

Academy of the City Charter School Board Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of The Academy of the City Charter School (the “School”) was held on May 28, 2013 at 5:00 P.M. at the School (36-14 12th Street Long Island City NY 11106)

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, 36-14 12th Street, Long Island City, New York 11106

The following members of the Board were present:

Dr. Richard Welles, Steve Zimmerman, Nancy Sills, Angela Howard, and Harold Elish

The following staff members and visitors were present:

Kate Smallberg (teacher), Desiree Galashaw (assistant principal), Richard Lee (principal), Adam Hunt (director of operations), June Schwartz (Open School Project), Digant Bahl (CFO), Dorothy Bukantz (teacher), and Paul Ajon (AoC)

Rick Welles called the meeting to order. He began with a homily from Horatio Robinsons’ mathematical series called *Progressive, Practical Arithmetic for Common Schools and Academies* copyright 1877 originally published in 1858:

Progress and improvement characterize almost every art and science; and within the last few years the science of Arithmetic has received many important additions and improvements, which have appeared from time to time successively in the different treatises published upon this subject.

In the preparation of this work it has been the author's aim to combine, and to present in one harmonious whole, all these modern improvements, as well as to introduce some new methods and practical operations not found in other works of the same grade: in short, to present the subject of Arithmetic to the pupil more as science than art; to teach him methods of thought, and how to reason, rather than what to do; to give unity, system, and practical utility to the science and art of computation.

Nancy Sills moved that the reading of the minutes of the April meeting be waived and that the minutes as written be accepted. Rick Welles seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Nancy Sills officially welcomed Harry Elish as a new member of the board of trustees. NS briefly remarked on Mr. Elish's experience with not for profit organizations, including those helping underserved youth, which along with his great enthusiasm for the school and its mission and his expertise in financial matters will be a great asset for AoC. SZ added to NS' approbation by noting the extraordinarily quick, unprecedented in his experience, approval of Mr. Elish by SUNY. All present at the meeting were introduced to Mr. Elish.

Facilities Report:

The lease for the new facility has been signed and keys to the Corpus Cristi site given to AoC. RL met with Father West from Corpus Cristi parish and other representatives from the diocese. RL was pleased by how receptive Father West was towards AoCs and looks forward to a good working and collaborative relationship. AoC will hire two people to aid in the relocation of certain articles of furniture at Corpus Christi

to keep them from becoming compromised during any portion of the project.

RL said that there would be a meeting on Tuesday May 29 with the architects and general contractors to commence construction.

RL stated that there were ten weeks left until the time AoC would be obligated to move out of its current occupancy and general contractors will soon be providing calendar information on dates of completion.

We have contacted RCN and Network Outsource (as internet service provider) to partner with architect.

RL was confident that things have been well coordinated.

The construction, which also includes asbestos abatement, would soon begin. Asbestos abatement will be costly. The abatement project would entail the dismantling of walls to join rooms or consolidate space. The abatement would only be limited to the areas where the dismantling would take place; the rest of the asbestos will remain encapsulated or undisturbed and therefore no abatement is required.

Education Committee Report:

Angela Howard updated the board about the topics that were brought up at the May 28 meeting of the education committee, which included: discussion of the statistics and procedures concerning children whose promotion to the next grade was in doubt, reading and math assessment, as well as a discussion of the resolution on high stakes testing. For the next education committee meeting, AH stated that the issue of math curriculum and high stakes testing will be a focus. The education committee determined to table the issue of the high stake testing resolution this time. The education committee

welcomed its two newest members from AoC's faculty, Kate Smallberg and Lisa Gangi.

Teachers Report:

Kate Smallberg talked about the assessments being practiced at AoC, and how through these practices, reading levels are being exhibited and results can be compared from Sept through the end of the year. Children are able to see their outcome in regards to their reading book levels and their written work. KS spoke about the work of children in different subjects: art, science, math, research and literacy and gave an example of how they all came together in a final second grade project on birds. In KS's second grade class there was a celebration of learning in which the parents and family members of the students were invited into the classroom and the children were able to show them their final project. DBukantz noted that the bird project in the other second grade class had a different culminating project which had a performance component in which the children read aloud from their projects. In both classes the children identified with their birds and became experts in them. NS shared her thoughts on the excitement and appreciation generated for both the children and the parents. She noted that the children had also done a class trip to the Bronx Zoo to further their bird research.

