



MINUTES
Board of Trustees Meeting
September 22, 2015

The meeting was held at: 198 Varet Street, Brooklyn, NY 11206

PRESENT

Lourdes Putz, Chair
Robert Shea, Trustee
Samuel Rivera, Vice Chair
Gabriel Perez, Teacher Liaison
Akil Bello, Treasurer
Joseph Cardarelli, Trustee

GUESTS

Kathleen Gaffney, Principal
Ellen Eagen, School Attorney
Mary Kenny, Minutes Transcriber
Princess Barimah, Staff
Kathy Fernandez, Staff
Patrick Kern, Staff
Rickey Brown, Staff

Darnell Pierre, Staff
Belnardina Madera, Staff
Paul Leleck, Building Hope
Kentia Coreus, Staff
John Witherspoon
Katie Manion, Staff
Roberta Smith, Staff

EXCUSED

Marcenia Johnson, Trustee, James Lema, Trustee, Charles Hobson, Trustee

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm

1. WELCOME

Ms. Putz opened the meeting and asked that the Agenda be amended to move items #8 & 9 up to #3 to allow Ms. Gaffney to give that report under Academic Report.

2. IT UPDATE

- Ms. Gaffney said the IT team has been successful and that Mr. Medina has made himself readily available throughout the updating process. Ms. Gaffney explained that Mr. Medina set up a new, private WiFi network for staff, and that he is the only one with the password. This will prevent it from becoming overloaded. Mr. Medina has also been preparing mobile laptops, updating student ID cards, and providing internet support for staff.
- The School secured a partnership with NYU Tech. They donated ten computers and would like to work with the School in the future.

3. ACADEMIC REPORT

Ms. Gaffney reported on the top five items:

- Filling vacancies
Five staff vacancies need to be filled. The DOE aggressively sought to hire SPED teachers and as a result many of our teachers left. The Board considered preventative measures. Ms. Barimah stated that she is putting a recruitment folder together.
- Scheduling
Mr. Brown is helping with scheduling.
- Stimulus Grant
The school is applying for capital stimulus funds from the State of New York.
- Orientations by Grade
Each grade has had their orientation.
- 9th Period
Over 40 clubs are active and sports are now underway. A number of new teachers are providing extra help for students.
- Data

Graduation rate is 79% for fourth year students. This is the School's highest graduation rate so far. Ms. Gaffney reported that in order to meet the School's goal of 80%, five more students would need to graduate this year.

4. FACILITIES/SECURITY

- The School installed an ADT Alarm System and hired two additional safety officers.
- The lobby floors and sidewalks have been cleaned and lights have been repaired or replaced.

5. ENROLLMENT

- Ms. Pierre reported that 957 students are currently enrolled and that she will resume registration in coming weeks.
- Summer Bridge Program
The program consisted of eight days from 9am to 12pm and focused on Math, English and Language Arts. It concluded with a Town Hall Meeting. Most parents, teachers and students agreed that the program was a success and should be offered yearly. Ms. Pierre stayed below the School's budget. Mr. Kern complimented Ms. Pierre on her work and said the program was much more productive this year. Ms. Eagen asked the School to track these students into the academic year in order measure their progress.

6. FINANCE

- Ms. Fernandez stated that as of July, the School has spent 1.2 million, which is on budget. She anticipates the \$6,500 increase in rent to be the only change.
- Audit
Ms. Fernandez is working on the audit and has received a list of 40 items that she will send.
- Expenses
Ms. Fernandez reported that currently the greatest expenses are the computer tech consultant and the associated equipment. The Board also inquired about the costs of September substitute spending. Ms. Fernandez responded that the School spent \$23,000, at a rate of about \$225 per day. The Board discussed potentially hiring one of the substitutes full-time.

7. HUMAN RESOURCES

Ms. Barimah reported on what she is doing to fill the vacancies. Ms. Barimah has continuously posted on job sites from May to September and is reaching out to TRS to join. Ms. Barimah provided the Board with a packet on nationwide teacher shortages and is outlining why teachers left. She is working with Mr. Leleck on re-doing the pay scale and mentioned a teacher shadow program. Ms. Barimah is also working on:

- A list of the top ten reasons to work at WCHS
- Initiating an all-staff annual check-in
- Recruiting student teachers from local colleges
Ms. Smith made the suggestion of using Carney Sandoe for teacher recruitment; Ms. Eagen said that this agency works with private school and that there is a considerable fee for hiring a teacher through this agency; Board will need to consider budgeting for recruitment in future years. Ms. Eagen suggested targeting teachers from upstate New York education schools. Hiring retired teachers was also discussed briefly. Ms. Eagen will provide additional online resources to HR.
- Ms. Barimah outlined the religious observance day pilot program. HR and Counsel sent out a memo stating that employees may elect to take two religious observance days with prior submission and approval. Ms. Barimah reported that a number of teachers have chosen to do but that some may have abused the system. Ms. Gaffney, Ms. Eagen and the Board agreed that this was not the intention and that there needs to be further discussion about the best way to handle this moving forward.

8. COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- Mr. Kern has connected with Youth Power, a program that works with teens, and will hold an event with them at the School on November 4, 2015.
- A local artist would like to install an art piece in the School to coincide with Black History Month events. The piece consists of four, 8ft tall photographs from Ferguson, Missouri. Mr. Kern has seen the images and feels they are non-explicit and would benefit the School's students.
- Mr. Hobson put Mr. Kern in touch with a film producer who needed students to perform with acclaimed musician Macy Gray. The film selected professional actors but Mr. Kern believes a positive connection was established.
- Mr. Kern stated that VICE reached out about a paid internship for a School alumnus.
- The SUNY Stimulus Grant, if awarded, would help the school with capital improvements. The School asked for \$175,800 – which included capital improvements for flooring, kiln ventilation and IT. We will be notified in October.
- Mr. Kern would like to work with the Board on getting local businesses to donate end of year tax write offs.
- Ms. Eagen said that the School is moving forward on providing ventilation for the kiln.

9. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

Ms. Putz told the Board that the June and July Minutes now reflect the changes that were submitted.

- June 16, 2015 Board Minutes
Mr. Rivera made a motion to approve the June 16, 2015 Board Minutes with changes. Mr. Cardarelli seconded. Mr. Bello abstained. All were in favor.
- July 21, 2015 Board Minutes
Mr. Rivera made a motion to approve the July 21, 2015 Board Minutes with changes. Ms. Putz seconded. Mr. Bello, Mr. Shea, Mr. Cardarelli abstained. All were in favor.
- August 26, 2015 Board Minutes
Mr. Bello was added to attendance. Mr. Rivera and Mr. Kern discussed that the fundraising letter mentioned in the Minutes was a draft.
Mr. Rivera made a motion to approve the August 26, 2015 Board Minutes with changes. Mr. Bello seconded. Mr. Shea, Ms. Putz and Mr. Cardarelli abstained. All were in favor.

10. BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- Mr. Witherspoon expressed interested in joining the Board and provided a brief history of himself.

Mr. Bello made a motion to approve the nomination of Mr. Witherspoon to the Board. Mr. Rivera seconded. All were in favor.

11. NEXT BOARD MEETING

October 19, 2015 at 6pm

12. ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

Ms. Pierre proposed hiring a 12th grade student or an alumnus of the School to serve as a paid administrative intern. Mr. Rivera spoke about the risks involved with hiring students and suggested a fellowship instead. The Board agreed and Ms. Putz made a motion for the School to offer a stipend of \$500 for an alumnus, or an unpaid fellowship for a current student. Mr. Rivera seconded. All were in favor.