

MINUTES OF THE  
MISSISSIPPI CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZER BOARD  
Regular Monthly Meeting  
Monday, January 27, 2014

The regular monthly meeting of the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board was held at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, January 27, 2014, at the office of the Board of Trustees of the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, located at 3825 Ridgewood Road, Jackson, Mississippi. In attendance were:

Tommie Cardin, Chairman  
Chris Wilson, Vice Chairman  
Dr. Bonita Coleman-Potter  
Johnny Franklin  
Dr. Karen Elam  
Krystal Cormack

Board member Dr. Carey Wright participated by teleconference

Board Chairman Tommie Cardin called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

ITEM I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

A. Adoption of Agenda

A draft agenda was previously circulated to the Board members.

Chairman Cardin requested a motion to adopt the agenda.

MOTION: Dr. Elam

SECOND: Ms. Cormack

There being no discussion and following a vote in favor by all members present, the motion carried.

ITEM II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the December 16, 2013 and the December 30, 2013 meetings were previously circulated to the Board members. There were a few typographical corrections noted that will be made prior to signing.

Chairman Cardin requested a motion for approval of the Minutes of the December 16, 2013 and December 30, 2013 Minutes, as amended.

MOTION: Mr. Wilson

SECOND: Dr. Elam

There being no further discussion and following a vote in favor by all members present, the motion carried.

### ITEM III. CHAIR REPORT

#### A. Attorney General Opinions

Three separate requests for AG opinions have been made by the Board, two of which are still pending before the AG Opinion's Committee. The first deals with the conversion of property belonging to a public school that converts to a public charter school. The second request deals with the issue of which parents are eligible to sign a petition in support of the conversion of the public school to a public charter school, specifically whether the parents of the existing school who have graduating students will be permitted to sign the petition and whether parents of students moving into the school district from another district will be permitted to sign the petition.

The third request addresses the topic of whether applicants for the Executive Director / General Counsel position must be licensed to practice law in the State of Mississippi at the time they make application or whether obtaining that license could be contingent upon their hiring. Though a copy of the opinion has not been received, Chairman Cardin has been told that it has been issued and states that although an applicant does not have to be licensed in Mississippi at the time of their application, they must be licensed effective on their date of hire. A copy of that opinion will be circulated once it is published.

Chairman Cardin announced that he has not yet revised the job description for Executive Director / General Counsel as was discussed in the December 30<sup>th</sup> meeting so that it could be advertised. There is currently pending legislation from both the Senate (Sen. Tollison) and House (Rep. Busby) seeking the removal of the law degree requirement from the position. Any of these bills could affect the scope of the job description.

Chairman Cardin requested a motion to hold off on the advertising of the position as moved in the December 30, 2013 meeting and allow time for the legislation to run its course and a decision to be reached.

MOTION: Dr. Wright

SECOND: Mr. Franklin

There being no further discussion and following a vote in favor by all members present, the motion carried.

Chairman Cardin gave a brief summary of other legislation that has been introduced and is pending.

#### ITEM IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

##### A. RFP and Application Committee

Ms. Cormack stated that the Committee has received 31 letters of intent from perspective charter school operators. The letters have been made available through the Board's link on the IHL website and copies are attached hereto as Exhibit A. She reminded everyone that applications are due March 14, 2014. A technical support meeting is being held following this meeting in the Technology Room of IHL, and an additional technical support meeting will be held via teleconference on February 7, 2014, at 10:00 a.m. CST.

##### B. Executive Director / Consultant Search Committee

Mr. Wilson stated that the executive director search is on hold, per the earlier discussion. Discussion of the consultant search was postponed to New Business.

#### ITEM V. NEW BUSINESS

##### A. Consultant Proposals

Chairman Cardin reminded everyone that a Request for Proposals for consulting assistances has been advertised and the deadline for submission of those proposals was January 13, 2014. Nine proposals were received and the consultant search committee met earlier to review these submissions.

