

New Dawn Charter Schools Board of Trustees

February 27, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes

11:00 a.m.: Executive Committee Meeting

11:15 a.m.: Full Board of Trustees Meeting

**New Dawn Charter High School
242 Hoyt Street
Brooklyn, NY 11217**

**New Dawn Charter High School II
89-25 161st Street
Jamaica, NY 11432
347-505-9101**

Board Members present: Mr. Ronald Tabano, Chairperson, Ms. Jane Sun, Vice Chairperson
Ms. Katharine Urbati, Treasurer, Mr. Brian Baer, Secretary

Board Members Absent: Mr. Daniel Lewis, board member.

Staff Members/ Visitors Present: NDCH: Dr. Sara Asmussen, Executive Director; Mr. Jose Obregon Director of Operations, Dr. Lisa DiGaudio, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Ms. Emily Predmore, Data Specialist, Mr. Ashish Abraham, Recruitment and Marketing Specialist, NDCHS: Ms. Donna Lobato, Principal,

I. School Updates— Ms. Donna Lobato

Ms. Lobato reported to the board members that the school is now in the second semester. She stated that the city is starting to get caught up with IEP meetings. Ms. Lobato has noticed a trend that students who used to be in restrictive placements are now being moved to less restrictive. This trend is true for both the Brooklyn and Queens school. Ms. Lobato stated that she is working with CSE to address these changes. Ms. Lobato also reported that she has two (2) calls/interviews this week for the literacy teacher position funded by the literacy grant. Also, Ms. Lobato reported that there is a demo scheduled for an aspiring teacher on Friday in Brooklyn. Senior activities are happening at both school locations. Finally, Ms. Lobato stated that she is working with Dr. Asmussen on getting more support for the growing ELL population at the Queens school.

Mr. Brian Baer asked Ms. Lobato what the scheduled graduation date is. Ms. Lobato replied that the graduation date is on June 25, 2024.

II. Resolution: February Agenda—Mr. Ronald Tabano

Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the February 2024 Board of Trustees meeting agenda.

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve the February 2024, Board of Trustees meeting agenda.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the February 2024 Board of Trustees meeting agenda.

III. Resolution: January 2024 Board Minutes—Ronald Tabano

Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the January 2024 Board Minutes.

Motion: Mr. Brian Baer motioned to accept and approve the January 2024 Board minutes.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the January 2024 Board minutes.

IV. Financials—Steve Ramkissoon

Benchmark 4: Financial Condition

Benchmark 5: Financial Management

a. Resolution: Monthly Financials

Mr. Tabano then asked the board members if they felt comfortable with the monthly financials to take a vote to approve them or not. All members were satisfied with the report.

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve the January 2024 financials.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Brian Baer seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the January 2024 financials.

b. Schedule for budgeting 2024-2025

Mr. Ramkissoon will have the anticipated by the May meeting at the latest and will distribute copies prior to this meeting for discussion.

V. Building Renovation Updates—Brian Baer, Jose Obregon, Steve Ramkissoon

a. COO update

Mr. Brian Baer reported to the board that CFS has begun the process to obtain the permanent COO for the Brooklyn School. Mr. Baer also stated that he forwarded to Metropolis a

completion letter sent to Mr. Jose Obregon by Casey Fire Alarm company certifying that the Fire Alarm system was fully installed and operational. Mr. Baer reminded the board members that the Brooklyn School temporary certificate of occupancy will expire in April 2024. He also stated that he is hoping that the permanent COO is granted soon to avoid having to apply for another temporary certificate. Mr. Tabano stated that there was an outstanding \$6K due to CFS and asked if the school was going to pay without objection. Mr. Obregon confirmed that the outstanding balance was already paid, and the school administration agreed to pay the outstanding balance without further objection.

b. Brooklyn Roof

Mr. Obregon stated that Mr. Brian Baer, Dr. Asmussen and he, had a discussion recently about getting the proper permits to begin work on the roof. However, purchasing construction materials sooner than later is required so that grant expenditure deadlines are met. Mr. Obregon further stated that he spoke with the project's architect to expedite construction material purchase.

Dr. Asmussen emphasized to the board that the challenge remains as to whether the room on the rooftop will be allowed to be used as instructional space by the DOB. Dr. Asmussen also stated that Mr. Brian Baer reached out to the land-use attorney to determine if this can be resolved quickly. Dr. Asmussen further stated that if it cannot be resolved quickly, then re-evaluating that effort will be necessary.

Dr. Asmussen also stated that she believes that getting the COO soon is in the interest of the school since beginning another project before obtaining the permanent COO will only further delay the process of getting a permanent COO. Dr. Asmussen stated that this is why she has postponed starting the roof project. She also re-emphasized that purchasing the construction material soon is necessary to be following the ESSER grant's timeline.

c. Queens Kitchen

Mr. Obregon informed the board that he had a meeting at the Queens school with Illya, the architect for the Queens kitchen project and the engineer that will oversee that project. The architect and the engineer did an assessment of the electrical panels, the existing duct work in the space, and the kitchen flooring, which may or may not have to be removed. If removal of the floor is required, then asbestos abatement will be necessary.

