah Pettway shared the following:*

### **Program Updates (W-A-Y Programs)**

- None

### **Enrollment/Recruitment/Marketing**

- WAY Academy Flint is currently at 99 students enrolled. The enrollment goal is 100 students.
- They have been receiving a lot of referrals from other schools.
- The additional marketing and recruitment has been helping enrollment this year.
- There has not been as many family referrals this year like the last one.
- There are 12 applications in process and 4 leads. Director
- Shelly Smith added 12 people are finalizing their applications and four are done. She is interviewing a couple tomorrow.
- Superintendent Pettway explained the enrollment and marketing approach that was launched this year. The advertisement campaign, the social media campaign, and the referral campaign.
- Superintendent Pettway invited the board members to like the schools Facebook page if they are on social media.

### **Academic Updates**

- The school is preparing for the WNWEA testing and this is the second year they are using it. They are adjusting the necessary to prepare for testing. Last year was the first year that the students took this assessment.
- This year they are hoping they're scores will increase. Scores are initially low but go up by the spring assessment. Supt. Pettway explained the comparative analysis for this exam is fall to spring.
- Winter scores as a touch point to make sure they are headed in the right direction.
- Highlights: Supt. Pettway wanted to congratulate Way Flint and their team on all the work they have done to meet their enrollment numbers.

## **Director's Report**

*Ms. Smith shared the following:*

- This is the last report of the 22/23 school year. It highlights the entire school year per month. The new school year started September 5<sup>th</sup> and in comparison this August 2023 enrollment to last August 2022 enrollment there is 99 students versus 70 students last year.
- When looking into the highest grade level of enrollment it is the ninth graders. The middle school has grown in enrollment.
- Total credit for the month of August was 33.67.
- They didn't have good participation, attendance, or work ethic from the students this month because it was still considered a summer month.
- The average credit attainment for the month of August was 0.38 credits.
- The goal is to reach an average of a half a credit a month.
- They hope to obtain that again in September.
- Average credit attainment earned by grade level this month was the seventh graders.

- Director Shelly Smith explained for the new board members that in a traditional school, students are enrolled in a grade level based on their age and earn credit at the end of the year. At WAY they are considered self-paced. Student complete projects that are aligned with core curriculum standards. When a student shows proficiency in that standard at 75% or more they are given the credit for the standard they complete with projects. Every class is different and have different number of standards. Every class has all the standards they need to earn. Students can work at their own pace.
- For example, the teacher could be teaching a math lesson in Algebra I and a student may love geometry, they are allowed to work on that instead.
- They try to do projects that are cross curriculum. For example, in a social studies project there can be lot of writing and reading. This project can also award them for English standards and credit also.
- In a traditional school setting if a student is 14, they are expected to be in the ninth grade but at WAY it's based on credits. If a student only has ninth grade credits, they are considered a ninth grader and they can be a 10<sup>th</sup> grade at any point during the school year, depending on how much credit they are able to obtain away.  
They are also blended, which also means the students only come in part-time to the school and are able to study at home at their leisure.
- Director Shelly Shelly explained that the goal is also to earn half of credit a month. If the goal is obtained, the student will finish the grade in a traditional amount of time.
- Most of the student meet or exceed half a credit a month.
- Points of Pride:
  - The number of enrolled students.
  - As of now there were a couple of students that were lost and there were many runaways.
  - There was 73% of the researcher's attendance in the open house in August
  - The district staff participated in CPI training which stands for crisis prevention intervention.

## **Treasurers Report**

*Director of Finance Sherry Lynem shared the following August 2023 Financial reports:*

- State Aid Payment Received \$84,109.89
  - This was the final state aid payment for the 22-23 school year.
- Monies Owed to WAY Program as of August 31, 2023, \$313,786.75
  - Note that this is an accumulation of the entire year not just the month of august.
- Monies Transferred \$22,500
  - Which paid the academies access fees.
- Accounts Payable for August is \$32,201.14
  - The bills paid throughout the month for the academy.
- Payroll Liabilities was \$44,157.73
  - This was for 2 payrolls and health care.

- Request for transfer in the amount of \$76,358.87 for the month of August.
  - That is to cover for the august payroll and accounts payable.

