



**Assabet Valley Collaborative Board of Directors Meeting
May 27, 2022
MINUTES**

Present: Michael Bergeron, Kirk Downing, Greg Martineau, Marco Rodrigues, Joseph Sawyer, Ernie Houle (9:05), Gregory Myers

Also Present: Cathy Cummins, Hien Burnham, Suzanne Pomerleau, Jennifer Medina and Aldo Tortorelli

Absent: Amber Bock, Jay Cummings, Brian Haas, Casey Handfield and Jeff Zanghi.

CALL TO ORDER

Michael Bergeron called the meeting to order at 9:04 am.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES- Tabled

Joseph Sawyer motioned to table the minutes of April 29, 2022. Kirk Downing seconded the motion. The Board voted (6-0) to table the minutes of April 29, 2022.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Hien Burnham provided an update on FY22 Year-End Projections; currently she is projecting that AVC will close the year with a \$466,536 deficit which has increased since the last meeting due. She noted that projecting year-end has been complicated by transportation billing and receivables - particularly when corrections are needed. She noted that changes to the projected deficit were due to both increase in expenses (90K) and by decrease in revenue (one student unexpectedly moved to Worcester, for example).

Hien noted that AVC is currently holding \$270K in liability due to disputed penalties in Van Pool payments. AVC and Van Pool will resolve before June 30.

Because there are still many variables, Hien will not be asking the Board to vote today to amend the FY22 budget but this may be needed at the June meeting if current projections hold true.

Kirk Downing inquired about why the Board approved an original budget with a deficit balance. Mike Bergeron noted that the Board had decided last year that the deficit amount would be drawn from AVC's reserve since AVC had enough in reserve to cover the projected deficit. He noted this is not something the Board should do year after year, but that the Board felt comfortable taking that vote this time last year.

Hien and Cathy updated the Board on the status of the FY23 Copy Paper Bid. AVC will request bids from vendors for 3 month copy paper bid (for districts that opt in). The bid opening will take place prior to the June Board meeting. Results will be presented for Board action at the June meeting.

FINAL FY23 BUDGET PRESENTATION

Hien and Cathy presented the Final FY23 Budget - which was largely unchanged since the last meeting. Hien noted that AVC does have a pending project with MEMA that may result in some reimbursements for staffing

and other COVID expenses from FY22-FY23; AVC has till December 2022 to file for reimbursement - and is currently working through the bureaucratic pieces with MEMA to move this project along. If MEMA reimbursements come through it will be relief and will be added to the general fund.

Hien noted that the Evolution project should get started soon once AVC and the contractor finalize contract negotiations; there is a possibility that AVC will have expenses to start the project prior to June 30, which will effect final balances for FY22.

Vote to approve the FY23 budget as presented.

Ernie Houle motioned to approve the FY23 budget as presented, \$17,237,395. Marco Rodrigues seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the FY23 budget as presented \$17,237,395.

Discussion:

Mike Bergeron noted that significant AVC's tuitions and fees must continue to do more to cover the costs of each cost center to continue to disrupt AVC's historic overreliance on transportation revenue to cover other cost centers. He noted that increases in tuitions are also better offset for districts through circuit breaker reimbursements. Marco Rodrigues added that AVC needs to ensure tuitions and fees for services are the primary revenue source.

Cathy noted that 19% increases were in the REACH classrooms and Evolution Cluster 3 - classrooms that are limited in enrollment to a max of 7 students. She noted that OSA and the other Evolution classrooms have greater capacity for increasing enrollment. During good enrollment years at OSA and Evolution, AVC can see quick gains, whereas at REACH and Cluster 3 Evolution if we are not at 21 and 7 students respectively, revenue does not cover expenses.

Greg Martineau requested to see the FY22 approved budget again; Cathy reshared the FY22 budget approved at the June 2021 meeting - in which the Board voted last year to approve a FY22 a deficit of \$287,395. Joseph Sawyer inquired about the Evolution project and how that will impact what is needed to draw down from reserve. Hien noted that currently, the project is expected to be paid out of reserve so any deficit or short fall will also draw down reserve. For these reasons, Hien and Cathy presented a budget proposal for FY23 that has cut expenses to yield a balanced budget with a small surplus. Kirk Downing inquired if the Board had set a threshold for a minimum reserve amount. Cathy noted that state regulations have a maximum surplus amount (25%), but that AVC had not established a minimum.

