APPROVED

Bridge Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Executive Committee Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday August 9, 2022 at 8:30 AM

Location

Join Zoom Meeting
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82613152824?pwd=ZGF2Mk5lMjJwZnZDMVpvNFNWRjlxUT09

Meeting ID: 826 1315 2824
Passcode: F3yhKQ

One tap mobile
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Meeting ID: 826 1315 2824
Passcode: 726151
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Committee Members Present
Geena Kuriakose (remote), George Winn (remote), Laurel Gyimesi (remote), Mark Harmon-Vaught (remote), Rose Kerr (remote)

Committee Members Absent
None

Guests Present
Kathy Baldassano (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Geena Kuriakose called a meeting of the Executive Committee Committee of Bridge Preparatory Charter School to order on Tuesday Aug 9, 2022 at 8:33 AM.

C. Approve Minutes

Laurel Gyimesi made a motion to approve the minutes from Executive Committee Meeting (Special Timing) on 06-06-22.
Mark Harmon-Vaught seconded the motion.
The committee **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

D. Welcome From Chair

L. Gyimesi welcomed all attendees and said that good things are happening at the school; the staff is pulling it together and all is going well.

II. Committee Updates

A. Academic Committee

R. Kerr stated that tomorrow would have been the next scheduled *Academic Committee Meeting* but the E.D. is away due to the unexpected early birth of his child, so instead of a committee meeting, she will reach out to co-chair M. Casale to share any academic updates.
R. Kerr has been visiting the school every week this summer and working with C. Volpe to see how the summer programs are going, the progress of professional development and the academic goals being structured and worked on; she will try to imbed the school's goals into the E.D.'s goals. They are currently working on the first trimester's goals and the tasks under each goal. Things are going well and therefore a committee meeting is not necessary in August; the next *Academic Committee Meeting* will be in September and hopefully Jane McCord will be able to attend that meeting. Due to the absence of the E.D., C. Volpe and F. Ebanks have been meeting and working together to structure important academic programs; R. Kerr is happy to note that C. Volpe will be staying on as DTL because she is of definite value to our school.

B. Finance Committee

G. Winn reported that the *Finance Committee* has not held a formal meeting this summer; he has been checking in on the budget; he received a copy of the budget in July. When E.D. returns we will catch up - hopefully towards the end of August.
We will be looking at how the budget is developed within the school; it will be interesting to see what summer school and professional development looks like as we enter the fall so we can get a plan in place for using resources; L. Gyimesi has graciously offered to sit on the *Finance Committee*; we still need a 3rd member on the committee. If any board member is interested in joining the *Finance Committee*, please let me know; we will have new members coming on the board, so that is encouraging.

C. Board Development & Governance Committee

L. Gyimesi reported that *Board Development and Governance Committee* member Mark Harmon-Vaught has been working very hard to get new trustees on the board; at least two of the new members should be ready to be voted on via resolution at our August 17th meeting, and hopefully fully activated by September. There is a 3rd potential new board member being worked on now.
M. Harmon-Vaught said that two of the new board members' paperwork is ready to go and the 3rd person is still in the application process. There should be no problem approving the two members whose paperwork is completed: Heba Nassef and Amanda Wolkowitz, the new *Parent Association President*. The 3rd potential board member is Eric Shuffler, who still needs a little more time.
L. Gyimesi said she is glad to hear the Jane McCord is still interested in joining the board.
R. Kerr said that she thinks J. McCord is away on a cruise, and she will follow up with her when she returns.

D. ED Support & Evaluation Committee

M. Harmon-Vaught reported that he is pleased to hear that E.D. goals are underway and that other academic goals are also being worked on.
R. Kerr asked about the goal setting; we previously were given a prototype of a structure of goals and she wants to know if that format is for the E.D. goals or the school's goals and are they one-and-the-same or is one imbedded inside the other?
M. Harmon-Vaught responded that the framework is the performance goals for the school that the E.D. is responsible for; some of them directly and some indirectly; the framework sets structured goals with measurable targets where possible. Those are the performance goals.
The other goals are developmental goals which are more qualitative and not as measurable, but will be factored in; E.D. has all of the same materials that we have.

III. New Business

A. Renewal Task Force Update

L. Gyimesi said that before addressing the appointment of committee chairs, she asks that a *Renewal Task Force Update* be listed each month as an item on *Executive Committee Meeting* agenda to enable us to give updates on the charter renewal process. She also requested a monthly meeting with Pasek Consulting for updates on what is being accomplished, what is being drafted, what they need from us and when they need it. It's important to stay on task. She has downloaded the renewal application and is reading it to see what to expect and to know what points need to be covered to keep Pasek Consulting on task as well. She asks that each committee report monthly at the *Executive Committee Meeting* on the renewal benchmarks that are applicable to them on the task force. She has divided the benchmarks to be assigned to each committee, which will be sent out to board members in an email and can be discussed at committee meetings; there are more benchmarks that fall under the *Academic Committee* purview, but that is expected since the charter renewal demands more in the academic area. All of this does not need to be covered today.