PCO Report

Steve Zimmerman delivered the PCO report. He discussed the need to engage more parents in the organization since some members of the board from last year have starting to scale back their involvement. PCO needs help, energy, support. There also are parents who wish to be volunteers at the school. The PCO is enthusiastic about teachers becoming involved as it will help energize the organization.

Open School Project is working on a revision of the by-laws for the PCO with regard to teacher involvement. The next PCO meeting will be on June 4th. SZ stated that by the last PCO meeting in June, there should be new candidates for leadership next year. There was a small discussion on methods to increase parent interest in becoming part of the PCO. RL noted that in other schools there is a PCO table set up during the first few days of school. SZ said that the PCO should serve as a filter between parents and the school. He noted that the Open School Project is at hand to assist the PCO on organizational issues. DBukantz spoke about the importance of a PCO and its role in the school.

Board Retreat:

RW began the discussion of a summer board retreat by noting that he felt that it should be mandatory for all board members. NS offered to host a retreat, more of a day away from the city, at a summer rental near New Paltz. RW asked that NS join him as a member of the retreat planning committee.

Finance Report:

DB gave the Finance Report. He reviewed in detail the board package of financial materials, which is Exhibit A hereto.

School Report:

Richard Lee and Desiree Galashaw gave the school report. Enrollment: Currently there are 157 children in the school, with the number of children slightly over the number provided for in the budget. Special education children constitute about 9.2 percent of the student population. RL stated that out of the 157 children on roster, 95% of families have completed re-enrollment documents for next year. There are 107 new

enrollments and there is a high display of enthusiasm amongst new parents. For kindergarten, about 100 families on the waiting list have been contacted.

With regard to Program, RL stated the following:

- There is currently a curriculum review in progress to determine areas that worked and areas to work on, including assessments & materials. All unit plans have been written for grades K-2, and the third grade framework has been written.
- End of the year reports and assessments are being completed by teachers and reviewed by RL and Desiree Galashaw. Reports will be mailed during the week of June 17th.
- Promotion in doubt: Currently there are 19 children with promotion in doubt, with 7 to repeat grade (about 5% of total student population) and others whose promotion is being discussed with their parents or guardians.

DG reported on discipline issues. In March there had been 17 occurrences of hitting, striking or kicking, with hitting being the biggest category. In April there were 19 occurrences. A study done of who was doing these acts resulted in the following: of 9 reported incidents of hitting, 8 had been by one child. Letters have been sent home to the families of children who have hit others and it is being taken very seriously by the school. The school works with the children and the families not only to punish the children for these acts, but to teach the children how to change their attitudes and reactions so that these sorts of incidents do not happen again. As a result of the study and resulting actions taken the school expects to see a reduction in these incidents in May.

There are the following end of the year events planned:

- Spring Concert May 30th 6 p.m.
- AOC picnic at Rainey Park June 22nd
- June 26th Last day of school

- June 28th Last day for teachers; moving 12-6 p.m.
- June 30th Last day at St. Rita's
- Open House at new school June 15th 9-11 a.m.

Open School Project: The Open School project is working on renewal documents with regard to its contract with the school. There are two long range projects it proposes to work with AoC on: charter renewal and the development of a middle school.

SZ and RW went with a consortium of charter schools of Western Queens and CEI-PEA to meet with the DOE to discuss co-location in DOE space and fairness. They also met with Harvey Newman of CEI-PEA to discuss problems endemic to independent charter schools

Development Committee Report:

NS gave the report of the development committee. There is a fundraiser planned for June 6 at 6 p.m. Jim Traub's mother, Lee Traub, has graciously and generously offered to host the fundraiser at her home and to provide catering for the event. Invited guests include potential donors, and representatives of administration, teachers and parents who will be speaking at the event.

Executive Session:

RW moved that the board move into executive session to discuss issues related to collective bargaining negotiations and invited RL to join the board. AHoward seconded the motion. The board went into the executive session.

There were no votes taken during the executive session.

The board returned to the public session. NS moved to that, all business being concluded, the board meeting be adjourned. SZ seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. The next meeting of the board shall take place on June 24. It shall be the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Sills, Secretary