APPROVED

Bridge Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Board meeting

Date and Time
Wednesday August 17, 2022 at 7:00 PM

Location
Bridge Preparatory Charter School
715 Ocean Terrace
Building A - Atrium (Main Floor)

Zoom Video
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, Geena Kuriakose, George Winn (remote), Laurel Gyimesi, Maria Casale (remote), Mark Harmon-Vaught, Rose Kerr

Trustees Absent
None

Ex Officio Members Present
Tim Castanza (remote)

Guests Present

Amanda Wolkowitz, Christine Volpe, Fahron Ebanks, Heba Nassef-Gore, Jane McCord (remote), Kathy Baldassano (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Geena Kuriakose called a meeting of the board of trustees of Bridge Preparatory Charter School to order on Wednesday Aug 17, 2022 at 7:00 PM.

C. Approve Minutes of June 15th 2022 Board Meeting

Mark Harmon-Vaught made a motion to approve the minutes, amended as indicated below, from Board Meeting on 06-15-22.
Laurel Gyimesi seconded the motion.
G. Winn requested that the minutes of 06-15-2022 be amended to correct information regarding $50,000 allocated for additional fringe benefits. He requests the record clarify that no specific program has been determined for these funds because further information from our management team is needed. There will be no spending of those funds until after the Board of Trustees reviews and approves any program. He wants be sure that the minutes do not indicate that we were somehow delegating responsibility for the allocation beyond the board at this point.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

D. Approve Minutes of July 25th 2022 Special Board Meeting

Geena Kuriakose made a motion to approve the minutes from Special Meeting on 07-25-22.
Mark Harmon-Vaught seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

E. Welcome From Chair

L. Gyimesi welcomed everyone; we have so much going on; we want to be prepared for the opening day of school. She expressed her thanks to the school staff for their efforts, especially C. Volpe who created and ran the successful summer school student program and also established professional development programs for teachers over the summer. Thank you to F. Ebanks who has been coordinating an ongoing move of classrooms in the building. In addition, since E.D. Castanza's baby arrived earlier than expected, C. Volpe and F. Ebanks stepped up and coordinated a welcome event for families of new students entering school in September. We thank them for keeping everything moving along smoothly during the E.D.'s absence. Finally, thank you to board members - this year will be a very busy and important year - it is the start of our charter renewal process, and the first 5th grade graduation will occur this year. Thanks to everyone for their time.

II. Committee Reports

A. Academic Committee

R. Kerr said that it is nice to see our existing board members and exciting to see some new board members at this meeting, both remotely and in-person. There was no *Academic Committee* Meeting in July as agreed, and although an August meeting was planned, a formal committee meeting was not held in August due to the unexpected early arrival of the E.D.'s baby and his subsequent absence. However, she has been meeting weekly with DTL C. Volpe reviewing professional goals, and many points about professional development plans. They examined what went right, what we need to expand, what teachers need, and what will get us to reauthorization and to achieve NYSED goals. Working with C. Volpe this summer has been very positive and well-organized and R. Kerr plans to continue to work with her through this year, going over teacher evaluations, the review of the curriculum, and how the new curriculum is working. She then asked C. Volpe and T. Castanza to speak about student data.

T. Castanza thanked C. Volpe and the *Academic Committee* for aggregating the MAP data which is critical not only now but also to compare with the NYS assessment data results. He then gave the floor to C. Volpe to discuss the MAP data.

C. Volpe said it was very nice to work with R. Kerr this summer and that it is always helpful to have a partner; it was a wonderful experience.
She reviewed the following MAP data:

MATH	**Beginning of Year** *(At or Above Grade Level)*	**End of Year** *(At or Above Grade Level)*
1st Grade	50%	72%
2nd Grade	31%	59%
3rd Grade	25%	42%
4th Grade	12%	30%

~~~~~~

ELA	**Beginning of Year** *(At or Above Grade Level)*	**End of Year** *(At or Above Grade Level)*
1st Grade	50%	79%
2nd Grade	29%	53%
3rd Grade	48%	72%
4th Grade	22%	30%

Overall, 97% of all 3rd grade students and 99% of all 4th grade students made progress. Another MAP assessment will be done in September to see if there has been any learning loss during the summer.
~~~~~~

R. Kerr stated that although the 4th grade data seems to indicate that they are the most struggling grade, 4th grade testing takes a big jump in content-learning assessment and there are higher expectations of 4th graders. T. Castanza added that there are other factors that come into play when looking at data; we enroll students in every grade throughout the year and some students arrive later in the year and sit for assessments before they have even been with us for a year. Our charter goals are very specific in looking at data on progress of students who have been with us "over time" (a year or two years); NYSED is looking for student growth; we will be looking at those metrics as we are working towards renewal.

