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BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
PUBLIC INPUT MEETING
TAOS MOUNTAIN CHARTER SCHOOL
August 20, 2012
10:35 a.m.
120 Civic Plaza Drive, Coronado Hall
Taos, New Mexico

REPORTED BY: Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR-CRR, NM CCR #219
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A P P E A R A N C E S

COMMISSIONERS:

- MR. M. ANDREW GARRISON, Chair
- MS. CAROLYN SHEARMAN, Vice Chair
- MR. EUGENE GANT, Secretary
- MS. CARLA LOPEZ
- MR. VINCE BERGMAN
- MR. MICHAEL CANFIELD

STAFF:

- MS. KELLY CALLAHAN, Director, Charter School Division
- MS. CORDELIA CHAVEZ
- MS. KAREN EHLERT

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1 THE CHAIR: The Public Education
2 Commission meeting is back in session. This meeting
3 is being conducted pursuant to New Mexico Statutes
4 Annotated, Title 22, Section 8B-6J, 2009. The
5 purpose of these community input hearings that will
6 be held from August 20th to August 24th, 2012, is to
7 obtain information from the applicant and to receive
8 community input to assist the Public Education
9 Commission in its decision whether to grant the
10 proposed charter application.

11 According to this section of the law, the
12 Commission may appoint a subcommittee of no fewer
13 than three members to hold a public hearing.
14 According to law, these hearings are being
15 transcribed by a professional court reporter.

16 The total time allocated to each applicant
17 is 90 minutes, which will be timed to insure an
18 equitable opportunity to present the application.

19 During the hearing, the Commission will
20 allow for community input about the charter
21 application. The time for public comments will be
22 limited to 20 minutes. If you wish to speak on
23 behalf of the applicant, please sign in at least
24 15 minutes before the applicant's presentation.

25 Please be sure that you indicate on the sign-up

1 sheet whether you are here in opposition or support
2 of the charter school.

3 The Commission Chair, based on the number
4 of requests to comment, will allocate time to those
5 wishing to speak. If there are a large number of
6 supporters or opponents, they are asked to select a
7 speaker to represent common opinions. We will try
8 to allocate an equitable amount of time to represent
9 the community accurately.

10 The Commission will follow this process
11 for each community input hearing: The Commission
12 will ask each applicant or group to present in the
13 front here. They will be given 20 minutes to
14 present their application in the manner they deem
15 appropriate. The Commission will not accept any
16 written documentation from the applicant; but the
17 applicant may use exhibits to describe their school,
18 if necessary. However, the setup time for exhibits
19 will be included in the 20 minutes.

20 Following the applicant's presentation,
21 the local school district representatives will be
22 given five minutes to comment. Subsequently, the
23 Commission will allow 20 minutes for public comment
24 as described above.

25 Finally, the Commission will be given

1 45 minutes to ask questions of the applicant.

2 Commissioners, are you ready to proceed?

3 (Commissioners so indicate.)

4 THE CHAIR: Will the Taos Mountain Charter
5 School please come forward? For the record, please
6 state the name of your school.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The name of our
8 proposed school is the Taos Mountain Charter School.

9 THE CHAIR: The names of the founders of
10 the school.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The names of the
12 founders of the school are Allison Bradley and Emily
13 Cohen.

14 THE CHAIR: And any other person who is
15 here today on behalf of your school.

16 (Show of hands.)

17 THE CHAIR: Hi, everyone. I won't put you
18 on the spot there.

19 You will have 20 minutes to present
20 information about your application. Please proceed.

21 MS. BRADLEY: Thank you. My name is
22 Allison Bradley.

23 THE CHAIR: That's on me.

24 MS. BRADLEY: Can you hear me okay? I'll
25 be referring to my notes, since I'm extremely

1 nervous this morning. But I'm very happy to see you
2 this morning. Good morning. My name is Allison
3 Bradley. I am a coauthor of the Taos Mountain
4 Charter School application, along with my partner
5 Emily Cohen. I have three sons, two of whom have
6 been in learning environments informed by the
7 principles within Waldorf education for many years,
8 since they were very young.

9 And my background includes a doctorate in
10 social psychology, postgraduate work in leadership
11 for sustainability education. And I've also done
12 work organizationally with corporate groups and
13 community-based groups ranging from coordinated
14 community response teams for the issue of domestic
15 violence, to corporate groups like Ford Motor
16 Company and Fortune Magazine, and with a focus of
17 helping people work together effectively and foster
18 ways of thinking and doing that strive to balance
19 economic development, human growth, and sustainable
20 practices, so that they can coexist harmoniously
21 instead of being in separate areas.

22 Here in Taos, I currently serve as the
23 coordinator for the Taos Waldorf School, and I'm an
24 active parent and work with the Boy Scouts and other
25 community groups.

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1 So the reason I came to speak with you
2 today is that I'm hopeful that you will consider
3 approving the application that has been prepared for
4 a new educational entity in Taos, which we are
5 proposing calling the Taos Mountain Charter School.
6 This school, should it come into existence, will be
7 based on the principles found within Waldorf
8 education. It will teach environmental, economic,
9 and interpersonal sustainability practices, and will
10 create a new educational option for the Taos
11 community.

12 As noted in the application, our school
13 will offer a Waldorf-inspired curriculum that meets
14 New Mexico state standards, and is fully relevant to
15 our community and local environment, with
16 sustainable living practices as our foundation. The
17 students will create meaningful connections between
18 the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social
19 aspects of life.

20 Sustainable living practices will be
21 realized in our curriculum through an emphasis on
22 gardening, farming, sustainable building skills, and
23 exploration of our surrounding local environment.
24 Nature and arts will be a focus in our curriculum.
25 Our school will foster a supportive community of

1 peers, parents, and teachers, which will help each
2 student become confident, engaged, and
3 self-directed, as a learner vested in his or her own
4 future.

5 Community service will be integrated into
6 the curriculum as part of the whole person
7 development. Each student will develop a sense of
8 responsibility to help others, whether in the
9 classroom or the larger community. Waldorf
10 education has a proven track record. As of 2012,
11 there are 1,025 independent Waldorf schools, 2,000
12 kindergartens, 629 institutions for special
13 education in 60 countries worldwide. There are
14 Waldorf-based public schools, charter schools, and
15 home-school environments as well. Research
16 estimates that 60 to 80 percent of Waldorf high
17 school graduates go on to college after graduation.

18 What may be a key difference in the
19 Waldorf approach to education is that the early
20 years in the classroom emphasize building the
21 capacity for learning rather than strictly content.

22 Research by Dr. Ida Oberman, who looked at
23 the relevance of the Waldorf educational approach
24 for public urban schools, found that during the
25 early grades, Waldorf-inspired public schools

1 consistently scored lower than their traditionally
2 focused peers. Interestingly, however, those same
3 Waldorf-inspired schools showed higher scores at the
4 high-school level, in fact, ranking equal to or
5 exceeding the top 10 percent of their peers.

6 The outcomes of Dr. Oberman's research
7 reflect the idea that Waldorf-inspired public
8 schools spend more time building capacity for
9 learning early on, and that later, this pays off, as
10 students learn content more quickly in high school
11 and retain it more readily, with test scores among
12 the highest within their peer groups.

