



# J. PAUL TAYLOR ACADEMY

*Recapturing the Joy of Learning - Recapturar la Alegria de Aprender*



## Governance Council Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 18, 2017

402 W. Court Ave., Building #2, Las Cruces NM, 88005

JPTA Media Room

### I. Opening Items:

A) The J. Paul Taylor Academy Governance Council met in open session on January 18, 2017 at 6:09 p.m. to conduct a regular meeting.

1. Roll was called by Janet Acosta:

Governance Council members Ric Hernandez, Arthur Berkson, Martin Lopez (arrived at 6:20 p.m., Chairman Ric Hernandez was notified by phone call prior to meeting of the delay), Sherry McDowell (was present via teleconference until she arrived at 6:21pm), and Janet Acosta were present. A quorum was confirmed. Member Coree King was absent.

Eric Ahner, Executive Director, Business Manager Gina Trujillo.

Stephanie Haan-Amato, prospective Governance Council Member (presented at today's meeting to be accepted to the board), and Diane Carmichael, prospective Governance Council Member were also present.

B) Chairman Ric Hernandez called for any conflicts of interest and no conflicts were stated.

C) Janet Acosta read the JPTA Mission Statement: J. Paul Taylor Academy, in alliance with families at the school and community, will offer a rigorous, well-rounded Spanish acquisition, project based instructional program in a smaller school to promote excellence for the diverse students of the Las Cruces area.

D) Arthur Berkson moved to approve the agenda for **January 18, 2017 Regular Meeting**. Janet Acosta seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously with affirmative votes from Rick Hernandez, Arthur Berkson, Sherry McDowell and Janet Acosta.

E) Ric Hernandez called for approval of two meeting notes.

1. Arthur Berkson moved to approve the minutes from the **December 14, 2016 Special Meeting** with modifications (listed below). Sherry McDowell seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously with affirmative votes from Rick Hernandez, Arthur Berkson, Sherry McDowell and Janet Acosta.

#### Modifications and notes:

- Janet Acosta noted that on page 3 and 4 of the minutes should not include the verbiage ACTION ITEM as it isn't an action item for the board, more of a follow through or follow-up.
- Arthur Berkson noted a modification to the notes under VII. Facility- the very last sentence "the committee found out they do not need the approval of the city legally, but they would still like to reach out to them to keep them informed", should be deleted and replaced with what the committee does need. The new sentence should read: Once the stamped drawings are finalized the committee will need approval from the Las Cruces Public School district and the State of New Mexico.



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- Ric Hernandez also noted that the end of the notes should indicate that the closed session was a part of the meeting and that two separate meetings were not held. Janet Acosta noted that she has made those changes, but couldn't have them presented here as the minutes had already been submitted. Janet Acosta, also for the record, wanted it noted that she would be including for transparency that Eric Ahner, Executive Director, was only present for 5 minutes of the closed session and was then dismissed.
2. Arthur Berkson moved to approve the minutes from the **December 19, 2016 Special Meeting** (with a special note for the record from Janet Acosta that the letter submitted with the notes is just a draft, and the letter that was submitted to NMPED was edited, professional and on letterhead). Sherry McDowell seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously with affirmative votes from Rick Hernandez, Arthur Berkson, Sherry McDowell, and Janet Acosta.

## II. Public Input:

A) Chairman Ric Hernandez called for any public input.

### 1. Public Input:

- Diane Carmichael, prospective Governance Council Member, and her husband Larry Carmichael were introduced. Diane Carmichael was asked to tell the council a little about herself. Diane is a retired educator with 35 plus years of experience, with her last 15 years being the Director of Special Needs Students in Louisiana. Chairman Ric Hernandez expressed his gratitude for her interest in joining the council.

2. Staff Input: There was no staff input.

## III. Governance:

A) New Governance Council Members:

Stephanie Haan- Amato gave a brief history of herself and her education and professional education experience that can be found on her resume. She also has a kindergartener and a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader at the school. She is excited to get more involved.

1. Janet Acosta moved to approve Stepahnie Haan-Amato as a new Governance Council member. Arthur Berkson seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously with affirmative votes from Rick Hernandez, Arthur Berkson, Sherry McDowell and Janet Acosta. Stephanie Haan- Amato will be an official voting member at the next meeting following her registration and paperwork being completed.

B) Governance Council Member Resignation:

Chairman Ric Hernandez let the council know that member Coree (Fox) King notified him that she would be resigning through a phone call a few weeks ago, he also received her letter of resignation by email today. Coree is resigning for family reasons, however is still a parent of a student at JPTA and still will be involved.

