APPROVED

Bridge Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday April 18, 2023 at 7:00 PM

Location
Bridge Preparatory Charter School
715 Ocean Terrace
Building A - Atrium (Main Floor)
Staten Island, NY 10301

17 Sagamore Road
Bronxville, NY 10708

300 Cromwell Ave
Staten Island, NY 10305

215 Hart Blvd, #1-K
Staten Island, NY 10301

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

Trustees Absent
None

Ex Officio Members Present
Tim Castanza

Guests Present

Christine Volpe (remote), Francesca DiCanio (remote), Heba Nassef-Gore (remote), Kathy Baldassano (remote), Rebecca Peters (remote), Rose Marie Illuzzi (remote), Traci Frey (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

As per Public Officers Law, Article 7, § 103-a *(Videoconferencing by public bodies)* board member Mark Harmon-Vaught is attending this meeting via videoconference and has been determined to meet "extraordinary circumstances" for remote attendance at a location not open to the public; he therefore is considered to be in attendance for purposes of quorum and is permitted to vote.
In addition, board members George Winn, and Maria Casale are attending via videoconference from locations posted on the public meeting notice/agenda and therefore open to the public; they are considered to be in attendance for purposes of quorum and are permitted to vote.
Board member Heba Nassef-Gore is attending via videoconference from a location not posted on the public meeting notice/agenda and therefore not open to the public; she is not considered to be in attendance for purposes of quorum and is not permitted to vote.
QUORUM IS MET FOR THIS MEETING.

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Laurel Gyimesi called a meeting of the board of trustees of Bridge Preparatory Charter School to order on Tuesday Apr 18, 2023 at 7:04 PM.

C. Welcome From Chair

L. Gyimesi welcomed everyone to tonight's meeting and said that we have some items requiring a vote for board approval; therefore she will be taking the committee reports out of order tonight, beginning with the *Board Development & Governance Committee Report*, which can include a vote on the resolution selecting a new board member.

II. Approve Minutes

A. Approve Minutes from Board Strategy Session Session 03/04/23

Laurel Gyimesi made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Strategy Session on 03-04-23.
L. Gyimesi stated if there is no objection, a motion to approve the minutes of the 03-04-23 meeting will be adopted. As there was no objection, the motion is adopted and the minutes are approved by unanimous consent.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. Approve Minutes of Emergency Board Meeting 03/15/23

Laurel Gyimesi made a motion to approve the minutes from Emergency Board Meeting on 03-15-23.
L. Gyimesi stated if there is no objection, a motion to approve the minutes of the 03-15-23 meeting will be adopted. As there was no objection, the motion is adopted and the minutes are approved by unanimous consent.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

C. Approve Minutes of Board Meeting 03/21/23

Laurel Gyimesi made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 03-21-23.
L. Gyimesi stated if there is no objection, a motion to approve the minutes of the 03-21-23 meeting will be adopted. As there was no objection, the motion is adopted and the minutes are approved by unanimous consent.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

III. Committee Reports

A. Board Development and Governance - Vote on Resolution #21 Selecting Traci Frey as Member of Board of Trustees

Mark Harmon-Vaught made a motion to approve Resolution #21 Selecting Traci Frey as Member of the Board of Trustees.
Rose Kerr seconded the motion.
The following resolution was presented to the board for a vote:

RESOLUTION #21 – Selecting Traci Frey as Member of Board of Trustees
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 **Traci Frey** as a member to its Board of Trustees, with a term expiring in June 2025 pending approval by NYSED. The resolution approving **Traci Frey** is adopted upon NYSED’s approval.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

George Winn	Aye
Laurel Gyimesi	Aye
Amanda Wolkowitz	Aye
Rose Kerr	Aye
Geena Kuriakose	Aye

Roll Call

Mark Harmon-Vaught	Aye
Maria Casale	Aye

M. Harmon-Vaught gave the following update of the *Board Development and Governance Committee*:
Knowing that we need to hold meetings during the summer months, we have talked about the potential for using some of our summer time to have strategy sessions on board member recruitment and long-term strategies for board development. We will have some member roll-offs due to term limits next year and we need to think about what that looks like; we need to make sure we have sufficient structures for succession plans in place for roles across the board. This will be a key focus for us moving forward.

