



MicroSociety Academy Charter School
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Board of Trustees Special Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 6, 2021
6:00PM
VIA Zoom Call

I. Board Meeting Called to order

- A. 6:02 pm. Present via Zoom, Amy Bottomley, Amanda Schneck, Barbara Halevi, Andrew McWeeney, Thomas Malone, John Dagianis, Cathy McNamara, and Tom Dougherty.
- B. Tom read notice regarding authorization to meet electronically due to Governor Sununu's State of Emergency Pandemic executive order 12/2020-04. All votes shall be done by roll call vote.

II. Public and School Community Input.

- A. Lindsay Millette and Erika Brown were present via Zoom.

III. IT Contract Renewal

- A. Our contract with Mainstay Technologies is up for renewal
- B. Contract terms are the same as last year, Active Cyber Security Monitoring and a block of IT service hours for service tickets and/or work.
- C. Contract costs have gone up, but remain within the current budget allocated.
- D. Amy was asked whether we are happy with the service performance. In the beginning the equipment budget costs were not as transparent as we had liked, but Mainstay has been very responsive to our tickets, near immediate response, and needs during the pandemic.
- E. Any change in the previous years cost?

- a. All still in budget current cyber monitoring is \$1300, new quote \$1500, but we have \$3000 in our budget line

Tom Malone motions to approve the adoption of the IT contract as stated. Dr. John 2nds. Vote by roll call:

Thomas - YES	Barbara - YES	Andrew - YES
Amanda - YES	John D - YES	Tom D - YES

IT Contract accepted. Tom authorized the Director to sign the renewal contract for 2021.

IV. School Reopening Plan

- A. The Chair outlined the scope of the meeting for the evening.
 - a. The current COVID trends are up to 12% positivity rate; at the point of our decision for remote, we were at 4%.
 - b. A new strain of COVID has reached the states, noting that it is highly transmissible, but additional details continue to be discovered.

Tom Malone motions to suspend the rules to allow Cathy McNamara to participate in the discussion due to her background and pending MACS Board membership. Amanda 2nds. Vote by roll call:

Thomas - YES	Barbara - YES	John D - YES
Amanda - YES	Andrew - YES	Tom D - YES

Motion carries to suspend rules.

- B. Review of the parent and staff polls relative to the opening on January 18th. Poll of families via email, many cases we have multiple siblings, and we did not ask to vote for each, though some did.

Students' Families:

- a. With duplicate responses eliminated, there were 60 total responses. 31 families indicated that they want to extend the remote period, and 29 indicated that they want students to return as planned.
- b. Of the 31 families who responded that they would like us to extend the remote period, 23 are hybrid families and 8 are remote.
- c. Of the 29 families who responded that they want students to return as planned, 28 are hybrid families and 1 is remote.
- d. Out of the 23 hybrid respondents, 6 have already requested their child move to remote. We anticipate the others are waiting on a decision before deciding.

Teachers:

- e. 23 staff members responded. 19 prefer to extend the remote period. 4 prefer to return as planned.

- C. We started to 30% full remote, at time of closure for holidays, we were at 40%
- D. Chair noted the NH COVID Dashboard Nashua at 2% positivity when this started. Also, the new strain has now breached the US, and is moving across the states, showing it to be highly transmissible.
- E. Tom Malone requested that Cathy share her observations of what she has seen at St. Joseph's hospital. offered additional details of what is being witnessed at the hospital. We are now up to 12%, 20-30% positive cases in the hospital, cases have been extreme. More expirations in the past 3 weeks than we have seen in months. The surge in March-May expected is now occurring. ICUs are tapped, and there are no beds available. 25% of patients coming in are for COVID issues.
- F. Dr John offers that this situation is a fluid one.. Nashua in the red zone, beds and secondary units are at max capacity. Manchester is 10% in positivity. Multiple things hitting at once. Holiday travel by families, new strain coming down - don't have enough information as to whether it is worse than current, but we do know it is more transmissible. This presents challenges, as we don't know where this is going. While there are reasons to have children in school, one of the things as a board member that we charged with is to keep children safe at all times, no matter if this an active shooter, or a pandemic. We take this very seriously. We want to provide a safe environment. If it takes a few more weeks to consider opening the school, we're not against the parents, but we do need to ensure that the staff and students are safe.
- G. Amy offered more information on the Staff. Reports of Two of our staff members exposed to Covid, and are through their quarantine period. Three staff members tested positive and are almost through quarantine. We have another teacher whose child was exposed in daycare, and now through. This is just in the short couple of weeks during the holiday vacation.
- H. 80+% of the teachers do not want to return to school right now. We do have adults with compromised immune systems, and some more elderly staff that raise the concerns also.
- I. Amanda raised a question surrounding the poll, do we know if the teachers are willing to come in? We did not ask that question. The staff meeting is on Friday, and Amy will inquire. The same questions asked of the parents were the same for the staff. It is a concern that the staff is nervous, as we do have a new mother with an infant, another who is pregnant, and those with immune deficiency.
- J. Cathy agreed with the parent comments on the suicide rate. Young people under 18 are coming to the hospital. 80% of the people are asymptomatic, and

are shedding the virus onto others. This is not a no forever moment to open the school, but we do need to wait and see as we are in the surge that we expected earlier in the year, that is now upon us.