13 What do we hope for with the Taos Mountain
14 Charter School? We hope to create a learning
15 environment that serves students from kindergarten
16 through high school and their families with a
17 Waldorf-inspired curriculum that is relevant,
18 rigorous, and based on relationship.

19 Is it the right time and the right place?
20 We think so. Waldorf-inspired initiatives have
21 existed in the Taos Valley for, some say, as many as
22 40 years, perhaps longer. What is different about
23 our approach is that we will bring together an
24 emphasis on sound management and fiscal oversight,
25 coupled with a firm commitment to accessibility to a

1 broad range of families bringing fresh perspective
2 and solid accountability to the implementation of
3 Waldorf principles. It is time for this proven
4 approach to be not only effective and enlivening,
5 but also appropriately structured for 2013 and
6 beyond.

7 As one example of how Waldorf learning can
8 take place in the classroom, I'll offer a quote from
9 our application. "Because participation in the arts
10 exercises so many areas of the brain, students
11 are -- who are exposed to arts-based education are
12 more likely to have a higher number of neurological
13 pathways."

14 Assuming they are given the appropriate
15 opportunities and instruction in their educational
16 careers, these children will have a higher capacity
17 for original and critical thought; for example,
18 students who merely listen to a teacher or see a
19 video on ancient Rome are using a relatively small
20 number of pathways in their brains; they're
21 listening and they're watching. Even the visual
22 activity is limited if they are watching a video or
23 if their teacher doesn't move around much, because
24 their eyes don't change focus.

25 However, students in the arts-based

1 method, while being guided by their teacher, are
2 writing and illustrating their own lesson books,
3 sculpting after the fashion of Romans, and acting
4 Julius Caesar, reciting Roman poetry, building
5 scale-model coliseums, reconstructing musical
6 instruments, and proclaiming edicts, and are clearly
7 using their brains and bodies more fully. Multiple
8 pathways are engaged and exercised. What's more,
9 these students are more likely to remember what
10 they've learned about ancient Rome.

11 Research in cognitive development shows
12 people learn primarily in terms of what they already
13 know. People use prior experience to construct a
14 frame of reference for processing new information.
15 Therefore, the ability to assimilate and apply new
16 concepts depends in large measure on the breadth of
17 a person's frame of reference. Arts-based
18 education, by relating conceptual information to
19 tactile, auditory, kinesthetic, verbal, visual, and
20 interpersonal experience, necessarily provides each
21 student with a broader frame of reference for each
22 new lesson.

23 Taos is a unique and a special place.
24 Nowhere else in the world will someone find
25 mountains like these, the Rio Grande Gorge, or

1 people both pioneering and creative enough to create
2 a culture like the one one experiences here. It's
3 no mistake that when something unbelievable happens
4 to someone here, it is often followed by the phrase,
5 "Welcome to Taos." Our hope is that if the Taos
6 Mountain Charter School is approved, it will be the
7 best possible kind of surprise, a surprise that will
8 help truly transform education for the better for
9 many Taos families in the years to come. Thank you.

10 THE CHAIR: Thank you for your
11 presentation.

12 (Applause.)

13 THE CHAIR: We ask that the local school
14 district representative come forward. For the
15 record, state your name and the role you play at the
16 local school district. And you'll have five minutes
17 to comment.

18 MR. WESTON: Okay. Thank you. My name is
19 Rod Weston, Superintendent, Taos Municipal Schools.
20 And I appreciate the opportunity to speak this
21 morning. I would suggest that, at least,
22 personally, and in terms of our school district, I
23 don't see -- I speak just for myself -- I don't have
24 any disagreement with the philosophical foundation
25 that's been presented to you this morning.

1 I would suggest, however, there already is
2 an arts-based charter school in Taos. I think there
3 may have been some connection between the two
4 schools in the past. And in terms of art and music,
5 in the public schools, we have maintained or
6 expanded our programs, K-12, over the last two
7 years.

8 I do have concerns. First of all, would
9 be the dilution of funding that taking a few
10 students from here and there across the district to
11 create any charter school reduces funding, but does
12 not result in a corresponding savings in costs and
13 expenses.

14 I spoke earlier about a concern with
15 divisions within the community and not supporting
16 the cohesiveness of this community. My past
17 experience is that this is especially problematic
18 when transitioning from an existing private school
19 into a public charter school, that there are slots
20 already filled within that private-school situation.

21 Those are the concerns that I bring to
22 you, and I would speak against approval for the
23 charter school. Thank you.

24 THE CHAIR: Thank you, sir. We will now
25 hear public comment from the Taos community. Each

1 person will have two minutes to make a statement
2 regarding the application. And the total time for
3 all speakers during this part of the hearing will be
4 20 minutes.

5 So, based on the number of folks who have
6 signed in, two minutes will take us to almost
7 exactly 20 minutes. So I will ask that everyone
8 adheres to time. And we do have a handy-dandy
9 timer, and she's very strict. No. I'm kidding.
10 She's very communicative, and she'll let you know.

11 Kenleigh Winters?

12 THE REPORTER: That was the last one.

13 THE CHAIR: Oh, I'm sorry. Here's my new
14 list. Sanjay Poovadan. And correct me for -- if I
15 butchered you.

16 MR. POOVADAN: Thank you. You're very
17 kind. My name is Sanjay Poovadan, and I'm a member
18 of this community. I have four children, 27 to 13.
19 I am speaking as a member of the community and a
20 parent, and a real estate broker.

21 Charter schools were created in this state
22 to give people options, choices. And I believe that
23 this charter school will give us a choice to have
24 children go to a school with this education and
25 still make it affordable. Elsewhere in the country,

1 Waldorf schools typically are privately funded. And
2 that essentially means that the children who can
3 afford to go there are people of wealth.

4 And having a charter school that will
5 allow this education to get to a larger group of
6 people, I see that when people come to this
7 community and look at the array of choices, there
8 are choices in the middle -- in the early childhood
9 years, and there are choices in the high-school
10 years. The middle-school years especially are an
11 area where there are fewer choices. And having a
12 Waldorf school, Waldorf-inspired school that takes
13 you all the way from kindergarten to high school
14 will enable people to have choices in educating
15 their children. And I feel that that's an important
16 benefit to our community. Thank you.

17 (Applause.)

18 THE CHAIR: Thank you, sir. Ted Dimond.
19 And, folks, please hold applause so we can get
20 through this. Thank you.

21 MR. DIMOND: Thank you. My name is Ted
22 Dimond. And I thank for you this opportunity to
23 speak before you today.

24 I have lived in Taos, New Mexico, for
25 36 years. I am currently on the Planning and Zoning

1 Commission for the Town of Taos. I preside over the
2 Board of Directors for the Northern New Mexico
3 Midwifery Center and the Taos Swim Club. I sat on
4 the board of Anansi School when it put forth its
5 charter application, and worked for Yes for Kids
6 when the first charter application went in before
7 you, I think about 12 or 13 years ago.

