APPROVED

Bridge Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday December 20, 2022 at 7:00 PM

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

300 Cromwell Avenue
Staten Island, NY

201 Pondfield Road West
Bronxville, NY 10708

Trustees Present
Amanda Wolkowitz (remote), George Winn (remote), Laurel Gyimesi, Mark Harmon-Vaught, Rose Kerr

Trustees Absent
Azalia Volpe, Geena Kuriakose

Ex Officio Members Present
Tim Castanza

Guests Present

Christine Volpe (remote), Francesca DiCanio (remote), Josh Moreau (remote), Kathy Baldassano (remote), Maria Casale (remote), Rebecca Peters (remote), Rose Marie Illuzzi (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

As per Public Officers Law, Article 7, § 103-a *(Videoconferencing by public bodies)* although board members Amanda Wolkowitz and George Winn are not present in-person for this meeting, they are attending via videoconference from locations posted on the public meeting notice/agenda and open to the public, and have been determined to meet the definition of “extraordinary circumstances” for remote attendance. Therefore quorum is met for this meeting.

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 Tuesday Dec 20, 2022 at 7:02 PM.

C. Welcome From Chair

L. Gyimesi welcomed the attendees and said she hopes everyone enjoys this holiday season with their friends and loved ones. She thanks everyone for their devoted service to the school and moves ahead to tonight's agenda.

II. Approve Minutes

A. Approve Minutes from Special Board Meeting 9/9/22

Mark Harmon-Vaught made a motion to approve the minutes from Special Board Meeting on 09-09-22.
There being no objection to the minutes as presented, the minutes are approved via unanimous general consent of the members.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. Approve Minutes from Board meeting 9/20/22

Mark Harmon-Vaught made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 09-20-22.
There being no objection to the minutes as presented, the minutes are approved via unanimous general consent of the members.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

C. Approve Minutes from Special Board meeting 10/24/22

Mark Harmon-Vaught made a motion to approve the minutes from Special Board Meeting on 10-24-22.
There being no objection to the minutes as presented, the minutes are approved via unanimous general consent of the members.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

D. Approve Minutes from Board Strategy Session 11/11/22

Mark Harmon-Vaught made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Strategy Session on 11-11-22.
There being no objection to the minutes as presented, the minutes are approved via unanimous general consent of the members.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

E. Approve Minutes from Board Meeting 11/15/22

Mark Harmon-Vaught made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 11-15-22.
There being no objection to the minutes as presented, the minutes are approved via unanimous general consent of the members.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

III. Committee Reports

A. Finance Committee

G. Winn reported that the *Finance Committee* met on December 15th and the following was discussed:

- Planning of financial topics to be covered in 2023; we will be looking at professional development and some of the programming to support staff at mid-year in the January meeting. Do we want to do any retooling in that area and does it involve a spend? This may also lead to the beginning of a focus on what's planned for the summer and next school year.
- In February we will be targeting some staff issues and in April we will move toward the area of operations. This is a tentative schedule and if anyone would like to participate, we are open to that.
- We discussed long-term space planning and will further consider that topic in March.

T. Castanza added some of the things to be addressed in January:

- Major variances on specific lines in the most recent updated budget version; do we expect those variances in spending to be spent, re-allocated or rolled over into cash balance for the next budget? Instead of looking at this at the end of the school year, it will be better to consider this now.

- End-of-Year update on current cash management; to report where our funding is currently located, and what interest-yields are coming from the accounts we currently have. It is best practice for us to review this now so that we can make any adjustments necessary.

G. Winn added that the next *Finance Committee Meeting* will be January 5th, but some of the financial information (investment report, cash management, etc.) may not be ready by then, but will certainly be looked at when available. Reviewing the budget now is effective and perhaps we can discuss this with BoostEd prior to January 5th; we welcome any board member who wishes to join us.

R. Kerr stated that the *Academic Committee* with C. Volpe will have a pre-meeting before January 5th and will make recommendations to the *Finance Committee* regarding programmatic budgeting, staffing and otherwise.

T. Castanza responded that we should address programmatic budgeting first, we have already talked about this and we know what's working and what we want to expand on; from a staffing perspective we already consulted with committees and are discovering staffing needs. The largest part of the budgeting process regards staffing and will take the most time to address. We need to look at each section of the budget and consult with the *Academic Committee*, get feedback from board members and work on getting to the end goal with enough time to focus on each area.

