**Harwood Unified Union School District Board of Directors**

**Harwood Union School Library**

**Board Minutes**

**December 6, 2017**

**6:30 to 9:00 PM**

**Unapproved Minutes**

**Present from the Board:** Christine Sullivan (Chair), Gabe Gilman, Jim Casey, Garett MacCurtain, Tom Cahalan, Maureen McCracken, Caitlin Hollister, Peter Langella, Alexandra Thomsen, Jill Ellis, Lorraine Wargo, Alycia Biondo, Rob Williams

**Not Attending:** Rosemarie White

**Board members late:** None

**Present from HUUSD:** Brigid Nease, Superintendent and Michelle Baker, Director of Finance. Donarae Dawson, Director of Special Ed

**Public**: Maddie Hughes, Thomas Thuman, Steve Odefey, Scott Mackey, David Goodman, Deb Hunter, Chris Keating, Ben Smith, Laura Caffry

1. Call to Order: Christine called meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.
2. Additions and Deletions:
   1. Henry FOI Request: how to handle this Freedom of Information request from Seth Henry. Discussion of what obligation the board has in this matter. It as been suggested that Seth meet with Michelle. Peter moved not to discuss issue at this time, seconded by Garett. 32% voted not to discuss it at this time and 61% voted to add it to the agenda.
3. Public Comment: Wanted to let board know that the work of the admin and teachers is very appreciated and many parents excited about all the great things happening. Other members wholeheartedly agreed. Have full faith in addressing the situation with the Henry request. Don’t ever believe that some of the shrill voices heard represent the community. So many feel proud and very well represented. Having stable leadership has been very important to this board.
4. Approve minutes: Alex moved to accept minutes with edits, seconded by Garett. Motion approved; Alycia and Lorraine abstained – not present at last meeting.
5. Reflections: Caitlin thanked the elementary principals for the amazing forum on Pre-K last Tuesday.
6. Henry FOI: think response is clear – if he has not contacted Michelle, ball is in his court. He should meet with Michelle and then come back to board. Should there be one person who responds rather than all board? Should we have a written procedure saying that these are the steps for a record request? Policy committee has discussed creating this policy. Caitlin moved to have Policy Committee create a policy procedure for this, seconded by Jill. Brigid suggests that Mr. Henry’s request is overwhelming – he was asked to limit this request to make it manageable, gave three choices and an offer to meet with Michelle. Board position is strong and clear. Board approves all expenditures and also have audits. None of these found any errors. Never any irregular spending. Shame on the Valley Reporter for publishing the Henry letter without the explanation from the Admin. Caitlin withdrew motion. Peter moved for the board not to adopt Mr. Henry’s records request as its own, seconded by Tom. Board vote: 84% supported, and 10.2 % opposed. Christine volunteered to contact Mr. Henry and follow up on the offer made in Brigid’s letter instead of the whole board taking on the task.
7. Retreat planning: December 13 plan: Val to be here from 6-7:30 or 6:30 to 8. Suggest Val spend a ½ hour with the Community Engagement Group before at 5:30. Suggestions: Board evaluation tool, Community Engagement event – Val is very supportive with this. Suggests to not focus on questions of “what do you love or what do you want to keep.” Start with overview of budget process, breaking down into small groups, may not be able to address all questions that night. Remember that this is one of many opportunities to engage, not hearing from everyone. Suggest take notes for small groups too. Use committee questions 1 & 2 and avoid 3 & 4. What other direction would be helpful to pass on to Val? Sub-groups do not feel right if with small number of people. Small groups allow all to be heard so important if there is a large group. Go around room and have each person introduce self, what town from and what questions they have. Can write questions on large paper. Ten board members are planning to attend on the 18th. Have Val spend more time on Community Engagement in general instead of the Dec 18 event. Empower committee to do this work. Ask Val how to make the public feel heard in future meetings – hearing from everyone, not just one or two people– and community interaction. Spend final hour with Val on board evaluation tool.
8. Board Reports –
   1. Communications: Meeting scheduled next week at 7 am at the Three Mountain Café.
   2. Community Engagement: Discussion of the four items for the meeting. (Have people attending write thoughts on large paper at meeting.) Committee will take ideas from tonight’s meeting under consideration and decide what to send out.
9. Director of Finance Report - Continued discussion of budget expenditures, yield:
   1. Michelle presented comparative FTE equivalent details current at the present time of each school, along with proposed staffing changes for FY2019. All administrators have agreed to these changes that are as bare bone as possible while maintaining equity. The changes at this time result in only 1.79 additional staff.
10. Scott letter and Holcombe memo: Financial numbers are bare bones as far as best practice goes. Wish could find a way to be proactive to share with Gov. Scott the information gathered by Michelle. Hope things that come out of the Summit would at least be for 2020 because any change would require time to process. It’s disrespectful for board not to be given the time to work this out. Peter made a motion to send the following letter to Governor Scott and the Legislature: The Harwood Unified Union School District Board would like to request that Governor Scott, the Legislature, and any agencies, organizations, or committees working on education funding attach 2018 choices to fiscal year 2020 (or the 2019-20 school year). We have already begun our fiscal year 2019 budgeting process, and any requests, mandates, laws, or agreements communicated now through the 2018 legislative session are already too late. Thank you for respecting our time and work as we try to meet our Act 46 goals of equity, excellence, efficiency, accountability, and affordability, seconded by Alycia. Motion passed unanimously.
11. Other business/future agenda planning: Could admin provide information about the capacity of each of the schools.
12. Executive Session: None
13. Adjourn. Rob moved to adjourn at 9:25, seconded by Alycia. Motion passed.