8 I applaud you for being open and remaining
9 open to these alternative schools. I think it's a
10 great opportunity for our community. I have raised
11 four children in this community, ages 31 to 13. My
12 13-year-old currently has just entered her first day
13 of eighth grade over at Taos Waldorf School.

14 Between my four children, we have
15 experienced pretty much every permutation of public,
16 district, private, and charter school in this
17 community, and have found that having the choices
18 for those children, each of my children have
19 prospered in different settings and in different
20 environments.

21 This, to me, is the most exciting of
22 charter applications because I think it most meets
23 the spirit of what the charter movement is about,
24 which is that it offers a true alternative to the
25 district schools in this community, offers a true

1 alternative to the other charter schools in this
2 community, and draws upon a long, time-honored and
3 tested tradition in the Waldorf Schools throughout
4 not only this country, but throughout the world.

5 We have the opportunity to draw upon the
6 resources of the international Waldorf community.
7 We have a teacher base that have had Waldorf
8 training, and, each summer, spend weeks furthering
9 their Waldorf training. Thank you.

10 And I don't think that the application, in
11 fact, any of the spirit of the charter applications,
12 is about one curriculum or one philosophy being
13 superior to the other; only that we know that
14 children have different learning styles, they
15 prosper in different environments, and there's no
16 question the success of the Waldorf curriculum and
17 philosophy can be measured.

18 Again, it's a time-honored tradition. We
19 have had a Waldorf School in this community for a
20 long time. And there's no question in my mind that,
21 while some students may prosper in the Taos Public
22 Schools, that students will certainly blossom more
23 effectively in an environment like Taos Waldorf
24 School. On top of it, it is, as has been mentioned,
25 a curriculum which emphasizes creativity in the

1 arts. And we live in one of the great art
2 communities in the world, where our students not
3 only have art in their schools, in the Waldorf
4 School, but many of the parents and grandparents and
5 people that surround them are also creative artists.
6 Thank you very much. I appreciate your openness to
7 the application.

8 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. Jesús
9 Hernandez.

10 MR. HERNANDEZ: Good morning. My name is
11 Jesús Hernandez, and I'm here to express my support
12 for Taos Mountain Charter School. I'm a resident of
13 Taos County, an educator, and a grandparent of a
14 child who has attended Taos Waldorf School for the
15 past ten years.

16 I had a long career as an educator in the
17 public schools, as a teacher and school
18 administrator. I was a school principal at the
19 elementary and middle-school levels. I also served
20 for many years in school accreditation committees.
21 As an educator, I have carefully watched my
22 granddaughter's progress in school. My
23 granddaughter has received a great education at Taos
24 Waldorf School. I'm always impressed and amazed at
25 the quality of her school assignments and the rich

1 activities connected with every lesson.

2 I'm very impressed with math, science, and
3 language skills she has acquired in school, but I'm
4 even more impressed with the music, painting,
5 drawing, manual arts, animal care, and farming
6 skills that she has mastered through the
7 hands-on opportunities that the Waldorf community
8 offers. This group provides every student access to
9 quality educational experience as hands-on programs,
10 designed to help each child succeed, plus a learning
11 environment designed to meet each child's needs.

12 I have seen my grandchild develop a love
13 for learning and become an independent thinker and a
14 problem-solver. She has enjoyed a safe and
15 exceptional environment that cultivates independent
16 learning, character enrichment, and regional
17 awareness, while developing community leaders and
18 diverse experiences through project-based
19 experiences.

20 What I love about the Waldorf curriculum
21 is that it not only addresses the academic needs of
22 the child, but also the physical, emotional, social,
23 and spiritual needs as well. It cultivates social
24 and emotional intelligence, connects students to
25 nature, and ignites a passion for learning.

1 Taos Waldorf School has a rich and
2 successful history in our community. The Waldorf
3 education is a very unique model from the existing
4 curriculum of other local charter schools. There is
5 a strong demand and support --

6 MS. CHAVEZ: Time's up.

7 MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you for your time.

8 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Hernandez.
9 Emily Cohen?

10 MS. COHEN: Hi. I'm Emily Cohen. I'm
11 going to refer to my notes as well.

12 THE CHAIR: May I ask? I know you're a
13 founder. So are you speaking on behalf of -- as a
14 parent or as the founder?

15 MS. COHEN: As both. Is that okay? I can
16 put on either hat. I am a parent.

17 THE CHAIR: Put on the parent hat.

18 MS. COHEN: Okay. I am -- my name is
19 Emily Cohen, and I am a parent.

20 THE CHAIR: Perfect.

21 MS. COHEN: Thank you. I have two
22 children who have gone through Waldorf education for
23 ten years. I have a master's in -- of science in
24 natural resources planning. I'm an environmental
25 planner. I work for an international environmental

1 and engineering firm on renewable resource projects.
2 I have worked at a Waldorf School for six years as
3 community outreach and coordinator. And I've also
4 served as parent council head and other school
5 organizations.

6 MS. CHAVEZ: You have one minute.

7 MS. COHEN: I'm very active in this
8 community. I've served -- worked as a volunteer for
9 the animal shelter, Brownie co-leader, public
10 library story time, created and organized a new
11 junior school poetry slam for all middle-school
12 students. And I -- thank for you this opportunity
13 for listening to our charter application.

14 It's been a great experience putting it
15 together. And I think we're looking at this as an
16 opportunity for collaboration and cohesive working
17 with all of the great resources in our town and the
18 other charter schools and within the school
19 district. Those are all wonderful opportunities.

20 We have just a few speakers here, but we
21 have a lot of support in our community. Thank you.

22 THE CHAIR: Thank you so much. Allison
23 Bradley?

24 MS. BRADLEY: I already talked. Sorry.

25 THE CHAIR: Elena Trujillo.

1 MS. TRUJILLO: Good morning.

2 THE CHAIR: Good morning.

3 MS. TRUJILLO: My name is Elena Trujillo.
4 I'm a native Taoseña. My family is from here, born
5 and raised, a very proud graduate of Taos High
6 School, and I attended public schools all through my
7 schooling, then went on to Swarthmore College in
8 Pennsylvania, where I received a liberal arts
9 education, majoring in theater studies, and just
10 recently completed two programs through the
11 alternative licensure program at Northern New Mexico
12 College. So I'm certifiable in K through 12, and
13 just recently accepted a position to start teaching
14 Spanish at the Waldorf School.

15 I am speaking here as a community member,
16 as a parent, and as an educator, to state that I
17 believe that education is the most important thing
18 for our children. And my daughter was able to
19 attend the Waldorf School two years ago because of
20 the subsidies we got for the -- preschool. But --

21 MS. CHAVEZ: One minute.

22 MS. TRUJILLO: -- for myself, it wasn't
23 possible to continue with the education because of
24 the costs. And this charter application is just
25 very exciting to be able to offer to the whole

1 community. And I'm just very proud to be here and
2 that we're even having this conversation. I do hope
3 that you will consider this charter. Thank you so
4 much.

5 THE CHAIR: Thank you. So, on line 7
6 here, I have "Students." And was there a -- was
7 there a group presentation that was going to be
8 made, or were --

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It is, and it's
10 less than two minutes. We just prepared it.

