

Hamden High School (HHS) School Governance Council

Meeting Minutes

August 23rd, 2021, 6pm (on Zoom)

Members Present (alphabetical order): Evelyn Cumberbatch, Frank Dixon, John Donahue, John Hanna, Elizabeth Marini, Nancy Restivo, Ann Stiltner

Members Not Present: Darcie DeCosta, Nadine Gannon, Andrew Hull, Frank LaDore, Melinda Saller, Greg Thierault, Mark Zarrillo

Members Resigned since last meeting: Evelyn Cumberbatch, Ann Stiltner – but both present for this last meeting

Guests Present: none

1. Welcome – Frank Dixon and Liz Marini

- a. Frank officially opened meeting; he knows many people are still traveling and ending the summer; he took his son to college; he welcomed present members; he said this will be truncated meeting but couple of key things to talk about; we need to focus on new membership and filling open positions; key things to work on is filling these slots; have a lot of work today to get back into compliance as a governance council; fortunately a lot of 9th grade parents have expressed some interest

2. Approval of Minutes – Evelyn Cumberbatch

- a. Eve asked if any recommended changes to May and June minutes; she explained that a member had questioned some of the paraphrasing of the conversation with Mr. Cocchiola so she went back and listened to the recording and basically took verbatim notes which are now in the minutes; similarly in June as she was participating in the meeting more, there were parts of the meeting that she missed taking notes on, so she also listened to the recording and basically took verbatim notes which are now in the minutes; thus, these minutes are quite lengthy
- b. John H. said it is important to approve May's meeting minutes but he wants an opportunity to review them again and make comments
- c. Frank wondered if he wants to approve June but not May's minutes
- d. John said that would work
- e. Eve made comments that the May notes are now basically verbatim notes and that it is not necessarily appropriate to include comments on the notes from the present; she said that different members may have different memories of what Mr. Cocchiola said and they may paraphrase what he said differently; if the paraphrasing is so different between different members, then it would be important to have Mr. Cocchiola also review the minutes; she said that May's meeting was a very important discussion and it is very important to continue this discussion; if people want to review the minutes see what still needs to be clarified with Mr. Cocchiola, then this could be done after they are

approved, and the SGC can invite Mr. Cocchiola back for further questioning; but, the minutes from May are presently pretty close to verbatim and at some point we need to go ahead and approve them; we can continue the very important discussion into the future

- f. Nancy said that minutes should reflect just what was said and should not include comments on what was said
- g. Frank asked if John was Ok with this, which he was, so Frank asked for motion to approve the minutes, a motion was made and seconded
- h. Eve will email them to the media specialists

3. Governance Council and Administrative Remarks – Liz Marini

- a. Liz said the SGC has a multitude of things to discuss
- b. **Governance Council Membership**
- c. Eve said that she has decided to resign from the SGC, for many reasons; she said that it has been a privilege and a pleasure to work with the members of the SGC; she will see that she completes the process of having the May and June minutes uploaded to the SGC website and she will take notes today, do an initial edit of them, and send them to Frank and Liz to oversee the process of approving those minutes. She said that the position of Secretary on the executive council is therefore open.
- d. A number of members said kind things to Eve for being a member on the SGC and for taking good notes
- e. Ann said that she has also decided to resign from the SGC; it has been a great experience for her and she thanked other SGC members
- f. A number of members thanked Ann for being on the SGC and being so dedicated in all that she does
- g. Frank said he appreciated Ann's work with his daughter
- h. Frank noted that John H. said goodbye to Ann and Eve in the chat
- i. Frank asked how many open slots the SGC now has: 2 or 3 Teachers?
- j. Liz said have 2 teacher slots open; she will be at orientation; she said there are some new, young and energetic teachers in Ann's department
- k. Frank asked where to be this coming Thursday
- l. Liz said she has asked for table for SGC on Thursday – similar to open house – has poster and has editable pdf available and paper forms if parents want to apply at that time. If anyone wants to drop by and hang out and sit with her is happening 5:30-7:30pm; she will be there 5-8pm.
- m. Frank asked which door to enter
- n. Liz gave out cell number to SGC to text to know where to go at that time
- o. Frank will plan to be there
- p. Eve asked if anyone will be at the actual orientation to talk about the SGC?
- q. Frank said not usually part of agenda
- r. Eve pointed out that it is a good idea

