

New Dawn Charter Schools Board of Trustees

November 21, 2023

11:00 a.m.: Board Meeting Minutes

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

**New Dawn Charter High School II
89-25 161st Street
Jamaica, NY 11432
547-505-9101**

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. Steve Ramkisson, Director of Finance & HR, Mr. Jose Obregon Director of Operations, Ms. Emily Predmore, Data Specialist, Mr. Ashish Abraham, Recruitment and Marketing Specialist

I. Resolution: November 2023 Board Meeting Agenda—Mr. Ronald Tabano

Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the November 2023 Board of Trustees meeting agenda.

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve the November 2023, Board of Trustees meeting agenda.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the November 2023 Board of Trustees meeting agenda

II. Resolution: October 2023 Board of Trustees Minutes—Mr. Ronald Tabano

Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the October 2023 Board of Trustees meeting minutes.

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve the October 2023 Board of Trustees meeting minutes.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Brian Baer seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the October 2023 Board of Trustees meeting minutes

III. Financials—Mr. Steve Ramkissoon

Mr. Ramkissoon reported to the board that in both schools the finances are moving in a positive direction and especially at the Brooklyn school. He also reported that the previous month there was a negative income of 100K at the Brooklyn school, but now there is a positive 23K recorded. Additionally with depreciation factored in, the net income remains positive. For the Queens school, there is a positive net income of 750K. Mr. Ramkissoon stated that he had nothing significant to further report and asked if there were any questions. There were no questions.

Benchmark 4: Financial Condition

Benchmark 5: Financial Management

Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there was a resolution to accept and approve the October 2023 monthly financials.

a. Resolution: Monthly Financials

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve the October 2023 monthly financials

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the October 2023 monthly financials.

IV. Staff Recruitment— Mr. Ashish Abraham

Mr. Abraham reported to the board that the Global and Science teacher positions were filled at the Queens school. Additionally, Mr. Abraham informed the board that there is an aspiring teacher designated for Queens, and one SPED teacher that is currently on-boarded in Brooklyn. Mr. Tabano thanked Mr. Abraham for the update.

VI. Student Recruitment—Dr. Sara Asmussen

Benchmark 6: Board Oversight & Governance

Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity

Dr. Asmussen reported that Queens has a net gain of 69 students since September 1. Further, the Brooklyn school has a net gain of 46 students. Dr. Asmussen also reported that SPED numbers are dropping and particularly in Queens. However, by next month she believes that they will increase. Dr. Asmussen also stated that free and reduced lunch numbers dropped in Queens. Dr. Asmussen believes that this was a result of not obtaining all the lunch forms back from students and that once this is completed, the numbers should go up by next month as well. Both schools are enrolling more boys than girls. Aside from this fact, Dr. Asmussen stated that everything basically remained the same. Mr. Tabano then asked Mr. Abraham to speak about student recruitment.

Mr. Abraham reported that the recruiting emphasis is focusing on neighboring Brooklyn schools. The goal is to establish relations with the guidance departments and with community organizations. One of these community organizations that was contacted is Pieces of Lifestyle, which is a life camp as well as the Community Justice Center. Mr. Abraham stated that by reaching out to these organizations the school is making itself known, informing the community what the school does, and who the school serves. Mr. Tabano thanked Mr. Abraham for the update.

VI. School Updates

a. Brooklyn—Ms. Donna Lobato

b. Queens—Mr. Muhammad Bilal

Dr. Asmussen informed the board members that Ms. Lobato and Mr. Bilal were not able to make the board meeting since they are preparing for the Thanksgiving festivities in their perspective schools. Dr. Asmussen further stated that the Thanksgiving meal took place in Brooklyn yesterday and Queens was doing theirs today. The holiday Thanksgiving celebration will take place tomorrow for the students. Additionally, Dr. Asmussen reported that Brooklyn is having their community party next Wednesday and she reminded the board members that they were all invited. The purpose of the party is to introduce ourselves to the neighborhood restaurants so they can see the school's culinary program. There have not been any issues or problems at all in either school. Generally, things seem to be settling down and the transition is moving forward at the Queens school.

VII. Facilities—Mr. Jose Obregon

Mr. Obregon requested that the board consider purchasing the BallistiGlass security metal detection kit for the Queens school. He also stated that this metal detection kit is a portable metal detector. It is small, unimposing, non-threatening, and portable. Mr. Obregon also stated that he has compared it to other ballistic devices that are more cumbersome. The ballistic glass metal detection system is equally as effective as the bigger devices. Mr. Obregon also stated that he believes that it is suitable for Queens because Queens has a larger space. The device does not work as well in the Brooklyn school since the Brooklyn entrance is a little bit more confined. As a result, you get a lot of false alarms when the device is deployed at the Brooklyn school. Mr. Tabano asked what the device looks like. Mr. Obregon stated that the detection device consisted of two (2) small detection devices resembling hockey pucks that are placed on top of two (2) stanchion poles. Those being screened walk between those two stanchion poles. There is also a computer and a monitoring device that can be placed on a table that will issue an alert if there is metal detected. Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there were any questions for Mr. Obregon. There were no questions. Mr. Tabano then asked the board members if there was a resolution to approve the purchase of the BallistiGlass Security metal Detector for Queens.

a. Resolution: Ballistic Security for Queens

Motion: Mr. Brian Baer motioned to approve the purchase of the BallistiGlass Security metal Detector for Queens.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to approve the purchase of the BallistiGlass Security metal Detector for Queens.