FACILITIES UPDATE

Aldo Tortorelli provided members with an update on the Evolution renovation project at 28 Lord Rd. He also provided updates to the OSA building.

He said he received 5 bids for the cleaning services for AVC and wants to meet with all.

SHARED LEADERSHIP UPDATE

Jenn Medina presented Board members with a presentation on sustaining AVC's redesigned hiring process which has been an area of success in AVC's commitments to educational equity, diversity, and inclusion. She noted the previously, like in most school settings, hiring had been done largely by a select few (administrators) with superficial opportunities for engagement with additional staff and very limited engagement with students and families. This often resulted in hiring decisions that were not compatible or sustainable, lack of workforce diversity, and lack of adding new team members who would be supportive to our commitments to equity. The new process was launched with the creation of new positions of Facilities and Technology; starting with an organic, inclusive position design process and hiring design process - which has since been built on, improved, and systematized. Nearly two years later, the process has been used by teams across AVC for each position and

this has resulted in capacity building. The process also includes embedded learning related to equity which has helped to increase access to shared learning and mission alignment across teams that have participated. Jenn shared an orientation/training presentation that will be used in the future to further formalize the learning across future hiring teams. She acknowledged the contributions of many partners in developing the process - with specific gratitude to Kiesha Lamb who had been instrumental in all aspects of the design and systems development.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S & TREASURER'S EVALUATION PROCESS

Vice Chair Mike Bergeron updated members on the evaluation process for Cathy's and Peter Zona's evaluation.

Amber sent an email about the evaluations. Cathy will present some of her self-evaluation at today's meeting; then on Tuesday or Wednesday Amber will share the google sheet. Michael Bergeron noted that Peter would also be asked to complete a self-evaluation (using the AVC Treasurer evaluation rubric) and that Cathy and Hien would provide additional input on their routine work with Peter.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Cathy Cummins presented her self-assessment which began with a review of the last evaluation completed in 2021. She noted that the last few years, including this one, have been extremely challenging at AVC. Her vision for educational equity had not been executed strategically and had not included adequate buy in from other leaders at AVC. Ultimately this led to significant turnover in leadership positions in 2021 as a result of a divided leadership team. Throughout 2021-2022 turnover in additional positions impacted all aspects of AVC's functioning. She noted that financial setbacks had prevented filling of key positions, which further impacted staff workload and engagement. She presented overall self-ratings of "needs improvement" across all 4 standards of DESE's superintendent evaluation rubric and an overall rating of "needs improvement." She noted that she stands strong in her conviction and vision that educational equity is the moral obligation of the collaborative and that achieving goals related to this can address the many areas in need of improvement at AVC. She noted that addressing finances and hiring well - quality and alignment to the vision of educational equity - will be key to AVC thriving on the other side of these challenging years of transition and disruption. She noted that she had made some progress on her previous goals, but that more progress was needed - particularly related to communication, climate, operations, and visibility.

Greg Martineau requested that Cathy add to her self-evaluation a completion of the ratings on the specific indicators on the Superintendent evaluation rubric. Cathy will send this to the board prior to the final evaluation meeting. Amber and Mike will gather additional information from Board members and Amber will present the final evaluation at the June Board meeting.

Hiring Update

Cathy provided an update on the hiring process for various positions. She noted that one high quality candidate for a teaching position is currently living in Kenya and would need visa support which Cathy has not done before. Marco Rodrigues stated that Hudson has done this for several years and he would put Cathy in touch with the person from his district who has been coordinating the efforts. She noted that there are 4 finalists for the OSA codirector and that she would have a recommendation for appointment at the June meeting. She concluded her update by stating that one of the additional steps she would be taking with the leadership team was to consider any adjustments that could be made to current roles that would allow for focus on particular gap areas. She noted the need for additional support in central office related to accounts payable - with funding for this built into the budget that was approved. She also noted the possibility of expanding Kenya Franjul's role to have her expertise impact more AVC-wide than her current role. She will provide an update at the June meeting.

Cathy shared with members that they need to discuss meeting dates for next year. They can be discussed via email. There are some conflicts with SWCEC and vacation weeks, November, December and February.

Joseph Sawyer motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ernie Houle seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously (7-0) to adjourn the meeting at 11:06 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Pomerleau and Cathy Cummins