APPROVED

Bridge Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Wednesday May 18, 2022 at 7:00 PM

Location
Join Zoom Meeting
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85726236693?pwd=SmVOZ0xlajVIZjdSZnlGOVd4MDQxdz09

Meeting ID: 857 2623 6693
Passcode: nvgu2S
One tap mobile
+16465588656,,85726236693#,,,,*800860# US (New York)
+13126266799,,85726236693#,,,,*800860# US (Chicago)

Trustees Present
Azalia Volpe (remote), George Winn (remote), Laura Timoney (remote), Laurel Gyimesi (remote), Maria Casale (remote), Mark Harmon-Vaught (remote), Rose Kerr (remote)

Trustees Absent
None

Guests Present
Amanda Wolkowitz (remote), Amber Zick (remote), Christine Volpe (remote), Dana (Surname not given) (remote), Denise Robb-Narcisse (remote), Diana Gershon (remote), Diane Spencer (remote), Donna LaCicero (remote), Ellen Overbye Rabin (remote), Eric Shuffler (remote), Fahron Ebanks (remote), Frances Chiarello (remote), Francesca DiCanio (remote), G. Franza (remote), Geena Kuriakose (remote), Gina (Surname not given) (remote), Heather Thomassen (remote), Heba Nassef Gore (remote), Jane McCord (remote), Josette (Surname not given) (remote), Joshua Sussman (remote), Karen Smith (remote), Kathy Baldassano (remote), Kimberly Santiago (remote), King Abdullah (remote), Maria Santiago (remote), Meg DeCristoforo (remote), Nancy (Surname not given) (remote), Nicole Lebovic (remote), Rose Marie Illuzzi

(remote), Thomas (Surname not given) (remote), Tim Castanza (remote), Tracy Meloni (remote), Victoria Jorgensen (remote), Zack Tun (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Mark Harmon-Vaught called a meeting of the board of trustees of Bridge Preparatory Charter School to order on Wednesday May 18, 2022 at 7:02 PM.

C. Approve Minutes from April Regular Board Meeting

Laura Timoney made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 04-13-22.
Rose Kerr seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

D. Approve Minutes from April Special Board Meeting

Mark Harmon-Vaught made a motion to approve the minutes from Special Board Meeting on 04-13-22.
Rose Kerr seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

E. Welcome from the Chair

R. Kerr welcomed all the many remote attendee-guests; also a warm welcome to our NYSED *Charter School Office Liaison*, Kimberly Santiago who is with us tonight, we are pleased that she can be here and spend some time seeing how we conduct our business. A special welcome to our potential board member candidates, who will be introduced tonight by the *Governance Committee*. Welcome to the parents who are here as well. We have much to do in May and June, so let's continue on with our meeting.

II. Committee Reports

A. Finance Committee

G. Winn reported that the *Finance Committee* met on May 10th; it was a quick meeting focused around the school budget; we had an update from the school leadership team on the 3rd draft of the budget, which is near completion. We expect to vote on the budget at our June board meeting. He was pleased to see that our executive team was able to respond quickly to the issues that they've seen on how we structure benefits, particularly the health care plan; a large part of what we do is supporting our human capital; the *Finance Committee* will look at some of the insurance contracts that we are supporting in

our final budget and will make recommendations on them at our next meeting. Things are moving along and the E.D. can give further details in his update.

B. Board Development and Governance

L. Gyimesi reported that the *Board Development & Governance Committee* met on May 5th and discussed the change in the Open Meetings Law; she attended a meeting at the NY Charter School Center to become aware of the changes and how we need to comply; there will be a *Board Development Meeting* in June to go into details. Briefly, the former OML still applies and video-conferencing is allowed, however a quorum of members must be present in-person at a location where the public can attend and the video-conferencing member must claim "extraordinary circumstances" for not appearing there in-person. This can be done on a meeting-by-meeting basis, as long as proper notice is given. We will need to adopt a resolution allowing this to happen; further details and explanations will be covered in our upcoming committee meeting.
She then introduced the potential board member candidate/guests at tonight's meeting and asked that they briefly speak;

