

Academy of the City Charter School
Minutes of the April 30, 2013 Meeting of the Board of Trustees

A meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of The Academy of the City Charter School (the “School” or “AoC”) was held on April 30, 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 web-site, 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, Silvana Vasconcelos, Angela Howard, and James Traub.

The following staff members and visitors were present:

Karen Granados (teacher), Alice McNeil (teacher), Meryl Ephraim (teacher), Angelo Ferrucci (teacher), Jessica Donatelli (teacher), Stephanie Galea (teacher), Diane Biondo (teacher), Lisa Gangi (teacher), Kate Smallberg (teacher), Alicia Latman (teacher), Desiree Galashaw (assistant principal), Richard Lee (principal), Tsering Choedon (parent), Adam Hunt (director of operations), June Schwartz (Open School Project), Jackie Mahoney (UFT), Fabiola Goldstein (PCO), Elaine Comerford (PCO), Digant Bahl (CFO), Frank Moss (Attorney) , and Paul Ajon (AoC staff)

RW called the meeting to order. He began with a quote by Debbie Meier from a description of a school she founded called Central Park East:

The recognition that schools-as communities-offer hope and possibility, and intellectual competence, especially for those families who live lives of quiet despair, is particularly needed. Children have never been reared in more anonymous and estranged settings-divorced from the adult communities beyond immediate families and like-minded peers, and voracious media that feed their narrowest narcissism. The sheer neighborliness that once went with public schools- even interchangeable one-no longer comes naturally. Schools must literally help create communities, rather than expect to live off them.

RW also responded to a letter that had been previously sent by the teachers to the AoC board, as follows:

“We value outstanding teaching and our teachers and look forward to agreeing to an effective contract that is fair to faculty and to the health of the school as a whole.”

In light of the fact that one of the board members had to leave by 6:00 p.m., RW made a motion to change the order of the agenda, including moving up the issues on which votes were required.

NS seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

NS moved to waive the minutes of the March 26, 2013 board meeting and to accept those minutes as written. JT seconded the motion, which was unanimously passed.

Directors and Officers insurance:

NS explained that there was a request by various board members to increase the D&O coverage (insurance) to a three million dollar figure; also, to have the trustees indemnified under the school's policy. The increase in fees was within the authority of the school administration and therefore, no board vote was required. In addition, the increased fees were already accommodated in the budget that had been approved by the board.

Board Membership:

NS reported that Harold Elish has expressed interest in joining the board. He is a financial advisor who lives in New York. NS elaborated on Mr. Elish's extensive credentials and the breadth of experience and other assets he would bring to the board, including his past experience on not-for profit boards, his past work for underserved youth in the City, and his ability to assist with development. He had met with all members of the board who had an opportunity to question him, as well as meeting with Richard Lee ("RL") and touring the school.

NS moved that the board adopt the following resolution (attached as Exhibit A):

WHEREAS, the Board of the Academy of the City, having reviewed his qualifications and experience, wishes to appoint Harold Elish to serve as a member of its Board of Trustees of Academy of the City Charter School, subject to his completing all the submissions required and receiving the approval of SUNY, it is hereby

RESOLVED, that Harold Elish is appointed as a member of the Board of Trustees, serving in the third class of trustees, subject to the approval of SUNY.

JT seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

CIPA (Children’s Internet Protection Act)-Richard Lee (“RL”) briefly spoke about CIPA policy (Children’s Internet Protection Act) and how it has to be implemented by our school. (CIPA imposes certain requirements on schools that receive discounts for Internet access or internal connections through the E-rate program – a program that makes certain communications services and products more affordable for eligible schools). RL explained that, as E-rate users, the CIPA policy must be the norm at AoC. The policy intends to protect children from such things as cyber-bullying. Also, it is important because it adopts age appropriate training. RL asked that the board move to adopt CIPA policy. By adopting CIPA, E-rate will return 80 percent of the money used to pay for Internet use.

