

**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  
Board Meeting Minutes  
April 26, 2021**

**Board Members:** Bob Parker, Babz Rawls Ivy, Kyeen Andersson, Beth Klingher, Errol Saunders, Peter Ludwig, Christopher Albert, Charles Negaro, Monica Maccera Filppu (*ex officio*), Terri Snell, Deloris Vaughn

**Staff:** Elena Augusewicz, Kimball Cartwright, Deborah Greig, Joel Tolman, Bev Greene, Rebecca Holcombe

**ZOOM meeting Recording**

**I. Welcome,**

- A. Babz called the meeting to order at 5:39pm. Seeing no public comment, she moved on to Business Requiring Approval.

**II. Business Requiring Approval (5:40)**

- A. [March 22, 2021](#) Meeting Minutes.
  - 1. Errol requested that the minute reflect that he was not present and did not take the Minutes. Beth Klingher and Elena Augusewicz were responsible for taking the minutes. Charlie moved to approve the minutes and Bob seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved with two abstentions: Errol and Kyeen.
- B. Invoices Needing Approval
  - 1. Thurston Foods \$6958.48
  - 2. YUP Math Tutoring Licences for 226 Students for May 2021-May 2022 \$8,136.00
  - 3. Peter moved to approve paying both invoices and Beth seconded the motion. Thurston Foods and YUP Math Invoices were approved unanimously.

**III. Executive Director Report (5:45) (Monica)**

- A. Update on CGHS Learning Mode
  - 1. As of last Monday we are running a Hybrid in-person model. Surveys showed that people preferred either all-in-person or all-virtual classes so we have taken that into consideration and adjusted our previous Fall model by re-cohorting and regrouping and avoiding classes where there are students both on zoom and in-person.
    - a) 75% of Freshman and Sophomores are in-person four days per week and most of their classes are fully in-person.
    - b) About 60% of 11th and 12th graders are in person two days per week.
    - c) Mask use is required indoors and we are adhering to 6ft distancing while students are indoors. We are encouraging students and staff to use outdoor spaces whenever possible.
    - d) Beth asked about whether or not we know how many students are being vaccinated or are hoping to be vaccinated.
      - (1) Monica answered that, in general, we have adopted a strategy of providing as much education and support as possible to get staff and students vaccinated. We have not made vaccines mandatory. Nurse

Keith is helping students and their families schedule appointments for vaccines when they need assistance. We are waiting on clear guidelines from the CDC around collecting vaccine data. Nurse Keith has a general idea of how many people have been vaccinated but we have not formally collected that information from staff or students.

- e) Babz asked about whether or not we have tried to become a vaccination Center.
  - (1) Monica responded that we have not been able to do so yet, but we have tried.
  - (2) Christopher explained that hosting a vaccine clinic might be difficult because classes are being held regularly in our gym so it may interfere with classes. He also said an alternative could be the parking lot but that is also in use during typical class times.
- f) Ky asked about students who are not returning to campus, their wellbeing, and if there is more outreach needed.
  - (1) Monica answered in 9th and 10th grade that we are at capacity for our space. The 75%-25% split is just about the right number to be able to hold classes for all of the students for four days a week like we are. In general, those students who are opting to stay home are doing so because of health concerns of a family member.
  - (2) In 11th and 12th grade, since they are concurrently on zoom anyway, whether on campus and not, they have different reasons for staying home. In those grades, many students are opting not to come back because their instructional model does not offer the same kinds of benefits for them as the 9th and 10th grade model does.
  - (3) We are exploring school-connected activities for students who are still at home. We are hosting a family day this Saturday that is just fun activities and not formal classes. We also are planning "class days" on Wednesdays in May where each grade will have their own day of fun activities planned where remote students are encouraged to join and go on hikes or other fun activities with their peers.

#### B. Update on School Director Hiring Process

- 1. Monica reminded us that we signed a contract with Edgility, a candidate search firm, and that we have a search committee of stakeholders supporting their work. No results have been shared yet but they will probably be sharing out with the search committee in the next 10 days so there will be more to report next month.

#### C. Summer Programming Plans (Farm, Camp and School)

- 1. Monica reported that we are doing a much longer, larger summer school as a way to mitigate learning loss for students who need it through credit recovery. Two summers of this longer form of Summer School will be funded using ESSER 2 relief funds.
- 2. All of our seniors (with the exception of three who might need more support) will be on track to graduate with support and credit recovery. Monica especially wanted to thank Victor, Monique, and our student support team for their hard work keeping our students on track and engaged despite the many struggles during the pandemic.
- 3. While we are running credit recovery for 10, 11, 12th grade students, we are not offering academic summer school for incoming 9th graders. This is based on research that has shown that academic summer school for 9th graders is less

successful for academic improvement and that we would be more successful using summer school for building culture and relationships with these students.

4. Rebecca will be running summer camp at a reduced capacity of 120 students on campus per week. Despite businesses reopening on May 19, the state did not include childcare or Summer Camps and there have been no additional announcements on changes in guidelines related to cohorting. In order to offer kids on campus access to everything at Common Ground we don't have the ability to increase the number of students physically on campus. Rebecca is hoping the OEC will present some new more clear guidelines that will help us to plan our summer camp rules/guidelines better. Although Common Ground cannot fill all of the need for summer options, there will be additional free summer camp options provided by the City of New Haven.

D. Update on Space Issues (Bob)

1. Charlie and Bob have met with Monica and others to put together an ad hoc committee to consider the problem that Jeremy brought to them last month: both short term and long term additions to spaces at Common Ground.

