

St. Coletta Special Education Public Charter School
Board Meeting Minutes
September 21, 2021
via zoom

Present: Francis Campbell, Chip Henstenburg, Josh Lewis, Frances Slaughter, Carla Ware-Easterling, and Dr. Peggy O'Brien, Chair. Also present: Kaiheem Mason, Christie Mandeville and Michael Olivarri. Due to technical difficulties, we could not maintain a connection with Ms. Slaughter; she left the meeting at approximately 6:45 pm.

Agenda items circulated prior to meeting:

- Call to order
- Approval of minutes
- Charter School Board Member Introductions
- The State of School:
 - Programs Overall—Christie Mandeville
 - Financial Report—Michael Olivarri
- Community/Neighborhood Update—Kaiheem Mason
- New Business
 - Chip Henstenberg
 - Mike Rodrigues
- Call to adjourn

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm. Minutes of the prior board meeting—May 18, 2021—were unanimously approved.

Charter School Board Member Introductions. Even though some board members had previously met Mike Rodrigues--St. Coletta's new CEO--this was our first board meeting in his company. Dr. O'Brien invited board members to introduce themselves so that Mike would have a stronger sense of who is on the board, and why we serve. Mike introduced himself as well.

The State of School—Programs. Christie Mandeville outlined the challenges and successes at the beginning of this school year:

--Almost everyone is back at school, but enrollment numbers are lower than usual. Rather than the usual enrollment of 250 students, she anticipates between 240-245 students will be enrolled at the time of the district attendance audit on October 5, 2021. She reviewed reasons for the decline this year: more students than usual have moved or withdrawn (often covid related), a group of Stage 5 enrollments in process, helping families who need assistance with proof of residency documents, larger graduating classes last year.

--We have more teacher vacancies than are typical at this time of year. Many teachers resigned at the last minute. Three new teachers started this week. Many paraprofessional positions are open too – more than are usual.

--The news on covid is positive: only 8 cases from among 500+ students, faculty, and staff, and none reported from close contact. Parents are appreciative of the ongoing communication with them—town halls and emails were mentioned specifically.

The State of the School--Financial Report. Michael Olivarri provided the board with a greatly appreciated year-end report, revised in format and in scope to offer a much fuller picture of the school's financial position and challenges. He offered a clear review of 3 funding years:

--In FY21, the charter school showed a 1.9M shortfall, a net loss caused by the absence of the gap funding. This loss was covered by St. Coletta of Greater Washington.

--In FY22, he anticipates that with extra covid funding along with the CARES2 and CARES3 monies, the charter school ought to finish in the black or close to it if expenses are held status quo.

--FY23 is of real concern, since in the absence of the extra specialized funding and the gap payment, the charter school would not be able to serve as many students. The sustainability of the school and its excellence into the future is a board concern.

Community/Neighborhood Update. COO Kaiheem Mason and board member Francis Campbell reported on the Hill East Development Project. As of this meeting, a developer has not been selected for the project, and there seems to be a pause in the project. The charter school's goal is to work with whomever is selected as developer to ensure that our existing construction management agreements are upheld and adhered to. These relate to our needs around things like safe and coordinated school drop-off and parking. Francis Campbell also noted that the Donatelli Group building project is underway and voiced his concerns about future residents there near to a school population of special needs students.

New Business.

--Chip Henstenburg will continue as a charter school board member, but due to other commitments he has resigned as secretary of the board. Peggy O'Brien will serve temporarily as taker of minutes.

--New CEO Mike Rodrigues shared with the board what he has been up to during his first 14 days on the job: developing positive working relationships both internal and external to the school; spending time with the senior team and organizing a sequence of individual and team meetings, and taking in his overall initial impressions of the school. He's glad to be here! He also previewed a proposed timetable for a St. Coletta-wide strategic planning process. Beginning in late October 2021 and running through April 2022, it would provide the school with a strategic plan that would inform both program and budget for the next fiscal year as well as the next school year.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Peggy O'Brien
Board chair and notetaker