Mr. Brian Baer also stated that since the school must spend down the grant monies, prior to September 30, he had a conversation with Illya and Eric, the architects, about the overall project schedule for the kitchen. Mr. Baer stated that with a twenty (20) week build, this means that construction needs to start sometime in early May 2024. Mr. Baer further stated that this does not give the school much time to execute the contract documents, do material procurement, and other construction related requirements. Therefore, Mr. Baer recommended that the school enter into a guaranteed maximum price (GMP) agreement. This agreement will maintain the overall value of the project but will also minimize/maximize the contractors purchasing power. Mr. Baer also stated that this type of agreement will require the board to consider how bidding is pursued not only for the contractors but also for consultants which the architect will need, such as a kitchen

consultant. Mr. Baer further stated that if the school can go to a one (1) or two (2) bid process, this will help expedite the project. If the school must go with a three (3) bid process, it will prolong the procurement and potentially cause the project to go past the September 30, 2024, grant deadline. Mr. Baer stated that this is somewhat of a challenge. Mr. Baer stated that he is comfortable with the GMP process. He further stated that he has done it many times as a design professional as opposed to the lump sum approach. He reminded the board members that the lump sum approach was used for the renovation of the Brooklyn school. The lump sum approach exposes the owner to multiple change orders. It also exposes the owner to unforeseen expenditures. Mr. Baer stated that the school has some work that it must do as an owner. There is also work that design professionals need to do. Primarily, the school needs to do the abatement of the wall and the floor in the kitchen area that has been tested and found to have asbestos on it. Notwithstanding this fact, the school needs to get that work done sooner rather than later so that it can stay on schedule. Mr. Baer also stated that there is work that the design professionals need to do. Mr. Baer asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Tabano asked Mr. Baer what he recommends doing to get the project moving. Mr. Baer recommended that, primarily, the school should execute an agreement with a hazardous material abatement contractor and then execute the work in a timely manner. Mr. Tabano asked Dr. Asmussen if Barone is aware that the school is going to ask them to do the abatement work. Dr. Asmussen confirmed that Barone does know and that the project was discussed with Scott Barone in a meeting with him, his team, Mr. Ramkissoon, Mr. Obregon, and herself.

Mr. Tabano asked Dr. Asmussen how the bidding process will work. Dr. Asmussen stated that if we go with a GMP process, this will be the responsibility of the contractor. Mr. Baer further explained that contractors are busy now and getting them to physically come to the school and access the job is a challenge. Mr. Baer also stated that another concern he has is getting the best qualified contractor for the job. In the case of the kitchen consultant, the school decided to go with HKD, which did the Brooklyn school kitchen and did it well. HKD is now doing Queens kitchen project for substantially less than what was budgeted.

Mr. Tabano stated that he thinks this is what the school needs to do, and the board must be prepared to defend its decision based on time constraints. Ms. Urbati also stated that the school should document any attempts to get additional bids so that it can further justify its decision to go with a single bidder.

Mr. Baer also offered the board members to explain in greater detail the lump sum approach versus GMP at another time, if necessary, since there were pros and cons to both approaches. Mr. Tabano stated that given everyone's experience with the Brooklyn school renovation project, he would defer to Mr. Baer's judgement on this matter. Mr. Tabano asked the other board members if they agreed with the GMP approach. Both Ms. Urbati and Ms. Sun agreed that considering past experiences with the lump sum approach and the time constraints, the GMP approach sounds like the best course of action.

Mr. Obregon informed the board that he believes that Barone can move quickly on this project since the student and teacher entrance will be moved to stairwell B giving contractors full access

to do the work at the time of their choosing. Dr. Asmussen stated that Mr. Obregon was in the process of getting the security/entry system installed on the other side of the building.

Dr. Asmussen also stated that the asbestos removal company that Barone used on the fourth floor and roof project was fast and efficient. There were no issues when the city came to inspection. Therefore, she expects that this will be the case for the kitchen project.

Mr. Tabano asked Dr. DiGaudio if she had anything to report. Dr. DiGaudio stated that there was nothing new or significant to report except that testing and material developments are continuing.

VI. Evaluation Schedule—Sara Asmussen

- a. ED**
- b. Board**

Mr. Tabano asked when the next board evaluations are due and Dr. Asmussen confirmed that they are due in June 2024. Mr. Tabano asked Dr. Asmussen to re-send them to the board members again. Mr. Tabano also stated that he will set up a meeting with the board members in March 2024 with the goal of getting the evaluations done by April 2024.

VII. New Business

There was no new business discussed.

VIII. Public Comment

Dr. Asmussen stated there will be a full presentation next month on internship, dashboard, and enrollment. She also stated that Regents exams are still embargoed, but she believes that by next month they should be free.

IX. Adjournment

The board members agreed to meet next month on March 26, 2024, at 10:30 A.M. The meeting was adjourned at 11:32 A.M.