

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 January 28, 2014 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. In addition, notice that the board retreat would commence immediately following the conclusion of the board meeting was also given. Notice was also given of a second session of the board retreat, to be held at the offices of the Open School Project at 37-24 24th Street, Long Island City, New York, 11101 on February 1, 2014 commencing at 9:00 a.m.

The following members of the Board were present:

Dr. Richard Welles, Angela Howard, Nancy Sills, Steven Zimmerman,
Harold Elish, Jessica James, James Traub,

The following staff members and visitors were present:

Richard Lee (Principal), Desiree Galashaw (Assistant Principal)
June Schwartz (OSP), Sara Helton (Teacher), Tanya Lewis-Kelly (Facilitator).
Emily Kotsaftis (PCO).

RW announced that board member, Sylvana Vasconcelos, had tendered her resignation due to the pressing time commitments of a new job that made it impossible for her to continue her board work for AoC. The board honors the

service, great insight and advice that Ms. Vasconcelos gave to the board and the school over the years of her service. Ms. Vasconcelos' letter of resignation is Exhibit A.

The board also noted with sorrow the passing of Pete Seeger, a great humanitarian and a great artist who was an inspiration to many members.

Teachers' Report

Sara Helton gave the update. The second grade was visited by David Lynch, a UNICEF award-winning educator. The children responded enthusiastically to Mr. Lynch and had the opportunity during his visit to practice their interviewing skills. The students asked interesting questions relative to his summer teaching position in Mexico. Grade-specific selection of books have favorably increased vocabulary knowledge. Exercises utilizing flash cards are incorporated into the classroom. Apps that help children learn their vowels and consonants are also supporting the learning process. Due to these visual tools, the students are progressing and doing well. There was a lengthy discussion on the pros and cons of standardized testing. Managing expectations were discussed. The question raised was, "What type of conversation should parents be having with teachers regarding this subject?" The Education Committee plans to meet in February.

PCO Report

At the PCO's fifth meeting, RL addressed the PCO on the pros and cons of standardized testing. The talk was extremely helpful and enlightening. Fundraising efforts spearheaded by the PCO were a huge success. Emily Kotsaftis

proudly announced that \$8,000 had been raised for the AOC play area. It was noted that separately, an additional amount of \$7,000 was also generated by the board for which the PCO was very grateful. A representative from the Charter Center came to AOC to speak about Advocacy day slated for February 4th in Albany. The topic of Advocacy day is *Charter School Models & Assessments*. The POC wants 30 parents to attend. To date, only two parents have actually signed up. The PCO is considering whether to become a separate legal entity, in particular considering issues of insurance and liability, including coverage under the school's insurance policy.

Resolution on La Raza Line of Credit

RL discussed the La Raza line of credit. LaRaza is a potential source of funds which loans money to individual schools at modest interest rates. They do not offer grants. HElish moved that the board adopt the resolution which is Exhibit B. AH seconded the motion. The motion to approve the resolution was unanimously passed.

Finance Report

Harry Elish gave the update on the finance committee. (Exhibit C is the finance report that covered current financial reports for the school year July 2013-December 2013. The finance committee met on January 28, 2014, at 4:00 p.m., prior to the commencement of the board meeting. The report was distributed to the board. The fiscal year has gone forward as anticipated. The revenue has been slightly up because more children enrolled than were budgeted for, and the facilities costs have been slightly higher than anticipated. The finance committee

gave the green light to a proposed budget for next year which would include three kindergarten classes and a planned phase two of construction to build a teachers' lounge and bathrooms in the basement, as well as other improvements. The proposed budget will be presented to the full board for approval at the February meeting.

School Report – Enrollment, Facilities, Outreach, Play Area

(The school report is Exhibit D). Richard Lee gave the school report by stating AOC has already received 425 applications for next year and many more applications are expected. RL distributed the marketing piece designed by a member of the PCO in the form of a postcard (*Community. Discovery. Joy.*) It will be utilized to inform potential families of the upcoming AOC open house schedule. Open houses will be held at the 31-29 60th Woodside location in mid-February & March and again on April 1st from 8:30am – 9:30am.

A short video was viewed of boys & girls grades Kindergarten through 3rd grade during a play session working with the imagination playground. It showed children at various times interacting with different sets of building blocks in the school gymnasium. It demonstrated how AOC students are gaining skills in community and collaboration. Children learn in different ways. The variety of state-of-the-art interactive building blocks offers the students the opportunity to have a joyous learning experience.

Teacher evaluations are going well. New locks are on every door to prevent intruders. Two closed-circuit cameras were installed and are directly linked to the

network. One camera is located in at the front entrance of the school; the other is in the parking lot. This valuable security measure cost approximately \$7,000-\$8,000). The after school project has ninety children participating.

Open School Project Report

Steve Zimmerman invited Susan Barker Miller of CSI to come to an AOC board meeting sometime in the near future. It was reported that Councilman Jimmy Van Bramer visited AOC last month and did a complete walk-through. He was impressed with our facility and the mission of the school.

A gathering of eight charter school administrators is being planned at the Jackson Diner in Queens for a symposium breakfast. The topic will be supporting the New York State DREAM ACT, which would provide scholarship aid and other financial opportunities to undocumented students wishing to attend college. State Senator Peralta supported the bill for the DREAM ACT.

Amendment to OSP Contract

There are certain amendments that the Lawyers Alliance have recommended, particularly with regard to the role of OSP in connection with grants solicited by AoC. In order for the Lawyers Alliance to work with OSP on those items, AoC must agree to a waiver of conflict of interest, since the Lawyers Alliance also represents the school (although no in connection with this contract). NS moved that the board approve the waiver. JT seconded the motion. RW and SZ recused

themselves from voting. All disinterested board members approved the motion, and authorized NS to enter into the waiver on behalf of AoC.

Other/Misc:

An announcement was made to remind committee members of the board retreat immediately following the board meeting and continuing on Saturday, (February 1, 2014) at 9am. The Saturday meeting will be held at the Open School Offices located at 37-24 24th Street **Suite 343** in Long Island City.

All business of the board being concluded, NS moved to adjourn the meeting. AH seconded the motion, and the meeting adjourned at 6:10pm

The board retreat began immediately following the meeting. In attendance were RW, SZ, AH, JT, JJ, NRS, HE and RL. Also in attendance were Tanya Lewis, facilitator and Theresa _____, scribe. The topic of discussion focused on the mission of the school. The board retreat adjourned at 9:00 p.m. The next session of the retreat was scheduled for Saturday, February 1, 2014 at 9:00 a.m. at the offices of the Open School Project.