A. Volpe asked about the results of the state assessments and a rumor that they were embargoed. T. Castanza responded that districts have already received disaggregated raw data of the state assessments. They then have to sort the data by individual student, class, and subgroups of students (disabilities, ELL, economically disadvantaged, etc.) At some point in September, NYSED will give permission to the districts to made the data public. Then we will be able to look at that data in context and how our data compares with the district as a whole and how do we compare to similar schools. L. Gyimesi stated that we still don't know who our comparative schools are and it is critical to our renewal that we know that or define ourselves separately. R. Kerr said that knowing who our "peer schools" are is critical for analyzing our standardized testing results in September and the implication for renewal.

A. Volpe added that it's important to emphasize that the 4th graders' assessment data is affected by the fact that they are the grade that was most adversely impacted by Covid. That information needs to be in the forefront of analyzing their numbers. T. Castanza confirmed that the 4th grade has the highest percentage of students with IEPs (60%). We need to contextualize the numbers on the data spreadsheet; now we have multiple years of data to compare. L. Gyimesi added that our students also did not have significant participation in previous state exams and many factors affect the testing data.

B. Finance Committee

G. Winn thanked L. Gyimesi for keeping the Board of Trustees on track and for the time she and R. Kerr spent visiting the school this summer to back up all of the board. He also thanked G. Kuriakose and M. Harmon-Vaught for their work as Board Secretary. The *Finance Committee* does not have much to report today; L. Gyimesi and G. Kuriakose have generously agreed to serve on the *Finance Committee* and if any other board member is interested, please reach out to him. The *Finance Committee* will be focusing on the 5-Year Budget, partially for our charter renewal and also as our first 5th grade class comes onboard, and what that will mean from a revenue standpoint and a management standpoint. We expect to look at the budget programmatically; anticipates looking at professional development, planning for the current year and beginning to look forward to next year. There is not much more to report until the committee meets in the upcoming weeks.

Due to a family commitment, G. Winn left the meeting at 7:10 PM after his report.

C. Board Development and Governance

L. Gyimesi reported that the *Board Development and Governance Committee* had not met over the summer, however M. Harmon-Vaught has been following up with the new board trustees and we have two resolutions on tonight's agenda to approve new board members; once we send documentation to NYSED and they approve it, the trustees become voting members. There are two additional potential board members pending, and M. Harmon-Vaught will follow up on that.
M. Harmon-Vaught added that the two board members being considered tonight have been vetted appropriately and he is confident that there will be no problem getting approval from NYSED.

D. ED Support and Evaluation

M. Harmon-Vaught reported that since our last board meeting the E.D. Support & Evaluation Committee met and had a conversation with the E.D. and we undertook our goal setting exercise for this year. He thanked the E.D. for sharing the initial information on goals for the upcoming year and appreciates his diligence and fairness with them; we will share those with the full board so that they can be reviewed and finalized by April.

III. New Business

A. Appointment of Committee Chairs

L. Gyimesi reported that there was an *Executive Committee Meeting* last week which drafted the agenda for tonight's meeting, so there are no surprises regarding committee chairs since we discussed this at the *Executive Committee Meeting.*

The following trustees are appointed as committee chairs:
R. Kerr and M. Casale, Co-Chairs of *Academic Committee*
G. Winn, Chair of *Finance Committee*
M. Harmon-Vaught, Chair of *Board Development & Governance Committee* and Chair of *E.D. Support & Evaluation Committee*

We have new board members coming on and we hope that they will consider joining the committees they are interested in and where they will best fit. Trustees can join more than one committee if they wish and even volunteer to co-chair a committee.

B. Appointment of Parliamentarian

L. Gyimesi announced that she has appointed K. Baldassano to be *Parliamentarian* for the board. Our bylaws give us discretion to appoint a parliamentarian and K. Baldassano has agreed to serve in that position. Thank you, Kathy.

C.

