

Academy of the City Charter School Board Minutes

A meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of The Academy of the City Charter School (the “School”) was held on August 27, 2013 at 5:00 P.M. at the School (31-29 60th Street Woodside, N.Y. 11377)

Notice of the meeting was given by submitting a notice electronically to the Queens Courier newspaper, posting the meeting’s notice on the school website, and posting a paper notice on the bulletin board at Academy of the City Charter School, 31-29 60th Street Woodside, N.Y. 11377

The following members of the Board were present:

Dr. Richard Welles, Nancy Sills, Angela Howard, Harold Elish, Silvana Vasconcelos (via Skype), Steve Zimmerman, Jessica James, James Traub.

The following staff members and visitors were present:

Kate Smallberg (teacher), Richard Lee (principal), Adam Hunt (director of operations), Dr. Frank Siguenza (Boys and Girl’s Club), Paul Ajon (AoC), Sara Helton (assist. teacher), Katie-Lyn Talbot (teacher), Dorothy Bukantz (teacher/OSP), June Schwartz (OSP), Emily Kotsaftis (PCO)

The meeting began with a tour of the new facility, led by Principal Lee. All board members were delighted with the beautiful new school and applauded the excellent progress made in the renovations. The meeting continued in the main office.

A motion by RW is made to waive the minutes for June and July board meetings as well as the June 9 special meeting of the board and adopt the minutes as written. Nancy Sills seconded

the motion and it was unanimously passed by all board members present.

Rick Welles opened with a brief homily about AoC having achieved much for a fairly new school. AoC is on its third year and has moved forward without all the turmoil and upheaval so many other charter schools experience in their initial years. AoC has a stable staff and student body as well as a clear notion of its program.

He also noted that, in the future, to make the board meetings more efficient, reports from committees and any other reports to be delivered must be distributed by the Wednesday during the week prior to the meeting in order to be delivered at the meeting.

PCO report

Emily Kotsaftkis presented the PCO report. This year, the PCO has elected eight new members to the PCO board. The eight new officers include two co-presidents, one treasurer, two executive secretaries, two class parent coordinators, and a communications coordinator. Four of the members are bi-lingual, English and Spanish. The PCO is also developing ways to communicating effectively (other than email) with families who might not have computers at home.

The PCO board has met twice this summer and worked with SZ and RL. The PCO has agreed on an approved budget. The amount of the budget is around \$4,800.00; not including the amount accrued during fundraising. They have set a fundraising goal of \$4,000. The PCO and school worked together to organize a group painting of the school including volunteers and teachers. More than 50 parents volunteered! This group painting was

about building community as well as painting the school. Some people signed up to volunteer in the classrooms to help the teachers set up their classrooms. There will be a PCO table set up during parent orientation day to acquaint parents with the PCO. Also, parents were asked to participate in the playground petition to acquire a playground in school and more than 100 signed the petition. Parents want to do whatever they can to help win the grant from Kaboom. There will also be a table in the lobby the first day of school. There is a mission statement of the PCO with 11 goals, which will be explained at the first PCO meeting on 9/10. The PCO will ask that parents donate \$10 per family and parents will receive a detailed explanation as to where the funds are being directed. The PCO's intent is effective and transparent communication with all families.

Teacher report

KS gave the teacher report. Teachers have been very busy preparing for the new school year, unpacking and setting up their classrooms. They are helping each other and getting to know the new staff members. They are excited for the children to arrive.

Finance Report

Exhibit A is the finance report prepared by Digant Bahl, CFO. Mr. Lee presented the finance report. He also noted that all of the SSF grant funds would be expended by 8/31, as required by the grant. Harry Elish noted that he would work with Digant to prepare a dashboard for every meeting, a sort of executive summary, of the financial condition of the school for presentation to the board.

School report

Richard Lee presented the school report. The school is coming together really well. Teachers are working hard to be ready for the opening day and there is a lot enthusiasm and hard work going around. RL stated that there are minor repairs that need to be tended to and it doesn't feel quite like home yet but he is confident that it will be in time.

There were 839 students that applied over the course of several months. As of August 9, 507 students were on the waiting list. From the 507 children on the waiting list, 400 or so families will not be able to attend AoC, which reflects the importance and demand for charter schools and the desire to have children attend them.

A total of twenty-nine students per class will be the cap, and the goal is to enroll twenty nine. The first couple of days of school will have moderate to poor attendance due to various reasons. AoC has the advantage of opening a week earlier than other schools; that can be a good indicator of how many children will be attending. At the same time, beginning the school year early can also be a disadvantage because many kids also fail to show up the first week.

