



CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, April 20, 2017 | 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

South Seattle College, Georgetown Campus
Colin Education Hall, Room C122
6737 Corson Avenue S
Seattle, WA 98108

Attendance:

Elizabeth Cohen, Trish Millines Dziko, Jessica Garcia, Dan Grimm, Kaaren Heikes, Dr. Stacy Hill, Dr. Margit McGuire, Dr. Gil Mendoza, Steve Sundquist, and Cindi Williams.

Joshua Halsey, Cathy Fromme, Nadja Michel-Herf, Paula Kitzke, Aileen Miller, Amanda Martinez

Guests from SIA: Travis Franklin, School Leader; Cal Larson, Board Chair

Call To Order:

Roll Call

Chair Sundquist called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m. The following Commissioners were present: Elizabeth Cohen, Trish Millines Dziko, Kaaren Heikes, Dr. Stacy Hill, Dr. Margit McGuire, Dr. Gil Mendoza, Jessica Garcia, Dan Grimm, Steve Sundquist, and Cindi Williams. It was determined that a quorum was present to proceed with the meeting.

Consideration of the February 16, 2017 Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting Minutes for the February 16, 2017 Commission Meeting Minutes were reviewed and one item in the minutes needed to change. Page 5 of the charter contract updates, specifically around the SIA conversation, we recorded the vote incorrectly. Kaaren Heikes abstained from voting and the notes need to reflect that. Steve Sundquist moved to approve the amended minutes. Margit McGuire seconded. Motion carried, with no opposes. Jessica Garcia and Trish Millines Dziko abstained.

Public Comment

Public Comments were made by the below:

. Linda McDermott, CFO of Spokane Public Schools: provided the Commission with perspective on the public school facilities challenges in Spokane;

- Darcolena Saloria, parent at SIA : expressed support for SIA’s proposed move;
- Paul Swift, parent at SIA: expressed support for SIA’s proposed move;

- Caroline McRoberts, Assistant to Superintendent Ben Smalls of Central Valley School District introduced Brian Kissler, Legal Counsel who read a statement providing additional details of the school district’s pending real estate transaction;
- Carrie Weeks, parent at SIA: expressed support for SIA’s proposed move;
- Jeff Bunch, parent at SIA: expressed support for SIA’s proposed move.

Chair Report

Chair Sundquist reported on the final appointments of the now full Commission. Commissioner Sundquist also provided a quick update on Joshua’s compensation and the discussion that happened the latter part of 2016. Executive Director Halsey gave a strong performance and the Commission was able to increase his compensation to the top of his range, but there is still work to be done to move into the next range. WaCharters has a conference coming up May 12 – May 13. Those interested may email Joshua or Amanda for registration. A reminder to everyone that F-1 Forms were due April 17 to Public Disclosure Commission. This uncomfortable task is important and Commissioners are legally obligated to complete this form to help identify potential conflicts of interest in performing our duties. Chair Sundquist’s last comment was an FYI that WaCharters has had a change of leadership and Patrick D’Amelio is the new Executive Director.

Executive Director Report

General Updates

Executive Director Halsey gave an update on the co-funded position for the CSP Grant Manager. This grant was a 7 million dollar, 3-year award. As the grant structure only allowed 5% to be used for administrative purposes, the full time position will be 75% CSP grant-funded and 25% CSC funded.

Charter School Updates

The Commission has, in conjunction with the State Auditor’s Office, begun to have conversations regarding timelines associated with school audits and when those reports will become available.

We are continuing the board monitoring now through the end of the school year. Currently in the middle of two-day site visits through June as well. These site visits include the school’s leadership, board members, students, teachers and operational staff. These visits will produce a report for the school and the information will be a part of the organizational framework report out next year.

Paula Kitzke is conducting site visits with the schools as well regarding Special Education services. These include interviewing staff who are part of the school’s current plans and are technical assistance focused. In addition to this, Paula has been working with Seneca, PSESD and the school’s teams that are part of the true measure collaborative effort.

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New School Application Updates

The Commission received 4 NOIs for application of a new charter school on February 17, 2017. On March 31, 2017, three applications were received. Two of those three are moving forward after the Completeness Review. The two schools moving forward are Impact: Seattle and New Horizons Academy.

The evaluation team is now doing a comprehensive review of the materials, including all 30 sections of the application materials. Each evaluator will review individually the applications, then come together for a panel call collectively. The next step will include Capacity Interviews on May 9, 2017 as a two-fold process including a performance task and then questions based upon their applications. Lastly, each applicant will hold a Public Forum in their prospective neighborhoods for community engagement. This will allow the applicant team to present to the public their plan, mission, vision and goals for the school in the area. Commissioners are urged to attend the Public Forums. The invites will be sent out for the final dates and times of these events.