We should be getting the standardized scores next week, which will be a critical starting point for our academic success; we can then align those scores with the testing we have done at the school to see where we really stand at the beginning of this school year. This will be looked at very closely by NYSED.

We were supposed to receive a draft summary of our meeting with NYSED but we still don't have it. T. Castanza has reached out to NYSED to ask for the status of the draft report but has still not received it. She will follow up with the E.D., who is officially on *Family Leave* from August 1st to August 29th, but who may return on August 22nd; she will speak to him for clarity on the date of his return.

Under the renewal process any material changes to our charter must be submitted by December 2022; we have been discussing adding Kindergarten-level classes, which would be a material change; NYSED seems to be very interested in doing that; we would need to further develop this idea before the end of the year, along with anything we wish to drop from the design elements in the charter; we need to discuss all this earlier rather than later this year. R. Kerr added that "looping' has not been working very well, except from the 4th to 5th grade and needs to be looked at.

R. Kerr asked who would be the point-person at the school for any academic issues that come up for renewal. L. Gyimesi responded that the E.D. is the head of the school and he prefers that everything go through him; if he chooses to make DTL C. Volpe the point-person for academics or F. Ebanks for organizational issues, that is up to the E.D. and everything should be brought to him unless he develops a different structure. R. Kerr agrees and said that T. Castanza should be informed that he will be our point-person for this; L. Gyimesi agrees said she will be happy to make it clear to the E.D. that he is the point-person for the *Renewal Task Force*.

B. Appointment of Committee Chairs

L. Gyimesi said that committee chairships had been discussed with the board and these should be no surprise. She knows everyone is stretched thin and she thanked everyone for their work on the committees:

- Academic Committee - R. Kerr & M. Casale, Co-Chairs
- Finance Committee - G. Winn, Chair
- Board Development & Governance Committee - M. Harmon-Vaught, Chair
- E.D. Support & Evaluation Committee - M. Harmon-Vaught, Chair

L. Gyimesi offered to serve on any committee that needs her and said that new board members will be coming on soon who will hopefully step up and offer to join or perhaps co-chair some of our committees.

C. Appointment of Parliamentarian

L. Gyimesi appointed K. Baldassano as *Parliamentarian* for the Board, in accordance with board bylaws; we had prior discussions on this and K. Baldassano has agreed to serve in that position, as needed. She will not be a trustee or have voting privileges but she will perform as indicated in the bylaws. She will participate in our meetings remotely as she has some mobility issues; we know that K. Baldassano is on top of her game, and she will let us know if we are doing anything wrong.

D. Leadership Team Performance Review

L. Gyimesi stated that a discussion on the leadership team performance may need to be done as a closed executive session, but she will keep this subject extremely broad for now; we had a discussion on the leadership team performance structure and we've agreed on a certain option, but she wants clarity whether or not we are in alignment on a bonus for two leadership positions (Community Engagement Officer and DSI position) and what that bonus would be. She asked if any board members do not want to discuss this; do we have agreement on it? does everyone know what was discussed? If anyone thinks they should not have this conversation now, please let her know.
M. Harmon-Vaught asked if she was referring to the maximum amount of allowable bonuses? L. Gyimesi responded yes, and part of the reason is because she learned that one of the positions is a 10-month position and not a 12-month position.
G. Winn asked if we were going to put something forward that might amend what we have already included in the budget from our previous conversation to extend the bonus program beyond the E.D. to the other members of the administrative team? And if we are not discussing particular employees but just discussing the framework of the bonus program, we should be able to discuss that in a public session since it doesn't involve individuals; he also asked if we had placed into the record the board decision on the extended bonus program after the last executive session regarding a bonus for a particular individual. L. Gyimesi said that after we ended that executive session, she doesn't think we put on the record the decision to adopt a bonus structure for the leadership team; she believes that a $3,500 bonus was proposed for the DSI position and $2,500 bonus for the Community Engagement Officer; the total line funds for the leadership team bonuses are about $16,000. G. Winn suggested that at a board meeting we make a motion to reserve a pool of funds of approximately $16,000 to allow for a merit-based bonus compensation to be used for the full administrative team; that should

be sufficient. Specifics of the plan can be relegated to a closed executive session since it may involve discussions on individual persons; we know the "what" and we need to figure out the "how". L. Gyimesi agreed and that that it makes sense. R. Kerr added that a uniform structure is needed. L. Gyimesi said that procedures need to be adopted; there is an E.D. trimester review and the E.D. must meet with the leadership team to do their reviews; it has to be very structured, the staff have asked for the structure so everyone will know where they stand;
L. Gyimesi asked if everyone agreed on the numbers she mentioned; G. Winn said the amounts seem reasonable to him right now.
R. Kerr asked if T. Castanza creates goals for his staff by trimester, is that something that the E.D. evaluation committee will be reviewing or will it just be reviewed by E.D.? M. Harmon-Vaught responded that all the goals for the school should be the school goals that are reflected in that framework, where those sit and what direct individual goals might sit below those is ultimately a leadership decision and not a board decision, but we do want to see who is doing what and what efforts people are doing that are supporting the key goals; all the goals are subsets of that core set of goals. G. Winn said the goals are set-up for the year and you check-in on them on a trimester basis, but they may not correspond to a trimester in terms of completion, for example the 5-year budget; but that check-in is where you are plugging it in; setting up the goals on a trimester basis may overwhelm staff; one of the most important things we are going to get from this leadership team is information for the budget which is the way we can think strategically about future plans like Kindergarten. M. Harmon-Vaught added that we set up the August and September meetings as two initial check points to make sure the goals are set and reflect what the board believes are the most important priorities and give us an opportunity for input. G. Gyimesi added it's important to get this structure tight; the E.D. had set up a grid of goals prior to going on *Family Leave*; we hope to see the goals in August so that we can approve them in September and move forward from there.

