

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 March 19, 2013 at 5:00 P.M. at the School (36-14 12th Street Long Island City, NY 11106)

The following members of the Board were present:

Dr. Richard Welles, Steve Zimmerman, Silvana Vasconcelos, and James Traub

The following staff members and visitors were present:

Adam Hunt (director of operations), June Schwartz (Open School Project), Dorothy Bukantz (teacher), Richard Lee (principal), Kate Smallberg (teacher), Digant Bahl (CFO), Elva Incantalupo (teacher), Stephanie Galea (teacher), Diane Biondo (teacher), Alicia Latman (teacher), Barrie Miskin (teacher), Karen Granados (teacher), and Paul Ajon (administrative assistant)

Facilities:

There were three architectural firms that were interviewed by a committee comprised of Steve Zimmerman, Richard Lee, Adam Hunt, Angela Howard, Barrie Miskin, Sarah Hill and Emily Kotsaftis.

Ultimately, the firm of DesBrisay and Smith was chosen for the project. A walkthrough for the architects occurred on March 5 followed by meetings at AoC on March 5 and March 12. Initial treatments for the office area and the other renovations have now been submitted to the board.

Steve Zimmerman explained that there is an urgency to move things along and get past the design phase so that the costs could be revealed, and to make sure that we do not exceed SSF grant.

Architectural surveys were passed around the room to familiarize the group with the ideas presented by DesBrisay and Smith. As the plans were passed around, Mr. Lee explained differences between the treatments.

A meeting occurred between Cliff Schneider, the attorney retained for the review of the lease, Nancy Sills and the Diocese regarding outstanding lease issues.

Rick Welles had preliminary contact with Kaboom playground construction company about possibly erecting an early childhood playground. The company would help design, build, and work out an amount on how much it would cost to see the project through.

Rick Welles and Richard Lee will get more information about what needs to be done to get the project started. Richard explained that Kaboom was the company used by Voice Charter School and Hour Children to have their playgrounds constructed. Richard estimates that about twenty thousand dollars would need to be raised and a group of volunteers would be needed. Hopefully, the playground would be in motion by the beginning of the next school year.

Steve Zimmerman discussed talking to the Raza Development Foundation (RDF) and their willingness to give AoC a credit line of \$150,000. The origination costs of the credit line and interest would be the only costs.

The topic of internet wiring came up, in which Richard Lee and Steve Zimmerman explained that internet wiring in a school could cost as much as \$100,000. Contracts have been made with a cable company to do the wiring at the new site and that 80% of money is to be recovered afterwards via eRate. We have information from our eRate vendor that 100% of Title I schools received full reimbursement at 80-90%.

Education committee:

Rick Welles discussed the data reports on reading and math.

Richard Lee mentioned, that at an earlier meeting, James Traub stated that it would be nice to have a teacher present or to be part of the education committee.

Teacher report:

Alicia Latman talked about the importance of communication with families and the different techniques for engaging parents. Parent/Teacher conferences are set up so that teachers can collaborate with parents about any issues that arise. Daily progress reports are prepared by teachers to monitor child development and progress. Weekly memo are written to inform parents of upcoming events including important issues and curriculum night. Also, these memos are meant to elicit questions from parents about their children.

Rick Welles requested a number of weekly memos for himself normally given to the parents by the teachers.

Finance Report:

Digant Bahl stated that the month of February was similar to January fiscally as predicted. A draft for the budget for next year is being worked on with consideration to the contract negotiations. In regards to enrollment, the school roster is at a steady 152. Rick Welles inferred that much of the success of the enrollment, has much to do with the efforts of Noel Peguero, Parent Coordinator and Adam Hunt as well as others respectively who work together to bring more children into AoC.

A financial sheet was shared and explained with the group.

The topic of closing the budget gap was talked about as well. Richard Lee explained that there is a projected number of 270 students that needs to be reached for the next school in order cover projected expenses.

School report:

Currently, AoC is enrolled at 152 with two new children starting after the break. Seventy percent of re-enrollment forms have been turned in already. In reference to new enrollment, AoC is well ahead of last year. There are, to date, 611 applications for the lottery compared to 400 at roughly around the same time one year ago. The expectation is for 700 applications. We have 9 siblings applying for Academy of the City Charter School.

Outreach:

Richard Lee and Desiree Galashaw presented on 3/19/13 at the Early Learning Center at Woodside Houses. It is a daycare center that houses about a hundred children.

A direct mailing service, Vanguard, was used for sending out 2,500 applications. About thirty applications have been returned from that mailing. Noel Peguero and current parents are responsible for handing out outreach programs to over forty daycare centers around the community for outreach.

In regards to staffing, twenty-two out of twenty-five staff members are returning. Postings will happen as well as external postings later this week.

Hiring teams will be organized for the week following the break. AOC is looking to hire for Lead and Associate teachers and an After-school Coordinator.

Board Minutes

Board minutes have to be given to SUNY within a timely manner, and the Board needs to agree upon to have minutes read and approved by board members every month. Rick Welles posed the idea of having Nancy Sills be appointed for the task of reviewing the board minutes and then sharing them with the board members.

Fundraising and Development

James Traub talked about his and Nancy's meeting with Jessica James. They discussed ways of setting up some fundraising events, and James Traub would post it, eventually agreeing on a date no later than two months. Another idea that was brought up for possible funding was getting local businesses to contribute financially.

An idea to have artists come to the new site and paint different segments of the new site was also introduced; the painted segments would then be sponsored by funders and a plaque with their names would be put up next to their work.

The teachers present at the meeting expressed the desire to work with the board of AoC in figuring out a solution that would be agreeable teachers and board members with respect to salary. They presented a letter of commitment signed by the teaching staff and submitted it to the executive board.

The Board meeting was adjourned at 6:45 P.M.