

BOT Meeting Thursday April 24, 2025 Minutes

Board Members in Attendance: Jim Sander, Robert Ansbro, Lucas Doe, Christopher Brignola

Administrators in attendance: Norma Hurwitz, Leena Thomas, Eddie Kubina

Not in Attendance: Sean Blackwell, Thomas Gorrell, Ted Francavilla

Meeting Called to Order by Jim Sander 6:32 pm

I. Approval of Minutes

Robert motioned to approve the minutes, Jim seconds, all in favor

II. Building, Student Recruitment, and Education

Packing has been occurring, books not in use have been moved. Rooms have been designated for new classes. After the state exams are over, we will begin moving furniture that is not in use. We still need to be mindful that we are still not at the end of the school year, so we do not want to disrupt current classes.

We are still looking for a math teacher. We have two people who are going to be coming in. The resumes are not very strong and the competition is high. A lot of resumes come in from other countries and they are not really into teaching, but they are in other fields. We get the resumes from Indeed and handshake, so they are available to people from all over the world. Not all of the resumes are for math teachers, but from related fields. A lot of people do not seem like they want teaching to be their career. They are not too strong to start with. We did have someone who was strong, however he got an offer to do research and that was what he really wanted. We do have two people coming in so hopefully they will be good candidates. We have over 250 applicants, however with registration, the competition is stiff. We have 36 students who have registered so far. We have more that are scheduled to register. Hopefully after the holiday, we can get more of them to come in.

The budget situation, the bond has 556,000. Of that we owe about 420,000 and another 10,000, which should leave use with 126,000. We have very high electric and gas bills. Both Sonia and David have been in contact with Cond Ed. They are saying that the bills are correct. We knew we would have to pay, but did not realize they would be so high. It seems that according to David, the last two bills are inclusive of electricity and gas at 20,000. It looks like about 120,000 or a little bit more for the year. We are looking to see if there is a deduction since we are a NYC charter school. The impression we have is that there are some options, but there is no clarity if anything applies to us as a charter.

Lucas would like to see projections made by Paul. We are on target with the projections. We still need to check everything. Sonia will meet with Paul and do an analysis of our bills and we

will add about 10%. Medical bills usually go up around 10 percent. Insurance will likely rise as well. It should not be a major issue though. When Paul did the budget, he budgeted more than what the bill would be. He put it at about 100,000 more and the number looks like it will be a little lower. We do have in flagstar, 600,000 from now until the end of the year. We still have a very good bank account. I feel as we hire teachers for the high school we will have to look at our budget more carefully, but so far we are on target. We have still not received what the tuition will bring for us. What the raise from Hochul is going to be. They were negotiating and working at increasing it. We have not received an update about what was agreed upon or what will be voted for. We are very underfunded as a charter school compared to a public school. Chris believes the calculations are the same this year as last year.

Norma's impression is that public schools have gotten significant funding and the charter schools have not gotten much. Charter school per pupil is about 18,000. For the DOE it is 39,000. It is not what each school gets, it is a complicated formula. It depends on the student roster, if there is an overprojection, it goes back, if it is under projected then additional funding will be given. We can get 162,000 for the Bloomberg grant which is based on registers and other factors. If we add more staff, then our numbers could change and we might have to borrow from ourselves.

Lucas will look at the projections after the meeting. He wants to see what the numbers are for the energy bill and what we are getting and to see if it is in line with his projections and then see if anything needs to be adjusted. We are not going to be making money like we were in the past now that everything is on us with the new building. We will not have a surplus because we have our new building. Is the 20,000 what was in the budget, if not then it needs to be adjusted. We need to make sure the numbers we are getting fits in with the budget and that it makes sense.

We will not have a surplus for the next 2 or 3 years. We were expecting this. Once we build the school that can change. Luckily we have good funding. We need to build a good school and not worry about the short term. Lucas agrees, we need to be a good school that teaches the students well. We do not need to make a profit. We just need to focus on helping the students to do well.

