



**Minutes for the Board of Directors for Emma Jewel Charter School Incorporated
DBA Emma Jewel Charter Academy**

March 10, 2025

5:30 p.m.

705 Blake Avenue

Cocoa FL 32922

Community Center

1. Call to Order- Alton Edmond called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance/School Pledge- Led by the candidates of the school SGA.
3. Roll Call- Ms. Lacy Bussey the board Secretary conducted roll call. Present at the meeting were Ross Whitley, Alton Edmond, Erik Jones, Reggie Jones, Lacy Bussey. Absent were Alexis White, and Phillip Holder.
4. Opening Statement- Ms. Bussey read the opening address that outlined how the board would conduct business.
5. Public Notice- Mr. Edmond asked Mr. Cole how the meeting noticed to meet the standard of public notice. Mr. Cole reported that the meeting was noticed in the school app, electronic board, as well as the school website.
6. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes from January 27, 2025 * There were no corrections to be made on the minutes. Mr. Reginald Jones made a motion to approve the minutes Mr. Erik Jones seconded the motion. All in favor signified by saying, I. The motion carried unanimously. The motion held a 5-0 vote.
7. Draft Approval* During the meeting, Mr. Ross Whitley informed the board that the draft of the IRS Form 990 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, had been completed and reviewed. He explained that the 990 had been part of a clean audit with no issues found. Mr. Whitley recommended that the board approve the draft. Mr. Whitley then made a motion for the board to approve the 990 draft. Mr. Erik Jones seconded the motion. All in favor signified by saying, I the motion carried unanimously. The motion held a 5-0 vote.
8. Monthly financials*- Mr. Ross Whitley presented the monthly financials to the board, explaining that the financial packet submitted to the district covered the seven-month period ending January 31, 2025. He noted that the report reflected a larger-than-normal deficit for January, primarily due to the occurrence of three payroll cycles during that month. Aside from this, he reported no unusual findings in the financials. Mr. Whitley stated that the month ended with a deficit of \$97,000; however, the overall deficit in the general fund was reduced to \$68,000, which remained close to the originally budgeted figure. He confirmed that everything in the monthly financials appeared to be in line and recommended that the board approve them. Mr. Cole added that a deficit was expected, as the school front-loads its supply costs in August. He noted that the financials typically level out by the end of the school year. Mr. Whitley made a motion to approve the January monthly financials. Ms. Bussey seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor, and the motion passed unanimously. The motion held a 5-0 vote.
9. IDEA 2025-2026*- Mr. Cole informed the board that Emma Jewel will not be part of the IDEA 2025-2026 lawsuit that is set to be filed. He shared that he received an email at the end of February regarding the submission of plans for the upcoming year, which required board approval and were due by March 14. Mr. Cole explained that the IDEA funds, totaling \$50,000, would be allocated toward supplies, speech and language services, occupational therapy services, a part-time ESE coordinator, and an instructional assistant.



He also noted that the budget includes hiring a speech therapist directly as a school employee, which could result in a \$40,000 annual savings for the school. He further explained that if the school were to hire the contracted speech therapist, it would be liable for a \$2,000 fee for breaking the contract. As a result, it could save the school \$38,000 for the year. Ms. Bussey made a motion to approve the use of IDEA funds for the outlined items. Mr. Erik Jones seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor, and the motion passed unanimously. The motion held a 5–0 vote.

10. Draft Budget School Year 2025-2025 School Year- Mr. Cole informed the board that the draft budget for the 2025 fiscal year was prepared by the accountant, Kevin. The draft reflected an increase in salaries compared to the previous year and included staff appreciation. Mr. Ross Whitley added that projected revenue for the upcoming year appears to be approximately \$30,000 higher than last year's budget, while expenses are projected to increase by about \$14,000. He noted that, unlike the prior year where a deficit was budgeted, this draft budget reflects a surplus. Mr. Cole further explained that part of the projected surplus may be attributed to positions that were included at the beginning of last school year but no longer exist in the current staffing plan. This was an informational item and will be voted on at a later date.
11. Local Capital Improvement Claw Back*- Mr. Cole informed the board that the school receives approximately \$60,000 in capital improvement funds. However, it was recently determined that the school had been overpaid by \$9,000 due to a miscalculation by the district related to debt services. He explained that school attorney Sean Arnold is drafting a motion on behalf of all affected charter schools, as the funds in question were already received and are now being requested back by the district. Mr. Arnold is also requesting that the district provide a clear explanation of how the debt service miscalculation occurred. Mr. Arnold has advised against signing the capital improvement letter from the district until he receives further clarification and can better advise his clients. This was presented as an informational item only, with no action taken at this time. A vote will be held at a later date.
12. Check Fraud- Mr. Cole informed the board that he discovered a total of \$5,000 in fraudulent checks had been cashed in unknown names with his signature and withdrawn from the school's bank account. Upon noticing the issue, he immediately contacted the bank, which confirmed that the checks had been fraudulently processed. As a result, Mr. Cole is now required to enter any future checks into the bank's online portal to verify and prevent any further unauthorized transactions. He also filed a police report and obtained a case number, which he submitted to the bank. The funds have since been reimbursed and returned to the school's account.
13. SGA Updates -SGA members gave updates on the upcoming events. The new vice president Amore was introduced. SGA Secretary Athena provided the board with an update on upcoming student events scheduled for April and May. She reported that the FAMU Gala is scheduled for April 4 at 7:00 p.m. and will be held at the Holiday Inn Express, with a special performance by the Emma Jewel Steppers. SGA president Nehemiah Pierce also noted that the eighth-grade FAMU trip is scheduled for April 24–25, giving students an opportunity to visit the campus. SGA secretary, Athena announced that the Eighth Grade Fantastic Trip to SeaWorld will take place on May 16, with students departing at 4:00 p.m. and returning at 1:00 a.m. The final event she shared was the Eighth Grade Graduation, scheduled for May 18th.
14. Adjourn- The meeting was adjourned at 6:08 p.m.



Emma Jewel Charter Academy



"Helping the Village Raise the Child"

Larry Bussey
Board Secretary

7/28/25
Date