11 THE CHAIR: Actually, because we reduced
12 the amount of speakers, I think you're going to have
13 plenty of time. So if you want to come up, please.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah, okay. I feel
15 like running. We're sorry for being late. We
16 totally apologize. We were frantically composing a
17 poem to read to you about our wishes for this
18 school. So be sure that you're in your little
19 group, please. And let's get ready.

20 Thank you so much for having us here
21 today. We wrote a poem, and it just happened within
22 the last hour, so let's see how it goes.

23 THE CHAIR: Did you state your name?

24 MS. BEASLEY: I'm Sarah Beasley. I'm the
25 eighth-grade teacher at the school, and I've been

1 there for the last seven years, and had many of
2 these children since first grade. And so this is
3 our eighth year together. Speak loudly. Are you
4 ready? Okay. Go for it.

5 STUDENTS: Taos Mountain Charter School is
6 encaged in a chrysalis, ready to break free to show
7 its colorful innovation. New and beautiful.
8 Freedom to learn, like a bird opening its wings and
9 embracing the world. A creative curriculum, like a
10 colorful kaleidoscope.

11 We want a school that's connected to our
12 community, like the ocean's tides are connected to
13 the moon. The teachers are wonderful, educating us
14 in inspiring ways, with science, knitting, math,
15 rigorous reading, and homemade textbooks. Art and
16 color makes our school known for its looks.

17 History coming alive, like the characters
18 of books stepping off the pages, stitching together
19 arts and academics. Education, colorful and
20 different as every sunset, letting each learn in its
21 own manner.

22 A school that stretches its colorful
23 wings, tutoring Taos youth on what they could be.

24 We want a school where we can start to
25 think outside the box. The land is enriching,

1 drawing us into the beauty of learning. We want a
2 school that's available to all.

3 Taos Mountain Charter School, we are ready
4 for you to unfold your wings and fly.

5 (Applause.)

6 STUDENT SPEAKER: We wanted to express our
7 gratitude for the Committee for listening to our
8 poem and considering the application.

9 STUDENT SPEAKER: We hope that you vote in
10 favor of the Taos Mountain Charter School. Thank
11 you.

12 MS. BEASLEY: Thank you so much.

13 THE CHAIR: I want to ask for our
14 transcriber. Do you need a copy of that? You got
15 it?

16 THE REPORTER: (Indicates.)

17 THE CHAIR: Kelly, help me out here.
18 There's a few minutes left. And I know for sure we
19 cut off Mr. Hernandez. I know you had a written
20 statement. Did you want to finish yours?

21 MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah.

22 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

23 MR. HERNANDEZ: I did have to jump around
24 to make it into the two minutes.

25 THE CHAIR: You were motoring pretty good

1 there, sir.

2 MR. HERNANDEZ: It was supposed to be a
3 three-minute speech. I timed it. Okay. So what
4 I'd like to say was that the Taos Waldorf School has
5 a rich and successful history in our community, a
6 unique and very different model from the existing
7 or, the other local charter schools. There is a
8 strong support and demand for this type of school in
9 our community. There is also strong support to have
10 another high-school option which we don't have.

11 It is extremely important that we continue
12 providing this unique educational program in Taos
13 and expand it to the high-school level, and, like
14 the children say, make it available to everybody,
15 which at this point, it's only available to those
16 who can afford to send their kids there. We want to
17 break that and make it available to everyone in the
18 community.

19 The Taos Mountain Charter School will be a
20 valuable asset to Taos and be of great benefit to
21 our children, our families, and our local community.
22 And we do thank you for your time and for your
23 support of charter education.

24 THE CHAIR: Thank you, sir. We will now
25 hear questions from the Public Education Commission

1 members. And this session is timed for 45 minutes.

2 And the floor is open. Commissioner Gant.

3 COMMISSIONER GANT: I'm going to go to the
4 budget. Who is going to address the questions for
5 the budget?

6 MS. COHEN: Is it okay if we all answer --
7 if either one of us answers as --

8 THE CHAIR: Yes.

9 COMMISSIONER GANT: Yes. My first
10 question is, who prepared the budget?

11 MS. COHEN: We had help with the budget
12 from Susan Olson, who is an adviser. She works
13 for -- she's on the board for the Alliance for
14 Public Waldorf Education. She was able to fly in
15 for our -- help us with our capacity interview down
16 in Santa Fe. She's in California today. But she
17 has a background in both private and public Waldorf
18 education. She is the head of the oldest public
19 charter Waldorf school in California.

20 COMMISSIONER GANT: Okay. Mr. Chair.
21 Who's going to manage your budget?

22 MS. COHEN: We will contract with someone
23 is our plan.

24 COMMISSIONER GANT: Who?

25 MS. COHEN: The Coalition for Charter

1 Schools offers that service. That's one option that
2 we're looking at. There are other people who do
3 that currently in town, who provide that service as
4 well. So we'll have to negotiate that.

5 COMMISSIONER GANT: The first question I
6 have is on Page 3, Function 2200, Option Code 51100,
7 Job Class 1211 through 1213. Okay? I'll go ahead
8 and ask the question. Maybe you can answer it
9 without trying to find it.

10 MS. COHEN: Okay.

11 COMMISSIONER GANT: You do not have any
12 budget or funds budgeted for a librarian, media
13 specialist, or data processing specialist. Can you
14 explain why not?

15 MS. COHEN: There is not going to be a
16 focus on media within a Waldorf context. That's not
17 part of our curriculum. We're planning on having
18 laptop computers that will be stored on a -- a
19 cart -- thank you -- and as needed for research, for
20 tests that need to be completed on that, that's how
21 we'll be using them. The library will be staffed
22 with parent volunteers. It's really -- we're
23 excited to have -- we need parents to be involved in
24 their kids' education. And that's one opportunity.

25 COMMISSIONER GANT: Who's going to do the

1 IT work that -- any computers, you have databases
2 you need to interface with with the State,
3 et cetera. Who's going to do your IT work?

4 MS. BRADLEY: Yeah. With smaller schools
5 that have this focus, often we do rely very heavily
6 on volunteers to deal with this sort of thing. So
7 within our existing older school in the community,
8 this function is, again, certified volunteers.
9 Should the budget expand as things change, we could
10 certainly hire someone to do that.

11 But we're going to have to be lean and
12 mean to get started. Our emphasis in beginning the
13 budget was to try to be as conservative as possible
14 and to get some basic things grounded, and then we
15 can expand it as we can.

16 COMMISSIONER GANT: So when you have to
17 deal with all the finance -- and it's very
18 complicated. So who is going to work directly with
19 the State, the PED, and their financial arm? Who's
20 going to be the person really in charge? It's got
21 to be one or two.

22 MS. BRADLEY: Right. Well, someone will
23 have to be hired as a director, sort of the
24 equivalent of a principal. And that person will
25 oversee all of that. So whether it's that

1 individual working directly with the budget, or that
2 individual working directly with the contracted
3 staff, we're going to make sure that all gets worked
4 out in the planning stages.