- K. Barbara stated that back in August we were favored to go to a hybrid model, educators wanted to be in the in-person learning mode. As there is now a shift in their mind set, they are on the ground. If their judgement is to stay in remote mode, we need consider their voice as they may have personal concerns, operational challenges to offer both programs, or some combination. We have to take this seriously, as the teachers are the ones sitting in the classroom, and we are sympathetic to what the students that are not achieving remotely is not what they can do if in the classroom. We should be considering whether there are particular kids that need specific help more than others.
- L. Amy offered that we are addressing added support in the remote model based on what the teachers have identified as students in need of extra support. Since specialists and paras do not have to cover staff who are teaching in online classes while we are remote, we can now utilize them to assist students in need. We have reallocated the resources according to need. IF we go back to in-person this support goes away so staff have class coverage to leave and teach online/fully remote students.
- M. When we talk about monitoring performance. In September, we were a bit shocked about some regression from March to September, however, since then, we are seeing growth. This is a statewide struggle, and not an ideal situation, but the good news is we are seeing progress. We are progress monitoring again in January and hope to see the positive trend.
- N. Thomas Malone spoke to the experiences of having staff to cover a classroom for an entire day during illness, lunch breaks, etc. Many days of using specialists and paras to fill in to close gaps. You do run out of staff to support. Presently, with MACS, our decision to go remote was that coverage of the classrooms, teachers having to cope with illness in family, or travel. Students traveling and the impact on the cohort. It would force Amy to notify parents that the class would not be covered. These circumstances all are less than ideal. Where does NH stand in getting vaccinations for our teachers, so that they could fulfill their duties.
- O. Amy responded that the program for teachers has been communicated to be allocated between March-May. All predicated on the distribution of vaccines coming into the state. We are going to be fighting operational logistics throughout the remainder of the year.
- P. Barbara offered that having the vaccine is not the only aspect that would dictate our return, there are other factors. Certainly it is important.

- Q. Andrew suggested that we need to build those criteria so that we can be clear on our plan to support the reopening of the school.
- R. Amy offered that realistically, 1 positive case in a classroom, could impact up to 3-5 teachers, as they rotate in to support the instruction.
- S. Dr John, getting back to being fluid, suggests that we not go remote for the remainder of year, as we don't have enough knowledge to do so. We are in a hot bed, and we need to evaluate how to return safely.
- T. Tom Malone inquired about extending remote to after the February holiday.
- U. Amy responded that while teachers have stated originally to travel during holiday, but since the impact of the surge, most have pulled back on any suggestion of traveling. Same when we polled the parents, surprisingly travel does not seem to be an impact for Feb vacation for staff or students based on survey results.
- V. We need to give family and staff a two week notice for daycare, and staff planning in order to get back to hybrid model.

Dr John suggests that we extend two weeks beyond our current date. We should meet in a couple of weeks to decide how long we go into February. We don't have the information to make carte blanche statements right now on a specific timeframe.

Propose to target February 8th, two weeks after we propose. Board to meet early the week of January 25th to review the fluidity.

Amanda agrees with Dr. John, we need to take a review on a week by week basis on the numbers, and make sure that we are doing the right thing

Andrew offered that we need to ensure that we hear the voice of the hybrid families, and that we want to get the school open, as safely as possible.

Thomas Malone agrees and all of the trustees agree that we want to get the school open, but we need to ensure that we can do this safely. We are fortunate to have representation by parents on the board, and in the meeting, and two trustees from the medical community that provide important insights to the situation.

Barbara makes a motion to postpone the opening of the school. On the week of Jan 25th, reconvene a special meeting to review the COVID metrics, additional information

on vaccines, and any other information that can help evaluate the next date. Thomas Malone 2nds. Vote by roll call:

Thomas - YES	Andrew - YES	Barbara - YES
Amanda - YES	John - YES	Tom D - YES

Amanda makes a motion to adjourn. Dr. John 2nd. All in favor.
Meeting adjourned at 7:05 PM