Renewal Task Force Update

L. Gyimesi said that due to the small number of current board members, since the charter renewal process will need to include all board trustees, it will be best to share renewal benchmarks with each committee. Those committees could then work on particular benchmarks and report at the monthly *Executive Committee Meeting*, and then at the full board meeting. The heaviest work falls on the *Academic Committee*, but there are some areas that can be pulled from *Academic Committee* and given to another committee. She will send an email to the board regarding the benchmarks and she invites discussion on this topic.
L. Gyimesi will continue to chair the *Renewal Task Force* and will offer a monthly report on the renewal progress; she asked Pasek Consulting to also report monthly to the *Executive Committee.* She is determined to keep the renewal on course, to have the data accumulated, be ready to address situations, have the narrative prepared and formulate strong arguments.

D. Other New Business

L. Gyimesi said that something has come up which causes a conflict with scheduling our monthly board meetings on Wednesday evenings; after sharing this information previously with the trustees, the better option seems to be Tuesday. She is hoping to get consensus of the board of trustees to make this change tonight.

As this is internal board business, L. Gyimesi made the following proposal to the board: That the monthly board of trustee meetings be moved to the 3rd Tuesday for this school year. She asked for any comments or objections.

There being no objection from any member, the board agreed by general consent that **future board of trustee meetings will be scheduled on the 3rd Tuesday of each month.** This information will be added to our calendar and shared with interested parties.

M. Harmon-Vaught stated that Wagner College has a new Provost, Dr. Tarshia Stanley, and he is very excited about her leadership. She wants to grow their education department, and with her on board, he feels confident it is a good time for a partnership between Bridge Prep and Wagner College; he reached out to T. Castanza, C. Volpe, and L. Gyimesi to find a date to schedule a meeting and talk about partnership opportunities. There is strong support for the idea in the Wagner College education department and he is very excited for the potential here.

IV. Executive Director Report

A. ED Report

- T. Castanza said that it's good to be back at work and see everyone; his infant daughter arrived a month early; he thanked everyone for being flexible and

stepping up and keeping things covered during his absence. He particularly thanked F. Ebanks and C. Volpe for their critical goal setting work and with important strategic planning. He thanked R. Kerr and L. Gyimesi for being present and visiting the school building this summer. He's looking forward to working with the board of trustees in this critical year.

- NYC and DoE released their **Health & Safety guidance** for schools yesterday; we are able to see any major changes and how it impacts what we do in school every day; there is no screening required for students, however all visitors to the building must still present proof of vaccination. We will refresh the information in our handbook and will share that with the board and families.
- **Exciting new partnerships: Wagner College**, thank you Mark for bringing this all together; partnerships like this are directly discussed in our charter and we are excited about developing professional growth opportunities. **NYCID**, a new after-school partner, will be facilitating our newly expanded after-school program; more opportunities to our students five days a week; further details on this program at the September board meeting. **Community organizations** have been reaching out and want to get involved; will update the board as these things happen.
- **Five-Year Budget update**: We have received the first version of the 5-Year Budget, which will be shared with the *Finance Committee* and the *Executive Committee*; we are developing budgetary goals; we want to identify long-term strategic goals and find ways to meet them from a budgetary perspective; we learned what NYSED wants to see in a 5-Year Budget.
- We are compiling the documents needed for our annual **Fiscal Audit** with Schall and Ashenfarb; the audit report should be ready for the board to review in October.
- Pasek Consulting is helping with our **Annual Report for NYSED**; it is a multiple step process.
- We still don't have a copy of our NYSED mid-term report, which we were told would be given to us in June, but NYSED said they are behind and that we should get the report in mid-August. The mid-term report is critical for our planning for next year, indicating which areas need growth and telling us where to allocate additional funds for resources.
- The Board of Trustees are invited to come into the school as often as possible; he would like them to really engage in the work; the people in our community need to get to know you and your talents.