B. Approval of Bridge Prep Income Tax Return

George Winn made a motion to approve the Bridge Prep Federal Income Tax Return for 2021 as Shared with the Board of Trustees.
Laurel Gyimesi seconded the motion.
G. Winn stated that the school's federal income tax return has been completed and was reviewed by the *Finance Committee*, Executive Director T. Castanza. Becky Peters and our financial partner, BoostEd,
We are confident that the tax return is accurate and can be filed. The completed tax return is being shared with the board tonight for approval before submission by our deadline of May 15th.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

C. Academic Committee

R. Kerr reported that the *Academic Committee Meeting* was held today, and the following was discussed:

- **Second Mock Assessments** were administered; actual NYS assessments will be given tomorrow and we wish everyone luck.
- **March MAP Administration Data** - will be presented to the board at the May meeting, along with growth data; there appears to be growth in all grades; students are making progress; this data will inform next year’s planning and decisions, We hope to obtain student-by-student longitudinal growth data, with grade-by-grade data to be presented at the May board meeting. Student goal setting is going on which will help students see where they are and what they need to do next. There will be meetings with middle schools so we can share the MAP data of our graduating students and the middle schools can place the students in the ICT format used in middle schools.
- **Structured Literacy Practicum Update** - a presentation was given to the teachers; applications for the program are already being received, reviewed and vetted; we should be getting an update on that program in next month.

- **Fifth Grade Graduation and Awards** - the graduation ceremony is June 15th at 3 PM at the St. George Theatre; the awards ceremony is June 14th at 5:30 PM at the Petrides Campus. R. Kerr requested that 2 or 3 awards be moved to the actual graduation ceremony but was told that no awards will be given on the Graduation Day; she has requested that decision be reconsidered and wants it on the record that her request is that just the most important awards be given during the actual graduation ceremony, for example the Board of Trustees Award.
- **Staffing Changes Next Year** - there will be some additions and changes to staff next school year; the additional staff that we are discussing with the Finance Committee are a Performing Arts teacher (Sundog Theatre); a 2nd Phys. Ed. teacher; a full-time Math Coach; a Literacy Coach (possibly part-time); a Speech Pathologist.
- **ADA Staff Training** - recommended for classroom management

D. Renewal task Force

L. Gyimesi gave the following update:

- Our next board meeting on May 16th will require more than 1 hour since there will be so much to cover at that meeting: MAP data, the school's budget, and 10 charter renewal resolutions.
- Pasek Consulting will be giving us a draft of charter changes and a cheat-sheet highlighting the material changes to the charter. We should have that information a week before our May board meeting and she asks that everyone read the charter renewal documents carefully since we will be voting on those resolutions at the May meeting. The resolutions give Pasek the ability to finalize our changes before submission. If any board member has any questions or problems with the proposed charter changes, we can discuss them after reviewing the resolutions and cheat-sheet.
- Benchmark #1 (Student Performance) is the most critical area and is due in October; it will be based on NYSED data released to us in August. We will have from August until early October to work with Pasek on benchmark #1.
- The renewal application and the other 9 benchmarks are due in August.

E. Finance Committee

G. Winn gave the following update:

- **Banking Arrangements** - E.D. and his team have set up relationships with 2 new banks: Bank of America and J.P. Morgan Chase; our original banks were Northfield Bank and Signature Bank; we have retained some accounts at Signature Bank, but at a lower level, because we are running payroll from there; we will eventually move payroll to one of the larger banks. There are other accounts set up for operational purposes and and escrow account of about $100,000. We are opening accounts at the 2 new larger banks as a protection against risk.

- **Investments** - we are looking at an investment program that will place money in higher yield accounts spread among various banks; sweep vehicles move money at the end of the day into FDIC insured accounts and keep account totals below FDIC insured levels ($250,000); these big banks will sweep the funds into FDIC insured accounts and then back again when we need access to the funds.
- **Staffing Plan & Budget** - working with other committees on the core of the budget, which is our staffing plan and supports for our faculty; creating budget lines for new positions, such as coaches, etc. We expect our next *Finance Committee Meetings* to be focused on the budget. Any board member who wants to attend the upcoming *Finance Committee Meeting* on May 8th is welcome to learn about our process.