- **Heba Nassef Gore**, an attorney, a former ADA in the trial division in Philadelphia, dealing with violence and sexual assault of minors; she has a significant background in compliance and regulations as the Professional Standards Accreditation Manager at NYU; she was at NYU for 7 years and now works as a consultant for colleges and universities.
- **Jane McCord**, Principal at PS 52, Staten Island for the last 21 years; prior to that she worked in other positions for the DoE and was an adjunct professor at NYU teaching post-graduate coursework on literacy for students with difficulty in learning to read; she hopes that her expertise and her good intentions will serve our community; she looks forward to working with the board.
- **Eric Shuffler**, perhaps best known here as the President of the Staten Island Ferry Hawks minor league baseball team, but he has a storied career as a strategic consultant, has long been involved in community affairs and we welcome his ability to help guide Bridge Prep. He currently has COVID and will speak to the board for a few minutes from home. **Mr. Shuffler did appear later in the meeting and speak briefly; he said he was a past PTA President at both his children's schools and helped found a school on the Upper West Side with Jessica Jenkins; public schools matter to him, he said serving on this board is important because his 15 year old son is dyslexic. He knows how his son struggled in PS 199 and after changing to the *Windward School for Children with Dyslexia* his son learned coping skills and the school was able to help him thrive; his family now lives on Staten Island and he wants to be involved in a school like Bridge Prep to help make a difference.
- **Azalia Volpe**, has been serving on our Board of Trustees as the *Parent Association* representative as President of the Association; however her term of president will be ending and her position on our board will also end. She is now seeking a new seat on the board. She is the parent of 2 children, her daughter

started at Bridge Prep in 2nd grade and everyone knows her commitment to Bridge Prep and its mission, specifically the children. She says she's a Mom by choice, a lawyer by training and an advocate because she had no other choice. She would welcome the opportunity to continue serving on the Board of Trustees. She sincerely believes in the mission of Bridge Prep and its continuation.

L. Gyimesi thanked them for their interest in joining our board and we look forward to going ahead with the recruitment process.

C. ED Support & Evaluation

L. Timoney gave the following update:
The evaluation surveys were completed by board members, school staff and the E.D. and have been collected and compiled; the results will be shared with the board after tonight's meeting. We will schedule a meeting sometime next week to go over the results and see how the evaluation looks; then we'll share the results with the E.D. and meet with him to discuss the evaluation and the goals for the new school year. We expect to have the evaluation process completed by our June deadline.

D. Academic Committee

R. Kerr reported that the *Academic Committee* met on May 11th and reviewed the academically related contracts that are up for renewal tonight, *Sundog Theatre* and *Edwards Orton-Gillingham/Literacy Live;* the Academic Committee recommends that the board approve those contract renewals.
T. Castanza and DTL Christine Volpe presented recent MAP data to the committee, which reviewed it for implication for instruction, for progress and for areas needing to be revisited for restructure. Importantly, it was Map data that came out of a recent broad-scale teacher professional development MAP program on how to use the data effectively day-to-day, which is key. E.D. and DTL will speak further on this tonight and she defers much of the academic update to their report.

III. Executive Director Report

A. ED Report

T. Castanza gave the following update:

- Welcome to our students' families who are virtually present at tonight's meeting;
- Today *Lightning Field Day* was held at school; so proud of the school's Family Association, who raised over $9,000 in the last few weeks through donations and a "Fun Run"; he thanks them for leading the way in our fundraising efforts.
- Welcome to the potential new board members, looking forward to introducing them to our school community;
- Happy to see Kimberly Santiago, our partner from NYSED here tonight.