5 Since we wouldn't be starting until next
6 year, we have several months to work these questions
7 through. And we'll be completely honest. We're not
8 financial experts. We're not budget experts. But
9 what we have is incredible fortitude, and we will
10 research this until we find our answer. So that's
11 how we're going about it.

12 COMMISSIONER GANT: You do know when we go
13 to vote, what's in what you've provided is what
14 we'll vote on.

15 MS. BRADLEY: Did you want to add any
16 additional -- Jesús has been helping us also.

17 MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah. And it's a
18 long-term administrator, and I was a principal at a
19 K-8 school as well, I have been advising them and
20 will be there on a weekly basis, on a volunteer
21 basis, at least until the school gets going and
22 probably beyond that. And I do have the experience
23 of having run a school, having been a principal at
24 many schools at the elementary and middle-school
25 levels.

1 COMMISSIONER GANT: Next question is
2 Page 4, Function 2300, Object 53411, Auditing. And
3 as a principal, sir, you know auditing can be very
4 expensive, very expensive. But you have no funds
5 allocated for auditing.

6 MR. HERNANDEZ: Oh, we have, sir. There's
7 been fund --

8 COMMISSIONER GANT: Look on Page 4.

9 MR. HERNANDEZ: As I do recall from the
10 budget, I think we had at least \$15,000 for the
11 first year for auditing purposes.

12 THE CHAIR: I'll ask that the applicants
13 and Commissioners, to speak as loud as you can so
14 that we get everything transcribed. Thank you.

15 MS. COHEN: I'm sorry. I'm still trying
16 to find that. Nothing like a huge document.

17 THE CHAIR: That's fine.

18 MS. BRADLEY: Another aspect that we've
19 been considering is knowing that some things are
20 going to have to shift as we move ahead with the
21 negotiations. If we do move ahead, if you choose to
22 move us ahead, some funding was placed in the
23 consulting category so that that could be used to
24 fill in spots that are not necessarily filled in.

25 MS. COHEN: And we do have as well, just

1 as a follow-up, within our structure of the
2 governing council, we have an audit committee that
3 will be responsible. And that's going to be -- off
4 the top of my head, it was made up of two members
5 from the governing council, the director of the
6 school and the business manager. So we will meet
7 all requirements to make sure that we have --

8 COMMISSIONER GANT: But it will be an
9 outside auditor who must do the work. So how are
10 you going to pay for it if it's not in the budget?

11 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Shearman has the
12 data here, if you want to come up and peek at it, if
13 that's helpful for you.

14 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Oh, I knocked off
15 my name. I'm sorry. If that would help you any.
16 As a matter of fact, I've got those --

17 MS. BRADLEY: So while Emily is looking at
18 that, another piece of the plan that we're hoping to
19 put into place is to set up, alongside the charter
20 school itself, a foundation into which donations are
21 accepted and into which fundraising outcomes could
22 go. And potentially, we could use the foundation
23 funds to work with whatever monies are there in the
24 first year or two.

25 COMMISSIONER GANT: Moving on, because

1 it's clearly not there, page 4, Function 2300,
2 Object Codes 55811 and 55812, Board Travel and
3 Training. No funding.

4 MS. COHEN: There is online training
5 that's offered through the Coalition of Charter
6 Schools. And we, again, are looking forward to
7 working with that coalition and benefiting from
8 their -- their expertise. We really had an amazing
9 experience going through all the training process
10 this past spring, learning from these amazing,
11 generous people who are involved in the charter
12 application and the charter movement; just really
13 inspiring.

14 And so I think that there's a lot of
15 resources that we're planning on utilizing.

16 COMMISSIONER GANT: Well, are you aware, I
17 hope, that House Bill 212 -- yeah, 212 -- and other
18 statutes require that board members take five hours
19 of training that's given either by the New Mexico
20 School Board Association, the Public Education
21 Commission --

22 MS. COHEN: Yes.

23 COMMISSIONER GANT: So how are you going
24 to fund that.

25 MS. BRADLEY: One potential relationship

1 that could really support us in this process is
2 Rudolph Steiner Foundation for Social Finance.
3 They're the foundation that holds the mortgage to
4 the property we hope to occupy, and they're very
5 interested in a charter school and that property.
6 They've made a verbal commitment to support this
7 group in whatever way to get this up and running,
8 the facility up and running, the facility in place.

9 So as soon as we know what the specific
10 numbers are, we can work with them. We can
11 communicate directly with Rudolph Steiner Social
12 Finance and ask for their support with the specific
13 budgetary needs and training.

14 COMMISSIONER GANT: I have two more budget
15 questions, and then I'll move on. Page 7, Function
16 2500, Code 53414, Other Professional Services. you
17 have budgeted in there \$50,000. But I'm not sure
18 what it's for.

19 MS. COHEN: My understand- -- it's for the
20 training. Do you want to --

21 MR. HERNANDEZ: Maybe the audit.

22 MS. BRADLEY: For the auditing.

23 MR. HERNANDEZ: When I reviewed the
24 budget, last time I reviewed it, there was an
25 allocation of \$15,000; there was an allocation for

1 board travel; there was an allocation for the
2 training. So that's why I was surprised when you
3 mentioned those things. So it could be that since
4 then, it could be that that was all moved into that
5 \$50,000 for off-site services. That would be the
6 only logical explanation, because all those items
7 were in there.

8 COMMISSIONER GANT: Last question. It's
9 on Page 9. Deals with food services. And I
10 understand you're going to do brown bag. Is that
11 correct?

12 MS. COHEN: That's our plan at this point,
13 yes.

14 COMMISSIONER GANT: And also stated in the
15 application, you're going to do a supplement of food
16 from a garden. Is that correct? But on Page 9,
17 Function 3100, Function 51100, Food Services,
18 there's no funding in there whatsoever. How are you
19 paying for the garden? How are you funding that
20 garden? Who's going to manage the garden? And when
21 you're not in growing season, how are you going to
22 provide that food that you normally would provide
23 during the growing season for your students?

24 MS. BRADLEY: So one of the hopes in
25 working with an agricultural setting, a garden-based

1 learning environment, is that students learn how to
2 not only harvest their food and plant the food,
3 et cetera, care for the garden, but also work with
4 the idea of food preservation: How do we have
5 vegetables in February, for example?

6 So part of the curriculum could be
7 actually processing the food, putting the food up,
8 et cetera, and, therefore, having kimchi, et cetera,
9 et cetera, available during February, March, April.
10 So if it were consciously planned and built into the
11 curriculum, for example, many schools will use a
12 combined position, which teaches both handwork and
13 gardening and agriculture.

14 And in that scenario, you've got a teacher
15 working with students throughout the year, and they
16 are doing everything from, "Here's how we plant the
17 seeds," to, "Here's how we process the food," to,
18 "Here's how you store food effectively." So that
19 would be built into the curriculum itself.

20 COMMISSIONER GANT: Understand. But how
21 do you pay for the storage, the canning, the
22 supplies? There's nothing in here for water.