The council expressed their appreciation for her dedication and commitment and are very thankful for her service. Coree King was the treasurer of the council and therefore will need to assign another treasurer at the next meeting. This position will need to be filled as soon as possible as the treasurer is also a signer on the account.



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## IV. Finance:

The Governance Council Finance Committee met January 12, 2017 and the meeting minutes were reviewed:

- The council discussed during the renewal process for insurance the company asked if there are any Governance Council members on the Foundation or if there are any school employees on the Foundation. Chairman Ric Hernandez noted that our answer is currently no as the foundation does not allow it per their bylaws. **(FOLLOW UP ITEM -Chairman would like the council to consider a similar change to the Governance Council bylaws.**
- The Council questioned the Finance Committee minutes that referred to the November and December financial statements; as well as the decrease in the Spaceport grant. **(FOLLOW UP ITEM -Gina will need to clarify the decrease of the Spaceport grant).**
- The meeting notes on the SEG increase was noted and it was also noted that the BAR for this increase will be presented at today's meeting.
- The meeting notes also stated that the committee reviewed a December transaction and that all procedures appear to have been followed.

A) Martin Lopez moved to approve the November Bank Reconciliations. Arthur Berkson seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously with affirmative votes from Rick Hernandez, Arthur Berkson, Martin Lopez, Sherry McDowell and Janet Acosta.

B) Martin Lopez moved to approve the November Cash Report. Arthur Berkson seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously with affirmative votes from Rick Hernandez, Arthur Berkson, Martin Lopez, Sherry McDowell and Janet Acosta.

C) Martin Lopez moved to approve the November Revenue and Expenditure Reports. Arthur Berkson seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously with affirmative votes from Rick Hernandez, Arthur Berkson, Martin Lopez, Sherry McDowell and Janet Acosta.

D) Martin Lopez moved to approve the December Bank Reconciliations. Arthur Berkson seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously with affirmative votes from Rick Hernandez, Arthur Berkson, Martin Lopez, Sherry McDowell and Janet Acosta.

E) Martin Lopez moved to approve the December Cash Report. Arthur Berkson seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously with affirmative votes from Rick Hernandez, Arthur Berkson, Martin Lopez, Sherry McDowell and Janet Acosta.

F) Martin Lopez moved to approve the December Revenue and Expenditure Reports. Arthur Berkson seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously with affirmative votes from Rick Hernandez, Arthur Berkson, Martin Lopez, Sherry McDowell and Janet Acosta.

G) Budget Adjustment Request 535-000-1617-0019-I:

Discussion:

- This BAR is an increase. This is despite the fact there was a decrease to the value to unit in the SEG, it is because we had an increase in the total number of units (we had a total of 11 more units). This increase in the units is attributed to the fact that Mr. Ahner did a fantastic job with the STARS data for



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the 40<sup>th</sup> and 80<sup>th</sup> day report, so we will see an increase of \$24,408. We also believe (we were not able to see PED's worksheet to know for sure) that that we saw and increase in the correction to the bilingual units (5<sup>th</sup> grade was added), an increase in ancillary FTE (from .23 to .50), and additional funding for a nationally board certified teacher. Based on previous information from the PED, we didn't believe that we would see an increase for two of these three increases, which is great that we had an increase but is also makes us uneasy in that we do not feel that we can more accurately predict that amount.