It is attractive to hear about other schools and what they have and the grass always seems greener. However, some will realize that our school is the better choice. We will look to not lose students in the future. They will stay with us through high school. It is a challenge because there are a lot of schools throughout the Bronx. Once we have families that look into the school and look for more updated buildings, they make choices not based on what school is the closest. Jim agrees that we should be optimistic about getting students because if we build a good school, people will come to it. We have to make sure that our parents are talking up the school and our students are recommending the school.

Two other positives are that we have an overwhelming number of teachers that have been with the school for several years and our educational program has been doing better. Eddie, Leena, and Paola are developing the teachers and as they become more sophisticated they will grow in

their ability to succeed. We will have to have more open houses and let families see our school and over time they will help bring us more students.

We need a high school math teacher. We do have someone for ELA, Science, and SS. We will have just 2 9th grade classes.

Everyone has done a great job with recruitment. Leena and Lourell did many events to draw in Kindergarten students. We had 84 applications and unfortunately as reality sets in about transportation, many choose a closer school as they get many offers. We had a lot of open houses for 9th grade as well and got a good amount of applications, but not all registered.

Our staff has done a wonderful job. We should reward them and appreciate them and recognize them for their hard work. Chris added that new hires for DOE are getting a 2500 bonus and 3000 for bilingual certification.

We might need to become creative since we have a longer school day and our retirement is not as good as the public schools. Our teachers are worth a lot, even the ones who are still developing.

Chris asked if we use Teach for America. Norma said they become difficult to work with because they want schools to allow the teachers to follow their program and not the school's program. We were unable to proceed with them. Chris said they are at his wife's school and do not have to follow any program. Another one to look at is teaching collaboration. He will give Norma the contact.

We will follow through, we would like to hire teachers from this program.

Jim is asking about summer school. The summer school will take place in the new building. The middle school will be in the new building. The K-2 might make more sense to stay in the P.S. 65

Write about furniture being moved over.

Jim says bonuses for teachers should be sorted out and teachers that go for a master degree can be given a stipend. We will be assertive with raises. The market is tight, we will probably have to be more generous with the hope that they are not taken away from us. New incoming teachers should not be making more than the teachers who have been with us for a while.

Before we went on vacation, we had a videographer to record and create a commercial for us. We will hopefully be able to use it for a channel 12 advertising. The broader advertising may be too expensive. As we do graduation and shows, we might have to ask the videographer to return and have teachers do a mock of other events that took place. We might have them return to record the students performing their shows.

We have multiple after school programs that have attracted more interest. We have our basketball, volleyball, soccer, and baseball teams. We have cooking, art club, creative writing, keyboard, and tutoring. We also have flag football. These programs will help us to gain more students in the long term.

III. Committee Reports

Nothing on building and development. Copies of the plaques have been sent. There is a word change that needs to be made. The logo was corrected. It was also sent, what the plaques would look like. They are going to show us what our plaques look like and then we will have our final review. The two smaller plaques, the one for the gymnasium will be 9 by 12. The board of directors plaque will be 9 by 12 and the one that is going on the front wall will be 9 by 14. It will take 6-8 weeks to get the final product once we approve the mock up. We need the final product before we can vote on it. We have to make sure there are no errors. We can respond by email if needed or have a meeting if needed. Bob's efforts are appreciated.

Lucas reviewed the finance, there is nothing to discuss. He would like to see the other numbers and look at the projections to review.

Chris put the information about the contact for the person in the chat. We can take teaching fellows. If we can match the bonus other schools are offering, then we can hire them more easily. Once they sign the contract, they have to report and they are not allowed to go to a different school. They are committed to finishing the school year. They are finishing their program while teaching, so they have to stay. An advisor is sent twice a year to check on them.

We have an ad that can be put onto a bulletin board. Yonkers and other areas nearby are having big budget cuts and laying off teachers. They are being excessed.

Is there someone who we could reach out to? We can try to advertise in those areas. A lot of people in Manhattanville have been applying. Robert will send a contact for Monique Riley. We can send her all of our ads as an attachment to put on a bulletin board.

Are there any contact names that we can reach out to? Chris will look into it. Chris will give us contact information for anyone that reaches out that is interested in charter schools that he will not be hiring himself.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:40 pm.