E. Other New Business

- L. Gyimesi said that we need to discuss the dates of our monthly board meetings; our full board meetings were held on Wednesday evenings, but this has become a conflict with the schedule of one of our board members; she asked if any board member had objection to changing our meetings to Tuesday evenings at 7 PM. There was no objection from today's attendees. This can be discussed further at our full board meeting next week. She will reach out to the other board members to let them know about this proposal so that there are no surprises when it's brought up for board agreement next week.
- G. Winn said that when school starts, he will need to leave *Executive Committee Meetings* by 8:15 AM or 8:30 AM; and if this is untenable we may need to move the timing for *Executive Committee Meetings* from 7:30 AM to a different time.
- G. Winn asked under the *Open Meetings Law*, if there is a requirement to do a motion to allow people to participate remotely and be fully present for voting; do we have to do something as a board to adopt that or can we automatically do so if we

announce the meeting at a remote setting that is also accessible to the public, such as a public library. L. Gyimesi responded that according to counsel for the *Charter Center*, the old methodology is still applicable so you could participate as a full voting member if you are at a public location, such as a library and you notified the public in advance regarding that location; the new amended *Open Meetings Law* requires us to hold a public meeting to outline the use of video conferencing - which she plans on doing at the September *Family Association Meeting*, if possible - and the board would need to adopt a resolution - which we won't be able to do by September - and you need to be physically present at a meeting unless you are unable due to "extraordinary circumstances". L. Gyimesi said that she and K. Baldassano will research the changes to the law and expect to hold an informational meeting for the trustees between now and the September 20th board meeting.

- R. Kerr asked if adding universal pre-K as well as Kindergarten is possible as a material change to our charter. L. Gyimesi responded that adding pre-K classes has been discussed and would probably be an added value - although she wonders how we would know if a child was dyslexic as such an early age - but NYSED says they do not administer pre-K and although we could add it, NYSED will not weigh-in on that topic. So if we want to make a material change to our charter it would only concern Kindergarten. It would be up to us to make any decision regarding pre-K and we don't need permission from NYSED to do that. She added that she would like the board to have a strategic session early this school year to make a decision on pre-K and Kindergarten and on what is a material change and what's not; we need to know if we should drop design elements that teachers say are not working or make curriculum changes. It's better to know these things in advance and not get caught up at the last minute.
- L. Gyimesi gave updates on the 5th grade students moving up to middle school; the leadership team had a meeting with 5th grade parents in July and will have another in August; there is a process in which 3 middle schools will develop a program for our students which will also be open to all students on Staten Island with dyslexia. This new program will be listed in the middle school choice brochure; there are other partnerships being worked on; there is significant movement towards making sure that the 5th graders move forward and get the information they need; parents feel heard and that's important. We will keep parents fully informed as best we can.
- M. Harmon-Vaught said that Wagner College has a new provost, Dr. Tarshia Stanley; she wants to grow their education department, and he told her of the work being done at Bridge Prep; now is a good time for a partnership between Bridge Prep and Wagner College; he will be reaching out to Bridge Prep with the provost and the chair of the Wagner Education Department to discuss future partnership opportunities; he would like to set up a meeting and is excited about the prospect. There is strong support for the idea at Wagner College.
- G. Winn said he wants to clarify his comments from the June meeting that concern the compliance calendar; he wants the board to know what the school is doing in

any given month; he wants to know on a monthly basis what the school has to put out and when; he wants the board to have a dashboard that encompasses whatever is going out; he thinks this must exist somewhere in the school, but he hasn't seen it; the committee is awaiting delivery of the compliance calendar from management so that the board can see what needs to be handled each month; it's something we have been awaiting for a while and he doesn't know why it's not there; it's important to demystify the compliance process which is complex; he wants us to see the substantial workload that the team is undertaking. As new board members join from other industries, unless they've been in the schools or health care, they don't really understand the amount of reporting and compliance that needs to be done. R. Kerr agreed that it is extremely important and as a former principal, she had to report monthly to the superintendent; someone was monitoring her school's compliance. As trustees we are the ones that must monitor Bridge Prep's compliance and it has to be clear to the E.D. that this is an expectation on a monthly basis. L. Gyimesi agreed that this must be locked down and Pasek Consulting can help since they know the state mandates; this is a critical goal that we must get addressed.

- L. Gyimesi stated that Board on Track's contract is up for renewal and that item needs to be added to the agenda for approval at our next board meeting.

IV. 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 9:30 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Baldassano