

**Westinghouse Arts Academy Charter School
Board of Trustees**

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 3, 2021, 6:00 P.M. EDT

Present:

Bill Pricener, Board President/Treasurer (Zoom)
Dexter Hairston, Board Secretary (Zoom)
John Hisiro, Trustee (Zoom)
Don Marinelli, Trustee (Zoom)
Gloria Rayman, Trustee (Zoom)
Matt Racunas, Solicitor (Zoom)
Rick Fosbrink, WAACS CEO (Zoom)
Betsy D'Emidio, WAACS Principal/CAO (Zoom)
Debra Lehew, WAACS Dir. SpEd (Zoom)
Elizabeth Speed, WAACS Faculty & Dir. of Marketing (Zoom)
Nadine Dunn, WAACS Business & HR Admin/Brd Recording Secretary (Zoom)

Excused:

JP Hernandez, Trustee
Greg Jakub, Trustee (Zoom)

Guests:

Westinghouse Arts Faculty, Staff and Parents attending via Zoom

The Meeting of the Board of Trustees began at 6:04 p.m.

Roll Call of Board Members:

Bill Pricener, Board President, welcomed all attending via Zoom.

Public Comment:

None

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Bill Pricener, Board President, presented the Minutes from February and asked if anyone had a comment. Hearing none, Mr. Pricener called for a motion to accept the minutes from the 2/3/2021 meeting.

Motion made: To accept the minutes from 2/03/2021 - Dexter Hairston , 2nd: Don Marinelli

Vote: All in favor: ALL Yea; 0 Nay; 0 Abstaining- Motion Carried.

Board Governance:

Bill Pricener, Board President, nominated Bernadette Gibson for a 3 year board appointment. Mr. Pricener read a brief bio of Ms. Gibson's accomplishments and employment history. He also spoke of her belief in Westinghouse Arts Academy mission. Mr. Pricener called for a motion to appoint Bernadette Gibson to the board of Westinghouse Arts Academy.

Motion made: To appoint Bernadette Gibson to the board for a 3 year term - John Hisiro , 2nd: Gloria Rayman

Vote: All in favor: ALL Yea; 0 Nay; 0 Abstaining- Motion Carried.

Rick Fosbrink, CEO, updated the board on the strategic plan retreat. He thanked all the board members for responding to his google survey and explained the slight conflicts with the dates chosen. Though a brief discussion, it was decided that Mr. Hairston and Mr. Hisiro would make arrangements to attend on 3/13/2021. Mr. Fosbrink would be in touch with the Board later this week with confirmed arrangements for the meeting.

TASK: Mr. Fosbrink will send out a reminder prior to the retreat to the Board Members.

School Programs & Policies:

Dr. Betsy D’Emidio, Principal, spoke about this year’s graduation ceremony. The ceremony is to be held on the last day of school, June 16 at 6:30 PM. The actual location, program, and attendance is still being worked on as the Covid guidelines are changing currently. Final plans will be forthcoming as we get closer to the date and see what new Covid guidelines need to be followed.

Dr. D’Emidio informed the Board that she has been in discussions with the School Counselor about changing the credit requirements and schedule for next year. The year will look more like a traditional school schedule containing 8 instruction periods and moving the start time to 8 AM rather than the current 8:10AM start. As discussions and plan progress, she will update the board.

Next, Dr. D’Emidio and Rick Fosbrink spoke to the fact that the Allegheny IU will be assisting the State in vaccinating school faculty and staff. They felt from the meetings they had been attending that once all school personnel had their vaccine, PDE was going to push for full in-person education to finish out the 20-21 school year. Dr. D’Emidio has already been working on a rough test schedule, similar to what was being planned for the fall, to facilitate the transition from hybrid to in-person instruction. Mr. Fosbrink would be sending out a survey to all families to see how many of our students would return to the building and how many would stay on-line. This idea was already brought to Dr. D’Emidio's attention by some parents that suggested students that were already in the building, take their virtual academic classes in the same space as the teacher teaching it. When teachers were asked, some were not happy with that idea because they felt their classrooms were unprepared for the students (ie: classrooms did not have any student desks).

Mr. Fosbrink addressed the desk situation with the Board stating he had spoken to some of our furniture suppliers. We have enough to cover the purchase of 250 desks, however the furniture manufacturers would need about 11 weeks to deliver.

After all the information was presented, the question was posed to the Board by Mr. Fosbrink, as to what they thought about returning to a post-hybrid full in-person educational model for the remainder of the 20-21 school year. Though a brief discussion, the Board felt that a return to in-person instruction should be attempted.