23 MS. BRADLEY: Exactly.

24 COMMISSIONER GANT: All the stuff that
25 goes --

1 MS. BRADLEY: Right. These would be areas
2 that we, again, work with the foundation that's set
3 up alongside the school, and private donors. One
4 factor, of course, is that if people are not having
5 to pay tuition for an education of this nature,
6 they're going to be more flexible with funds
7 available. And if that were planned effectively up
8 front, people could plan to donate at certain
9 intervals and in certain ways.

10 And we can really focus around specific
11 projects. So a garden is a very specific project.
12 Many people are interested in that type of project.
13 We can write grants, certainly work effectively with
14 community resources in a project-based way.

15 MS. COHEN: This is -- am I interrupting?
16 Is that -- I think that this is a really exciting
17 endeavor that speaks to our community, the
18 gardening. It resonates for Taos. There's a lot of
19 support for this educational experience for our
20 children. And there's -- that support is conveyed
21 in -- monetarily as well. We've already started
22 doing research into potential grants. And
23 there's -- there is a lot of opportunity out there
24 to support this kind of education.

25 MR. HERNANDEZ: And if I may add, this is

1 not a brand new thing. We've had a garden going for
2 a number of years, and a very successful one.
3 There's one right now going on. One of the things
4 that I mentioned was my granddaughter has acquired
5 tremendous farming skills. She can do an entire
6 garden, from planting to weeding it, from harvesting
7 everything, and it's been because of the education
8 that she's had over the years in that garden.

9 There is also a greenhouse as well that
10 the kids get involved with. And the garden has
11 always been there, always been successful, and has
12 been an effort and a love from the parents and the
13 community to make a garden. And we expect that to
14 continue in the future, that there will be community
15 involvement to make sure that we maintain that
16 garden successfully.

17 And again, if the funds are needed, then
18 we can go through the grants.

19 COMMISSIONER GANT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
20 I may have questions later.

21 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner Gant.
22 Floor is still open. Commissioner Shearman.

23 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: You can't see me,
24 huh? I just wanted to follow up on a couple of
25 questions.

1 I see the support for this school, if I
2 can just take a personal minute here. But remember,
3 what we have to look at when we make the decision to
4 vote -- when I, personally, vote to approve the
5 application or to deny it, is we have to look at the
6 hard stuff, like do you really have enough money to
7 support this school and to do it right and to make
8 sure that the kids get the education that they need?
9 And when I look at a budget that has no money for
10 facilities, no money for electricity, gas, water,
11 liability insurance -- I thought the \$50,000 you had
12 up here in contract services, contracted business
13 services, you were going to tell me was for the
14 business manager. But I hear you saying it's for
15 some other things.

16 So now I find nowhere in this budget that
17 you're paying a business manager. You can't survive
18 without a business manager. And school finance is
19 very different, as you well know. You've got to
20 have somebody that knows what they're doing, or you
21 can be in a lot of trouble.

22 And the same with the IT question that
23 Commissioner Gant asked you. If you don't do your
24 STARS reporting correctly, you're up the creek
25 without a paddle. And it is not easy. It is very,

1 very complex.

2 So I'm worried when I look at this budget
3 and see that there are things that I think need to
4 be here, and they're not. And yet, you've spent, as
5 you should, making a budget, all of the money that
6 is coming into the school under the SEG funding.

7 I look at the amount that you have
8 budgeted for the principal. \$40,000. Correct me if
9 I'm wrong, Kelly and Karen and the school people.
10 That's not enough --

11 MS. CALLAHAN: That's correct.

12 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: -- for a high
13 school principal. And I know it's a K-12 school,
14 and it's my understanding they've got to go for the
15 higher amount. So I'm really worried about this
16 budget, that it's not paying for everything that
17 needs to be paid for.

18 And to rely on donations and grants and
19 maybe funding coming in from other sources, it
20 worries me. What if it doesn't show up? Then what
21 do you do with the kids? Turn off the lights and
22 have school in the dark? You know, that's out an
23 out-there example. But it is a concern, okay?

24 Now, let me go just to a couple of other
25 things that I wanted to ask you about, and then I'll

1 let others have their turn.

2 I'm looking at your application on Page 16
3 and 17, where we talk about student goals. And I --
4 I'm very concerned. Are we using the same form? My
5 numbering is not the same as yours. Never mind.
6 We'll get there.

7 Student academic performance. Your goals
8 are mastery of traditional Waldorf curriculum
9 adapted for public schools, proficiency in
10 New Mexico Common Core State Standards. All
11 students will show yearly growth in all subject
12 areas.

13 Remember, we're looking for SMART goals.
14 They've got to be specific. They've got to be tied
15 down. They've got to be rigorous. They've got to
16 be all these kinds of things.

17 And Goal No. 1 is mastery of a traditional
18 Waldorf curriculum. I have no idea what mastery --
19 how -- how do you prove mastery? What's -- what's
20 the defining measure here? And is that all students
21 are going to reach a certain level, some students?

22 And the other thing that bothers me about
23 your goals is that they're written for students upon
24 graduation. And you've got a K-12 school. And
25 until they graduate, one could say there are no

1 expectations. I'm looking for what's going to
2 happen in kindergarten, first grade, second grade,
3 and third grade. What are your expectations for
4 those kids? I want to know where you expect them to
5 be and how you're going to get them there. That's
6 what I'm looking for.

7 Just a couple of other things. You should
8 see my notes. I've written all over everything.

9 I'm looking at Page 77 of your
10 application. And I'm not sure if you're asking for
11 a waiver there or not. I'm going to let you get to
12 that page.

13 Or 78. It's under G, "Graduation
14 Requirements."

15 MS. COHEN: Okay.

16 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: And it says,
17 "Students must meet all portfolio and final project
18 requirements, as outlined by their teacher."

19 Are you seeking a waiver from graduation
20 requirements?

21 MS. COHEN: No.

22 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: No? Okay. Let
23 someone else go ahead, and let me find the rest of
24 my questions.

25 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner

1 Shearman. Any others? Commissioner Canfield.

2 COMMISSIONER CANFIELD: Just a quick one.

3 Thank you, Mr. Chair. So are you currently in a
4 facility now? I was a little unclear on the
5 facility issue. That's a big one with the charter
6 schools.

7 MS. BRADLEY: There's an existing
8 facility. So this is not a conversion school. Taos
9 Waldorf School will close if this charter is
10 approved.

11 COMMISSIONER CANFIELD: You say "will
12 close."

13 MS. BRADLEY: The existing school that's
14 on the property. So this will open as a new school
15 on the property.

16 COMMISSIONER CANFIELD: So utilizing the
17 same classrooms and the same facility?

18 MS. BRADLEY: With appropriate
19 modifications, yeah.

20 COMMISSIONER CANFIELD: Are you currently
21 paying rent there now?

22 MS. BRADLEY: Yes.

23 COMMISSIONER CANFIELD: How many square
24 feet are we talking about, approximately? Sorry.

25 MS. COHEN: No. I have the facility

1 management plan here.

2 COMMISSIONER CANFIELD: Okay.

3 MS. COHEN: It's several buildings.

4 COMMISSIONER CANFIELD: Oh, okay.

5 MS. COHEN: Would you like me to show you?

6 Is that --

7 COMMISSIONER CANFIELD: No, that's okay.

8 Just -- you don't have the actual square footage
9 there? It's okay.

10 MS. BRADLEY: The rooms were measured, and
11 we used the square footage formula to devise which
12 students would go where -- which classrooms would go
13 where.

