

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 March 25, 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

The following members of the Board were present:

Dr. Richard Welles, Nancy Sills, James Traub, Angela Howard, Steve Zimmerman

The following staff members and visitors were present:

Richard Lee (principal), June Schwartz (OSP), Dr. Frank Siguenza (Boys and Girls Club) Emily Kotsaftis (PCO), Paul Ajon (AoC Staff)

Rick Wells called the meeting to order. He began the board meeting with a brief discussion about accompanying RL on an open house tour with parents, how it reminded him of the private school he had headed, and how proud he was of AoC’s reputation and high standard of education and curriculum.

AH moved to waive the reading of the February minutes, and approve them as written. JT seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Board Development

AH and HE met with two prospective board members. One was asked to join the board of Success Academy. The other, Cheryl Lyn Bentley, was very interested in AoC. She has a background in not for profit work, a masters in education and a law degree. As a first step, a meeting was being planned between her and RL. There was further discussion of inviting Ms. Bentley to a board meeting. AH is also working on finding a potential board member who comes from the local community. There was discussion concerning the need for the task force to establish criteria for recruiting board members. OSP is working on an informational package for potential new board members.

RW stated that it is not necessary for teachers to attend board meetings, although they are always welcome. There will be regular distribution to the board of the classroom newsletters. Teachers serve on the education committee and therefore will be attending those meetings regularly. NS expressed her approval of the classroom newsletter procedure for keeping the board informed and also of the substance of the newsletters which reflect the rich curriculum being offered at AoC. The other board members concurred.

PCO

Emily Kotsaftis presented the PCO report. The PCO recently had its seventh meeting and attendance seemed to be improving. The second grade class teachers presented the PCO with a program called on

“Engaging With Literacy Through Research” which focused on a project from last year, which chronicled the lives of birds; children’s work samples were presented.

The PCO began to discuss multicultural education as a result of numerous email posts in January. One parent had expressed a desire to see more specific focus on African American culture. There was a discussion at the PCO meeting about how race is being integrated in the curriculum, or how the school is addressing race education in the school. There was a discussion of forming a parent group to discuss issues of race.

Another movie night was hosted at AoC recently; \$400 dollars was raised from selling hot dogs. There is a Spring book fair planned for June.

The PCO has collected dues from less than 50% of the families. It is working on collecting dues from the other families.

An art auction of student artwork is being discussed and the PCO has consulted with Ms. Judy.

The PCO is applying to become a client of the Lawyer’s Alliance in connection with potentially becoming an independent 501(C)(3) organization and for other future legal needs.

The PCO will be asking class parents to work on teacher appreciation week.

The PCO is working on recruiting people who are willing to run for next year's PCO board. With the exception of co-president Amanda Lefer, all of the board members will be new next year. A small nominating committee consisting of Steve Zimmerman, Barrie Miskin (Teacher), Michael Caramanico (ELA), and Emily Kotsaftis has been formed.

Finance Report

RL delivered the finance report, by reviewing the written report previously prepared and distributed by DBahl, accountant and CFO. (Exhibit A)

School Report

RL gave the school report which had previously been distributed to the board (Exhibit B).

Some of the third grade children will have the opportunity to perform as the children's chorus in Carmina Burana at Lincoln Center together with Japanese musicians in a program which commemorates the tragedy of the Tsunami. It is an exciting opportunity that was set up by Alan Nunez, AoC's music teacher.

About nine volunteer parents will be working on the next phase of the playground, installing the playground tiles. Previously, parent volunteers helped to prepare and level the ground to ensure a leveled plain.

One of the third grade head teachers is on maternity leave. A second grade assistant teacher will be the head teacher in her classroom for the remainder of the school year. Two substitute teachers will be filling in as associate teachers for second and third grades, respectively.

The school custodian is departing and a new custodian who has previously worked at the school as a substitute has been hired.

Letters of offer are being prepared. AoC anticipates that 23 out of 24 staff members will be returning next year, which is an excellent reflection on teacher morale. There are currently openings for a learning specialist, a fourth grade head teacher and a kindergarten associate teacher.

JT noted that he had spoken with the education director of the Martha Graham company who had expressed interest in visiting AoC with an eye toward sponsoring a potential Martha Graham dance program at AoC next year. He will arrange a school visit.

More than 65 people attended the open houses, twice as many as attended in previous years. Currently there are 980 applications for next year.

RL discussed AoC's mid-year assessments, which results had previously been distributed to the board (Exhibit C). AoC has retained the services of an outside expert to work with the teachers on intervention responses to the various assessments.

There will be a school visit by SUNY on May 7. The board will be interviewed at 5:30 on that day.

OSP

SZ gave the OSP report. A team from OSP went to South by Southwest conference where OSP had been invited to participate. Both Randi Weingarten and Diane Ravitch spoke there.

SZ was recently in Albany. It is anticipated that a deal will be struck soon. On the table is increasing the PPR and facilities funding. The UFT is doing serious fighting against increased funding for charter schools.

Prior to the meeting OSP circulated the mission statement of the coalition of community based independent charter schools. (Exhibit C) RW moved that the board endorse the principles set forth in the mission statement. NS seconded the motion. It was unanimously passed.

OSP will recommend a consultant to work with the school on a mock third year visit in advance of the visit by SUNY.

OSP is also seeking new board members for its organization so that a fresh perspective could be shared and to ensure compliance with not for profit law. RW previously circulated the resumes of the new board members (Exhibit D). Under the contract with OSP, AoC must approve any new board members of OSP. NS moved that the board accept the proposed new OSO board members. JT seconded the motion. NS, JT and AH all voted in favor of the motion. RW and SZ abstained from voting.

RW and AH are working together to establish rubric for RL's evaluation. They will be presented at the May board meeting.

The business of the meeting being concluded, NS moved to adjourn. JT seconded the motion, and it was unanimously passed.

The next board meeting shall be held on April 29, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. at AoC.