IV. Executive Director Report

A. ED Report

T. Castanza gave the following update:

- **Renewal Process** - spoke to Pasek Consulting today to walk through some of the next steps for us in the renewal process and to give them what they need; also to get clarity on what the board will be voting on; use the Pasek cheat-sheet as a guide for the changes to the charter; some of the changes are small and some are substantive; about 90% of the changes shown in the cheat-sheet were already in the red-line version of the charter that was shared with the board in March; we have discussed most of the changes being made; Pasek has done a lot of work that has been very helpful, such as drafting sample language based on the conversations we've had with them; Pasek created a survey which we will send out to families.
- **NYS Exam is Tomorrow** - spoke to the teachers today wishing them well and thanking them for their hard work that has lead to this; the teachers know that testing data is critical and C. Volpe has been sharing with the teachers how important this assessment is to our school community and that weighs on teachers.
- **Summer Boost Program** - we applied for the program through Bloomberg Philanthropies and we were awarded a grant of $84,640 for our 4-week summer school program for 45-50 students; thanks to C. Volpe for helping with that grant application. This program is separate from the DoE Summer Rising Program. C. Volpe responded that all Bridge Prep students are eligible to participate in the DoE Summer Rising Program.
- **Middle School Match Up** - ATS will match our graduating 5th grade students with middle schools and we should know which middle schools within a few weeks; T. Castanza will arrange to meet with or have conversations with the principals of the schools where our 5th graders will go to discuss the supports our students will need. T. Frey suggested that E.D. invite the middle school guidance counselors to a breakfast or lunch event to share with them information about our students who

will be attending their middle schools and talk about the supports, programs and accommodations that our students will require. T. Castanza responded that we are already planning with the middle school principals to do this and have our 5th grade teachers be involved in these conversations. We are establishing relationships with middle school principals. T. Castanza will update the board on this topic.

- **PEP Meeting** - the PEP will be voting on the proposal to permanently site our school on the Petrides Campus tomorrow; the meeting starts at 6:30 PM, but our proposal is the last item on their agenda, so it will be late before they vote on our proposition; T. Castanza will be testifying at the meeting; he will update the board after the PEP vote and meeting ends.
- **School Safety Enhancements** - DoE is installing safer access and entry into school buildings; our building will be getting installation of cameras, door buzzers and security monitors at main entry; this is welcome news.
- **Admissions** - we held our admissions lottery in early April and made offers to 65 students; we have 47 acceptances; some applications will continue to trickle-in through June; we will continue to recruit; we are planning an open house event for guidance counselors and school-based support teams of other DoE schools. We actually received 7 applications for Kindergarten, although we don't yet offer that grade.

V. New Business

A. Other New Business

R. Kerr stated that two of our board members are being honored:

- **Traci Frey** received an award for “Leadership in Holocaust and Anti-bias Education” from the Wagner College Holocaust Center today.
- **Maria Casale** will be honored at an event on April 21st by Dr. Michael Gabriel and the Healthy Path Foundation for her work in the community educating children as Founder and Director of Leap Tutoring Academy, Homeschool Connections Cooperative Program and Fusion Programs, and Educational Director of Dyslexia Associates.

Both of them were congratulated by the board members present at tonight's meeting.

VI. Family Association Update

A. Family Association Update

A. Wolkowitz gave the following update:

- **Read-a-Thon** collected $25,000, and there will be a school-wide Pizza Party; an ice cream truck will come to the school and T. Castanza will be slimed; students

are very excited for all the events. Most of the money raised will pay for Family Day to be held in June at the Petrides Campus; the remaining money will go to the new school library.

- **5th Grade Events** - 5th grade dance invitations going out this week for the end of May; deadline to purchase the 5th grade yearbook is early May; yearbook ads can be purchased; 5th grade trip to Medieval Times was great; the students were very well-behaved;
- **Plant Sale** - tentative date of April 29th but vendors seem to be low on plant stock and prices are high, so we may hold a seed sale instead;
- **Family Association Officers' Elections** will be held in May and all officers' positions will be filled.

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 8:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Baldassano