Mr. Obregon proceeded to inform the board that the firewall license for both schools needed to be renewed. Since both schools have expended their E-Rate CAT II funds, the schools needed to purchase these licenses. He asked the board for approval to purchase the two licenses. The cost of the licenses is \$8,200 at the Queen school and \$4,800 at the Brooklyn school. Mr. Tabano then asked the board members if there was a resolution to approve the renewal of the firewall licenses in both schools.

b. Resolution: MSP for Fire Wall

Motion: Mr. Brian Baer motioned to approve the purchase of the firewall license for both schools.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to approve the purchase of the firewall license for both schools.

c. Update on COO for Brooklyn—Mr.'s Baer & Ramkissoon

Mr. Brian Baer reported that Fire COMM had requested whatever documentation we had, because the account manager could not find it. Mr. Baer stated that he forwarded them everything he had in his possession. One of those items was a letter on FDNY letterhead indicating that everything is good with the Fire Alarm system. Mr. Baer stated that he hopes to hear from the FDNY soon or after the holiday. Mr. Baer reported that the assignment of a representative from GKV to Metropolis is in progress. That representative will be designated to work with the DOB to get paperwork in motion. Mr. Baer also stated that he has been in contact with both the electrical and plumbing subcontractors. Both contractors are now waiting for CFS to complete their work. Mr. Baer discussed his conversation with Joe Barbagallo of GKV two weeks ago. Mr. Barbagallo indicated that they did not negotiate with CFS that there would be a reduction a in the overall fee. Mr. Baer asked Mr. Barbagallo to find any documentation but that documentation is not available. Therefore, CFS is looking to charge \$6,800 and an additional \$2,200 or \$2,300 to create the as-built documentation and the change that is required for the PA permit. Mr. Baer indicated that total fees would add up to \$10,000 to complete their work that includes filing with the Department of Buildings for the certificate of occupancy.

d. Update on Queens issues—Mr. Ramkissoon

Mr. Ramkissoon recommended to the board that it is more financially efficient if the school pays the fees to CFS rather than keep spending money for an undetermined amount of time re-filing for a temporary certificate of occupancy. Ms. Urbati agreed that this is the most fiscally prudent

thing to do. Mr. Tabano asked Mr. Ramkissoon to try to negotiate a reduced amount with CFS. Mr. Ramkissoon agreed to do so.

e. Update on Kitchen Reno—Mr. Obregon

Mr. Obregon reported to the board that he met with Mr. Brian Baer, the architect team, and the schools two (2) culinary instructors (Todd Bryant and Ashley Hall) to look at three (3) kitchen designs. Both Todd and Ashley looked at the designs and submitted their comments and observations. Mr. Obregon also informed the board that he has an electrician scheduled to come to the Queens school to access the electrical layout of the space. Mr. Obregon stated that he will get those drawings to architects most likely after the Thanksgiving holiday. Mr. Obregon further stated that he and Mr. Brian Baer talked about having the architects start moving on the roof project in Brooklyn as soon as possible.

IV. New Business

Mr. Ramkissoon reported to the board that he had a discussion with Barone management about some ongoing facility issues that have been identified. For example, there is an issue with the heating units working consistently and properly. Additionally, there may be a power issue where the heating units are overloading the electrical system. There are also multiple bathroom leaks, which are fixed and then seem to re-occur. There are walls that are buckling due to water damage from previous roof leaks. Mr. Ramkissoon also stated that Mr. Obregon has a list of all the facility issues that need to be addressed and fixed. These are issues that in most cases are re-occurring. Mr. Ramkissoon also stated that he will talk to Barone after the Thanksgiving break and discuss with them the wall that needs to come down for the new kitchen that will be installed for the culinary program.

Dr. Asmussen asked Mr. Brian Baer if asbestos testing proposals are always so ambiguous and lengthy. Mr. Baer informed Dr. Asmussen that they could be, but he will go back to the architect and ask for a clear and more concise proposal.

Mr. Ramkissoon informed the board that he has met Mildred Elley college that is looking to rent some space for their medical programs. The college has a medical field program and is looking to expand. Mr. Ramkissoon informed the board members that New Dawn students may be able to benefit from this program. The partnership with Mildred Elley college has the potential to be financially profitable for NDCS. Dr. Asmussen further stated that it would be great NDCS could get a second CTE program here and a medical CTE program is on top of the list. Mr. Ramkissoon also stated that lease payments are guaranteed even if the program doesn't do well and ends.

Ms. Urbati asked what the time commitment on the lease is and Mr. Ramkissoon responded that it is a five (5) year lease. However, the lease will specify that if Mildred Elley college does not have enough students, they can discontinue the program. The college will use the school facility from 5 P.M. to 11 P.M. The lease will have all operating costs factored in including security, janitorial, and the like. Dr. Asmussen stated that we cannot commit leasing Queens since that involves a rental property and the landlord of the Queens facility would have to get involved. Mr.

Ramkissoon confirmed that it can happen at the Queens school, but we will need Barone Management's approval.

Dr. Asmussen asked if the board can take a vote on this proposal or wait until there is a final contract. Mr. Tabano stated that the board will wait until there is a final contract.

Dr. Asmussen also informed the board that both schools underwent an active shooter with hostage drill under the STOP grant managed by Ms. Stacey Newton. Dr. Asmussen stated that the drill highlighted some things that the schools really need to focus on. Therefore, Dr. Asmussen stated that the schools are going to move forward with that. As part of that training, Dr. Asmussen and Mr. Obregon will be attending the advanced CPTED training course in person. Dr. Asmussen emphasized again that it was a very helpful exercise.

V. Public Comment

There was no public comment made.

VI. Adjournment

The board decided to meet again on December 18th for the next board meeting. The meeting adjourned at 11:34 A.M.