

**YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
1231 North Broad Street – 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
December 14, 2018**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Martin Brigham, Timothy Daniel, Jared Farbman, Erin McNamara Horvat, Kiley Smith Kelly, Scott Lillis, Melanie McCottry, James Mergiotti, Tiffanie Talley-Baines, Roxanne Tillman, Sai Yerrapathruni.

**Attending by phone:** Khalilah Lawson (joined at 9:40 a.m.), James Multari (until 10:55 a.m.), Robert Totaro (until 10:00 a.m.)

**Absent:** Keith Anderson, Graham Brent, Charles Esser, David Thomas.

**Guests:** Elliott Brown, John Andrew Gallery, Michael McGuire.

**Staff:** Ameen Akbar, Scott Emerick, Adesanya Karade (by phone), Brian Leffler, Eva Lexie, Meredith Molloy, Robin Walker.

**Staff guests:** Nikkia Moss, Allison Predjulek, Jennifer Rivers.

**The meeting was chaired and called to order at 8:55 a.m. by Board Chair M. Brigham.**

**Welcome:** (M. Brigham)

- M. Brigham welcomed and introduced the visiting guests.

**Approval of Minutes:** (M. Brigham)

- The draft minutes of the regular board meeting of October 11, 2018 and the special expulsion meeting of October 23, 2018 were distributed to the board in advance of this meeting. There were no corrections. Thirteen board members were present to vote on the following resolution:
- **Motion** by T. Daniel: **To approve the minutes of the October 11, 2018 board meeting and the October 23, 2018 special expulsion meeting as submitted.** K. Smith Kelly second, motion **unanimously approved.**

**Announcement from a Guest:**

- J. Gallery, the founding Board Chair of YouthBuild Philadelphia, was a guest at the meeting and spoke about his efforts to raise funds to support the appeal of a former student serving a prison sentence of life without parole.

**Mission Statement:**

- A draft of the proposed new mission statement was distributed to board members in advance of this meeting and a copy is on file with the minutes. S. Emerick described the process that was followed in revising the statement. There was input from many stakeholders.
- Thirteen board members were present to vote on the following resolution:
- **Motion** by E. Horvat: **To approve the new mission statement as submitted.** M. McCottry second, motion **unanimously approved.**

**Finance Update: (J. Mergiotti)**

- J. Mergiotti introduced and welcomed new staff member Allison Predjulek, our Controller.

Audited financial statements for FY 2018

- The audited year-end financial statements for FY'18 were distributed to the board in advance of this meeting and a copy is on file with these minutes. J. Mergiotti reviewed highlights from the statements. It is a clean audit with no findings or management letter comments. It was a strong financial year with good growth in net assets. Operating costs were kept down in the desired range of 80% program and 20% operations.
- Thirteen board members were present to vote on the following resolution:
- **Motion by T. Daniel: To approve the fiscal year 2018 audited financial statements as presented.** S. Lillis second, motion **unanimously approved.**

FY 2019

- Financial statements as of 10/31/18 were distributed to the board in advance of this meeting and a copy is on file with these minutes. J. Mergiotti reviewed highlights.
- The Statement of Activities shows that we are on target and a little ahead in revenue. The main reason for a difference between budget and actual is in salary and benefits due to some open positions. School District revenue is a little ahead due to the number of Special Ed students.
- The Balance Sheet shows that our cash position continues to strengthen. Receivables are up a little but all deemed collectable. Certain grants are not yet earned. Nothing that we are waiting for is more than 90 days old.
- There was a question about computer equipment purchases. We have purchased some equipment and will be purchasing more – specifically for our firewall, upgrading our WiFi, and putting in an electrical backup system.

Other finance updates

- With more cash on hand we need to look for better returns.
- J. Mergiotti presented and talked through the Finance dashboard which has been spearheaded by J. Farbman along with staff.
  - J. Farbman stated it is still a work in progress and there are still things to add. He welcomed feedback on what is useful, and what should be added.
  - There were a few questions and clarifications, and a generally very positive reaction from the board members.

**Program Update: (B. Leffler)**

- A document was distributed to the board in advance of this meeting with information about 2018-19 program priorities, a program data update, and a Specialized Services update. A copy is on file with these minutes.
- B. Leffler reviewed our program retention data. We are not currently meeting our goal. However, S. Emerick stated that he has discussed this with Christina Grant at the Charter Schools Office and she stated that we are within four percentage points of the overall School District rate despite the fact that our students have all previously dropped out. Also there are other alternative programs whose retention percentages

are only in the 40's. So although we want to do better, we are still doing well comparatively speaking. In discussion:

- At the next charter renewal our graduation rate goal should be tied to that of the School District.
- E. Horvat expressed strong support for the hard work of the staff and their accomplishments, and the hope that they do not become demoralized by challenges like this.
- None of our grants are at risk due to our graduation rate.
- B. Leffler highlighted the continued increase in the number of our Special Ed students. This year we have 72 who were previously identified, and there are many others who would qualify. We have hired additional resources to serve these needs and are providing training to all staff.
  - The Program Committee has been discussion whether more students should be officially classified as Special Ed.
- A large number of students have experienced and/or are experiencing trauma. We are aware of the toll of secondary trauma on staff and are working to address it.

