



Atmosphere academy

Atmosphere Academy Public Charter Schools Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes July 28, 2020

Zoom Conference Call
Atmosphere Academy Charter School
5959 Broadway
New York, New York 10463

Board Members Attending:

Mr. Alan Dillon
Dr. Michael Lagas
Mr. Jesse J. Greene, Jr.
Mr. Mervin Burton
Mr. James Spitzer

Board Members Absent:

Others in Attendance:

Mr. Colin J. Greene
Mr. Peter Markey
Ms. Elizabeth Nash
Mrs. Katherine Brennan
Ms. Camila Gonzalez
Mr. Bryan Fryer
Mr. Christian Roman
Mr. Ben Pah
No public in attendance

Agenda Item 1. Call to Order

At approximately 5:04PM Dr. Lagas opened the conference call and called the Board meeting to order.

Agenda Item 2. Pledge of Allegiance

No Pledge of Allegiance was performed.

Agenda item 3. Board Reports

Atmosphere Academy
July 28, 2020

Mr. C. Greene reported on the July 17th Accountability Committee call. The minutes of that meeting were sent to the board for their pre reading.

Mr. J. Greene reported on the Finance Committee call of June 24th. Topics discussed there were covered at this board meeting.

Agenda Item 4. Comments From the Public

There were no public attendees and therefore no comments.

Agenda Item 5. Revision and Adoption of the Agenda

The board had no objections or additions.

Agenda Item 6.1. Board Meeting Minutes

Mr. J. Greene presented the draft June Board Meeting Minutes for approval by the Board. These were sent to the Board in advance for their review.

Mr. J. Greene moved to approve the meeting minutes for June 2020.
Mr. Dillon seconded the motion.

Vote Aye: Mr. Burton, Mr. Dillon, Mr. Greene, Dr. Lagas, Mr. Spitzer
Vote no: None

Motion adopted.

Mr. J. Greene also discussed preparation of the Board minutes and committed to continue to prepare them for the near future. His recommendation is to have legal counsel listen in to the Board meeting and prepare the minutes when the budget allows.

Agenda Item 6.2. Finance Update

Mr. Fryer reviewed the draft of the financial narrative for the prior fiscal year 2019-2020. The draft was circulated to the Board. He noted the big improvement in surplus year to year. Expected surplus is \$182,000 and operating surplus of \$554,000.

The Board asked about the cash results. Cash was down \$208,500, but after adjustment for the escrow deposit and repayment of earlier overpayment by DOE, cash was flat year to year.

Mr. Fryer next reviewed the progress on the annual audit. He expects a smooth finish to the audit for 2019-2020.

Atmosphere Academy
July 28, 2020

He reviewed the Federal grant to schools of \$239,000 to help with Covid risk management.

Because of the risks due to COVID-19 Mr. J. Greene and the school have decided to defer payment of the loan due July 31. The loan will be deferred until October when repayment will be reviewed again.

Mr. C. Greene reviewed the enrollment charts and the impact on revenue. A range of budget outcomes were discussed based on the range of student populations for the year. The break-even point was reviewed and the probability of reaching and exceeding that number of students was discussed. He then discussed the efforts to bring in more students and the time frame to get that done so the full time equivalent student count will create an acceptable budget year.

School opening options and risks for the school were reviewed and discussed.

He then reviewed new hires for the new school year.

Agenda Item 6.3. Enrollment Update

Ms. Gonzalez reviewed the efforts to drive enrollment. She discussed the survey sent to families, the efforts to contact families and the drop off in response due to COVID-19. She then covered the 2020-2021 application document. Next enrollment ideas were presented to the Board. These included: wait list family calls, contacts made at closing Catholic schools, neighborhood canvassing, communication of seats available and other ideas. The efforts resulted in more applications in July than June so the efforts are effective.

Mrs. Brennan discussed the outreach to Boy's and Girl's Clubs to increase awareness of the school.

A factor impacting recruitment is lack of confidence in public transportation and no school bus services for many of the students. The school looked into hiring its own bus service but that was not successful.

Mr. Pah commented on the unprecedented level of uncertainty about the start of the new year. At the date of the Board meeting there was no guidance from the State or City regarding the new year. But Atmosphere continues to work with families for recruitment of students for the new year. He noted that the problem Atmosphere is seeing is universal across the city.