- Martin Lopez then asked for the record what the response to our Hold Harmless letter was. Mr. Ahner reported that the response came from our budget analyst by email and it stated that her recommendation was for denial because overall, we would not see a decrease due to the increase discussed above.
  - Martin Lopez voiced his disagreement with this since we still saw a 1.5% decrease to the SEG unit value. The increase discussed above should be separate from our request, and that our request should still be considered.
  - Mr. Ahner noted that the email made it seem like the Hold Harmless would not be passed on to the Secretary of Education, but he did send a certified copy directly to the secretary, and therefore is confident that she got the letter. Mr. Ahner is indifferent on whether we receive a response back or not. He expressed that he wishes that we would have waited but we also needed to send it when we did so that we were timely in our response. However, when the reduction we were expecting is taken into consideration we are still seeing an increase as discussed above. He noted that whether we choose to pursue a response is up to the Governance Council and up for discussion, but being a non-voting person, he would be okay with letting it go since we do now have a little bit more wiggle room. He also noted that he has high hopes to reserve as much as possible to we feel less pressure down the road. He also feels like we now can make it through the year without "sweating it."
  - Chairman Ric Hernandez expressed concern that the amount that we are required to have in reserves could be raised if we came into additional revenue. The amount we now have in reserves was a reduced amount from the original required amount.
  - The question then becomes to push and possibly deal with the repercussions or let it be. It was an overall feeling that we will not get a response from the Secretary of Education unless we push.
  - Sherry McDowell added that she felt we should let it be and no matter what end the year in the black.
  - Arthur Berkson stated they learned about this type of situation in training for the GC. Situations where you don't get responses leads to people losing faith in government. We are required to meet very clear deadlines but responses back do not have such deadlines. He also noted the he feels it is very disrespectful to not receive answers back, and that is a major issue.
  - Again, Sherry McDowell noted that she didn't believe this is an issue that we push. She also reminded the council that even the reserves are still JPTA's money and we should end the year in the black.
- Martin Lopez then asked if we plug the increase back into the line items that had to be reduced where would that put us at? Gina estimated that we would have the reserves plus \$10,000, so around \$58,000.
- It was noted that the state needs to approve this BAR. The approval or disapproval turnaround on a BAR is usually quick but can take a few weeks. BARs are submitted electronically.



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- Concern was expressed that the money be put back exactly where it was taken from when we were faced with a reduction. Mr. Ahner stated that he felt like we put it back where the money is needed.
- Gina noted that next year we will not get as much bilingual funds because we were not awarded bilingual money for next year. It was then asked if we were going to put any of this increase towards that for next year.
- Discussion of line items proposed in this increase:
  - Is money for Governance Council Member training necessary since the current board had agreed to pay for training themselves? Chairman Ric Hernandez stated it was and that we need to leave money for about 3 council members' training just in case, especially with new members that have not already agreed to pay for it on their own. It was then noted that the coalition is a very positive thing.
  - Utilities were brought back up to about where they were before the decrease.
  - Noted that this BAR puts the increase in difference places throughout the budget and that it is not going into the required reserves at this time.

Sherry McDowell moved to approve the Budget Adjustment Request 535-000-1617-0019-I. Martin Lopez seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously with affirmative votes from Rick Hernandez, Arthur Berkson, Martin Lopez, Sherry McDowell and Janet Acosta.

## H) Lunch Program Cost Increase for 2016-2017 School Year:

### Discussion:

- Reminder that this program runs in the red but is an integral part of our school so we need to try to decrease the loss.
- **(FOLLOW UP ITEM:** Council asked Mr. Ahner to please include in his Friday updates a summary of why we are asking for the \$.15 increase and for families to send comments and concerns by email to him so that he can summarize at the next meeting. Also, let parents know that they are invited to attend the next meeting to participate in discussion on the vote for the Governance Council to petition Mr. Ahner to increase the cost of the lunches).

## V. Executive Director Support and Evaluation

### A) Executive Director Report

Mr. Ahner's report with the monthly statistics was discussed.

- Discovery data was sent to Chairman Ric Hernandez but there hasn't been enough time for it to be analyzed to see the potential growth of the students, this data will be analyzed for further discussion at the next meeting.
- Student enrollment and attrition was discussed:
  - Last meeting it was reported that we had a few student's leaving and that number ended up being eight students. Those open slots left by those students have been filled.
  - It is possible that another middle school student will be leaving but we don't foresee a problem in replacement even though the middle school waiting list is much shorter. We should be on track for the 80<sup>th</sup> day reporting.
  - Historically at JPTA, and in Mr. Ahner's experience, attrition at the middle school level always tends to be higher. This is something Mr. Ahner is discussing with our teachers on how to combat attrition and retaining our kids through middle school.
  - Arthur Berkson mentioned that sometimes waiting list size can be misleading when it comes to this time of the year because many people become comfortable with their school



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and it is a hard decision to make to move your child (he was speaking from personal experience). Mr. Ahner agreed that it is a hard decision for parents however, he as seen many willing to move mid-year.

## B) Head Administrator Mid-Year Evaluation

Janet Acosta moved to table the Head Administrator Mid-Year Evaluation until the February meeting. Arthur Berkson seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously with affirmative votes from Rick Hernandez, Arthur Berkson, Martin Lopez, Sherry McDowell and Janet Acosta.

