

**PLEASE NOTE: In order to comply with adjusted CT Open Meeting laws, this Zoom meeting will be recorded and posted on the Common Ground website**

## **New Haven Ecology Project**

January 30th, 2023

[Zoom Recording](#)

**Present:** Bob Parker, Monica Maccera Filppu, Charles Negaro, Abigail Roth, Alexis Smith, Gioia Connell, Errol Saunders, Jen Burke, Beth Klingher, Chris Hayes, Terri Snell, Kyeen Andersson, Michelle Sepulveda

**Staff:** Elena Augusewicz, Bev Green, Rebecca Honlcombe, Audrey Nefores, Rikki Brown, Joel Tolman

## **Welcome**

Bob called the meeting to order at 5:32

There was no public comment.

## **Business Requiring Approval (5:33pm)**

Abigail moved to approve the December board minutes, Charles seconded the motion. The December Board Meeting Minutes were approved unanimously.

[Minutes of the December Board Meeting](#)

## **Invoices Needing Approval**

Beth moved to approve all the Pareto, Thurston and PKF O'Connor Davies invoices as listed. Charlie seconded all of the invoices for approval. The invoices were approved unanimously.

- Pareto invoice \$21,695.50, annual bill for self-insurance
- Thurston Foods \$9511.23, End of Dec and half of Jan Bills
- PKF O'Connor Davies \$32,480, annual bill for audit and additional procedures. NHEP to pay:\$23,950.00 and CGHS to pay \$23,530.00

## **[Executive Director Report \(5:37pm\) \(Monica\)](#)**

Monica presented the report attached.

Monica specifically asked that board members check the "Next Generation Accountability" powerpoint in the report asking them to consider what they would want to learn more about. That will help us decide what to focus on in board meetings between now and the fall. She also wants to make sure that board members are doing the annual board training module. It was sent out in the agenda email last week and included [HERE](#). All board members should complete training by April 1, 2023.

Monica gave a legislative update from CT Charter Schools. They will be helpful to us during the renewal process. They are our primary advocates in the state legislature. The CT Charter School Finance advocates for equal funding for all kids, there are ways in which the funding formula is broken and has underserved charter schools and urban schools. House Bill 5003 could write charter schools into the standard funding formula. There is a link included in this report where board members can submit written

testimony, students and parents will also be submitting testimony. There's an informational forum this Wednesday at 11am about CT School/Student Funding and that will be available on youtube after, Monica will send it out to all board members.

### **Audit Committee (5:56pm) (Monica)**

The audit committee did not meet in January but did review required documents from the auditor and discussed by email to close out the FY 22 audit season.

### **Development Committee Report (5:57pm) (Alexis)**

The Development Committee will meet Thursday Feb 2 to discuss Development's progress towards our goals for individual giving, event giving, foundation giving, and competitive government grants. We will also be discussing the planning on new, small fundraising and stewarding events on Common Ground's campus. The group will be joined by Alisha Crutchfield-McLean from local business BLOOM to discuss event planning and garnering local business support. Audrey said that she has 4 final candidates for the Communications Coordinator role and will have that hiring decision made this month.

### **Finance Committee Report (5:58pm) (Beth)**

The finance committee met on January 26th to review the [budget vs actual with 2nd quarter projections](#). The committee agreed that the goal for the year is to close the current projected deficit of \$79,545 and end the fiscal year with a net of between 80 and 100K. This will cancel our current Net Asset deficit of \$93K which is a result of previous year's losses. Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 21st at 5pm.

Monica shared her screen to present the budget vs actuals as of Dec. 31st 2022. Development is on track to meet their total development revenue goal. The net after RNA has been cut down to \$79,545 and we are working with our team to hold the line and reduce costs.

Beth said that the finance committee plans to reduce the deficits by reducing costs on the school side. The school relies heavily on Development and Community programs to cover student fees. Payroll is a set expense so instead, we're looking to reduce non-payroll expenses by 8%.

### **Governance Committee Report (6:20pm) (Bob)**

The Governance Committee met on January 17th. The discussion included final details of recommending three new board members, upcoming changes necessary in our officers for next year, and continued work on the Executive Director evaluation. The next meeting is scheduled for Feb 21, 2023. For more info contact Bob Parker.

### **Motion to Appoint New Members through June, 2023.**

Errol moved to approve all three new members to the Common Ground Board of Directors. Alexis seconded the motion to approve the election of these board members. The motion to approve the board members was approved unanimously.

- [Jen Burke \(Teacher Member\)](#) Jen introduced herself, she's a teacher and core 10 lead for CG. She worked here from 2007-2013, then volunteered here in 2015 and 2016. She was the Teacher Representative on the board in 2009-2012.

- [Jeff Carter \(Community Member\)](#) Bob stated that Jeff could not present at this meeting but he has a long history at Common Ground. His son attended school here, and he has helped with different Development and Facilities projects over the years.
- [Michele Sepulveda \(Community Member\)](#), [Bio](#), Michele introduced herself and thanked the board for considering her for this opportunity.

### **School Committee Report (6:26pm) (Monica)**

There was no school committee meeting in January as there were no agenda items. Monica said this committee will reorganize to start planning for the upcoming charter renewal.

### **New Business (6:27pm)**

Charles wanted to know how many lottery applications we get from the school lottery each year. Joel wrote in the Zoom Chat that we received 121 applications through our lottery and 332 through the New Haven lottery last year for about 75 open spaces in the high school. Students who don't get in immediately are put on a waitlist.

### **Executive Session (6:29pm)**

Abigail moved to enter into Executive Session at 6:29 pm, Alexis seconded the motion to enter into Executive Session. The move to enter into Executive Session was approved unanimously.

Executive Session ended at 6:41 and there were no votes taken.

### **Adjourn (6:41pm)**

Kyeen moved to adjourn the Common Ground Board of Directors Meeting. Abby Seconded the motion to adjourn. The movement to adjourn was approved unanimously at 6:42pm.

Next Meeting: February 27th

### **Public Comment:**

In order to comply with adjusted Connecticut Open Meeting laws, any member of the public wishing to participate in the meeting must sign up on the Public Participation Sign-up Document. Sign-ups for Public Participation will open at 5 pm on the last business day before the meeting (Friday, January 27th) and will close at 5:00 pm on the day of the meeting (Monday, January 30th) Public Participation is limited to 2 minutes per person up to 30 total minutes. Anyone wishing to make a statement to the board can also submit testimony in writing to [Bob.Parker@nhep.com](mailto:Bob.Parker@nhep.com) by 5:00 pm on the day of the meeting. All submitted documents will be included in the publicly shared meeting minutes.