- s. Liz said she will ask Tegan; Tegan is new 9th grade Principal; she started in late February 2020; Liz looked for but couldn't find the agenda for the orientation
- t. Ann found it and said its 5:30-7:30pm, only for 9th grade students and their families; check-in and fair are on football field; only students can go into the school for a tour
- u. Frank asked if Greg is leaving
- v. Eve said Greg emailed her prior to the meeting to apologize for not being here, so it does not appear that he plans to leave
- w. John D. said on the Education committee Greg said that he may not be able to head a sub-committee but he still wanted to stay on the SGC
- x. Frank asked if Eve is a community member?
- y. Eve said yes
- z. Frank asked if John H. is staying
- aa. John H. said that he is staying
- bb. Liz asked if anyone knows of any community members
- cc. Frank said he thinks a community member just has to be citizen of Hamden; he said that he is thinking of a couple people and if anyone has names, can bring them up
- dd. Nancy asked if there is an available link to the application
- ee. Liz said that she has on to-do list to email the editable pdf tomorrow; it is a very simple application, and she will have Nadine add it to this week's Dragon Update, so can do voting in month of September;
- ff. Frank wondered how long need to leave it open?
- gg. Liz wanted to talk about the other open positions first; almost 4 parent positions, 1 community member, 2 students; she said she asked one student but he couldn't commit due to basketball schedule; she addressed Ann – for students she has in mind – she read the By-Laws and it says students are supposed to be elected by the student body
- hh. Ann said that in the past there were only the number of candidates for the positions, so an election wasn't necessary, so will depend on how many students will get to apply
- ii. Frank said that last year he reached out to Mr. Battle and he submitted Imani? Wondered if should hold election or enlist students?
- jj. Liz said she wants to enlist some students; she read the By-Laws again and that there should be an election to make sure they are in compliance
- kk. Franks said he thinks the SGC should stay in compliance, so should have an election; will have to get the school to make sure this is held
- ll. Liz said on the pdf form, there are boxes to check to run as student as well as parents; could put on smart boards around the school; she can create a slide with QR code to access the form on-line; but the SGC needs decide about how long to hold open;
- mm. Frank said even if automated and virtual, need democratic process; conversation that has to have
- nn. Ann said can add the form to the Dragon Update, and can be

- advertised for all: parent, community and students
- oo. Liz said Ms. Gannon doesn't like the Dragon Update to be too verbose; can she sent her bullet out to the SGC to be further edited; but wants to make sure goes out by Friday at 2pm;
- pp. Frank wondered what's the problem with old process
- qq. Liz clarified that wants to phrase it in a way that is clear and not too verbose
- rr. Frank said to make sure includes for community, parent, and students, not for teachers
- ss. Ann said need a deadline for the submission of the applications
- tt. Liz suggested September 17th, so before next SGC if it is on 3rd Monday of the month, which would be September 20th
- uu. Frank said seems too soon
- vv. John wondered if school is out on the Friday before
- ww. Liz said good question
- xx. Frank said seems too soon
- yy. Liz asked why Frank wants to extend it
- zz. Frank said some parents don't read that quickly; but he is open to other times
- aaa. Liz said that if say in Dragon Update say due 9/17/21, can keep revisiting and can extend deadline if need to
- bbb. Nancy said that if she sees quick deadlines she is quicker to fill out applications, versus waiting to fill out the application
- ccc. Liz likes that very much
- ddd. Frank said if put in Dragon Update this week can put in deadline
- eee. Liz said will have updates in future Dragon Updates
- fff. Frank, Liz, and Nancy made further comments along the same line
- ggg. Liz asked how the SGC feels we are up to with open seats and application process, any issues in those areas?
- hhh. Nancy asked if Liz leaving
- iii. Liz said, no, but its final year that she can serve, so does want to make sure that adequately giving the SGC what is needed when she leaves
- jjj. Frank said this is his last year; but if he can return as a community member, he may do that; he is very busy with some other things
- kkk. Ann asked if he wants to share what he is doing
- lll. Frank said he is running for Board of Education
- mmm. Liz congratulated Frank; she then asked the SGC if want to meet over Zoom or in-person; she is concerned about the Delta variant and thinks the SGC should still meet virtually
- nnn. Frank said he is on board with meeting virtually until satisfied that can meet safely
- ooo. Liz said she has little ones at home and they can't get vaccinated yet; at least 2 teachers on SGC have little ones, and John and Andy's time is so valuable when have little kids; but she doesn't know if easier for them to be virtual or not; she thinks is more convenient over Zoom
- ppp. John D. said he is good with Zoom

