

**THE HOPE ACADEMY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

October 19, 2015

MINUTES

A meeting of the Board of Directors was held on Monday, October 19, 2015. An agenda was distributed to all present (and made a part of these minutes by reference). Directors in attendance included John Kelly, Amanda McMullen, Bianca Rodriguez, Deana Tineo, Michael Deragon, Dr. Michael Rocchio, and David Ortiz. Staff in attendance included Superintendent Margaret Knowlton, Head of School Raphael Diaz, Tom Conlon, Gisselle Pellerano-Monserratt and Deborah Malachowski.

Call to Order – In the absence of Chairman Lombardi, Mr. David Ortiz called the meeting to order at 8:50 a.m. and welcomed the group.

Consent Agenda- Mr. Ortiz asked if there were any questions regarding the minutes of the August 17, 2015 Board meeting which were previously sent out to the Board members. Hearing none, Mr. Ortiz then asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

Dr. Rocchio made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, Ms. Rodriguez seconded the same, and the minutes were

unanimously approved.

Mr. Ortiz then asked Ms. Knowlton to give a brief explanation of the Classroom and Administrative Space Lease Agreements. She explained that the wording in the lease agreements remained the same. The only change was a slight increase in the cost of the classroom lease which was previously approved by the Board in May during the budget process. She also noted that Meeting Street did not increase the cost for leasing the administrative space even though more space was allocated to The Hope Academy.

Mr. Ortiz then asked if there were any questions regarding the Classroom Lease Agreement and the Administrative Space Lease Agreements. Hearing none, Mr. Ortiz then asked for a motion to approve the leases as presented.

Mr. Kelly and Ms. McMullen recused themselves and did not participate in the discussion or subsequent vote.

Ms. Rodriguez made a motion to approve the updated leases as presented, Mr. Deragon seconded the same, and the leases were unanimously approved.

Finance Report – Mr. Conlon reviewed the budget for the first quarter of the school year and provided a summary of the revenue and expenditures for the Implementation Grant.

He noted that transportation costs continue to be an issue due to the significant increase in fees for this school year. Mr. Conlon informed the group that The Hope Academy had gone out to bid for transportation. Ms. Knowlton told the Board that although ridership is low, costs continue to be high, noting that several parents who had received bus passes had returned them to the office as a result of being made aware of the strain on the school budget. She then apprised the Board of some possible solutions that the leadership team is currently working on including collaborating with other charter schools, reviewing results of any transportation bids, awaiting the RIDE roll out of a possible new contract with Statewide, as well as Mr. Diaz meeting with the Providence Transportation Department. A discussion regarding transportation options followed. It was agreed that the Finance Committee will review all possible solutions and make recommendations to the Board.

Discussion of Board of Director Meeting Procedures – (VOTE)

Ms. Knowlton presented written meetings procedures for the Board's discussion and possible adoption regarding offering public comments at future meetings attached hereto and made a part hereof.

The Board members engaged in discussion and agreed that they would allow public comments at the beginning of each board meeting on agenda specific items and would be restricted to three (3) minutes per person. Mr. Ortiz then asked for a motion to approve the meeting procedures as presented.

Dr. Rocchio made a motion to approve the Meeting Procedures as presented, Ms. Tineo seconded the same, and the Board of Director Meeting Procedures policy was unanimously approved.

Crisis Response Plan- As required annually by RIDE, Boards must be knowledgeable of the School Crisis Response/Safety Plan. Ms. Knowlton reviewed the School Crisis Response/Safety Plan outlining the various community agencies that have received the plan and are included in the response. She updated the group on all security measures implemented in the building and asked members to respect the confidentiality of the information included in the document. She also reported that she, along with Mr. Diaz and Ms. McMullen had presented and answered questions from parents at The Hope Academy Parent Association (HAPA) meeting approximately a week ago regarding safety plans and procedures.

Interim Site Visit Report- Ms. Knowlton reviewed the site visit report that was received on October 7, 2015 from RIDE. There were several statements in regard to the status of school operations and standards of accountability that were considered inaccurate and in need of clarification. Ms. Knowlton provided a summary of the various areas of the report where she provided additional information. A lengthy discussion regarding the report took place and Ms. Knowlton agreed to draft a response to RIDE and bring it to the next Board meeting for further discussion and approval.

Discussion of Facilities Report – (VOTE) - Mr. Kelly provided information on the possible expansion of the existing Meeting Street building to accommodate Hope. He stated that a master plan is presently being prepared at Meeting Street’s cost. He explained that consistent with past Board discussions Meeting Street is open to partnering with Hope. Mr. Kelly noted that a presentation of the master plan will be shared with The Hope Academy at the December Board Meeting to decide if Hope wants to continue to be a part of the plan as Meeting Street would need a long term commitment from Hope to move forward. The Board was enthusiastic and looks forward to the presentation. Ms. Knowlton stated that Hope Academy staff will also have an opportunity to meet with the architect to provide input on what they would like to have in their school.

Upon discussion a consensus was reached to table any vote until the December 21 Board Meeting.

Evaluation Committee Report – The Evaluation Committee provided the Board with the goals for the Superintendent that were developed at the October 16, 2015 meeting. A discussion regarding the goals took place with some slight revisions. The Evaluation Committee will present the goals for a vote at the December Board Meeting.

At this time Mr. Deragon recused himself from the remainder of the meeting and was no longer a participant.

Head of School Report- Mr. Diaz updated members on student demographics and noted that discipline concerns have been dramatically reduced. He reviewed student assessment results describing the screening tools currently being implemented in the school. He reported that teachers continue to develop their Student Learning Objectives (SLO) in accordance with the RIDE Model Evaluation Support System. Mr. Diaz stated he will evaluate the remainder of staff in accordance with The Hope Academy performance evaluation process. A discussion took place regarding the established student achievement benchmarks. It was decided that a presentation of the academic benchmarks and the curriculum would be presented and approved at the next Board meeting.

Superintendent Report – Ms. Knowlton reported that she had accepted the resignation of Ms. Pam Rush, Reading Specialist and thanked her for her dedicated service. She noted the position has been posted and there will be an increase in hours which will be supplemented with Title I funds. Mr. Diaz will continue to serve in the capacity of ELL Coordinator and teacher. Mr. Ortiz asked how much time is spent servicing ELL students and Mr. Diaz stated he spends approximately thirty (30) minutes per day. Ms. Knowlton noted that as the population increases there will be a need to reevaluate the position however it is unnecessary at this time and with Mr. Diaz's expertise he is able to provide a substantial relief to the budget by providing these services. Ms. Knowlton also told the Board that Mr.

Diaz has interviewed all professional service employees and has determined that they meet the needs for the school program.

Ms. Knowlton informed the Board that the Consolidated Resource Plan (CRP) application is underway. She outlined the various responsibilities of staff members adding that she plans to have it submitted in November and approved by December 2015. Ms. Knowlton also reported that Mr. Diaz is organizing a School Improvement Team (SIT) and is in the process of creating a School Improvement Plan (SIP) as required. She also noted the upcoming Harvestfest event for students and families and assured the group that she continues to monitor charter school legislature.

Prior to adjournment, Mr. Ortiz mentioned that the next Board meeting will require more time. The Board agreed to attend a three (3) hour meeting on December 21, 2015 if needed.

Adjournment –Mr. Ortiz asked if there were any further questions and upon there being none, thanked the group and asked for a motion to adjourn. Dr. Rocchio made a motion to adjourn, seconded by, Ms. Tineo and unanimously approved and the Board adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Malachowski

Secretary Pro Tem