

Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

September 11, 2021

Trustees Attending: Carlos Bonner, Adina Ellis-Cato, Tracey Friedlander, Crystal Goliday, Heather Harding, Hoyt King, Ami Richardson, Rodney Rice

Staff Attending: Erika Bryant, Bill Moczydlowski, Linda Moore

The meeting was called to order at 9:37am by Board Chair, Heather Harding.

Minutes of the June 29, 2021 board members were reviewed. Crystal Goliday made a motion to approve the minutes. Hoyt King seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Financial Report: Bill Moczydlowski presented the financial report for the period ending June 30, 2021. The report highlighted:

- A \$.3M surplus, primarily due to the PPP loan, which was forgiven.
- \$492K more income than was budgeted.
- Net income was \$1,365,682.
- Other data

--The summer feeding program also provided more revenue than was budgeted,

--Grants and donations were less than was budgeted.

--Spending exceeded budget on personnel line item, primarily because once students returned to the building, the school had to hire additional temporary employees.

The FY 2020-21 audit is in process.

Discussion: Adina Ellis-Cato asked questions about the PPP loans which were federal loans to businesses to mitigate COVID-related expenses. Bill Moczydlowski explained that the loan was subsequently forgiven.

Governance Committee Report: Ami Richardson introduced Adina Ellis-Cato, who is the most recently elected trustee and is the parent of a Brookland student. Ms. Richardson reminded trustees to review and sign the Trustee Conflict of Interest form and to forward it to Linda Moore immediately after the meeting.

Executive Director's State of the School Report: Erika Bryant presented the State of the School Report.

The focus of the school year is recovery, healing and wellness. The primary goals for the school year are to: (1) Re-establish community; (2) Focus on social-emotional wellness for students and staff; (3) Create self-care plans for staff; (4) Focus on flexibility and adaptability.

There are 345 students at Brookland, out of a ceiling of 350 students. At the East End campus, 263 out of a possible 288. The school day is heavily influenced by Covid protocols that require considerable time and resources.

Preparation for SY2021-2022 included:

- Safety and security protocols
- Maximizing available space
- Purchase of Owl cameras for each classroom
- An increase in staffing, including a full-time person to coordinate COVID-related matters and a parent engagement coordinator at East End, additional aftercare and food services personnel
- Parent Orientation Week

What school looks like in SY2021-22

- Weekly Covid testing and notification
- Multiple changes in school routines and traditions
- Very limited number of visitors. All visitors must go through the same Covid-mitigation protocol that students and staff do.
- Students remain with their classmates and don't mix with other pods
- Desks are sitting at least 3 feet apart
- No more meals in dining rooms. Food is brought to each classroom. If they are eating inside, only half of the students eat at one time.

Discussion: Hoyt King asked how the Covid testing is being funded. Ms. Bryant reported that testing was initially funded by a Rockefeller grant and subsequently with an OSSE sub-grant. However, the sub-grant will not cover the cost of testing for the entire year at the rate that the school is testing now. The rationale for choosing the subgrant, as opposed to the city-wide grant, is that, with higher rates of COVID infections, it is probably best to test frequently now. If the school continues to test at its current rate, funding will be depleted by January, 2022. Mr. King asked whether the school is eligible for more PPP loans. Ms. Bryant replied that the school is not eligible for additional PPP loans,

Adina Ellis-Cato commended the school for its frequent testing protocol. The city-wide testing is not going well per reports she has received. Ms. Ellis-Cato asked whether there is a role for parents who wish to raise money to purchase tents or other needed supplies and equipment. Ms. Bryant responded that parents can raise money, build picnic tables, tarps and tents. Ms. Goliday added that several parents are interested in volunteering to support the school.

Biggest Concerns for SY21-22

- Student and staff mental and physical well-being
- Full-time person attendance mandate
- Student enrollment
- Managing the COVID-mitigation process is taking all of employee's time and resources.
- All of these precautions and protocols take away from instruction and learning time.
- Accelerated learning is a citywide goal but is difficult to do with less time available.

- The school leadership is looking for ways to free up employee's time by outsourcing, contracting out, reduce meeting times, etc.

Questions and Discussion:

- Hoyt King asked how much of the expenses from last year will recur this year. Ms. Bryant responded that the Covid-related expenses from last year are expected to continue this year, except for the facilities enhancement expenditures from last year. Also, there will be additional personnel expenses,
- Ms. Goliday asked whether information will be made available about the number of staff vaccinated and the number of staff from each campus who are not vaccinated due to religious and medical exemptions. Dr. Harding advised that the school should provide this information upon advice of legal counsel.
- Hoyt King asked whether the DCPCSB ranked schools last year and whether they will rank them this year. Ms. Bryant replied that the DCPCSB will not rank this year but that OSSE will.
- Hoyt King asked whether any other charter school advocacy groups are lobbying DCPCSB for additional resources for Covid-mitigation support? Ms. Bryant responded that the DCPCSB has some resources that have been made available to schools, e.g., consultants. Ms. Moore added that local public resources for the school are largely approved by the Mayor's office and the City Council.
- Carlos Bonner asked how much leeway schools have to circumvent the in-person, five-days-per-week instruction model mandate. Ms. Bryant replied that there is no flexibility in implementing the mandate and that there is little that schools can do in the absence of successful advocacy.
- Adina Ellis-Cato asked about the size of the re-opening grant that the school received from the city in 2020. Ms. Bryant indicated that the school received a grant of approximately \$150K and that this year's re-opening grant award is projected to be around \$80K. Ms. Ellis-Cato asked whether the \$80K will be sufficient to cover current year Covid-related expenses. Per Ms. Bryant, the answer is probably not,

Other Business and Announcements:

Ami Richardson reminded trustees to let the Governance Committee know of persons who may be interested in serving on one of the board committees.

Education Board Partners will provide governance training at the November board meeting.

Adina Ellis-Cato and Crystal Goliday, representing the Development Committee, will outreach other parents to secure resources for the school's Covid mitigation needs.

Carlos Bonner reported on a development company's search for a community outreach professional.

Linda Moore reminded trustees of the significance of the day, the 20th anniversary of the 9/11/2001 attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and the crashing of a plane in Pennsylvania and related the reminder to an account of the dedication of Stokes faculty and staff and their success of calmly reuniting students with their parents on that day.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:14 am.