

**Policy & Governance Meeting Minutes**  
**September 23, 2019**

Present: Laurie Klinkhammer, Eric Torres, Charles Vue (arrived 8:37am)

Also present: Mary Ann Hardebeck, Abby Johnson, Jim Schmitt, Jim Fey, Meta Miske Recording Secretary

Meeting called to order at 8:33am by Dr. Torres.

**Public Comment**

No members of the public present for public comment.

**Information regarding green initiatives from Student Transit**

Jim Fey, Vice President of Student Transit gave an update on Student Transit's green initiatives. Mr. Fey indicated Student Transit has been focusing on new clean diesel technology. Most of their fleet is less than 15 years old so most of their units are in the lowest emissions category except a few spare units. A new clean diesel bus costs \$115,000-\$120,000 but they received a grant from the State of Wisconsin that helped offset some of the cost for recent bus purchases.

Additionally, Student Transit's new facility has heated indoor storage; most buses are stored inside and do not have to be plugged in during the cold months. They used high quality insulation when building the new bus garage to retain heat. When buses return from their routes and park in the building, the heat radiates from the bus's engines keeping the building warm. As a result, Student Transit very rarely turns on the heat in the bus garage. The new facility was built with many efficiencies.

Dr. Torres asked if Student Transit has any electric buses. Mr. Fey said not yet as they are monitoring the reliability of electric buses in cold-weather areas such as ours. Mr. Fey said they purchase 4-8 new buses each year and will continue to monitor the reliability of electric and hybrid buses as they buy new units each year.

Dr. Torres asked what makes a yellow bus a yellow bus. Mr. Fey said there are federal government standards regarding every aspect of the buses. There are only three main manufacturers and they are highly regulated. Only school buses can be painted "National School Bus Chrome" which is a patented yellow color believed to be the most visible color in all variations of light.

Mr. Vue said if the federal government regulates the buses, perhaps the green initiatives and requirements will come from the government. Mr. Fey agreed the government may eventually place stricter emissions regulations on school buses.

Dr. Torres asked if the new models are air conditioned, heated, etc. Mr. Fey said the new models have heat, but air conditioning is optional. Student Transit purchased air conditioning units on some of their buses with wheelchair lifts to accommodate students with heat sensitivities. On general education routes, the buses do not have air conditioning.

Mr. Fey talked the committee through a packet he brought which showed how emissions have decreased over the last several years and how clean diesel engines use about half the gas compared to

standard diesel engines. Dr. Torres asked why Thomas Buses (the manufacturer that makes the buses Student Transit purchases) aren't using a more efficient engine that was listed on the chart. Mr. Fey said Thomas does manufacture some with the more efficient engine but not in the bus style that Student Transit currently runs. Thomas is working on making the more efficient engine fit the flat-front style bus that Student Transit runs.

Ms. Klinkhammer said it can be hard to compare electric with fossil fuel because the batteries contain toxic chemicals and must be charged. Unless they are being charged using wind power or solar power, batteries are still being charged using energy created by fossil fuel. Mr. Fey agreed that we'll probably see a hybrid approach to many vehicles and perhaps down the road we'll see electric buses in town and use diesel only outside the city routes for reliability purposes. Mr. Fey said if Student Transit sees the hybrid buses become reliable and the return on the investment balance out, they will consider moving toward hybrid or electric buses. However, he is careful not to follow a fad because Student Transit must keep buses safe, reliable, and easy to maintain.

Dr. Torres asked if Student Transit ever talks about green initiatives with the city. Mr. Fey said they have in the past, but it's been about 3-4 years since they last met and discussed. Student Transit would be willing to continue conversations with the city.

Dr. Torres thanked Mr. Fey for attending, sharing the information, and for his service to the community.

#### **Draft of resolution regarding renewable energy**

Dr. Torres presented a draft of a resolution and asked if it reflects what the committee wants to do and if they could support it. A few typos and grammatical corrections were made.

Discussion occurred about what it looks like to meet these goals, which align with the city and county's initiatives. There was uncertainty about the scale of utilizing 50% renewable energy by 2030. ECASD has 22 buildings and it's unknown if that is a reachable goal. It may be that the District is already headed in that direction, but in terms of heating and cooling there was uncertainty if renewable energy was one of the criteria.