**Fundraising Update:** (K. Smith Kelly)

- A written Fundraising Committee Update was distributed in advance of this meeting and a copy is on file with these minutes. K. Smith Kelly reviewed highlights.
  - The annual giving campaign is going very well. We are already at \$56K of our \$93K goal.
  - We are waiting for reporting to come in, but we have seen our United Way donations decreasing over the last couple of years. This may be because some corporations have stopped participating in the UW campaign. We will reduce our goal for this accordingly and focus elsewhere.
  - K. Lawson joined the meeting by phone at this time.
  - The fundraiser event will be on May 2 at the HIVE. We will be honoring Malcolm Jenkins for his work in Philadelphia, but are still working on getting him to attend in person. We will be showcasing student voice more than in the past. We are working on sponsorships.
    - There was a discussion about the appropriate level for ticket prices.
- S. Emerick provided an updated on our funding pipeline. He credited the Development Department with great work in stewarding our existing grants and increasing our foundation grants.
  - He explained shifts in funding from United Way and Starbucks & Schultz, to support different projects.
  - We have new grants from William Penn Foundation, Vanguard, and Children Can Shape the Future Foundation.
  - We received major increases from PWI and YouthBuild USA AmeriCorps.
  - Moving forward we are prioritizing work towards obtaining support from Comcast, Prudential, and the Oak Foundation.

**Governance Update:** (K. Lawson)

- A written Governance Committee report was distributed in advance of this meeting and a copy is on file with these minutes.

- K. Lawson commented that she is working with T. Talley-Baines on planning a social event to attract new potential committee and board members.
- Areas of current need include people with HR, fundraising, government relations, or special education expertise.
- J. Multari reported on plans to do committee assessments digitally. We hope to distribute the assessment separately to each committee in January. Please participate.
- We are looking at doing a full board assessment in the spring.

#### **HR Update:** (S. Emerick)

- Ameen Akbar has worked here for over 13 years. He will be gradually transitioning out of his role as Director of Student Life during the next few months, moving to part-time and then leaving in late May. A. Akbar spoke about his path and the reasons for his move, and how important YouthBuild Philly is.
- R. Totaro left the meeting at this time.
- Open positions for Director, Assistant Director and Dean in the Student Life department are being posted.
- A lot of work has been done on preparations to have a functioning HR Committee. The committee description document is complete; a copy was distributed to the board in advance of this meeting and is on file with these minutes. T. Talley-Baines has agreed to become the Chair of the new committee. We aim to staff it with people who have various kinds of HR expertise by May. They will then do planning over the summer and be ready to start committee work for the next academic year.
- S. Emerick mentioned that a written HR Report was distributed to the board in advance of this meeting. A copy is on file with the minutes. He pointed out the work being done on professional development, as well as the new benefit offering up to a 4% match on student loans, and the 3% salary increase for eligible staff. He also highlighted new hires.
- Thirteen board members were present to vote on the following motion:
- **Motion by R. Tillman: To approve the establishment of the Human Resources Committee of the Board.** J. Mergiotti second, motion **unanimously approved.**

#### **Board Photo**

- A group photo was taken of board members present at the meeting.

#### **Presentation: The Learning Exchange** (R. Walker)

- Robin Walker, Director of the Learning Exchange, gave a presentation about the Learning Exchange, including sharing a promotional video and the website. She described events that have been held to date. We now have three coaching clients and have been asked to do an individualized training for an organization in the spring.
- There were questions and discussion about metrics around the efficacy of the program. We are starting to work on data collection.

#### **Strategic Plan Update** (S. Emerick)

- A Strategic Planning Update was distributed to the board in advance of this meeting and a copy is on file with these minutes.

- S. Emerick thanked T. Daniel, E. Horvat, M. Brigham and D. Thomas for their work as Strategic Planning Committee members.
- This plan is not a broad, intensive, comprehensive one-time plan but a more “evergreen” process that allows it to be refreshed and evolve over time. We aim to produce a living document that focuses on a few priority strategic initiatives.
- The previous plan mirrored the functions of the board committees. That is not the case with the new plan, although we have asked each committee to identify their near-term priority goals and we have distributed that document to the board as well.
- The current plan is focused on the four main issues that we identified: Enrollment, facilities, the business model for the Learning Exchange, and risk management. The committee recognizes that not all four are equal; the first two are the most pressing and significant.
  - The Learning Exchange is already making good progress, it has grant support, and the work on the business model has made a good start.
  - Risk mitigation originally was raised as an issue in the Finance Committee, and the early concerns arose due to threats to public funding which have not materialized. We now have an ad hoc Government Relations Committee functioning. There is still work to do on operational risks, but it is less urgent.
  - The ad hoc Facilities Committee has done a lot of work in defining what we need. We have talked to some people with expertise in capital campaigns. We are committed to being in a different space by the end of our lease, whether at the current end date or a negotiated earlier date. We now have pro bono legal counsel from Ballard Spahr. The Operations Department is keeping documentation of issues that arise with our current facility.
  - We need to write up a document for the plan, and will engage an external partner on that. We are looking at a few potential consultants. We aim to write it in the first quarter of 2019, so that it can be ready for discussion at the Board Retreat.
- J. Multari left the meeting during the Strategic Plan update.

**Closing and Adjournment:**

Twelve board members were present to vote on the adjournment resolution.

- **Motion** by M. McCottry: **To adjourn the meeting.** S. Yerrapathruni second, motion **unanimously approved.**

**Executive Session:** (M. Brigham)

Following the adjournment of the regular meeting, some board members remained for an optional update on the Executive Director Review process. This was informational only.

Respectfully submitted,

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Eva S. Lexie