RL said that re-enrollment numbers are high and was confident to say that the percentage is roughly about ninety percent. The reason why it's not more than that has much to do with the amount of children that moved out of state, other schools, or whose commute was too far. The real outcome will not be determined until the second or third week of school. Adam Hunt and Noel Peguero will be contacting children who attended school last year and through the first weeks of school to determine whether they will be returning to school. who may not have showed up the first several days of school to RL expressed

that AoC needs to contact our older children from our old zip code to figure out if there is any doubt that they may not return.

The Busing for the children will not begin until September 9th

Families that came throughout the summer that were not able to come to the open-house were impressed with the school.

The news on the street is very positive regarding the reputation of AoC. There have been several local newspapers that have mentioned AoC. The local press along with the PCO's promotion of the school, have been very informative resources for families to discover AoC.

The academic program will focus on the common core and the curriculum will be aligned with the common core. The teachers will work with groups of children to make sure that the instructions reaches children with different learning styles -- visual learners, auditory learners, learners who need to take notes. The children will ultimately learn to trust the teachers and the school and to take chances. Math will be a focus this year. Teachers will be using TERC as well as GoMath. Children will practice skills, use manipulatives. Teachers will be supported and given special PD focused on math.

Staffing positions are filled with the exception for Guidance Counselor, which will be temporarily filled until January 31, 2014. That position should be filled this week.

Negotiations with the UFT over teacher evaluations are still in process. The rubric incorporates the same standards used for the last two years. Standard for the evaluations are still the same. Board members are welcome to give feedback and join the committee working on evaluations

The CPR EAD training went well. Up to eighteen staff members are certified for CPR EAD training in the case of an emergency.

We are running our own afterschool program here at AoC. The afterschool program will be a paid program, with a sliding scale for families eligible for free and reduced lunch. The cost of the afterschool program will be slightly more expensive than last year's program since we didn't receive the grant we applied for. We've hired an afterschool coordinator who is also our physical education teacher as well. For the kindergarten and first graders, there will be academic enrichment onsite from 4 to 5 and then art, drama, and sports from 5 to 6. For the second and third grade, there will be academic enrichment on site from 4 to 5 and will conclude from 5 to 7 at the Boys and Girls Club in Astoria after being transported from AoC.

Staff members interested in the afterschool program will be able to participate in the program.

In regards to insurance, the D&O coverage was increased to 16 million dollars as requested by the board. A summary of the insurance coverage is available for any board member to review.

SZ and RW delivered the report of OSP. SZ invited board members to attend the Northeast charter conference. Key elements of the OSp contract being negotiated with OSP are charter renewal and making a decision re opening a middle school. June Schwartz will be the OSP representative in the school. A task force of board members to work with OSP on the middle school project was formed. It includes: Harry Elish, Nancy Sills, Richard Welles, Angela Howard, Ricahrd Lee, and Desiree Galashaw. JS is a founding member of the Open School Project with a particular expertise in curriculum and project management.

HE and AH gave the report of the board development task force. The task force is working toward preparing guidelines to expand the board, and in particular preparing an agenda for the board retreat. The guidelines will include, how to go about finding a board member and parent participation on the board.

A planning committee for the board retreat was formed, consisting of RW, Jessica James, AH, and Harry Elish.

Development Committee -- James Traub and Jessica James gave the report of the development committee. The school would benefit from tapping into the large companies in Long Island City and those closer to the new school. The development committee will follow up on finding an intern or a "junior" board member to work on development. The committee is continuing to talk to potential donors and foundations on behalf of the school.

OSP Contract -- Board members affiliated with OSP were asked to leave the room. The non-interested board members continued the discussion concerning AoC entering into a contract with OSP. Nancy Sills worked with Principal Lee on behalf of AoC to define the nature of the relationship with OSP and in particular the services OSP would be providing to the school. The relationship and services are crucial and important to the school at this time. Nancy Sills asked for authority to complete the negotiations. Harry Elish moved that the non-interested board members gave Nancy Sills authority to complete the negotiations with OSP with a fee to be a percentage of per pupil revenue. The limit of her authority was: Y1- \$150,000/ Y2- \$195,000 and Y3-\$225,000. James Traub seconded the motion, and it was unanimously passed by all non-interested board members present. The vote being concluded,

the board members affiliated with OSP were invited back into the room and the vote take was described to them.

The business of the board being concluded, NS moved to adjourn the meeting. RW seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed by all board members present.

The next meeting of the board of trustees shall take place on Tuesday, September 24, 2013