Mr. Wilson reported that several good proposals had been received but the one that primarily met the most items identified in the scope of work requested by the Board was the National Association of Charter School Authorizers. He stated that a considerable amount of discussion had been had over the fees proposed to be charged by the Association and that further negotiation was needed in that area. It appears that, out of all of the proposals received, they best met the needs of the Board and he recommended that the committee continue in discussions with them to ensure that all of the technical needs of the Board will be met and fee arrangement for same is satisfactory.

Chairman Cardin followed up with his thought and suggestion that the Board seek consultant support in two separate areas, the first being the umbrella of the application process and evaluation by someone with significant knowledge and experience in the operation of charter schools and who has a good working knowledge of Mississippi state law to take the Board through the selection process. The second area is simply the need for technical or administrative support from someone who can assist with setting up a website and doing fundamental administrative work that does not necessarily have anything to do with charter schools but can get the office up and running. He stated that he had reached out to IHL and Dr. Wright had offered the assistance of MDE for the administrative support assistance.

Chairman Cardin requested a motion to authorize the Committee to enter into negotiations with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers in an attempt to form a contract to bring before the Board for consideration.

MOTION: Dr. Wright

SECOND: Mr. Franklin

Following a discussion regarding the areas in which fees could possibly be negotiated and lowered and following a vote in favor by all members present, the motion carried.

#### ITEM VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Cynthia Gardner with Greater Love & Liberty Christian Center addressed the Board stating the need to make a point of clarification with regard to the letter of intent she submitted. She explained that Greater Love & Liberty Christian Center is not the actual applicant, but the applicant is Sojourner Truth Academy, and there were members of the Board of Sojourner in the audience. Greater Love & Liberty's letterhead was used simply because Sojourner does not have letterhead of its own at this time. They will serve Leake County including Carthage and outlying areas.

Dr. Martha Liddell with Success Makers Associates addressed the Board making a similar correction to the letter of intent submitted by that organization stating that the applicant should actually be identified as Inspire Charter School for Inspire Elementary STEM Academy and Inspire Boys Academy. Chairman Cardin asked for clarification on the specific area of Northeast Mississippi to be served by schools, and Dr. Liddell stated they would be in Columbus, Mississippi and serve the Columbus city school district.

Mike Sayer with Southern Echo asked if only the list of organizations submitting letters of intent would be posted on the website or would the posting also include the actual letters submitted. Chairman Cardin stated that the letters are posted. Mr. Sayer asked if a summary list would be posted, and Mr. Cardin stated he would do that.

Niah Spriggs with CC Smith Leadership Academy addressed the Board and stated that she was having difficulty opening the link to the posting from the IHL website. Chairman Cardin stated that it would be reviewed and ensure that it was available to everyone.

Bennie Braswell with Kings Academy Prep addressed the Board. He asked if organizations making letters of intent for multiple school locations would be treated as one entity or separate entities for each location in terms of the limit of 15 applications to be approved. Chairman Cardin stated they would be treated as separate entities. Mr. Braswell then asked if the Committee would then look at locations when approving applications and would one organization be considered based on their location at the expense of other organizations. Chairman Cardin stated they would not.

Chairman Cardin pointed out that what have been submitted to date are simply letters of intent designed to give the Board an idea of how many organizations have an interest pursuing a charter school application. It is very different from the actual application, which is a far more extensive process.

Mike Sayer asked if there will be any screening of the letters of intent that would preclude someone from filing and application. Chairman Cardin stated that there would not be.

ITEM IX. SET NEXT MEETING

The February meeting was tentatively scheduled for February 17, 2014. This date is subject to change in order to coordinate with training under the Mississippi First grant, as well as with the National Association should a contract be approved and executed with them.

A special called telephonic meeting will likely be necessary in the interim to discuss and possibly approve a negotiated contract for consulting services with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers. That date will be announced when scheduled.

ITEM X. ADJOURN

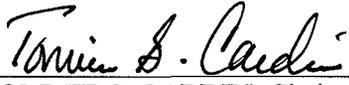
Chairman Cardin requested a motion to adjourn.

MOTION: Dr. Elam

SECOND: Mr. Franklin

There being no discussion and following a vote in favor by all members present, the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

ADOPTED, this the 17<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2014.

  
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TOMMIE S. CARDIN, Chairman