

**MEETING MINUTES
OF
CATALYST ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL
April 6, 2021**

Held Both in Person at Catalyst Academy Charter School and Virtually Via Zoom

Trustee Attendees: Rachel Amankulor, Carey Harris, Erin Stiling, George Childs, Carl Cooper, Tom Walenchok, Allison McCarthy

Other Attendees: Brian Smith, Darren Gray, Jean Novak (Strassburger McKenna Gutnick & Gefsky)

Rachel Amankulor called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

Public Comment--None

Approval of Minutes of March 2, 2021 regular meeting. *Carey Harris moved to approve the minutes for March 2, 2021. George Childs seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.*

Financial Update. Brian Smith reviewed the financial picture and position. The overall position hasn't changed much in last month. Days of cash is now 44. Gross margin was slightly better. (The PPP loan was discussed later in meeting.) There is still a gap in income. Maplewood loan is pending and may close in April. The budget is being developed. Catalyst' allocation is \$330,000 from the most recent federal stimulus plan.

Approval of PPP Loan. Brian explained the purpose of PPP and Catalyst's eligibility for funds. He also explained the urgency in applying for the loan given that the program is winding down. Dollar Bank administered the loan for Catalyst. Dollar Bank used the school's current payroll for the loan calculation. The amount of the loan is approximately \$128,000. Catalyst needed to move fast (before the end of March) to ensure getting the loan. Therefore, the motion to approve the loan was "after fact" due to the need for immediate action. (The money has been received by Catalyst.) *Carl Cooper moved to approve the loan; Carey Harris seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

Audit Firm Approval. Brian explained the search process for an auditing firm, as well as the School's audit needs. He looked for Pittsburgh-based firms with charter school experience and preferred women-owned or minority-owned firms. Brian explained the strong preference for a firm with charter school experience. Other Board members had experience with MaherDuessel and supported the selection of it as the auditor. *Tom Walenchok moved to approve the selection of MaherDuessel as auditor; George Childs seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

Payments of Bills. Brian reviewed the bill list that was included in the Board package. Brian also reviewed some of the expenses for the month. *Carl Cooper moved to approve the payments of bills. The motion was seconded by Allison McCarthy, and it carried unanimously.*

Board Academic Committee Update. Erin updated the Board on Committee’s activity. The Committee met on March 15, when it reviewed goals, the charter, and key metrics. At the next meeting (in April) the Committee will examine the most important metrics to establish academic goals, both short-term and long-term.

Attendance Update. Brian presented an attendance update and noted that attendance was better in March than in February. Brian discussed tracking of chronic absenteeism, i.e., students who are absent for 10 or more days. Chronic absenteeism decreased February to March. The goal is to work with parents to get students to school and to school on time. The School has also carefully addressed truancy, and it is looking for positive reinforcement methods to address attendance issues in general. The Board discussed other available resources to support attendance efforts.

Enrollment/Marketing Update. Brian stated that scholars have come back in person in two or three classrooms. Regarding enrollment, he expects current students to return next school year. Regarding new students, through the lottery, offers were made for 53 in kindergarten, 2 in first grade, and 9 in second grade. (Seventy-two is a “full” kindergarten). Grades other than kindergarten are more difficult to fill. Brian has seen positive energy at recent open house events. He is hoping that parents will become referral sources for future students. Brian also explained some of the building renovations progress.

Human Resources Update. A kindergarten teacher resigned at beginning of spring break. Through the hiring cycle, the school had identified a candidate to fill the position. They extended an offer to the candidate, who was able to start early. Darren provided an overview of the transition for the kindergarten class with the new teacher. A counselor also has joined school. Darren discussed onboarding for both the new teacher and the new counselor. Catalyst continues to receive applications, including many “high quality” candidates. The concern is diversity of candidates in order to have staff that reflects the students at Catalyst.

Board Training. Rachel discussed Board training progress.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:13 p.m.