G. WInn agreed that it's great to review this mid-year for support across all student and staff programs; the committee is here to support and direct resources to make sure that both academic and operations are comfortable with the budget.

B. Board Development and Governance

- M. Harmon-Vaught reported that Amanda Wolkowitz is now officially a member of the Board of Trustees, having been approved by NYSED. Board members welcomed her to the board.
- There is another potential board member who should be approved for membership any day now: Heba Nassef-Gore.
- Another potential board member, Rebecca Peters is mid-way through the approval process.
- M. Harmon-Vaught will be reaching out over the next few weeks to other candidates for board membership; if anyone knows of a person who wishes to joint the board, please let him know.
- The *Board Development & Governance Committee* has also been discussing long-range recruitment plans for building board capacity and replacing departing board members. This will be discussed further in the new year.

C. ED Support and Evaluation

M. Harmon-Vaught said that members of the *Executive Committee* met with Executive Director T. Castanza earlier today for the first Trimester Check-In of this school year. It was a thorough conversation and will be followed up directly.

D. Academic Committee

R. Kerr reported that the *Academic Committee Meeting* was held on December 13th and DTL C. Volpe and Executive Director T. Castanza will discuss the topics covered at that meeting. She then gave the floor to the E.D.

T. Castanza stated that we've been discussing how data ties into our school-wide academic goals; data drives the decisions in the classrooms. R. Kerr added that there is no specific MAP data at this time, but we are looking into a more expanded new Dashboard.

C. Volpe gave the following update:

- We are in the process of taking a second look at our earlier MAP data on the school-level, focusing on growth to make instructional decisions based on that data.
- We held mock NYS tests in November for grades 3-5, which was very revealing for the teachers - indicating the areas students need to review and where student weaknesses are; they practiced student stamina since the tests are lengthy. It was challenging since we have many students with special ed. accommodations, but overall it was a very successful trial run. We hope to do another mock testing in February.
- Finished the first round of informal classroom/teacher observations, sometimes accompanied by R. Kerr; will be starting formal observations soon. Have been doing professional "learning walks" to let teachers watch great instruction in their targeted weakest areas.

T. Castanza offered the following:

- Pasek Consulting gave us feedback regarding expanding our monthly reporting Dashboard to show non-academic elements; a draft version of this new Dashboard is included for board members to review. He then reviewed the sample Dashboard which contains sections for Enrollment (with subgroups), Monthly Student Attendance (with percentages of absences per grade), and Suspensions (by grade level). This type of Dashboard is not mandated but is recommended by Pasek. Pasek suggested adding special education data to the document. This new Dashboard will be offered to the board for review on a monthly basis starting in January. Discussion followed regarding reporting the new Dashboard to the board on a trimester basis unless there is something salient happening at the school that the board should know about sooner; all agreed that trimester scheduling would be better.

- Pasek is currently gathering data of percentage of students classified as learning disabled from the district and NY State and comparing our students' data with similar students to assist us with our narrative for charter renewal.

IV. Executive Director Report

A. ED Report

T. Castanza gave the following update:

- We have been talking about the middle school application process for several months; the middle school application process closed on December 6th; this was our first year involved in the process and it was difficult to say the least. We held individual meetings and advisory sessions with many families to support them in both their decision-making and the actual application submission process. Although we didn't endorse any one specific school, we have been partnering with NYC Dept. of Ed to make the transition to middle school as easy as possible for our 5th graders. We offered our resources to DoE and 3 middle schools on Staten Island have stepped up; most of our students did participate in the application process and applied to the new programs that the 3 middle schools are offering geared towards students with language-based learning disabilities. We will help our 5th grade students with the transition process of moving from 5th grade to 6th grade.
- Visited the Windward School on November 30th with members of the board as well representatives from the 3 schools, District 31 leadership and BP Fossella’s office. We will meet with the District 31 leadership team after the holiday recess to discuss further plans for the 3 middle schools. We are getting good feedback from 5th grade parents who feel supported in this process.
- Reached out to NYSED to see if there is an update on both the finalization and delivery of our Midterm Report and the assignment of a new liaison for Bridge Prep; spoke to NYSED Counsel Karonne Jarrett Watson who shared that NYSED is still working on finalizing the report and that the school has not yet been assigned a new liaison. Pasek said it is important that we are assigned a NYSED liaison prior to charter renewal but we are unable to do anything about it.
- Each member of the staff received a Trimester 1 Staff Survey, and the results are back, but not yet aggregated. Results will be shared with the board soon. These surveys reveal areas where improvement and additional support is needed for staff, teams and our community overall and how we can continue to develop and grow. Another targeted survey was sent out to all instructional staff specific to professional learning for feedback related to the types of professional learning that staff felt they benefit from and which types they believe they need more of. This data, along with Trimester 1 Academic Data, will help inform professional development planning for the remainder of the year.
- We have met the number of Safety Drills (evacuation and/or lockdown) required for the first half of the school year. These drills are input into the DoE’s OORS system,

