

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 September 24, 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, Jessica James, James Traub.

The following staff members and visitors were present:

Richard Lee (principal), Desiree Galashaw (Asst. principal), Paul Ajon (AoC), Dorothy Bukantz (teacher/OSP), June Schwartz (OSP), Amanda Lefer (PCO)

NSills moved to waive the reading of the August minutes and accept them as written. RW seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

HElish began by asking if any board members were interested in attending a United Way program in board development that would take place on November 14, 2013. The program tries to match not for profit boards with potential board members. RW as well as RL or DG from AoC will be attending, and HE stated that one additional board member was needed to attend. JJames volunteered to attend.

PCO report

Amanda Lefer introduced herself as a PCO Co-President. She described her process of choosing a school for her child, exploring all the charters in Western Queens and ultimately choosing AoC as being so superior and unique in the educational program it offered.

The PCO's first meeting on September 10, 2013 was extremely successful, with a turnout of about 70 people. Information was distributed in both English and Spanish. The next PCO meeting will take place on October 8, 2013. Curriculum night was a big success, with approximately 200 parents attending. The PCO worked on curriculum night to recruit new members and appoint

class representatives. Upcoming PCO events include a movie night for the families of AoC. The PCO has a fundraising goal of buying a projection screen. There was a discussion about the possibility of renting a screen for special events. The PCO is also planning a fall festival on a Friday evening. The PCO is working on arranging and scheduling snacks for classrooms and researching having a healthy snack policy, along with a list of suggested snacks. The PCO is sensitive to the economic issues involved in this issue. The PCO is also looking into healthy lunch alternatives.

The PCO has found someone that can oversee the PCO fundraising activities, which will include creating an Amazon wish list, a Thanksgiving pie sale and a winter Scholastic Book Fair. and the scholastic book fair is another fundraising activity that could have potential if approached skillfully.

Finance report

HE gave the report of the finance committee. The finances of AoC are stable. Enrollment is within the parameters needed to meet the budget. There will be a meeting of the finance committee with AoC's outside auditors on October 4, 2013.

School report (Exhibit A)

RL presented the school report stating that there are currently in excess of 270 children enrolled at AoC. A major goal of the administration, which was the focus of extensive and successful outreach program --spearheaded by the Director of Operations and the Parent Coordinator --, was to preserve the current student body (despite the move to a new part of the district). Ninety-two percent of last year's children returned this year. RL will meet with parents in October to discuss any concerns or queries concerning the new location.

Curriculum night was very successful. Parents came with plenty of questions regarding any number of concerns that were answered during this time with the teachers. Teachers were also excited to meet and present parents with their plans for the school year.

Over two hundred people attended which was a great outcome and showed great parental involvement in the school and their children's educations.

The education committee met before the board meeting and was given an example of unit plans for the math curriculum. Unit plans are also being created for literacy, social studies, science, music, and physical education. This is being done to make sure that the comprehensive program is appropriate for each age group, and as a record keeping system to monitor what's been done to date at AoC.

Professional development is ongoing and includes workshops held last week on health and safety, Individualized Education Plans , technology and math. RL will be running professional development workshops on teaching mathematics to young children. The school is also creating learning communities, which will involve workshops spread out throughout the semester on topics such as learning disabilities and distractibility, teaching mathematics to young children, and teasing and tattling. RL has worked with PLC in the past and they have been very successful, because the energy of attendees is being used within the group to generate enthusiasm and a sense of pride. The workshops are expected to reconvene in January.

AoC has been awarded a Citylore grant. Citylore is a non-profit organization dedicated to conserving and promoting folklore in New York. One of the grants was from the NEA foundation. RL thanked NSills for making the connection for AoC with Citylore.

Staffing positions within AoC are all filled with the exception of the guidance counselor. The current guidance counselor is on extended maternity leave until January. Initial interviews were carried out and two finalists selected, but upon further investigation neither was qualified for the job. The position has been reposted.

The first two weeks of school have gone very well. The kindergartners acclimated very well to the school, with very few cases of separation anxiety.

The new facility is in very good shape. The main office is looking great. The administration team is finally together in the front office. The science and library tech room are coming together. There is a buzzer system as well as new locks and the main front door will serve as the main entrance. Any other door opened will set off an alarm. Lighting is almost over ninety percent completed.

We have our very own A/S program running successfully, run by the physical education teacher, Charles Quinn, and staffed by AoC staff members. The attendance reflects ninety children participating so far. The program, which is a very important one, serves many families that need the care after school hours. The A/S program for Kindergarten and first grade has academic enrichment for the first hour from four to five as well as snack. The academic enrichment is then followed by physical activities. The second and third graders have academic enrichment for one hour and then leave for programs the Boys and Girls Club.

The relationship is positive between the Church and AoC. There has been discussions concerning the barriers in the

playground/parking lot and concerning the fences, which can be closed off from the public but cannot be locked.

There has also been discussion about Father West gaining access to the building other than through the front door. It is anticipated that all issues will be resolved to the satisfaction of the school and the Church.

RL is still negotiating and waiting to hear from Kaboom concerning our application for a grant to build the AoC playground in the interior courtyard. There are two grants that AoC may qualify for; one that would fund playground in a box, and one that would fund a climbing structure.

DGalashaw added that the cost for a playground for the playground that AoC needs is around sixty thousand dollars.

NSills reported to the board on the search for a general counsel. Attempts to find a large, general practice law firm to act as pro-bono counsel have been unsuccessful. She has been in contact with Cliff Schneider, who previously represented the school in connection with its successful lease negotiations for the current space. He has submitted a formal proposal to represent the school, including setting forth his fee structure. His fees are very reasonable and he previously went through a vetting and competitive bidding review. She has recommended to the school that he be retained, subject to review and approval of RL. RL

would be in control of contact with the general counsel and determine when outside legal services were required. NS would continue to serve as board liaison to the outside counsel.

NSills also reported that the contract negotiations between AoC and OSP contract are concluded, the final terms and language have been agreed to and within the authorization previously provided by the board. All that remains is for the contract to be signed. The contract is for a 3-year term and NSills reported that it is an excellent contract that should serve the upcoming needs and interests of the school very well.

RW and DBukantz gave the report of the open school project. DBukantz spoke about the tasks AoC had asked OSP to undertake, one being the completion of a science and social studies curriculum for the second and third grade by October. That work has been concluded. It includes the connections to the common core and ELA and mathematics. Also, the curriculum is in line with the standards recommended by the national teachers of science. There were also some upgrades to the K, 1, and 2 science programs in order to implement science and social studies into the curriculum.

The E-portfolios are currently being set up. The e-portfolios includes ready made rubrics for projects the teachers are

working on with the students. June Schwartz will be the liaison between OSP and AoC with regard to the ePortfolio program.

RW stated that since the contract was completed, the board could now put together a three-year work plan.

There is a board meeting on Tuesday, November 26. This day happens to conflict the Thanksgiving holiday, so it was suggested that there be a motion to change the date from the 26th to November 19. RW proposed the change on the board calendar, which motion was seconded by HE. The motion was unanimously passed.

A discussion with certain board members took place to figure out the details of how the board retreat would take place. They discussed the possibility of having the retreat spread out over two days and the issues that would be discussed. The cost of a speaker would also have to be considered.

The business of the board being concluded, AHoward moved to adjourn the meeting. JTraub seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed. The board meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