- NYS *Education Commissioner* Betty Rosa and *Board of Regents Member* Christine Cea will visit Bridge Prep on Monday June 6th; and agenda is being finalized and further information will follow.
- Our NYSED Mid-term Visit will be held virtually on Tuesday June 7, led by Kim Santiago, our NYSED CSO Liaison joined by Shenita Johnson, who will serve as the consultant for the visit; we will highlight our key design elements in everyday practices; a portion of the visit will include a meeting with students' families. NYSED will also virtually meet the *Board of Trustees* on June 2nd from 12pm-1pm;
- We are still finalizing the end-of-year budget and will present that to the board in June.
- We co-sponsored *Dyslexia Awareness Day* in Albany on May 12th; NYC Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks announced changes in the DoE approach to supporting dyslexic students; this is wonderful news and highlights how important our work is; more students across NYC will get the chance to thrive like our Bridge Prep students with access to specialized instruction.
- Contract extensions to be voted on at tonight's meeting: Sundog Theatre (Academic), BoostEd Finance (Financial), Edwards Orton-Gillingham (Academic).
- Student Registration is in full swing; we held a few in-person registration days and aim to have all students registered by the end of June.
- Thanked F. Ebanks for working with him on space planning; we continue to evaluate our space needs for the upcoming school year working with our DoE partners on our shared campus; met with NYC DOE *Office of Space Planning and Campus Governance* on May 13th to discuss space allocations and changes, as well as the updated policies around Campus Governance; we will establish a *Shared Space Committee* starting in September, comprised of school administrators, teachers and parents;
- We created a draft school calendar for the 2022-2023 school year but are awaiting the NYC DOE calendar to be released in mid-June.
- We've began to identify students that may benefit from our summer school programs; we applied for the $75,000 Bloomberg Philanthropies' new Summer Boost NYC program and are waiting to hear back; if we receive the funds, we can double the number of students in the summer program and increase the amount of days (50 students for 24 days) from July 5th-August 5th from 8am-1pm.
- Further updates can be read in the E.D. update report submitted to the board.

At this point, he gave the floor to Christine Volpe, the *Director of Teaching & Learning* to discuss academic data:
Professional development was held to show teachers and staff how to use MAP data; not only to look at the data but also how to take meaning from the data; how teachers can use the data everyday in their classrooms.
C. Volpe reviewed the MAP Growth Data and shared the chart with the board; the data indicates that all grades have shown improvement, with grades 3 & 4 exceeding national

grade level norms; we are looking forward to seeing the results of this year's ELA & MATH tests.
R. Kerr emphasized that the 3rd and 4th grade students have been at Bridge Prep the longest and have gotten OG lessons all along; it shows how our curriculum is working; she wants to congratulate the students and families.

B. FY23 Budget Discussion

T. Castanza reviewed the budget process and the budget narrative. Budget was discussed at the last *Finance Committee Meeting* and many board members were there; received good feedback from the board on the budget narrative.

Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) Budget Narrative highlights:
The priority areas to allocate funding and assure organizational success include
#Organizational retention and staff continuity critical for the success of students and staff;
#Staff support & professional learning in areas of strength & those with opportunities for growth;
#Increased staff headcount to accommodate the final phase in of our currently approved grade span;
#New, responsive benefit offerings to support staff financially, as well as make them feel valued, such as reducing health benefit costs and student loan reimbursements;
#Enhancement of the student experience through funding for additional programming, events, materials, trips and extracurricular programming;
#Organizational advancement, through new targeted partnerships, an early launch of the student recruitment process.

The budget was developed conservatively in its approach to revenue, while being robust as it relates to expenses. Revenue in the budget is primarily driven by Per Pupil funding based on allocations from NYS. Student enrollment projections in the budget account for 230 students. After accounting for all projected expenses and with a conservative approach to projecting revenue, this budget will provide the organization with a significant and strong Operational (Net) Surplus of $1,822,683 and an ending Cash Balance (Reserve) of $5,872,588.

The budget shows us in a strong financial position, able to accommodate the need for additional expenses, needs and strategic planning choices. We could expect additional revenue in the form of up to 12 additional students, which the school is able to serve and has enrolled to date. This additional revenue will result in an increase to the school’s Operating (Net) Surplus.

