



MINUTES
Board of Trustees Meeting
October 19, 2015

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

PRESENT

Samuel Rivera, Vice Chair
 Robert Shea, Trustee *via Skype*
 Akil Bello, Treasurer
 Joseph Cardarelli, Trustee
 John Witherspoon, Trustee
 Evens Barreau, Parent Rep.
 David Fier, Staff Rep.

GUESTS

Kathleen Gaffney, Principal
 Ellen Eagen, School Attorney
 Mary Kenny, Minutes Transcriber
 Princess Barimah, Staff
 Kathy Fernandez, Staff
 Patrick Kern, Staff
 Ricky Brown, Staff
 Jennifer Parker Sparks, Staff
 Matt Fernandez, Staff
 Raymond James, Staff

Paul Leleck, Building Hope
 Natalie Bar-Levy, Staff
 Mara Levi, Staff
 Kentia Coreus, Staff
 John Witherspoon
 Kate Manion, Staff
 Roberta Smith, Staff
 Belkis Sosa, Staff
 James Tully, Staff
 Gabriel Perez, Staff

EXCUSED

Lourdes Putz, Chair; Marcenia Johnson, Trustee; James Lema, Trustee; Charles Hobson, Trustee

The meeting was called to order at 6:37pm. Mr. Fernandez introduced three students interested in sitting on the Board as student representatives. Each student introduced themselves and explained why they want to serve. A fourth student who was unable to attend will submit a video and then the Board will make a decision.

1. WELCOME

Ms. Eagen welcomed staff and students. She spoke about the advantages of witnessing governance firsthand at Board of Trustees meetings. She invited attendees to add their input and recommendations.

2. TRIP PROPOSALS

- Boston Trip: Choir students performed and Ms. Levi introduced a Boston senior trip proposal citing college exposure and professional music training as benefits of the trip. The Board inquired about the cost per student and brainstormed ways to defray costs. Ms. Levi went over three bids and Mr. Leleck offered to commit \$5,000 from Building Hope. Ms. Gaffney said student safety is her primary concern so she would prefer to have the security of a tour company. Ms. Eagen stated that while the Board supports the trip, a fundraising plan needs to be in place as the group cannot guarantee the Board providing financial assistance.
- Washington DC Trip: Ms. Bar-Levy and Mr. Perez proposed a Washington DC trip for juniors. They did not ask for financial support and will fundraise most of the money. The 45-student trip would take place in May and the total cost would include the hotel, meals, and guided tours. Mr. Bello also raised logistical concerns, but expressed overall approval.

3. ACADEMIC REPORT

Ms. Gaffney reported on approaching school mid-terms and recent test scores. She said math continues to be a top concern. Mr. Fier said that the new Common Core Curriculum assumes students are already familiar with the material but in-house assessments from the summer show that WCHS students are not where they should be. Mr. Fier said the Summer Bridge Program helped students and that the newly-hired reading specialist will be working with the Math Team. Mr. Brusca will provide comparative city and state data. The Board asked for the Math department to devise a plan to address low math scores and asked for plan to be presented by December.

Ms. Gaffney also reported on:

- Filling Vacancies: HR is working to fill all vacancies and recruitment is ongoing.
- Rachel's Challenge: A representative from Rachel's Challenge, an anti-bullying organization named after the first student shot at Columbine, spoke to students and parents of the School. The event focused on chains of kindness.
- Teacher Support: School leadership is actively visiting and observing classes daily and providing instructional support for School teachers.
- ADP: ADP remains difficult to touch base with for support.
- Community Support: The School has been involved with community events including the Breast Cancer Walk, Diabetes Walk, and Hispanic Heritage Week.

4. FINANCE

- Audit Update: Ms. Fernandez said the audit is still ongoing and that she would circulate a copy of the financial draft for approval. Mr. Leleck expanded saying the audit looked good, he doesn't anticipate any findings, and that the footnotes will be the same as last year. Ms. Eagen said the auditors complimented Ms. Fernandez on her work and are happy with the clean audit.
- Fiscal Policy Manual: Ms. Fernandez has been working with Charter School Business Management over the past year to create a new handbook. Ms. Eagen said the language is aligned with the personnel handbook. Mr. Bello made a motion to approve the Fiscal Policy Manual based on what the financial consultant recommended, pending review of the modifications. Mr. Cardarelli seconded and all were in favor.

5. DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- Vendor List: Mr. Kern reviewed a list of vendors the School has worked with in the past. He asked the Board for permission to proceed with soliciting donations.
- Gym Proposal: Mr. Kern will discuss a new gymnasium proposal with the School cabinet and leadership and will present it to the Board before approaching local politicians about funding and donations.

6. ACCOUNTABILITY & COMPLIANCE UPDATE

- Status of November 2nd Reporting Requirement: Ms. Manion provided an update on the November 2nd deadline. She is collecting a fingerprint screen shot, a fire drill schedule, Board surveys, and is working on the School's Progress Towards Goals. Ms. Eagen and the Board discussed how to handle responses where data has not yet been released.

7. ENROLLMENT UPDATE

Mr. Leleck reported that enrollment is 949, which is below the School budgeted amount of 952. The School's enrollment number is 963 so recruitment remains a priority focus. He reported that Ms. Pierre will be visiting an enrollment center the next day. The 2015 cohort is low and the Board discussed enrolling more seniors

8. HUMAN RESOURCES

Ms. Barimah is working on teacher recruitment. Mr. Fier asked about reimbursement of holiday time.

9. FACILITIES UPDATE

Space usage for United We Stand: The Board discussed using building space for Ms. Putz's organization, United We Stand, as the School would not profit from it and it is community group that advocates for the School's students. The space would primarily be used for parent meetings. The Board considered a number of potential issues including, conflict of interest, number of people, technical needs, and the time frame. The Board also inquired about DOE Guidelines. They also stated that if this were to move forward United We Stand workers would need to be fingerprinted, escorted, and incorporated into the evacuation plan. Ms. Eagen said she has contacted Sonya Hooks at the DOE and will report back.

10. NEW BUSINESS

School-Based Mental Health Provider Proposal: Ms. Gaffney said the School's Clinical Counselor has been looking into School-Based Mental Health Providers for students. A one person full-time conduit would set up in the mezzanine and provide services including group and family counseling. It would be paid by insurance at no cost to the school. This person would also provide IEP screenings and testing accommodations. A representative will speak to the Board at the next meeting.

11. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 22, 2015 MINUTES

- Page 1, #2, IT Update, second bullet: Add the words "work with the school."
- Page 1, #3 Academic Report, first bullet: Change the word "five" to "staff."
- Third bullet: Add the words "and the school is applying for capital stimulus funds from the State of New York."

Mr. Bello made a motion to approve the Minutes with changes. Mr. Cardarelli seconded. All were in favor.

12. NEXT BOARD MEETING

Mr. Kern will contact absent Trustees regarding their availability for a meeting November 24, 2015 at 3:30pm.

Mr. Barreau introduced himself and expressed interest in joining the Board. He is a parent of two WCHS students and is a guidance counselor for a DOE middle school.

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION

14. ADJOURNMENT