### **State Aid Note Borrowing**

*Director of Finance Sherry Lynem shared the following:*

- During the month of September, there is no state aid payments. The state pays the foundation and allowance over the course of the year but only 11 out of 12 months.
- Schools do not receive a state payment during the month of September.
- Most schools have to borrow money to cover the month of September 's expenses.
- The Academy cannot do that because of its structure in the prior ESP agreement. Since they do not qualify, they tried to find a private lender through a bank or financial institution but they were unsuccessful in finding one.
- As of now they may have some cash flow issues. The balance sheet shows there is \$30,000 as the balance at the end of August. They do have some additional revenue coming in throughout the month of September. There is a shortfall, and it will be tight the next couple of months until state aid payment starts coming in for the new school year.
- Kelly shared that back in the 2000s the state was undergoing some financial hardship. The states fiscal year runs October 1 to September 30 but because of the hardship they decided to withhold payments in September for all schools. Since then, they have kept it this way.
- Superintendent Pettway explained the bridge loan which is used by most schools. They go through the Michigan Finance Authority to apply for a loan and pay it back over the course of 11 months.
- Superintendent Pettway explained to bring everyone up to speed the issue with Flint. They are not able to apply for that loan because of the agreement with the management company. They had established "Sweeping" agreement, which does not meet the criteria of the MFA. During reauthorization this past year they changed the contract to a base percent contract to be able to apply for the bridge loan through the MFA.
- Kelli shared that there are three criteria's they need to meet to be able to apply. One is there has to be two years of audits, a flat fee contract and a minimum enrollment of 100 students.

### **Current School Building Update**

*Director of Supt. Pettway shared the following:*

- To bring everyone up to speed, the current facility that they are in, they were negotiating a lease last year, and ran into some issues. The authorizer raised some concerns in regard to the landlord's willingness to update some things in the building.
- They were up against a deadline, and they agreed to a temporary agreement for one year in efforts to get more time to work through the process with the landlord and the landlord can correct things needed.
- They are now nervous that the landlord will not hold up their end of the bargain and correct items needed.
- The authorizer is now recommending they establish a plan to move out of the facility, if necessary.
- That they have launched an exploratory search to look at other venues possible to move the school into.

- The goal is to present to the board 3 options to consider by the November meeting. They are partnering up with a commercial real estate agent. This will give them enough time to review and visit the locations.
- Hopefully by that time they have heard back from the landlord plans.
- In any case they can decide by the beginning of the year if necessary.
- This building serves a purpose of the program. The director and her team have been here since 2013.
- As of now there is only one possible location up to code to present to the board. They stated the need to find a place that meets code, or the landlord takes responsibility to bring the building up to code. Once brought up to code then it is always reflected on a higher rent amount.
- Again the goal is to try to stay within a 1 mile radius of the current location to have the same community, same bus, route, etc. There was also a lot of negotiation around the Flint school district providing lunch to WAY students because they are right down the street from the facility and that is beneficial.
- The financial aspects of moving will be hard.
- Melissa added that if they do need to move locations it will result any contract update the revenue will need to be approved by LSSU board assessment consult. They want to have it approved by the February meeting instead of the May meeting just in case changes need to be made.
- If necessary the lease at the current building also ends June 30.
- The landlord is the Flint cultural center who they have been working with as a primary chief of operational officers and their attorneys. There has never been an issue until their attorney got involved. There are environmental things that by law a school is required to have in place but as a community organization, they are not necessary.
- There was a number given from the landlord of \$35,000 to make the changes necessary. Their concern was that there is no justification to make an additional \$35,000 of investment there has been no rent increase since 2013. They did propose a rent increase and moving costs will also be high.
- Board Member Howard stated that if the change is only 3\$5,000 and they are looking at another five-year lease it would only be out \$500 a month increase.
- Superintendent Pettway is trying to get all the parties together, so they are all on the same page because different things are being said. The next step is to have the board attorney Amy get everyone together and come up with a resolution. It may happen within the next couple of weeks.
- Another major issue and moving is that there is always a big initial drop in enrollment numbers as well.

### **NCSI Policy Updates Spring 2023**

*Supt. Isaiah Pettway shared the following:*

- LSSU contracts a service for the board. This is a part of the fee that the school pays to LSSU to contract The National Charter Schools Institution (NCSI). They are responsible for all the board policies.
- They take the responsibility that as a board, they have the policies in place to meet the requirements of the law. They also give them policies to be considered best practices, as

well as administrative guidelines, things to keep in mind as they are overseen governance of the school.

