

**John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy Charter School
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**

Date: November 19, 2020

Time: 10:00 AM

Place: Zoom Video

Members Present: Harvey Newman, Douglas Knight, Richard Levine, Ron Tabano, Dana Jackson, Lawrence Ng, Sy Fliegel

Members Absent: none

Call to Order: Mr. Newman called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM on November 19, 2020

The minutes summarizing the October 22, 2020 meeting will be reviewed in December 2020.

Report of the CEO

Mr. Tabano met with teachers and support staff to inform them students will continue to provide 100% remote instruction through the fall semester. The decision is based on the higher COVID-19 positivity rates seen throughout the city and DOE's decision to close schools. The decision to stay remote is good even though it is not ideal. The counselors, case managers and teachers reach out to struggling students daily. There are mental health issues and the team is calling students frequently. With DOE closing schools, our teachers who are UFT members can teach from home as per UFT/DOE contract. With a resurgence of COVID-19 cases, we propose to have support staff work a hybrid schedule after Thanksgiving. Effective 11/30, support staff will report to work in-person Tuesday and Thursday and work from home Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. There is a plan to reassign work to people who have tasks that is performed only at the school. These employees, about three, will assist in outreach efforts. All employees will be required to submit a report documenting their work activity by 6pm. All employees have the option to work in-person, if they choose. Custodians will report to the school building each day and work on projects to spruce up the space. Case managers will be trained in conducting safe home visits. Mr. Knight asks the reason in choosing Tuesday and Thursday to work in-person as opposed to other days or allowing flexibility. Mr. Tabano, replies the days are chosen to accommodate the fiscal and mental health teams.

Mr. Tabano requests a motion to accept the continued remote education plan for students and hybrid work plan for support staff.

- Motion:** Mr. Knight moves to accept the remote education plan for students and hybrid work plan for support staff.
- Second:** Mr. Newman seconds the motion.
- Vote:** Unanimous.

Attendance mirrors the city attendance at 53%. Attendance is a little higher during the work week. It is a struggle for students to attend zoom classes and focus. COVID-19 has impacted many of our students. They have sick families and need to work to support families who lost jobs. Students are doing their school work at night and check in with teachers, case managers and counseling team. We are allowing flexibilities during this unprecedented time. Tablet distribution to students in need of technology is complete. Technology is not the issue. The issue is time and current conditions. We are keeping records of reasons students are not able to attend scheduled zoom classes – many are challenged with different priorities. There are two teachers in almost every classroom. There is a lot of instructional support and teachers go above and beyond to work with students after hours. It is noted that the special education population is at 52% which is high and significant.

Data and outreach by the mental health support team show more students are suffering from anxiety. Students want and appreciate contact with faculty and support staff. There is a lot of outreach to students with social, emotional, and mental health concerns. Dr. Peter's has reported Zoom tele-meetings are better than nothing.

The DOE will conduct renewal visits remotely along with several DOE representatives. January is the visit. Dates and reminders will go out to the Board of Trustees and students.

The Regents exams are cancelled. Students who take and pass a Regents subject class will receive a Regents waiver. This is helpful to students who struggle with test taking.

A virtual parents' night is scheduled next Tuesday, November 24 from 3 – 6 pm. Zoom meeting links have been sent to parents to meet with teachers. Progress reports were mailed and will be discussed.

Mr. Knight and Ms. Jackson have completed the Board assessment. We will wait for the remaining Board members to send the assessment in. The assessments will be averaged and findings will be reported on at the next meeting.

Mr. Tabano explains Ms. Mitchell is unavailable to report as she teaches during this time of the day. He reports the Bronx campus is faced with similar situation.

Mr. Tabano informs the Board of the passing of Jason Salters. Mr. Salters was a 2009 graduate and an exemplary culinary student. The Board extends condolences.

Report of Cecilia Sakosky/CFO

The Form 990 which are our tax returns were completed by the accounting firm, Schall and Ashenfarb. The numbers presented in the form were reviewed and discussed in detail by Dave Ashenfarb and the members of the audit committee last month. The Board reviews the Form 990 and there are no questions. Form 990 is made available to the public upon request. Ms. Sakosky requests the Board to accept the Form 990 for fiscal year ending June 30, 2020 for filing.

Mr. Newman requests a motion to accept Form 990 for the year ending June 30, 2020 for tax filing.

Motion: Mr. Ng makes a motion to accept the Form 990 for fiscal year ending June 30, 2020 for tax filing.

Second: Ms. Jackson seconds the motion.

Vote: Unanimous.

The school's financial position is 4% lower from the previous year. The decrease is expected. FTE is down to 316. Our investment portfolio remains strong. The Board's objective to protect cash and investment returns is within the investment policy of 5% return. There is an increase in fund balance of 316K. This is a timing factor and it is expected that there will be a decrease in fund balance at the end of the fiscal year. Student enrollment reported in the prior billing cycle is 312 FTEs. Both campuses brought in new students. Hopefully we will reach 320-325 FTEs. We are still taking students in but it is slow. Total number of students requiring special education services is 52%. We get a pick up revenue from the increase in SPED students. 52% is a high percentage.

The STOP-TA grant will take effort however the addition of walkie-talkies to assist teachers and staff to quickly communicate threats is a benefit. Mr. Newman inquires about two vacancies preciously reported. Mr. Tabano informs the Board a hiring freeze remains and that existing instructional staff are able to handle the instructional load. Mr. Newman asks what are projected deficits for the year and plans in drawing down assets. Ms. Sakosky explains the projected deficit is 1.3M – 1.4M however on a cash basis, when adding depreciation back, the change to cash flow is projected at a deficit of 1.2M. There is currently no need to draw down

on assets but cash is monitored and we will assess the need to draw down on investments in the Spring. New grants awarded in October will defray a portion of existing costs.

Mr. Knight inquires about support staff salaries and medical premiums. Ms. Sakosky explains salaries are frozen. Only union increases are committed per collective bargaining agreement between the DOE and UFT. Medical benefit premium increases will not substantially increase. Ms. Sakosky informs the Board of a meeting with Mr. Libby, the benefits broker with MDG where a discussion ensued around upcoming increases. Industry increase is running single instead of double digits.

Mr. Newman inquires if there are expenses related to COVID that have not been budgeted. Ms. Sakosky reviews the budget line and shares with the Board that COVID-19 expenses are under budget. The budget includes costs for cleaning service which has not been obligated because students have been remote. We may need to obligate expenses in the Spring or when students return to in-person.

Mr. Knight shares that he navigated the new website and congratulates Ms. Sakosky in taking on the role and creating an impressive and professional website. Mr. Levine suggests adding Mr. Tabano's name to the end of the Principal's message on the website. All trustees agreed. Mr. Knight asks why a teacher is resigning in January instead of the end of a school year. Mr. Tabano explains the teacher is not comfortable with remote instruction and wanted to retire last June but agreed to stay on to assist with renewal.

Mr. Knight recommends to adjourn the meeting.

Motion: Mr. Levine makes a motion to adjourn the meeting.
Second: Ms. Fliegel seconds the motion.
Vote: Unanimous.

The meeting adjourned 11:05 pm.

Next meeting is scheduled for December 17, 2020 at 11 AM.