C. Monthly Financials

T. Castanza reviewed the monthly financials with the board, looking at the June amounts, and actual vs projected expenses; some amounts can be rolled over to the next budget as cash reserves.

IV. Votes

A. FY23 BoostEd Contract Extension

George Winn made a motion to approve the extension of the BoostEd contract for 1 year, from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023 under the same conditions as previously agreed upon.
Laura Timoney seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. Sundog Theatre Arts Program Agreement

Mark Harmon-Vaught made a motion to approve the Sundog Theatre agreement to provide the arts discipline of drumming during school hours in the form of 13 total classes/week in a residency to continue for 34 weeks.
Azalia Volpe seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

C. Literacy for Life Proposal FY23

Mark Harmon-Vaught made a motion to approve the Literacy for Life/Edwards Orton-Gillingham training and coaching program (Option 1) ongoing during 2022-2023.
Rose Kerr seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

V. Family Association Update

A. Family Association Update

A. Volpe gave the following *Family Association* update:
The "*Fun Run*" was able to raise $9,119 and we are very proud of the accomplishment as we were only hoping to reach $4,500.
On June 12th the 2nd *Annual Family Fun Day* will be held at the *Carousel For All Children* in Willowbrook Park from 12pm to 6pm. The carousel has been reserved for our students' families to enjoy. Of course, board members are also invited.
She then yielded her speaking time to the people waiting to speak during public comments.

VI. Public Comment

A. Public Comment

The following parents of Bridge Prep students spoke to the board about their wish that the school grades be extended to 6th grade and middle school so that their children can continue to thrive at Bridge Prep. They feel very strongly about this and don't trust that the DoE will support their children. They are afraid that their children will fall behind and lose self-esteem if they attend a DoE district middle school.

- Diane Spicer, 4th grade parent
- Heather Thomassen, 4th grade parent
- Azalia Volpe, speaking as a parent of 2 students
- Karen Smith, 4th grade parent
- Joshua Sussman, 4th grade parent
- Donna LaCicero, 4th grade parent
- Amanda Wolkowitz, 4th grade parent

R. Kerr thanked all the families who spoke so candidly. We hear you.
The Executive Director and Board of Trustees is planning a parent/family meeting in the very near future to hear more details of your concerns and questions and to listen to your pleas. Those of us who are parents - or not parents - do feel you. The E.D. will lead the meeting and will discuss the possibilities, how authorization works, the potential for grade expansion, NYSED policies and timelines for such things. We want to bring you up to speed and let you know further that we do care. Thank you for acknowledging the hard work that the school does every day and the fact that your children are happy and prospering makes it all worth while. We will see you very soon. Thank you.

T. Castanza responded that we are working on setting up a date in early June for the parent meeting. To all the parents on this video-conference, you know that your kids are our kids, and I have made the promise to you that we will not let them go anywhere without a plan; whatever that plan looks like, I promise you that there will be ample time to make the process personalized. You have met the board, you know our staff, you know our team, we're there every day; I see some of our teachers on this video-conference who see your kids every day and care about every one of them. We are getting your emails and hearing your concerns; I give you my word that this process will be everything that we can make it be to assure their continued success. We are very proud of their success and we want that to continue.

R. Kerr added that our understanding will continue; we will meet very shortly so that you know you are supported with more than just head-nodding on a Zoom call; we want you to feel really supported and we get what you're saying; it's all about love of children. We are there for you and will hear from you in person very soon.

M. Harmon-Vaught thanked the parents; anyone to whom you entrust your children has a duty and it's wonderful to hear how much your children are thriving at Bridge Prep; it's a wonderful place. As a non-founding board member, he is so pleased to join this

community where we have parents who are engaged, board members who are engaged, a school staff who are so invested in everything for our Bridge Prep kids.

VII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:24 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Baldassano