

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF ACADEMY OF THE CITY CHARTER
SCHOOL HELD ON NOVEMBER 16, 2014

A meeting of the Board of Trustees (the "Board") of The Academy of the City Charter School (the "School") was held on November 16, 2014 at 5:00 P.M. at the School (31-29 60th Street Woodside, NY 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:

Rick Welles, Steve Zimmerman, Harry Elish, Jim Traub, and Nancy Sills

The following staff members and visitors were present:

Richard Lee (Principal), Desiree Galashaw (Asst. Principal), Dorothy Bukantz (AoC Staff), Caren Leslie (AoC Staff), Ernie Brooks (guest), Michela Nonis (prospective trustee), Amanda Lefer (PCO), and Ana Vasquez (OSP)

Rick Welles called the meeting to order.

Jim Traub and Nancy Sills presented the Development Committee update. JT and NS are working on a fundraising letter; letter will be an email sent to a list potential benefactors. Committee pointed out it was "tremendously important" to expand circle of benefactors. The PCO expressed interested in sending outreach letter to some of the parents' connections as well.

RW moved to waive readings of October Minutes and approved the minutes as written. JT seconded motion. Motion passed.

NS introduced Michela Nonis to the board, listing her many accomplishments and talents that will be great assets to the board and to the school. She moved that the board adopt the resolution welcoming Michela Nonis as a trustee of Academy of the City. (Exhibit A) JT seconded the motion. Motion passed. MN will be in the 3rd class of trustees, with board term running to 2016. All forms together with the resolution will be presented to

Steve Zimmerman asked the Board to ratify an MOU agreement between AoC and the Variety Boys and Girls Club of Queens. The MOU was previously signed by RW, Chair. Copies of the MOU were distributed. The board discussed and agreed on best practices going forward which would provide for board review of any similar contracts prior to their being signed.

Richard Lee presented School Report (Exhibit B). School is currently undergoing focused observations and coaching of staff. Observations show that the teachers are highly engaged and “doing well.” Observations focused on improving student engagement and emphasis on “higher order questions”. School is also in the process of hiring a Science teacher and administrative assistant.

The board was pleased to hear a presentation by Caren Leslie. CL is a Learning Specialist focusing on improving reading comprehension. Ultimately she plans to work with the children on improving math skills as well. At the current time, CL works with students who are reading below grade level. CL’s approach is to “instill real love for reading” while balancing the reality of needing to take the state test. CL is meeting with students three times a week and working with a “leveled learning intervention” promoting reading benchmarks and building vocabulary. She has perceived improvements in the reading abilities of the children she works with even since the beginning of the year.

Desiree Galashaw provided additional commentary for presentation. DG stated that administration knew which students needed to improve reading. Students started working with CL by the second week of school. Currently, 5 out of 20 students working with CL have reached reading grade level. The school is in the process of hiring an additional learning specialist to work with at-risk students.

The board was also pleased to hear another presentation by Dorothy Bukantz, who discussed the story telling program she has developed for all the grades. DB uses storytelling as a way to promote academic intellectual development; for example, early grades experience storytelling as an introduction to pattern stories (narrative, character, setting, source, etc). She also explained how storytelling is also a way to build social and emotional development and build a community within the school. Storytelling can be integrated within the social science curriculum and the social studies curricula in the school, and DB makes an effort to include stories that represent cultural backgrounds within the school. Academically, storytelling promotes listening and speaking as well as encouraging students to write the stories they listen to as well as writing their own stories. DB is planning to tell the entire story of the Odyssey to the third and fourth grades over a 2-3 month period this year.

RW asked DB how she uses OpenSchool in her story program and DB explained that she encourages students to choose a page from their storytelling journals and take a picture to post on OpenSchool.

Amanda Lefer presented the PCO report. The PCO is “pulling resources” together for the Spring Gala. The Gala is scheduled for 4/18, with location to be determined. Recent PCO event, Fall festival was highly attended; event auction raised \$610. Thanksgiving pie sale fundraiser is currently on going.

The PCO has circulated a request form for educational tools that teachers would like in their classrooms. Only 4 teachers have responded to request. The next PCO meeting is scheduled for 12/1 after morning assembly. The meeting will focus on charter school advocacy.

Harry Elish provided the Finance committee report (Exhibit C). Committee is “on track” with an upcoming meeting in 1/27. Finance committee is preparing to create a budget for the upcoming school year. Preliminary budget will be presented to the Board by March meeting and finalized by May.

SZ presented the Open School Project report. OSP recently participated in a demonstration with the Coalition of Community Charter Schools (C3S) focused on demanding equitable funding for charter schools.

SZ and RW also discussed the upcoming charter renewal procedure. OSP is working with NECSN to receive documents that may be needed for charter renewal including examples of charter amendments, school applications, and authorizer responses. RW established that these documents will be useful for crafting “what goes into our story” and determining what is the best way to describe school progress. Board members will be able to follow the progress of the renewal process via a Google site.

OSP is also working on an “on-boarding document” for new Board members. Document will be sent to Board for review via email. Document will also include links to charter application, Open Model, and OSP contract with Academy of the City.

NS left the meeting.

Meeting went into Executive Session. There were no votes taken during the executive session.

The business of the board being completed during the executive session, the board returned to public session. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.