V. Votes

A. Resolution #14 to Appoint Board Member Heba Nassef Gore

Mark Harmon-Vaught made a motion to Approve Resolution #14 - Selecting Heba Nassef Gore as Member of Board of Trustees.
Laurel Gyimesi seconded the motion.
The following resolution was presented to the board and followed by an individual voice-vote of board members:

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of Bridge Preparatory Charter School ("Bridge Prep") deems it to be in the best interests of Bridge Prep that the following action be taken by the Board of Trustees of Bridge Prep pursuant to this Resolution:
WHEREAS, The Bridge Preparatory Charter School Board of Trustees, having conducted a thorough criminal history record check via fingerprinting which is deemed acceptable by NYSED, and having discovered no State or Federal criminal history, or having provided information regarding such history to NYSED, if found, and having verified that any academic and/or professional credential or qualification presented by the proposed member is genuine, and having reviewed the application in its entirety, has voted to select **Heba Nassef Gore** as a member to its Board of Trustees, with a term expiring on June 2025 pending approval by NYSED. The resolution approving **Heba Nassef Gore** is adopted upon NYSED's approval.
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, pursuant to applicable law, and the authorizing Charter, the undersigned, being a majority of the Members of Bridge Prep hereby consent to, approve, and adopt the aforesaid Resolution.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call	
Azalia Volpe	Aye
George Winn	Absent
Rose Kerr	Aye
Geena Kuriakose	Aye
Laurel Gyimesi	Aye
Maria Casale	Aye
Mark Harmon-Vaught	Aye

B. Resolution #15 to Appoint Board Member Amanda Wolkowitz

Azalia Volpe made a motion to Approve Resolution #15 - Selecting Amanda Wolkowitz as Member of Board of Trustees.
Laurel Gyimesi seconded the motion.
The following resolution was presented to the board and followed by an individual voice-vote of board members:
WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of Bridge Preparatory Charter School ("Bridge Prep") deems it to be in the best interests of Bridge Prep that the following action be taken by the Board of Trustees of Bridge Prep pursuant to this Resolution:
WHEREAS, The Bridge Preparatory Charter School Board of Trustees, having conducted a thorough criminal history record check via fingerprinting which is deemed acceptable by NYSED, and having discovered no State or Federal criminal history, or having provided information regarding such history to NYSED, if found, and having verified that any academic and/or professional credential or qualification presented by the proposed member is genuine, and having reviewed the application in its entirety, has voted to select **Amanda Wolkowitz** as a member to its Board of Trustees, with a term expiring on June 2025 pending approval by NYSED. The resolution approving **Amanda Wolkowitz** is adopted upon NYSED's approval.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, pursuant to applicable law, and the authorizing Charter, the undersigned, being a majority of the Members of Bridge Prep hereby consent to, approve, and adopt the aforesaid Resolution.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call	
Maria Casale	Aye
George Winn	Absent
Azalia Volpe	Aye
Geena Kuriakose	Aye
Rose Kerr	Aye
Mark Harmon-Vaught	Aye
Laurel Gyimesi	Aye

C. Renewal of Board On Track Contract

Laurel Gyimesi made a motion to Approve Renewal of the Board on Track Membership/Contract Effective 10/15/2022.
Azalia Volpe seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

VI. Family Association Update

A. Family Association Update

A. Wolkowitz said that she is excited to be here and thanked the board for welcoming her; she represents the *Family Association* and wants to connect families, staff and students; after dealing with Covid, families were just not participating and attending activities as much, she is hoping to reach out and get more families into the school and get more parents involved. They are working on rebranding the *Family Association* with a new logo and an update of their social media, Facebook, Instagram, etc. The association will be holding many events, continuing what was done in the past and adding new events: a pumpkin patch, winter wonderland, read-a-thon, and more. They will have a table at the student orientation and want parents to get to know them. She invites the Board of Trustee members to all the parent events throughout the year.
R. Kerr thanked A. Volpe for her efforts with founding the *Family Association* and getting it up and running and she is happy to know that A. Wolkowitz is building on that foundation with so much enthusiasm.

VII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

R. Kerr said that F. Ebanks returned to tonight's meeting but was not in the room when L. Gyimesi thanked her for her efforts during the summer and for working so hard coordinating the moving of classrooms.

L. Gyimesi again thanked F. Ebanks for being so helpful during her school visits this summer; she enjoyed getting to know the staff.
R. Kerr thanked F. Ebanks and all of the staff who are helping with the classroom move.
E.D. was asked when he will return to work and T. Castanza responded that he expects to be fully back at work on August 29th, but will be back temporarily for 2 days next week for professional development.
There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 7:52 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Baldassano

Documents used during the meeting

- Resolution_14_Heba_Nassef_Gore.pdf
- Resolution_15_Amanda_Wolkowitz.pdf
- BoardOnTrack_Renewal_Contract.pdf