Mr. C. Greene reviewed the timeline to resolve the recruitment problem and assured the Board that the budget would be managed to no loss for the year.

Agenda Item 6.4. Contract Approvals

Mr. C. Greene reviewed the advertising spending expected over next few months. Two major contracts were involved. The first proposed was an expected spend of over \$20,000 over the next few months at IMG Digital Advertising. This will be a rolling advertising spend. The second contract with the MTA, Outfront Media, for \$22,820 for advertising on MTA transport. After explanation he asked for Board approval.

Atmosphere Academy

July 28, 2020

Mr. J. Greene moved to approve the two contracts.

Mr. Spitzer seconded the motion.

Vote aye: Mr. Burton, Mr. Dillon, Mr. Greene, Dr. Lagas, Mr. Spitzer

Vote no: None

Motion adopted. The contracts were approved.

Agenda Item 6.5. Lease Amendment Approvals

Mr. J. Greene prepared and sent to the Board, in advance of the meeting, explanations of lease amendments for both the Marble Hill facility and the 5959 Broadway facility. Both would increase COVID-19 readiness, expand space in the case of 5959 Broadway and get the added rent expense within the real estate reimbursement entitlement for charter schools, so there would be no impact on educational funding/spending.

Mr. J. Greene discussed the planned improvements, relations with the landlords and status of building improvements and expansions.

A motion was made to approve the lease amendments as described in the explanation materials sent to and reviewed with the Board for both the Marble Hill facility and the 5959 Broadway facility.

Mr. Spitzer moved to approve these two lease amendments

Mr. Burton seconded the motion.

Vote aye: Mr. Burton, Mr. Dillon, Mr. Greene, Dr. Lagas, Mr. Spitzer

Vote no: None

Motion adopted. The lease amendments were approved as presented.

Agenda Item 6.6. Digital Atmosphere

Mr. Pah and Mr. C. Greene discussed building the brand of Atmosphere Academy. They reviewed how this can be done using digital advertising such as Google ads, social media, school focused websites and publications. They next reviewed ad metrics and how they can be interpreted and used to focus brand building. They also reviewed Instagram ads, Facebook ads, and school review sites such as Yelp. Mr. C. Greene also discussed how to monitor on line reviews of Atmosphere to be sure a fair story exists in the digital worlds.

Agenda Item 6.7. Atmosphere Movement

Mr. C. Greene reviewed the key principles that make up what Atmosphere Academy is working to represent. Principles such as social justice, market driven school choice, and merit rewards for staff.

Atmosphere Academy
July 28, 2020

Mr. Pah discussed how the school can get local support, handle political issues and make appropriate contacts with local politicians.

Ms. Nash discussed how Atmosphere can be more responsive to local needs for schools and have positive actions ready to go when local schools close creating the need.

Mr. C. Greene discussed new local political leaders and their views of charter schools. He also discussed how this can be expanded beyond the current charter by moving the broader effort to Atmosphere Foundation.

Agenda Item 6.9. Reopening Update

Mr. C. Greene and the leadership team reviewed the work underway to be ready to open the school for the fall term. They reviewed the following activities:

Response to SUNY requirements and plan submission which included:

- The school's reopening plan.
- The action calendar.
- The operations plan.
- The academic plan.
- Enrollment and attendance.

The integration of all of this into an executable plan for the fall term.

Then they reviewed the COVID-19 plan including space available for the student population and the social distancing plan.

Mr. C. Greene reviewed the unknowns and uncertainties at this point in the planning cycle.

He then reviewed current parent preferences for the fall term. 30% want all remote and 70% prefer blended school process.

Agenda Item 7. Consent Agenda

There were no consent agenda items.

Agenda Item 8. Executive Session

There was no Executive Session.

Agenda Item 9. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

Atmosphere Academy
July 28, 2020

Agenda Item 10. New Business

There was no new business.

Agenda Item 11. Adjournment

At 7:06 PM the Board moved to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. J. Greene moved to adjourn.
Mr. Burton seconded the motion.

Vote Aye: Mr. Burton, Mr. Dillon, Mr. J. Greene, Dr. Lagas, Mr. Spitzer
Vote no: None

Meeting adjourned.