and reported to NYSED by NYC DoE. We have been talking about establishing a Campus Safety Council on the Petrides campus because we don't believe that issues regarding campus safety are being addressed by one of our co-located schools or the district as a whole. We lodged a complaint with Campus Governance and repeated our request for a Campus Safety Council to be formed. Will be meeting on January 9th with the Borough Safety Director to make sure that all of the schools and offices on this campus are on the same page with shared communication, shared protocols and shared responsibilities; there needs to be additional training for Building Response Teams, since an emergency could happen anywhere on the campus.

- Working with Ms. Illuzzi on potential grants that our team will be pursing for the upcoming year; working with the NYS Charter School Association and a local community partner to support our grant writing and submissions process; several different possibilities include a combination of both sector specific grants and local community grants (Reso A, city council discretionary funds, local bank grants and non-profit specific grants). Since many grants have application deadlines, we now have a "grants tracker".
- One of the main fundraisers that we participate in is the American Cancer Society's Holiday Brunch and Wishlist Campaign for children and families in the community impacted by pediatric cancer. This year, Bridge Prep served as the Light of Hope sponsor at the event on December 11th; in partnership with our Family Association, we sponsored a Holiday Wishlist for a family in our community that is deeply impacted by pediatric cancer.
- Spoke to Pasek today and they shared the path to renewal; we obtained some helpful information regarding deadlines; Pasek said that there is no peer school identified for our school and we don't know how that will affect our NYS evaluation.
- Our admission process will start in January; we are going back to more of an in-person event style; we will continue to do the mailings but will also hold 2 open house events; board members are welcome to attend; will share the dates with the board soon. We hope to have the admissions process and registration finished by the end of May.
- R. Kerr added that we must make extra effort towards recruiting ELL student admissions; T. Castanza agreed and said there will be translations of materials and recruitment events in communities where English is a 2nd language.
- M. Harmon-Vaught offered to help E.D. reach out to organizations he has connections with, such as La Colmena. E.D. said that would be helpful and he will be in touch about this.

B. Monthly Financials Overview

T. Castanza introduced Josh Moreau, of BoostED to discuss the monthly financials of the school. J. Moreau will be presenting this type of information at future Finance Committee Meetings.

J. Moreau reviewed the school's monthly financial document and said that our school is in good shape financially; the school's "P4" invoice is approved for total enrollment of 239 students; we are spending our federal grants right in-line; we have a little over $100,000 in ARP money (federal COVID funds) of that, $20,000 will be spent for next summer's summer school program; Special Ed enrollment is right where it should be; through November, the schools' surplus is well over $1,000,000 and cash balances are robust; in most cases we are under-spending. In January, we can do a budget revision and let that roll into the next year's budget plan and out to future years as well.

V. Family Association Update

A. Family Association Update

A. Wolkowitz gave the following update:

- The Family Association had a very busy December;
- Decorated Buildings A & E and transformed them into "Whoville", we had great support from the family volunteers and the staff;
- Held our first Holiday Fair; the students came to buy gifts for their families and we had a wonderful turnout.
- Sold about 250 "Dream Cakes" for Christmas; cakes were created by Moretti Bakery;
- Family Association is sponsoring a "Snack Break" for the school staff tomorrow to thank them for their support.
- Planning a "Read-a-thon" in February starting with a Book Drive, asking for donated books from families.
- Fifth grade events: trip, dance and designing T-shirts with art teacher; yearbook is underway; we will allow families to upload photos for the yearbook.
- Thank you; glad to now be officially on the Board of Trustees.

VI. 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 7:49 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Baldassano