14 COMMISSIONER CANFIELD: Okay. So you're
15 comfortable that the facility could be utilized
16 once -- if you were approved.

17 MS. BRADLEY: Yes, approximately
18 8,000 square feet.

19 COMMISSIONER CANFIELD: Okay. Okay. So
20 the reason for not having it budgeted was you're
21 anticipating getting it paid through other sources?
22 Is that right? Or were you anticipating getting it
23 rent-free for a year?

24 MS. BRADLEY: We're going to enter into
25 negotiations with the Rudolph Steiner Foundation as

1 soon as the charter is approved.

2 COMMISSIONER CANFIELD: Thank you. Thank
3 you, Mr. Chair.

4 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner
5 Canfield. Commissioner Lopez?

6 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Do you -- one thing
7 is you don't have any reference to any support in
8 your budget for English-Language Learners. And if
9 you're going to market to the whole community,
10 that's not in the budget. And how are you going to
11 market to the whole community if it's just the
12 existing population? You said you wanted to go out.

13 MS. COHEN: Absolutely. That's going to
14 be a real focus for us. We really want to draw a
15 wide spectrum of kids from our whole community to be
16 there. We do have budgeted a Spanish teacher. And
17 the way a Waldorf curriculum is so multisensory,
18 it's a really great opportunity for kids who learn
19 in different styles, including kids who have English
20 as their second language.

21 So the goal would be to have them in the
22 classroom, as the first choice, with their peers.
23 We would then, as support is needed, and following
24 all the laws as required for testing and
25 proficiency, we will have pullouts. And we are

1 hoping that some of our teachers will be bilingual.
2 That would be a goal. We can't guarantee it. And,
3 again, as the budget becomes more flexible in the
4 future, we will be able to budget more -- more
5 support specifically for that.

6 For reaching out into the community, we're
7 going to have open houses. We're going to go have
8 events at the youth and family center, at the
9 library, do as many outreach activities as we can,
10 as well as providing material in Spanish and English
11 to work with -- with groups.

12 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Thank you. On
13 Page 145 of the application, you mention the three
14 groups that will be given priority to get into the
15 school. And you realize that's not allowed?

16 MS. COHEN: You know, it wasn't -- no, I
17 didn't realize it wasn't allowed. I saw
18 something -- that the federal regulation -- law --
19 was -- makes a recommendation. And I wasn't clear
20 how the State of New Mexico felt about that. We
21 thought it was worth putting it in and seeing what
22 happened, if that was allowed or not.

23 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: My husband and I
24 founded a charter school in Santa Fe, and our
25 daughter didn't get in -- didn't get through the

1 lottery.

2 MS. COHEN: Yes. That's a risk that we've
3 definitely acknowledged.

4 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Okay. Thank you,
5 Mr. Chair.

6 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner Lopez,
7 Commissioner Gant?

8 COMMISSIONER GANT: Page 149. It's in
9 your chart. It deals with purchase of instructional
10 materials. Are all the instructional materials
11 going to be purchased through the Waldorf system?
12 That's what it -- that's kind of what I get an
13 indication. In other words, are you going to have a
14 sole source for all your --

15 MS. COHEN: I'm not sure how to answer
16 that. I think there are specific materials, paints,
17 nice paper, wax crayons, things like that, that are
18 available from different sources. So I guess -- are
19 you -- am I understanding you're wanting to know if
20 it would be up for, like, bid?

21 COMMISSIONER GANT: It says, "Materials
22 are very particular to Waldorf curriculum."

23 MS. COHEN: Right.

24 COMMISSIONER GANT: Are you purchasing
25 books, materials -- what are you pushing --

1 purchasing from Waldorf?

2 MS. COHEN: We would be purchasing
3 supplies, like paper, crayons, paints. There might
4 be additional math books, materials for science
5 classes, that kind of material.

6 COMMISSIONER GANT: Have all these
7 materials been approved by the Public Education
8 Department?

9 MS. COHEN: I don't know that. But we
10 would make sure that they are. I mean, we're open
11 to working and making sure that we're meeting all
12 requirements.

13 COMMISSIONER GANT: But if they're not
14 approved by the Public Education Department, then
15 what?

16 MS. COHEN: Then we would be -- we
17 wouldn't purchase them. We're open to that
18 conversation.

19 COMMISSIONER GANT: Then I go back to
20 my -- one of my questions. Purchase of Waldorf
21 materials. Is that a sole source? You're going out
22 on sole-source contracts?

23 MS. COHEN: No, I don't think so.

24 COMMISSIONER GANT: Then how are you
25 making the purchases?

1 MS. COHEN: Well, if we -- I hope I'm
2 misunderstanding what you mean by "sole source." I
3 mean, I -- my understanding is that if we're looking
4 to buy certain kinds of paint, we would open that up
5 to whoever can supply that kind of paint. It's --

6 COMMISSIONER GANT: That's what I want to
7 hear. But what I'm reading is Waldorf.

8 MS. COHEN: Well, we wouldn't necessarily
9 buy the same paints that another public school would
10 buy. We would have certain kinds of paints we're
11 looking for. Well -- it's a particular kind of
12 watercolor paint that is certain colors that's
13 particular to the curriculum. We don't -- wouldn't
14 say it needs to be purchased by -- from a particular
15 source. It would -- but whoever can provide it.

16 COMMISSIONER GANT: My last question,
17 Mr. Chair. Are you associated with the Waldorf
18 national -- whatever it's called -- the Waldorf
19 Schools, national or international? How much is the
20 school going to pay to be part of that -- that group
21 of schools every year? How much from your budget?
22 And I can't find it in the budget, so that's why I'm
23 asking.

24 MS. BRADLEY: Right. We would cease to be
25 a member of that organization. This group would

1 become a member of the --

2 MS. COHEN: Alliance for Public Waldorf
3 Education.

4 MS. BRADLEY: It's a different
5 organization. And so that has dues of approximately
6 \$200 a year, yeah, which we could meet through
7 donations.

8 COMMISSIONER GANT: Okay. Thank you,
9 Mr. Chair.

10 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner Gant.
11 Commissioner Shearman, and then Commissioner
12 Bergman.

13 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Okay. I -- on
14 Page 152, I have another question. Under the
15 Business Plan budget, under Expenditures, about in
16 the middle of that paragraph, it says, "Full-time
17 employees will enjoy medical benefits of up to \$400
18 per month." Could you explain that?

19 MS. COHEN: My understanding for that is
20 that it is what would be budgeted for making sure
21 that there is health insurance for each teacher, and
22 approximately \$400 per teacher a month. Is that --

23 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: For medical
24 insurance?

25 MS. COHEN: For health insurance.

1 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Okay, okay.

2 MS. COHEN: Health insurance. Sorry.

3 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Bergman.

4 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Could you turn to
5 Page 151, then?

6 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: One fifty-one.