- They will always have either legally required policies, best practice policies or administrative guidelines for the board. These updates happen twice a year in the fall and during the spring.
- The first one is a technology policy update, to legal contact for individuals with disabilities. The legislation meets the civil rights requirement. It states, to make sure that there is access to all students regardless of race, ethnicity or background.
- The second one is the technology acceptable use policy. It is legally required updates the schools that all information used on the Academy's website, social media is to be approved by administration. That a policy is put into place that all permission is granted prior to usage of the student's image. For example, it is included in the student enrollment and all parents will either sign off or deny usage of her student's image. Staff technology acceptable use, this one governs how staff is able to use the school's technology.
- Lastly, the last two are best practice, one information management updated language on how students' information is managed. Currently information is required to be on site no less than seven years. Any information after that can be destroyed. All school information is house in the building.
- Advertisement and commercial activities govern how the school is able to advertise. The board assigns a designee in this case it is Supt. Pettway and Director Shelly Smith.
- The second set of policies are legally required.
  - The school is required to verify that all the appropriate school age students are tested and meet the OEAA requirements.
  - Procurement use of federal funds, making sure that all contracts follow the egger provisions.
  - Animals on school property or campuses. This is because of the increase of the use of therapy. Animals' permission needs to be granted by the school.
- 8140 Academy safety information, making sure that all student safety requirements are in place, but are also on the transparency page on the website.
- Dykema, LSSU's attorney will be auditing the school's website for transparency information.
- Best practices 84A it is the schools threat assessment and interreplacement. This governs what must be in place in the crisis management plan.
- Again, best practices and administrative guidelines are there to give a point of reference they are not required to be voted on.

### **Training**

- Board President Lori Wright signed up for the LSSU retreat in Lapeer.
- Board Member Kelly Glenn signed up for the retreat that is happening in November.
- Board Member Edwards asked for dates and locations closest to him.

### **Action Items**

#### **Approval to Accept Financials Report for August 2023**

- Motioned by Kelli Glenn/2<sup>nd</sup> by Sanford J. Edwards III
- Roll Call Vote: Lori Wright (Y) Howard Buetow (Y) Kelli Glenn (Y) Venetta Watt Tucker (Y) Sanford J. Edwards III (Y).

### **Approve the NCSI Policy Updates Spring 2023**

- Motioned by Kelli Glenn/2<sup>nd</sup> by Howard Buetow
- Roll Call Vote: Lori Wright (Y) Howard Buetow (Y) Kelli Glenn (Y) Venetta Watt Tucker (Y) Sanford J. Edwards III (Y).

### **LSSU Liaison Updates**

*Melissa Weisberger shared the following:*

- All conflicts of interest have been completed.
- Announced and shared the retreats dates, locations, and details, with the board members,
- There was conversation of having Angie Irwin record 4, 20-minute videos for next year for the board to review prior to or after a board meeting. Then have a five-minute discussion and get credit for towards their PD requirements.
- Just a reminder to the ESP about the transparency recording on the website making sure to update board members and their WAY Program emails.
- Superintendent Pettway will get the board members a WAY Program email and access to the board portal.
- Making sure that the signed approved board meeting minutes are on the website and the educational evaluation tool along with the PA48 report.

### **Board Committee Reports/Comments**

- **School Board Building Update:** Supt. Pettway covered that in his report earlier.
- Board Pres. Lori Wright explained how subcommittees function with the board. They try to have a board member and someone from the management company come together to create a subcommittee.
- Supt. Pettway mentioned that they are asking all boards to establish a finance committee. This committee will need to meet with the finance team and the superintendent. This will be no more than 30 minutes prior to a board meeting, and they will review and discuss in detail the months finances. Once at the board meeting when presenting the financials, it's not just Ms. Sherry Lynem presenting, they would like a board member present o them about their finances.
- Board Treasurer Kelli Glenn is requesting a discussion item in the future after the grant budget amendment to get a picture of all the grants available and how they are utilizing them. What staffing is under each grant. She also welcomes to the new board members.

### **Announcements**

- There is a board secretary position opened. Melissa shared that by the board secretary it means looking over the board meeting minutes monthly and signing off every month on them. As well as some other docs every now and documents, every now and then.

**None**

**Call to the Public**-No public present/no public comments

## **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn: Kelli Glenn / 2<sup>nd</sup> by Howard Buetow

- Roll Call Vote: Lori Wright (Y) Howard Buetow (Y) Kelli Glenn (Y) Venetta Watt Tucker (Y) Sanford J. Edwards III (Y).

Meeting adjourned at 7:57 pm

Minutes submitted by: Alexandra Guzman