

CHARMS Collaborative
Open Session Meeting Minutes, January 20, 2016

Members Present: Mr. Farmer (Sharon), Mr. Zinni (Avon), Dr. Lally (Holbrook), Ms. Henderson (Canton), Dr. Rizzi (Stoughton)

Members Absent: Mrs. Gormley (Milton)

Also Present: Rosalie O'Connell (Executive Director), Christina Farrington (Business Office Assistant), Paulajo Gaines (DESE Representative), Andrew Paquette (TMSolutions, Business Management)

Board Minutes

Board meeting minutes for December 18, 2015 were presented for approval.

Mr. Farmer made a motion to approve board meeting minutes for December 18, 2015; Dr. Lally seconded. Motion to approve board meeting minutes for December 18, 2015 passed unanimously by a vote of 4 to 0.

BUDGET UPDATE

Mr. Paquette presented an updated budget showing a surplus of \$128,248.33. This surplus increases to \$158,067.13 with the addition of a new student from Brockton. The prior year revenue received in August 2015 is \$268,336.48. Mr. Zinni asked for clarification on the FY15 status. Mr. Paquette will present a revised budget (revenue and expense) for the Board to vote on.

Mr. Paquette explains that the collaborative received some late FY15 payments in FY16. Mr. Farmer questioned why they were late. Mr. Paquette answered that they were sent in late or the district did not pay in time. Mrs. O'Connell feels that both are accurate explanations. The former Business Manager stopped sending invoices and following up on past due invoices. Mr. Paquette further explained that a majority of the past due invoices are from non-member districts. Dr. Lally inquired if there are any invoices that cannot be collected? Would it be worth it to try to get the money owed? Mr. Paquette feels these invoices are collectable and indicated that all revenue that came in after July 1, 2015 is reflected in FY16. Mr. Paquette indicated that all FY15 obligations were paid.

Mr. Zinni and Mr. Farmer were pleased with the format of the updated revenue report.

Ms. Henderson motioned to accept the revised revenue report with the addition of the new student; Mr. Farmer seconded. Motion to approve the revised revenue report with the addition of the new student passed unanimously by a vote of 5 to 0.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES

Mrs. O'Connell reviewed the **Charms major initiatives** for this year:

1. Trauma Sensitive Classrooms and meeting the social-emotional needs of all our students.
 - All Charms staff trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid
 - Committee working on draft policies, procedures and protocols
 - Collaboration with outside agencies
 - Strategies incorporated into classroom settings

2. Transition Planning

- Indicator 13 as our blueprint
- Curriculum Needs
- Student Driven Practices
- Collaboration with adult services
- Engaging Families

Program Updates:

- There are currently 4 students that are enrolled in the Alternative Education/Vocational Education hybrid program.
 - Increased accessibility to receiving a diploma and vocational training
 - Wider range of transitioning services
 - Increased individualization of services
- One of our students is currently holding a position at Sports Authority working 15 hours a week.
- Charms students volunteering at the YMCA as well as in the Charms administrative office.
- A new student from Brockton is enrolled.
- Five active referrals. Mrs. O'Connell stated that the majority of referrals are for social/emotional students.

Mrs. O'Connell updated the Board on the **SCRO Initiatives**.

1. Registration is still open for the applicants for the SCRO Virtual Learning Academy as they need 12 teachers to run the program.
2. The SCRO is looking to offer mentoring for teachers in the severe special needs program.
3. There will be a special education fair on 12/15/16 & 12/16/16. This fair will include key note speakers for both days as well as breakout sessions with the collaborative staff. The location has not been finalized yet however Mrs. O'Connell is looking into holding it at the Massasoit Conference Center in Brockton as they can accommodate the amount of people that would be attending.

