



Board of Trustees Meeting

Place: New Dawn Charter High School
242 Hoyt Street
Brooklyn, NY 11217

Date: December 20, 2016

Time: 2:36 p.m.

Present: Dr. Phil Weitzman, George Crowley, Leslie Winter, Samir Souidi, Darlene Anderson

Board Members via video conference: Esosa Ogbahon

Staff Members/ Visitors Present: Dr. Sara Asmussen, Melissa Wilson, Lisa DiGaudio, Eleni Salony, and Dylan Optican and (for confidentiality, student's name is hidden) were present for the first part of the meeting.

I. Introduction of New Staff Member

Mr. Tabano introduced Dylan Optican who is working as an independent consultant at New Dawn as part of a mental health grant. Ms. Optican introduced herself. The Board welcomed Ms. Optican to the school.

II. Resolution: Minutes from November's meeting

Mr. Tabano asked if there were any corrections. Dr. Asmussen reported the Mr. Crowley had emailed his corrections to the entire Board and that those corrections had been made.

Mr. Tabano requested a motion to accept the minutes as edited.

Motion: Mr. Crowley moved that the minutes be approved.

Seconded: Leslie Winter

Vote: Unanimous

III. Student Presentation to the Board

At this time a student who was suspended for the year had chosen to appeal the suspension and presented to the Board about why (s)he should be allowed back. There was a discussion around accountability and next steps.

IV. Presentation by Insurance Subcommittee



Ms. Salony presented the work the Insurance Subcommittee had conducted on the Reserve Fund Policy. Under acceptable accounting practices and at the request of our auditors, this Policy was developed in order to outline procedures if for any reason, we did not receive money from the NYSED to run the school. Good accounting practices state that the Reserve Fund should have 3 months of operations monies set aside for an emergency. For New Dawn this amounts to \$1.25M, which is already in a set aside.

The Policy outlined who could access the money, how the money was to be reserved, and the procedures for when it was appropriate to draw down the money. There was also a repayment schedule in the event we need to access the money. There was a discussion around the purpose of this fund which is mandated by good not-for-profit practices and has been requested by our external auditors during our last annual audit. There was a clarification that these funds would only be accessed through a Board vote and that it is only to be used in the event we cannot pay regular operating costs.

A request was made by the Board that the auditors review this document as a draft before a Board vote. Mr. Tabano asked for a motion to send the draft to the accountants for comment.

Motion: Mr. Tabano moved that the draft be sent to the accountants for review for a full Board vote in January.

Seconded: George Crowley

Vote: Unanimous

V. Building Updates

Mr. Winter and Mr. Tabano reported on the two finalist architectural firms who had been at the school earlier in the day to outline their vision for the school. Ann Tirschwell, formerly of Civic Builders and currently of Type A Projects, set in as a consultant for the school to review the proposals and presentations. She reported that she would write up her impressions but basically both firms were very good, the decision is going to be based on a number of factors such as if it is feasible to build up.

The costs between the two firms, while at first glance looked substantial, actually were not that different. One firm presented on just renovating the space; while the other firm presented on adding two floors. When looking at just renovating, their costs are very similar.

Ms. Tirschwell (as presented by Mr. Tabano) suggested that we get a cost estimator in now to figure out costs prior to picking a firm. This would allow us to apply for the bond application right now, we do not need to break ground in the next three months, we just need to understand our costs. Ms. Tirschwell told the earlier group (Mr. Tabano, Mr.



Winter, and Dr. Asmussen) that she would provide names of firms she thought might be helpful for this process.

After much discussion it was decided that going with the cost estimator, then having the architectural firms come back with responses to the estimators questions would be the next step. These costs then would be submitted to Build NYC for funding the bond application. It was also decided that once we have a firm on board, the Board would hire an Owner's Rep or General Contractor to be based at the school to actually oversee the renovation/build up.

There was a brief discussion about the insurance that will be needed. Mr. Winter requested that we look into doubling out D&O insurance. Dr. Asmussen reported that she had already met with the School's insurance brokers about insurance once we buy the building, and those costs are reflected in our five-year budget, and additional insurance once renovation begins. As well, all the Insurance Certificates from the differing firms will absolutely be reviewed prior to any work beginning in the building.

VI. Financials

After submitting the monthly financials earlier to the entire Board, Mr. Crowley had sent around his questions about the monthly financials prior to the meeting. First, the budget was off by \$5, the accountant stated that was a rounding error and she would correct it. Second, why was the budget for SPED teachers lower this year. Last year we had hired an additional SPED teacher who we did not replace. However, we still have an opening for one individual and we have job ads out continually. Different strategies were discussed about finding SPED candidates. New Dawn is helping existing teachers return to school to get SPED certification as well.

Third, Mr. Crowley wished to know what the building rent was so low in the budget and why we were over budget already. This is due to the fact that there was a belief that the School would have purchased the building by now. Therefore, the costs are actually in the mortgage line and not in the lease line in the budget. Mr. Crowley requested that the monthly financials include this information even though we have not started using that line as of yet.

Fourth, there was a request that positive/negatives be switch in the variance column. Finally, we need to report Erate properly. Currently, our technology is way overbudget but that is because this is the year the School made use of their substantial Erate budget. Approximately 90% of these costs will be offset by Erate payment, but this is not reflected in the budget. This will in fact, make the technology line come in at budget.



VII. School updates

a. Student Status

Dr. Asmussen presented the student status template. The Board requested several changes. First, the number of new enrollees had been left off the report. Second, the Board wanted last year's attendance compared to this year's attendance reported monthly. Mr. Souidi pointed out that one of the ways in which the Board oversees the school, and reported to NYSED that overseeing is occurring, is by analyzing attendance and it should be included. Attendance will be reported monthly.

An additional to the report is the FTE as reported to NYC DOE on the invoice and the unduplicated count of students. The Board wanted to make sure that our budget requirements are being met and that we are serving at least 450 unduplicated students a year as per our contract with NYSED.

b. Regent Results

The School has shifted how it determines who can take a Regents exam. All seniors are exempt from this requirement. All other students must complete work assignments in order to be eligible to sit for an exam. A student who is absent 80% of the time cannot come in and sit for an exam. This is called "Ticket to the Test" and was first implemented during the summer session. This led to fewer students taking the exam but much high pass rates. We are currently in the process of tweaking this moving forward. This is a philosophical question of, should student take the exam and fail so that they know what they need to do next time, or do we only allow students who have done the work or attended regularly to take the test. This is an ongoing discussion and one we are having with NYSED as we work on our accountability plan.

VIII. New Business

Mr. Tabano asked if there was any new business. There was none.

IX. Adjournment

Being no new business before the Board, Mr. Tabano requested a motion for adjournment.

Motion: Mr. Wiesman moved that the meeting be adjourned.

Seconded: George Crowley

Vote: Unanimous



The meeting was adjourned at 3:57. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 24 at 2:30 p.m. at New Dawn Charter High School, 242 Hoyt Street, Brooklyn.