7 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: I note on order
8 Page 151 -- and I don't have the pages she -- does,
9 it says you are going to require students to do
10 fundraising for \$500 each? Can you see that in
11 there, or can you find --

12 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Right there.

13 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Is that what it
14 says?

15 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Uh-huh.

16 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Can you explain
17 that? I got two kids through school, and they sold
18 raffle tickets and stuff. But I would have choked
19 on \$500. Can you explain that to me?

20 MS. COHEN: I think that that's an average
21 and that we're just trying be as conservative as
22 possible with the budget and recognize that we're
23 going to have to do fundraising. Obviously, some
24 kids are going to do \$10. Some kids might be able
25 to do more.

1 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: So there's not
2 going to be any penalty because some kids are not
3 going to be able to do \$500?

4 MR. HERNANDEZ: This is not directly to
5 the kids fundraising. We would like to see about
6 \$500 per student. So if we have 10 students, we'd
7 like to have \$5,000 fundraised in our fundraising
8 efforts. It may have nothing to do with the
9 students.

10 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: So you're not
11 asking -- so if the parents can pony up \$500, that
12 would be fine?

13 MR. HERNANDEZ: No, no, no, no. The
14 students have nothing to do with that. We do many
15 events throughout the year that raise money -- raise
16 funds. And our goal would be able to raise "X"
17 number of funds, \$50,000 a year, or \$25,000 a year.
18 The majority of those events, students are not
19 involved in that.

20 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: I just saw the word
21 "student," and I thought you were requiring the
22 student to raise --

23 MR. HERNANDEZ: Per student. That would
24 be a goal, if we could raise \$500 per student.
25 There are a number of students in the school. That

1 could be a concert. We have many artists that give
2 concerts and the proceeds come to the school.
3 That's what we're looking at.

4 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Are you the only
5 Waldorf School right now? Are you aware of any
6 others?

7 MS. COHEN: There is not a public. This
8 is the first charter Waldorf in the state. There is
9 a private Waldorf School in Santa Fe.

10 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: And Commissioner
11 Gant kind of already touched on this. My question
12 was, is the Waldorf curriculum already recognized by
13 the PED? And if I understand your answer, you're
14 not sure whether it is or not.

15 MS. COHEN: Is it recognized.

16 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Your curriculum is
17 going to have to be approved by the PED.

18 MS. BRADLEY: There are quite a few
19 Waldorf-inspired schools around the country. This
20 is the first one in New Mexico.

21 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: So it's up in the
22 air whether they're going to approve your
23 curriculum?

24 MS. COHEN: In the application, it lists
25 various curriculums, that people can be coming

1 forward who are interested in becoming a charter.
2 And Waldorf is listed as one of them. I surely hope
3 so.

4 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Okay. And on
5 Page 104, you list, as an assessment, apparently,
6 something called the Discovery Education Assessment.
7 I think you called it a formative assessment. I'm
8 not familiar with that one. Can you describe that
9 one to me a little bit?

10 MS. COHEN: I am not very familiar with
11 it. The way we came to that is -- again, this whole
12 process has been really amazing and wonderful. We
13 were down in Albuquerque for some trainings at ACE
14 Leadership School, actually, which is a charter
15 school in Albuquerque. And the resources are
16 amazing in this state of people who are willing to
17 support initiatives, charter initiatives.

18 And as New Mexico is moving to the Common
19 Core Standards, I was talking with their curriculum
20 specialist as we were pulling our information
21 together. And that's what is going to be -- is one
22 of the approved assessments that New Mexico has put
23 forward. So -- in the future. And we're just going
24 to embrace it right now and sort of be ahead of the
25 game on that is how we're looking at it, rather than

1 transition to different assessments over the next
2 few years.

3 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: I'm going to ask it
4 a different way then. What are we discovering then?

5 MS. COHEN: It is a formative assessment
6 that the State of New Mexico is going to be going
7 to. There were three options. And this is one of
8 them that seems like it's going to fit for our
9 curriculum. I can't give you more details on it
10 because it's not actually started yet. It's --

11 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Okay. So it's very
12 new, then?

13 MS. COHEN: That's my understanding, yeah.

14 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Mr. Chair, I think
15 that's all I've got.

16 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner
17 Bergman. Commissioner Gant.

18 COMMISSIONER GANT: One more question that
19 maybe Commissioner Shearman hit upon. This is on
20 Page 10, "Other Purchased Services," Function 3300,
21 Object Code 55200, Property Liability Insurance.
22 Zero budgeted. You're going to have property. By
23 state law, you must purchase liability insurance,
24 physical insurance. Who are you purchasing your
25 insurance with?

1 MR. HERNANDEZ: We already have that
2 existing, so I think it's just an omission there.
3 We do have existing liability insurance for the
4 property.

5 MS. COHEN: And I think that, for this
6 particular budget, I am sorry that we can't speak in
7 more detail to it, because we had someone help us
8 with this part of it. That being said, we really
9 wanted to be as conservative as possible. But we
10 will meet all requirements within -- that the State
11 of New Mexico has, and we will have liability
12 insurance.

13 And that just -- I think we're -- we're
14 wanting to be as flexible and able to acknowledge
15 what the State's going to require and meet those
16 requirements, as well as meet our mission and our
17 goal. And so, for the budget, we'll make it work.

18 COMMISSIONER GANT: Ms. Callahan, correct
19 me if I'm wrong. Is it not required that they go
20 through NMSIA for their insurance?

21 MS. CALLAHAN: Mr. Chair, Commissioner
22 Gant, that is correct.

23 MS. COHEN: So that's what we'll do.

24 COMMISSIONER GANT: Going back to
25 Commissioner Shearman's point of view, we were

1 expecting a balanced budget with all lines properly
2 covered. And that's what we have to vote on, what
3 you have here. All right. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

4 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner Gant.
5 Are there any other questions from Commissioners?
6 Seeing none, any member of the public, including the
7 applicants, may submit written input following this
8 hearing. Written comments can be sent to the
9 Commission via the Public Education Department main
10 Web site at www.ped.state.nm.us, through the
11 Calendar listing on the front PED Web page, through
12 the Public Comments section on the front PED Web
13 page, and using the link, the same URL, slash,
14 Comments.

15 You will be directed to an e-mail format
16 in which to write your comment. Make sure you
17 identify the school you're commenting on in the
18 drop-down menu. Please note that any written input
19 must be received by no later than close of business
20 on the third business day following the hearing on
21 the application you wish to comment on. That's
22 wordy, but three days.

23 Thank you for your presentations and your
24 hard work in preparing the applications. The
25 Commission will now recess the hearing until

1 2:00 p.m., where it will resume in the community of
2 Santa Fe. Thank you.

3 (Proceedings in recess at 11:45 a.m.)
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1 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

2 I, Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR, CCR #219, Certified
3 Court Reporter in the State of New Mexico, do hereby
4 certify that the foregoing pages constitute a true
5 transcript of proceedings had before the said
6 NEW MEXICO PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION, held in the
7 State of New Mexico, County of Taos, in the matter
8 therein stated.

9 In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my
10 hand on August 28, 2012.

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12
13
14 Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR-CRR, NM CCR #219
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