**IV. Governance Committee Report (6:12) (Bob)**

- A. The Governance Committee met on April 20th to discuss new Board member candidates and bylaws revisions.
  1. Bob will be sending out an email with the links to Bios and CVs of five new potential candidates for Board Membership. The Governance committee will come back to the Board in a more formal way to get its consideration of these potential new additions.
  2. The Committee is trying to establish equal classes of service so that we can spread out who leaves the Board every few years. Additionally, the Committee hopes to have a draft of the new Bylaws in May for the full board to vote on those proposed changes in the June Meeting
- B. Bob discussed that the Annual Meeting will happen on Tuesday, June 29th 5:30-7:30. This is when we would elect new members and new officers annually. Our regular Monthly Meeting to remain on June 28th, 2021 which would be mostly spent reviewing the final budget proposal and voting on the 2021-2022 Budget.
  1. Babz was wondering if we could make the June meeting in person, maybe outside. Bob said that we can make that call closer to the date depending on the weather.
- C. Ky added that by doing this the very next day, there will not be any other Board business that we squeeze into our annual meeting. This will allow the board members rolling off of the board to finish their responsibilities and leave room for the new board members to review our policies before our August meeting.

**V. School Committee Report (6:20) (Monica)**

- A. The School Committee met on April 6th and April 20th to discuss internal hiring practices and the development of consistent hiring practices for all CGHS hires. The Committee is making some ground considering policies that will allow the organization to give more equitable consideration to applicants.

**VI. Finance Committee Report (6:22)**

- A. The Finance Committee met on April 22nd and reviewed Budget vs. Actuals as of March 31, 2021 (not attached because of error; see below for corrected version). This includes a third quarter projection which is the best guess on how we will end the year. We are very close to what was budgeted and we will have a \$138,000 "excess." Row 73 is money we took from our reserve fund to make up for a Community Programs loss. If we have an "excess" at the end of the year that will reduce how we pull or contribute to our reserves.

1. Charles wanted to know the best case scenario for the end of the year. Beth said the best case would depend on how much we end up with PPE forgiveness. Monica stated that the \$800,000 forgiveness plus last year's small surplus could mean \$900,000 in reserves. Monica wanted to add that we have made significant infrastructure improvements this year where we did not have to pull from Capital money because of this PPE money.
2. Kyeen wanted to know if we had met our goals to reach our three-year payroll increase that was proposed. Beth explained that that depends on what happens with this budget over the next two years.
3. Charlie wanted us to know how our whole benefits package compares to that of NHPS Teachers. Monica said that we are pretty close this fiscal year to what NHPS have offered their teaching staff but our target at the end of 3 years is based on a NHPS projection. In our salaries this year for teachers most of our teachers are earning 98-99% if they were on the same step in NHPS but NHPS did not raise salaries this year so we may have caught up to 100% depending on what their union negotiates. Any private organization can not offer the same level of benefits but we don't have an exact comparison. That being said, we have not received any complaints on our new benefits or our adjusted PTO. Monica does hope to budget for changes to our retirement support, only Teachers Retirement Board contributions are going to Teachers and CG does not contribute additional funds to any staff retirement plans.

B. FY 22 Budget update

1. Beth noted that the next year's budget is still in progress. There is a lot of uncertainty right now in the state budget before May, but the budget committee will be working on nailing down those uncertainties and submitting a draft budget to the Board for the May meeting. We expect that the budget will be voted on in June, in accordance with state budgeting requirements.
2. Monica found what she believes is a mistake in the payroll section of the Budget vs. Actuals spreadsheet above. She will be asking Betsy to submit an amended Budget vs. Actuals to the board to review. Beth also said that Betsy should review the whole column of last year's numbers because there may be a few mistakes.
3. [The corrected Budget vs. Actuals is linked to here.](#)

**VII. [Development Committee Report \(6:34\)](#)**

- A. Charles stated that a larger report was sent out in advance by Kimball. The biggest point is that we are \$75,000 short on our fundraising goal for the year.
- B. Kimball and Audrey are setting a high goal for The Great Give. Audrey will be meeting with board members on wednesday to give them a modus operandi on Great Give fundraising.
- C. Charles, Kimball and Audrey are trying to find organized ways for the board to raise funds. This could be offering the board pre-made communications and to get board members to contribute to finding high level donors that we can ask for substantial contributions. If everyone on the board could bring one person on, that would be huge.
- D. Babz explained that we have a development team that needs our help. We all have email and social media that we need to sure up our reach. People give because they dig us but then they don't give again because they think we're all right and don't need additional support. We want to touch people in a way that they want to keep supporting into the future. We want them to stay connected. We can step up our game by talking to our circles and expanding our circles to make sure we can continue to raise money into the future. We need to support the development team, do thank you letters and phone calls to our donors.

Audrey's 30min meeting she's going to host will prepare everyone so you don't feel isolated in your ask.

**VIII. Adjourn (6:51)**

- A. Bob moved to adjourn at 6:51pm, Charles seconded. The motion to adjourn was unanimously approved.

Next Meeting:

Monday, May 24, 2021 (5:30 pm)

**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, April 23rd) and will close at 5:00 pm on the day of the meeting (Monday, April 26th). 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 [errol.saunders@nhep.com](mailto:errol.saunders@nhep.com) by 5:30 pm on the day of the meeting. All submitted documents will be included in the publicly shared meeting minutes.