

CHESTER CHARTER SCHOLARS ACADEMY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

7:00 p.m., February 15, 2022

Date of Approval: Tuesday, March 15, 2022

Call to Order: The Board of Trustees for the Chester Charter Scholars Academy held a public Board Meeting in Chester, PA on February 15, 2022. The meeting convened at 7:01 pm. An Executive Session took place in advance of the public Board Meeting to discuss personnel and litigation matters. Members of the Board in attendance (at the time of the call to order): President Barbara Klock, Ben Berger, Marilyn Henkelman, Frances Hoover, Mandy Kennedy, Judy Owen, Alice Turbiville, Ian Wilcox, Head of School/CEO Akosua Watts and Don Delson, Trustee Emeritus. Absent: Pam Greenblatt, Dion Lewis, Joan Richards. All in attendance participated via video call.

Public Comments: No comment. Members of the public present: Chris Hanlon, Executive Director, CCSA.

Approval of Minutes

- o The Board reviewed and adopted the minutes of the December 21, 2021, meeting of the Chester Charter Scholars Academy Board of Trustees. Two corrections were recorded: the spelling of the consulting firm Momentem on page two.
 - Motion – Ben Berger
 - Second – Judy Owen
 - Ayes: 8 Nays: 0 Absent: 3

President's Report

Barbara Klock (President)

- Moment for Mission
 - o Barbara shared her thoughts on finding joy in the school day and emphasized the need for students to be together in person these days.

Committee Reports

Facilities,

Mandy Kennedy (Ad-hoc Committee Co-Chair)

- Building Expansion
 - o Received working numbers for both phase I and II of the proposed project and the cost was higher than expected.
 - o Explained how the proposal has changed to include building out the first floor completely, as opposed to stacking the classrooms which still results in six extra classrooms.
 - o Will take those drawings to BSI and get new numbers. Should hear back in 6-8 weeks, at which time both boards will need to decide how to move forward.
 - o Anticipated final cost is \$3-3.5M.
 - o Don Delson spoke about the need for space: increased special needs population as well as the modular spaces going away in 2024.
 - o There was a brief discussion regarding necessary fundraising strategies to replace the money spent on this project, as well as how to receive permission from the bondholders to avoid violating the debt covenant.

Nominating and Governance.

Judy Owen (Committee Chair)

- Onboarding process will be complete by the end of March 2022.
- Zach Oberfield will join the board in July 2022, but Tom Parker will not join due to recent retirement as well as medical issues.
- Parent Representation
 - Currently recruiting for a new member from the CCSA parent population.
 - The committee will interview a proposed candidate: a great-grandparent who is the guardian of a student and who has been a part of the school for many years.
 - Akosua Watts spoke about the special qualities needed for the parent role and the reason why this candidate would work.
 - There was a brief discussion regarding the roles and responsibilities of the parent representative, particularly the need for equity alongside other members. The parent/guardian board member will continue to be a board member who participates in all aspects of board responsibilities including attending executive sessions.
- Online Training
 - According to the PA Department of Education, online training for the trustees of any charter school board is mandatory.
 - All board members who joined the board after 2019 were directed to the link <https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/Governance/Act55/Pages/Charter-School-Trustees-Training.aspx> and asked to report to Marilyn Henkelman when training is completed.

Endowment

Don Delson (Committee CO-chair)

Currently about halfway to the goal of \$10M; \$3.2M is in permanent endowment and \$1.8M is in board designated endowment. Funds from the board designated endowment would be made available should the school fall into financial extremis.

- Highlighted several board members and donors who have contributed to the endowment, including Joan Richards whose \$1M gift now funds the Joan K. Richards Head of School position.

Finance Committee, Alice Turbiville (Committee Chair)

- January Financial Statements
 - Two items of note – numbers reflect the folding in of ESSR II grant funds as well as the cost of the modular units.
 - Surplus for the year is right on target
- Reviewed financial impact of the new building expansion.
- School has applied for ESSR III funding, and those funds are being incorporated into long range projections.
- The next Finance Committee meeting will be held jointly with CCSA Foundation's Finance Committee where both groups will discuss the building expansion project.
- Begun work on next year's budget, started going through preliminary assumptions and will share a draft of that at the May board meeting.

School Report

Akosua Watts (Head of School/CEO)

- Emergency Instructional Time Template
 - Asked the board for approval of this document, which will allow the state to give the school full credit for changes to instruction, including remote learning or asynchronous days.
 - Motion – Marilyn Henkelman
 - Second – Judy Owen
 - Ayes: 8 Nays: 0 Absent: 3
- Charter School Annual Report 2021-2022
 - Asked board for approval of this document, which collects general facts about the school such as line items, fixed assets, staff professional development, parent trainings, etc.
 - Motion – Barbara Klock

- Second – Ben Berger
 - Ayes: 8 Nays: 0 Absent: 3
- Remote Learning
 - Returned from holiday break with two weeks of remote instruction. Because of illnesses due to Covid the school did not have enough staff to conduct in-person learning.
 - It was hard for high school students to acclimate, so a demerit structure was reinstated, as well as other consequences. Continuing to work through those options with Mr. Holm, Director of High School.
 - Younger students continue to acclimate well.
- Staff Development
 - Conducted listening sessions with staff in December and one suggestion was for mini conferences, allowing for peer to peer sharing of skills.
 - Implemented the idea into the next day of professional development and the response was strong. Staff got to choose from an array of interesting topics, including incorporating laughter in the classroom and how to explore poetry. Allowed for staff to share their work and receive affirmations. Will incorporate this idea in later professional development days.
- Re-Enrollment and Open Enrollment
 - Re-enrollment for current families began in January.
 - Transitioned to online process with a new SIS.
 - 85% of current families have indicated they are returning. This is a big improvement from previous processes, which were all paper based.
 - This was also an opportunity for families to create a parent portal which will allow them to access other information about students.
 - Open enrollment will run from February 1 – February 28. New families and siblings are eligible to apply.
 - To date we have received 368 new applications in the month of Feb compared to 179 last year. Any name received in February will be included in the lottery to determine places on the waiting list for each grade level. The only students who will be pulled right away are incoming kindergartners. Older students will only be offered seats at the end of the school year based on re-enrollment.
- Black History Month
 - Spotlighting black history where we can: schoolwide door decorating contest; “this day in black history” during morning announcements, etc.
- 100th Day of School
 - Celebrated with various events: kindergartners dressed up as 100-year-olds; third grade had a glow party; second grade had a luau and there were lots of counting projects.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Date of Next Schedule Public Board Meeting: March 15, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.