FEASIBILITY STUDY

The previous study was completed in 2012 when the number of students was dwindling. The decision from that study was to hire a new Executive Director and move forward. There were 53 students in 2012. Mr. Zinni is concerned with Milton Public Schools leaving the collaborative, will the other member districts leave as well. The 3 options for moving forward are: (1) revitalize, (2) merge with another collaborative, and (3) dissolve. Mr. Farmer questioned the merger option and what are the financial liabilities? Dr. Rizzi questioned whether the board members should ask the collaborative attorney questions regarding this and then discuss further at the next board meeting. Mr. Zinni explained that he talked to his districts' attorney and was told the only liability while a member is a 120 day clause.

Mr. Farmer is worried about other districts as his district has no intention of changing their membership in Charms unless there is some big financial issue. Mrs. O'Connell shared her concerns about space. Mr. Farmer further clarified that this process needs to be very thorough. He questioned what the collaborative could do to revitalize; the collaborative needs to be fair. Mr. Zinni questioned what the next step should look like. Mr. Zinni suggested the board members generate questions for the attorney and also perform a needs assessment for the districts. Ms. Henderson believes the high school programs in Canton are very impressive. Mr. Zinni feels that Charms needs to grow and expand. Mr. Farmer

questioned how small is too small? What would that number be? Mr. Farmer agrees that each board member needs to put together a list of questions. Mr. Zinni questioned what service/product does Charms need in provide? Dr. Rizzi feels both are great questions. Dr. Rizzi questions how many kids are covering that overhead? Need accounting to get an answer.

Mrs. O'Connell explained that when she started at Charms the programs were not meeting the needs and her first duty was to revitalize the programs. The current quality of the teachers and curriculum are excellent. Charms' now has a team that is very committed.

Mr. Paquette feels that the budget should be voted on/looked at during each board meeting. He also feels that Charms could look into non special education initiatives that could be revenue generating. Mr. Zinni questioned FY15 and what is owed/not collected. He requested a report that reflects this.

Mr. Zinni would like a new understanding of the district's obligations should Charms close. Mr. Zinni questioned if the collaborative should bring in some to evaluate the programs? He suggested a retired Special Education Director. This would give the Board an idea of where the collaborative is. The overall evaluation should cover staff, curriculum, safety, IEPs, quality and best practices. Mrs. O'Connell explained that she has a goal to accomplish this for the Multi Skills program. Ms. Henderson was looking for clarification on the overall evaluation. Is this how the collaborative wants to spend our money? Who is going to let the collaborative know how to grow the programs? Dr. Rizzi feels that a cost saving method would be to have one of the district's Special Education Directors do the evaluation. Mr. Farmer feels that the collaborative would need to move forward should the evaluation prove that the collaborative has high quality programs. The collaborative should not dissolve at that point and should move forward. Mr. Farmer questioned if the collaborative maxed out, how many referrals can the collaborative take? Mrs. O'Connell replied 20 to 25 students.

Mr. Farmer inquired if there is a benefit to open up the collaborative membership to other districts? Mrs. O'Connell has looked into this option over the last few years. Mr. Farmer clarified that he although he has concerns, he hopes for the collaborative to achieve success. Once the collaborative has a full picture, then the collaborative can move forward.

Dr. Rizzi explained that since the Multi Skills program evaluation is a part of Mrs. O'Connell's goals, those two program will be evaluated first and then decide if the collaborative should move forward with the other programs.

Mr. Farmer questioned if there is an expert on merging collaboratives? Ms. Gaines will inquire with Christine Lynch at DESE regarding this question.

The Board would like for the attorney to attend the next board meeting in February and attend at 10:00am.

In closing, the collaborative's next steps are:

1. Board members will send questions to Mrs. O'Connell to forward to attorney;
2. Attorney will be invited to attend the next board meeting on February 24, 2016;
3. Plan a future meeting with the Board of Directors and their Special Education Directors; and
4. Financial questions answered by Mr. Paquette.

Adjournment

Mr. Farmer made a motion to adjourn open session; Dr. Lally seconded. Motion to adjourn passed unanimously by a vote of 5 to 0.

Executive Session

With there being no further business, an executive session was not held.