## VI. Facility

### A) Facility Committee Reports

Arthur Berkson reports that the last Facility Committee Meeting was the morning of the last board meeting so the next meeting is on Tuesday at ASA Architect's office with Mr. Shelton. The committee's goal was to have the stamped drawing of the grounds at this meeting, but that will probably not happen until February, due some traveling of those involved. The goal was to get it, and get bids and get ground work going during Spring Break but we don't know at this point if that will be possible. Arthur is seeking staff that would be interested in being on the committee and helping in communication to let everyone know what is happening on the development of our playground. Having this playground is going to add to the identity of the school. Arthur Berkson noted that he would ideally like to have the physical education teacher on the committee, however he knows she and all other teachers are busy and have limited time. He joined the board in hopes to work more closely with the teachers and thus far has been disappointed in the participation from them during this more harmonious time. Mrs. Dozier and Mrs. Curnutt were in attendance and Mrs. Dozier stated she would be involved however she's not sure if she or Mrs. Curnutt would be the best on the committee as they are SPED teachers, and don't have classes to take to the playground. Mrs. Dozier and Mrs. Curnutt stated they felt it would be better to make an appeal at the staff meeting. It was a consensus of the group that it would be good to have an elementary teacher involved with the committee and with the AOC as well. Arthur Berkson will attend a staff meeting to ask for volunteers for both the Facility Committee and the AOC.

## VII. Development

### A) Development Committee Report

No discussion as the meeting will be held next week.

## VIII. Academic Excellence

### A) Academic Oversight Committee

#### 1. AOC December Meeting Minutes

No further discussion on this meeting as it was discussed in last month's meeting. Next meeting is next week.

### B) Parent Advisory Council

#### 1. December Meeting Minutes

- Meeting notes have not been received but PAC just held a restock the teacher lounge and supply closet and it went well. PAC is finding a few volunteers for Friday's talent show.

### C) Gifted Advisory Committee-( 2/3 required meetings fulfilled.)

#### 1. October GAC Minutes

- This meeting was mainly planning the December meeting.



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## 2. December GAC Minutes

- Guest speaker meeting, was well attended and sign-in sheets were included with the minutes. Overall a great event.

## IX. Policy

### A) Approval of Lottery and Enrollment Policy

- The revised policy has been on website for comments, the final draft is being presented.

Arthur Berkson moved to approve the Lottery and Enrollment Policy. Janet Acosta seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously with affirmative votes from Rick Hernandez, Arthur Berkson, Martin Lopez, Sherry McDowell and Janet Acosta.

### B) FERPA Policy

Discussion of 1/3/2017 meeting- Sherry McDowell let us know that the formatting is the issue once fixed then it can be posted and voted on next month. Question was raised if this is to be included in annual training for teachers and staff. It was unknown at the time. (**FOLLOW UP ITEM-** Mr. Ahner will look into the annual training).

### C) Compulsory Attendance Policy

Discussion on this policy is being moved to the next meeting.

### D) Alcohol and Tobacco Policy

Discussion on this policy is being moved to the next meeting.

## X. Other Business

### A) Open Discussion

- Thank Mrs. Carmichael for attending and hope she is still interested. (**FOLLOW UP ITEM** by Janet Acosta on whether she would like to pursue).
- Next union discussion 2/1/2017 at 12:30 then there will be a closed session to discuss.
- Arthur Berkson- stated once again the training he attended from PED presented great information.
- Janet Acosta- recommended attending the financial training which was great as well.
- Eric Ahner- hope that we start to have a solid training steps for new GC members. Also, how we orient our families that are new to JPTA both at the beginning and mid-year.
- Hiring someone to come to JPTA and do training for our GC could be a possibility and invite other charters from the area and split the cost.
- Last February is when we started the process of a budget committee, so we need to start building that committee soon. Training is involved and GC would be welcomed if they would like to attend the training even if they are not on the committee. Last year Mr. Torres lead the committee, and this year Mr. Ahner is willing to lead it. Vicki Chavez will be instrumental in this process as well.
- Next meeting is February 15, 2017 at 6 p.m., performance evaluation can be included in this meeting.

## XI. Head Administrator Support and Evaluation Committee

No discussion at this time.



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## **XII. Closing Items:**

A) Martin Lopez moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 p.m. Sherry McDowell seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously with affirmative votes from Rick Hernandez, Arthur Berkson, Martin Lopez, Sherry McDowell and Janet Acosta.

Respectfully Submitted,  
J. Acosta  
JPTA GC Secretary  
(AL)

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Ric Hernandez, GC President