

Minutes of the Academy of the City Board of Trustees Meeting of March 15, 2016

A meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of the Academy of the City Charter School (the “School”) was held on March 15, 2016 at 5:00 pm 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 notice on the school’s website and posting a paper notice outside the school building at Academy of the City Charter School, 31-29 60th Street, Woodside, NY 11377.

The following members of the Board were present: Nancy Sills (Chair), Angela Howard, Rick Welles, Steven Zimmerman, Harry Elish, Michela Nonis (Secretary).

The following staff members and visitors were present: Richard Lee (Principal), Digant Bahl (Accounting Solutions of New York), Norma Hubert (Consultant), Caren Leslie (Assistant Principal), Richard Carlson (Science Teacher).

The meeting took place in the new science classroom, located in one of the recently added re-locatable units.

Nancy Sills called the meeting to order and noted, in celebration of Richard Lee's birthday, that in the midst of our usual focus of how we can support the school as it matures and grows, we should pause to celebrate the special qualities of AoC that Richard has put in place and nurtured as Principal. The school is an incredibly nurturing and welcoming institution that celebrates every child and aspires for every child to succeed. The children learn by the example of the adults in the school and there is no better example for them than their principal. All board members thanked RL for his shepherding of the school so far and look forward for his continued leadership into the upcoming charter term.

Richard Carlson, the Science teacher, described his classroom and the science curriculum. The students have been busy studying gravity; motion and friction; solids, liquids and gases; electricity and magnetism. RC described the hands-on experiments and activities that students engage in. Students are learning to do oral demonstrations and explanations as well as written reports. Grades 4 and 5 have written lab reports at the end of each unit. On RC’s wish list are powerful microscopes for the classroom.

Ratification of the February Minutes

NS requested a motion to ratify the February board minutes as written. AH so moved, HE seconded and all were in favor.

School Report (previously distributed to the board and attached as Exhibit A)

RL briefly shared his vision of the school’s mission with the board. The focus of the school needs to be on academic achievement to make sure that the students are gaining as much as they can from their education and that their achievement in school is high. Academic achievement will open doors that might remain otherwise closed to some of the students and will enable them to have access to good middle and high schools, as they progress through their education. The school exists in order to make sure that the kids reach their highest potential and to give them the tools that enable them to achieve that.

Project based learning, social emotional learning and family outreach will support the academic achievement occurring in the school. RL will support the educational program through increased outreach, communication, and clarity on the vision for the school.

- A task force for Project Based Learning has been put in place to study what is already happening in the school and expand upon that. The intent is to put in place school-wide projects that will take place in the Winter and Spring. There will also be additional projects throughout the year.
- The Buck Institute has been contacted for PD around PBL.
- The social emotional learning curriculum already in the school will be expanded as will the school’s partnership with parents and caregivers, and with the Boys and Girls’ club. It is likely that there will be a summer program at the school.
- A proposal for a Family Literacy program starting in the Fall is upcoming.
- Results from recent internal testing are showing a strengthening of the academic program.
- Academic warning letters have been sent out to parents. Teachers are being coached to make sure they communicate clearly and compassionately with parents and caregivers in the upcoming conferences.
- The school has received about 1100 applications so far for about 80 spots. Open houses have been well attended.

OSP Report (previously distributed to the board and attached as Exhibit B)

SZ gave the report. A charter dissemination grant application will be submitted on Friday. An AoC alumni tracking program was discussed and several suggestions for the timing of the program were made. RW briefly updated the board on the situation in Albany. Some funds for charter schools might be reinstated. It is expected that the budget will be passed in April.

Approval of the 990 tax filing form.

HE requested a motion to approve the 990 tax filing form. AH so moved and RW seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Authorization of Family Literacy Program

NS requested a motion to fund the Program in the Fall. RW so moved, AH seconded and all were in favor.

Education Report (previously distributed to the board and attached as Exhibit C)

AH gave the education report. The committee is working on teacher benchmarks and assessments. RL will report to the committee on middle school placements. The library received a wonderful donation of books and a plaque thanking the donor is in place.

Finance and Operations Report (previously distributed to the board and attached as Exhibit D)

HE gave the report. Budget looks like it's going to come in pretty much exactly on target. Regarding operations, the committee has asked RL and DB to attend the next committee meeting and talk about operations in the school and what changes, if any, might be needed to ensure best possible practices. DB will report on operations on a quarterly basis.

Board Development Task Force

HE reported having met with possible future board member candidates. Meetings between other board members and likely candidates will be arranged. NS suggested that the board consider parents of alumni as possible future members of the board. SZ suggested that the PCO Co-Chairs be made full voting members of the board.

The business of the public session being concluded, RW moved to adjourn, HE seconded the motion and all were in favor.

The next board meeting will be on April 19, 2016 at 5:00 pm.