TASK: Mr. Fosbrink to reach out to the school districts already doing full in-person instruction to discuss distancing and disinfecting strategies. He will also reach out to some closed schools to see if we can find desks quickly

Lastly, Mr. Fosbrink and Dr. Deb Lehew, Director of Special Education, presented and explained the IU IDIEA Programs contract. The contract basically stated that by partnering with the Allegheny IU, we can use funds to support our Special Education program. This is a program that we have used before and we need the Board to vote on and sign the contract as a formality.

Motion made: To accept the IU IDIEA Program contract - Don Marinelli , 2nd: Dexter Hairston

Vote: All in favor: ALL Yea; 0 Nay; 0 Abstaining- Motion Carried.

School Personnel:

Rick Fosbrink, CEO, referred the Board to the list of personnel for February. We had no terminations or resignations. We had hired 3 temporary employees; two for the spring musical and one for our E-Sports team. All positions are stipends that will be paid at the end of the activity.

Bill Pricener, Board President, called for a motion to approve the personnel report.

Motion made: To approve the personnel report - John Hiriso; 2nd: Don Marinelli

Vote: All in favor: ALL Yea; 0 Nay; 0 Abstaining- Motion Carried.

Report on Facilities:

Rick Fosbrink, CEO, reported that the stage and house area had some cosmetic improvements completed in preparation for our spring musical. New drapes and work lights have been installed on the stage area. The lights in the house area have been fixed and new LED lights were installed. All the lights will be controlled by a new WiFi dimmer unit.

Recently, Mr. Fosbrink continued, our facilities personnel discovered graffiti on our building in an area where the outside lighting had malfunctioned. The lighting will be fixed and our facilities personnel will use the school's power washer to remove the images once the weather warms up a little more. Mr. Fosbrink also spoke with a fencing company to block off that area. Board members also suggested installing cameras in that area.

Mr. Fosbrink completed his report by stating the facilities personnel have been setting up the boiler room to be an official storage room and office area for the facilities personnel to use. Mr. Pricener added that once the weather stays warmer, he would like to volunteer to landscape the Herman Ave facing school grounds. All are welcome to join him.

Report on Finance and Business Services:

Rick Fosbrink, CEO, presented to the board the resume of Maureen Ryan, Grant Writer. Mr. Fosbrink would like for the school to enter into a contract with Ms. Ryan to better position ourselves for grant applications and awards. Ms. Ryan has been instrumental in the awards of large grants to local school districts such as Braddock Hills Propel. Mr. Fosbrink has worked with her in the past on other projects and found her work to be impressive and profitable. The Board reviewed the contract and asked our solicitor if he had any issue with the rather lengthy agreement. Our solicitor found none at this time and felt it was pretty standard. The solicitor pointed out the cancellation clause should the school no longer require the service.

Bill Pricener, Board President, called for a motion to enter into the contract for the grant writing service.

Motion made: To approve entering into a grant writing agreement with Maureen Ryan - Gloria Rayman, 2nd: Don Marinelli

Vote: All in favor: ALL Yea; 0 Nay; 0 Abstaining- Motion Carried.

Rick Fosbrink, CEO, presented to the Board the finance reports. Nothing unusual to report. Our on hand cash is still high and our expenses are being kept to a minimum. Mr. Fosbrink explained the outstanding balances from the school districts and showed that the new Condensed Board Summary Report had been fixed. He then went on to say that we are starting to plan the budget for the 21-22 school year and stated that some of the new laws from Harrisburg may only affect us as it pertains to Special Education funding.

Mr. Pricener asked for a motion to retroactively approve payroll, contracts, and bills for February.

Motion made: To approve the contracts, bills and payroll for February - Don Marinelli, 2nd: John Hisiro

Vote: All in favor: ALL Yea; 0 Nay; 0 Abstaining- Motion Carried.

Report on Marketing and Enrollment:

Elizabeth Speed, Faculty and Director of Marketing, reviewed the dashboard for the month of February. Ms. Speed showed that we currently have 39 students already accepted for the Fall, with more in the pipeline. She stated that the targeted marketing programs for our art disciplines are receiving a good response. That this week we would wrap up Dance and move focus to Digital / Studio Arts. She also informed the Board that Literary Arts is creating their own marketing piece and have turned this project into a gradable learning experience for the students. Lastly, Ms. Speed said that the bus direct mailing piece is ready to go out and has

already created a buzz showing an interest in a southern route being implemented as well. Ms. Speed credits this interest to our wonderful parent advocates.

Executive Session:

Bill Pricener, Board President, stated that this concluded the public portion of the meeting and the Board would move into the Execution session to discuss personnel issues.

Mr. Pricener thanked everyone for attending. The Board went into the Executive Session and the public meeting adjourned at 7:08 pm.

Next Meeting: April 7, 2021 at 6:00 pm

Date:

Board Secretary