- qqq. Liz said can revisit this decision at future meetings; she then moved to sketching out tentative dates for next year's SGC meetings
- rrr. John H. put out to cross check with school calendar for days off
- sss. Group discussion of future meetings while a number of members looked at the school calendar for this coming year; decided on: 9/20, 10/18, 11/15, 12/20, 1/24, 2/28 3/21, 4/25, 5/16, June is optional meeting TBD if will meet
- ttt. Frank asked if have to put on website
- uuu. Liz said she will email the media specialists
- vvv. Eve offered to send the dates along with the meeting minutes for May and June to the medial specialists; she also pointed out again that she is vacating the Secretary position
- www. Frank said that can address this in September
- xxx. Liz said vote used to be in October, but maybe can move up to September, but if not have new members by September, will have to wait until later
- yyy. Frank said so will have to ask for volunteer Secretary for future
- zzz. Liz said can do quick recordings on TikTok
- aaaa. Frank asked if anyone will volunteer
- bbbb. Nancy volunteered
- cccc. Frank and Liz thanked her

4. Principals Update – Nadine Gannon

- a. Not Present

5. Board of Education Report:

- a. Not Present

6. Old Business

- a. Frank said a lot of old business but not able to get to it today Including:
 - b. **Student/Teacher Committee**
 - i. Students not present to continue discussion
 - c. **Sub-Committee Goals and Members** – not discussed
 - i. **EDUCATION/SCHOOL COUNSELING**
 - ii. **SAFETY/OPERATIONS/COMMUNICATION**
 - iii. **MENTAL HEALTH/SUPPORTS**
 - iv. **BUDGET**
 - v. **SCHOOL PROMOTION/SCHOOL CLIMATE**
 - d. **School Equity Initiative** – Not discussed at this meeting

7. New Business

- a. Liz said is working with capstone committee – to shepherd class of 2024 thru capstone project, work with advisor in school, but hook up with mentors, wants to work with SGC to develop bank of sponsors;

wants to know in future if anyone would like to form sub-committee with her to work on this goal

- b. Frank asked what kind of professions
- c. Liz said will have better answer at September meeting; depends on the student's interests; if interested in podcasts or musicians; might be interesting and wide-cross section of local professionals or even may be special interest of citizen;
- d. Frank asked about the capstone program
- e. Liz said now State requirement to do capstone program for graduation; HHS able to write own way for how students will do it; at last marking period of sophomore year; working on it in junior year, and presenting in senior year
- f. Frank said to sign him up for helping to develop the bank of mentors as the knows may different professionals in the area
- g. Liz thanked him for that; knows that is big project that has to grow slowly
- h. Frank said he has known many business people in his family and he has always been on board with mentorship programs
- i. Liz said some kids have shared with her what they want to do, a rising sophomore started his own podcast during the pandemic and another kid has said capstone is pushing him to start a band with political music, but some kids will need additional help and support as this can be scary and tricky

8. Adjournment – Liz Marini

- a. Frank said we seemed to accomplish a lot in 60 minutes
- b. Liz apologized for running over
- c. Frank thanked everyone, asked for motion to adjourn
- d. Liz made motion to adjourn, seconded, and meeting adjourned

Next SGC meeting: September 20, 2021, 6pm on Zoom