The final recommendation reports for the applicants will be submitted to commissioners on June 16, 2017 for review at the June Commission Meeting.

Legislative Updates

Joshua continues to meet with legislators. There is currently a big gap between where the Governor, House and Senate have landed in terms of their proposed budgets. The leadership of the Senate and the House are not yet actively negotiating. The expectation is that the Governor will reconvene them for special session next week that lasts for 30 days. Some of the bigger policy issues remain in the air, as they are attached to the budget.

Lawsuit Challenging Constitutionality of Charter School Act Updates

The plaintiffs have asked for an appeal which has to be filed by July 10, with the state's response due by August 9.

Disclosures and Conflicts of Interest Discussion

Chair Sundquist attended an event that included Maggie O'Sullivan from Rainier Prep, WaCharters and representatives from Summit Sierra's board of directors. He was the first presenter and described Washington's charter law and the responsibilities of the Commission, then departed before the other speakers made their remarks.

Other potential concerns reported by Commissioners included:

Newly appointed commissioner, Jessica Garcia, is a parent to a child at Green Dot Destiny and is on the School Advisory Council. Commissioner Garcia will recuse herself and not participate in the consideration of any issues related to Excel or Green Dot to mitigate any potential conflict of interest.

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Dr. Stacy Hill serves on the SIA board and will recuse herself from today's discussion and vote regarding SIA.

Charter Contract Transfer Updates and Consideration

The Commission has supported Excel's request to transition to Green Dot Public Schools Washington, and the State Board of Education has approved it. The new contract is not yet finalized but it is in process. Steve moved to approve the signing of the contract of Excel's transition to Green Dot once it has been finalized. Trish seconded. Motion carried, with Jessica Garcia abstaining.

Spokane International Academy submitted a series of documents in accordance with the transfer application to move their current contract with Spokane Public Schools to the Commission. Commission staff met with school leader Travis Franklin, on March 10. They spent a full day with the special education team, Travis, board chair Cal Larson and other team members.

Travis Franklin has a great relationship with Spokane Public Schools, and there has been significant communication with them about not being able to find a facility that enables them to grow within their district boundaries. The potential move would locate SIA in the Central Valley School District. Central Valley sent a memo to the Commission regarding the lack of transparency and communication with SIA on this potential move.

Joshua's recommendation to the Commission finds that the transfer is in the best interest of Spokane International Academy's students.

Steve moved to accept SIA's charter contract transition from Spokane Public Schools to the Commission. Cindi seconded the motion. Stacy abstained. Motion carried.

Academic Performance Framework Updates and Next Steps

Whitney Spalding Spencer from NACSA joined Joshua in presenting the Academic Performance Framework. They have worked with various stakeholders to review the proposed academic framework – questions are in the document FAQ. The three questions they are trying to answer today include:

1. Why does the framework include so many measures?
2. Why is the achievement index weighted so heavily?
3. How much does each of the indicators count and how will these impact the school ratings?

Whitney elaborated on academic performance and where this fits within the life cycle of a charter school. The team started with a generic NACSA framework, modified it to meet the requirements of our charter law, tested and finalized. The reality is that no single measure is sufficient, but they all fit

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together in a holistic way. The final product will be a one-stop shop so that we don't have to go looking for data in additional places.

Overview of Commission's Regulatory Functions

Joshua and Aileen Miller discussed the Commission's regulatory function. The Charter School Act and the Ethics in Public Service Act both have requirements that guide the role of the commissioners and the Commission itself. With new commissioners and continuing invitations to charter school sector learning opportunities, we have to review our policies and the laws to determine the extent to which we participate in the coming events. We want to clarify how to handle potential and potentially perceived conflicts of interest.

Commissioner Hill has served on the SIA board since its inception, works with them through her teacher preparation program at Whitworth, and will be a parent at SIA when her daughter attends. Given today's earlier Commission decision accepting the school's petition to transfer their charter to the Commission pending their move to a new facility outside Spokane, she announced her intention to resign from the Commission.

Executive Session

No closed executive session.

Next Steps

The following next steps were identified:

1. Begin a new appointment process with the governor for Commissioner Hill's seat— any ideas let Steve know
2. Academic performance framework
3. SIA Charter contract will be working through a re-chartering process for May meeting
4. Conflict of Interest and our ethics-related policies
5. Moving forward on Joshua's compensation
6. Continuing with the 2017 new school application process toward consideration in late June

Meeting Adjournment

Chair Sundquist adjourned the meeting at 3:19 PM

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