There ensued board discussion concerning cyber-bullying policy with the assurance from the administration that the CIPA policy was not restrictive, but rather an overarching policy and that the school would have its own cyber-bullying policy.

RW moved that the board adopt the CIPA policy. AH seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Finance Report:

Digant Bahl (“DB”) distributed to all attending the meeting the fiscal report (Exhibit B). He discussed that the school has projected a revenue of 2.57 million dollars, has received 1.7 million dollars to date and expects to receive the rest this fiscal year. With regard to expenses, budget costs were \$1.8 million; paid out so far has been \$1.139 million. DB projects that the total expenses will be around 1.8 million dollars. DB reviewed the key fiscal factors:

Enrollment numbers are at 157 children. AoC has \$360,000 dollars in a federal start up grant. The grant reimburses the school for monies actually expended in accordance with previously approved expenditures. That amount will be expended before the end of this fiscal year.

As of March 31, 2013 we have \$406,000 in total assets, \$250,000 in the bank, and \$50,000 dollars in escrow as required by the charter. We also received \$176,000 as scheduled from the DOE.

DB also reviewed revenue and cash flow.

Teachers' Report:

Meryl Ephraim read the teacher's report. The teachers reported about their wish for a stronger relationship between the PCO and the teachers. They advocated forming a new organization made up of parents and teachers. A written copy of the teacher's report was distributed to the board chairman, and is Exhibit C hereto.

There ensued discussion among the board, the teachers and the parents present concerning the possible re-defining goals and renaming of the PCO to a PCTO, as opposed to the formation of a separate organization, and how it would help the school community. The board encouraged the parents and teachers in this endeavor, which is in accord with the community model of AoC. In accordance with the by-laws of the PCO, SZ is the board representation to the PCO.

PCO Report:

Elaine Comerford gave the report of the PCO. The PCO is focused on next year, recruiting more parents to join the

organization and finding successors to serve on the board. They are working on the open house for the new building in May, the Spring concert, and the end of the year picnic.

School Report:

Facility --RL talked about the topics that were brought up at a meeting at the new facility (attending were Father West, representatives from the Diocese, the realtor, AoC's architect, SZ and Desiree Galashaw ("DG"). The topics discussed included sharing the kitchen, the play yard, classrooms, lobby, furniture (50% of the furniture is usable and will be retained), storage and design of the lobby. There was a resolution on all issues, as well as agreement on sharing the cost of a snow removal contractor; the architects will redesign the lobby renovations in accordance with the discussion at the meeting. Finalization of the lease is anticipated in early to mid-May. The landlord has signed off on DOB applications. E-rate contractors cannot commence work until May 19, 2013.

Because of the increased cost of in the bidding process, the renovations will be done in a phase one/phase two manner. The cost of the renovations will likely exceed the SSF grant; although some changes are being made to the plans. (As DB explained, the SSF grant is a reimbursement grant of \$200,000, with the school being required to contribute 20%, for a total of \$240,000 to use for construction). The grant is only for construction costs and not in general budget.

Enrollment - Current enrollment is 157/ 54 in Kindergarten/ 49 in first grade/ 54 in second grade. AoC has surpassed the budgeted amount of 150 children (with an FTE of 151.3 as of April). Special Ed FTE is 9.2.

AoC's re-enrollment for next year among our current families is about 95%. 59 new children have already been enrolled for next year. Adam Hunt and Noel Peguero have been doing great work in enrolling new families. Parents who have signed up have given very positive feedback in terms of having a good experience in the enrollment process. Families whose children have been accepted at 3 or 4 charter schools have been choosing AoC.

Curriculum- RL stated that unit plans for the year are due April 23 for grades for K-2. The administration and the teachers have started working on the third grade plans. The school is currently in the process of completing the hiring of the third grade team.

Charter amendment- The school is in the process of responding to the letter received from SUNY concerning the requested charter amendment. RL has drafting the response with regard to educational program; DB has prepared the response concerning the financial portion. It will be ready for board review next week.