Dr. Hardebeck will share the resolution with the Buildings and Grounds Department and ask them to propose language to make the resolution clear and achievable. Dr. Torres will share it with some colleagues at UWEC to see if things are "doable."

#### **Discussion about Committee Membership and Charter School Policy 331**

Ms. Klinkhammer indicated she would like to re-evaluate Board Member participation Advisory Committees. It can be problematic for the committee because they may not have as open and free of a conversation with a Board member there and they may have the impression that the Board member can or should make decisions on behalf the Board. It can be equally problematic for the Board member because their opinion or position as a Board member may not match what the committee feels it should be, or they may be asked to speak on behalf of the full Board which they cannot do.

Mr. Vue said in his experience with the Family Advisory Council and Eau Claire Virtual School Board he feels those same situations. He said the feeling can be different depending on how the committee is using the Board member. It was suggested to more clearly differentiate between what is a Committee of the Board versus an Advisory Committee or Governing Committee.

It was discussed that each committee should have a process to gain input from the Board as one Board member alone should not be giving direction. Dr. Hardebeck said one of the challenges is when the committee wants the Board member to make decisions, but the Board member is there to hear from the committee to be able to take things back to the full Board. She suggested the Board designate an executive director to serve as a liaison between the Board and Advisory Committees. The executive directors already ensure MOU's and contracts are followed, so perhaps they can also serve as liaison between the Board and Governing Committees as well rather than having a School Board member on a Governing Committee.

Board Policy 185 mentions Standing Board Committees. Board members are needed on Budget Development and Policy & Governance. LEAP and Demo & Trends should move to Advisory Committees; Demo & Trends isn't listed on the policy at all but should be. It was agreed that Advisory Committees are formed by non-Board members and Board members shall not participate in Advisory Committees.

Ms. Klinkhammer will draft changes to Policy 185 and present for review at the October 7 Policy & Governance Committee meeting. Ms. Klinkhammer will also begin the review of Policy 331 – Charter School Policy.

#### **Policy 453.12 – Concussion and Brain Injury Management**

Mr. Jim Schmitt shared a change proposed by Marshfield Clinic, who is ECASD's contracted vendor for Athletic Trainers, to indicate that if a student sustaining a concussion is also an athlete that the athletic trainer be part of the student's care team in working through the concussion. Dr. Torres said Jeanne Brown had previously expressed when creating this policy that athletic trainers should not be the only person clearing a student after a concussion. It was clarified that with this change the athletic trainer is not the medical provider clearing an athlete to return to play after a concussion. Marshfield clinic's athletic trainers want to be included on the conversation but not the authority.

Motion to approve revisions to Policy 453.12 – Concussion and Brain Injury Management by Laurie Klinkhammer, second by Charles Vue. Motion carried by unanimous voice of approval.

#### **Policy 662.3 – Fund Balance - Discussion of Next Steps**

Ms. Johnson reminded the committee that there's been discussion about including a range or specific percentages as the threshold for the fund balance and having the discussion among the full Board.

Dr. Torres said they will schedule a work session and the Board should review the documents Ms. Johnson previously shared.

Mr. Vue said it would be helpful for the Board to see what the policy is and what it could be.

Dr. Hardebeck suggested Dr. Torres share this idea tonight at the Board meeting when giving a P&G Update, and once the Board is aware, Meta can work to schedule a work session to discuss fund balance and spending parameters.

Dr. Hardebeck said she has put together some information regarding the Eau Claire Public School Foundation's (ECPSF) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that ECPSF is proposing. The packet includes research on what other school districts in and outside of Wisconsin do, the draft of the MOU, the minutes of the discussion about the MOU at the ECPSF's retreat, and the Board's Gift Policy. Dr.

Hardebeck said Sarah French resigned and took a position writing grants for Red Letter. Sue Bornick, Executive Director of the Eau Claire Community Foundation, will be filling in while ECPSF searches for a new Executive Director.

**Adjourn**

Motion by Charles Vue, second by Laurie Klinkhammer, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried by unanimous voice of approval. Meeting adjourned at 9:53 am.