Committees - Four teachers have volunteered to join the education committee. The board will consider reconfiguring the education committee, since so many of the board members are now on it. The education committee will meet next week.

Professional Development-DG elaborated on the professional development program at AoC. It has been in two waves. The first drew upon the internal expertise at the school, with teachers sharing their knowledge and experience with each other, as well as bringing back to the school what they learned in outside seminars. The second phase, planned for the 2013/14 school year, will be to bring in outside sources to AoC to continue professional development. The topics to be

addressed were chosen by the teachers in a survey sent out by the administration. The top topics chosen by the teachers included: common core standards; classroom discipline; understanding the IEP process; study groups; impact of disabilities on student achievement; teaching mathematics (Aoc's plan is to make next year a "math year"). Next year all teachers will be trained in responsive classroom techniques. On PD days, there will be a number of workshops available to the teachers, and they will be able to participate in more than one of them.

Promotion - There was a brief discussion of promotion, with 16 children's promotion being in doubt (3 in K/ 6 in first grade/ 7 in second grade.) The process is to bring in the families to meet with RL to discuss all issues -- educational, social, family commitment. There will be a summer program option for the children. Last year two kindergarten children remained in K for a second year. RW asked RL to study the children whose promotion had been in doubt last year -- how did those who remained at their previous grade level progress this year/ how did those who were promoted fare?

SV left the meeting.

Open school project - SZ gave the OSP report. To date, the total number of state and government grants and private grants, including during the startup year, which OSP has assisted AoC in obtaining is \$935,000.00.

This year the major project of the OSP for AoC has been finding a new facility and inter-facing with the Diocese and architects. Another project undertaken by OSP has been advocating with LaRaza Foundation for a \$150,00 line of credit, at 1 or 2% interest.

Recently, SZ traveled to India to meet with software engineers on OSP's eportfolio project. It hopes to implement eportfolios school-wide next year.

Other work beyond just AoC that OSP is working on include: working with the Charter School Center to advocate for charter schools with the next mayoral administration; conducting a leadership search for a Staten Island charter school which may become an OSP school. OSP is also advocating for fairness in funding. Success charter school has applied for two charters in DC-30, and it is believed that they are being offered co-location space in public schools which were not offered to other local charter schools, a development that can become a wedge in the community.

Development Committee:

JT gave the report of the Development Committee. There will be a fundraiser on June 6. JT's mother, Lee Traub, has graciously and generously offered to host the fundraiser at her home and, as her donation to the school, provide the catering. Invitations have been sent to many potential donors to the school. Further ideas for invitees were solicited at the meeting. The plan for the fundraiser is to have RL, a teacher and a parent address the gathering. JT is exploring finding an intern from the masters program in development at NYU to work with the school on development. Ultimately, the Development Committee will work to raise funds from businesses in AoC's new community.

Miscellaneous Discussion:

Alicia Latman spoke on the teacher's behalf about the salary negotiations between the UFT and AoC, expressing disappointment in the progress of the negotiations. AoC's attorney, Frank Moss, responded with regard to the board's

great appreciation of the teacher's hard work but its concern with budget challenges for upcoming year, including no increase in the per pupil funding and the costs of moving to and renting a new facility.

RW noted that a resolution concerning high stakes testing which had been scheduled for a vote, was being referred to the education committee for consideration.

Executive Session:

RW moved that the board go into executive session, with RL and Frank Moss present, to discuss collective bargaining issues. NS seconded the motion. The executive session being concluded, RW moved that the board return to the public meeting. NS seconded the motion, and it was unanimously passed.

The board resumed the public portion of the meeting. The business of the board being concluded, AH moved to adjourn the meeting. JT seconded the motion, and it was unanimously passed.

The next board meeting is scheduled for May 28, 2013 at 5:00 at AoC.

Nancy R. Sills, Secretary

