



# Atmosphere academy

## Atmosphere Academy Public Charter Schools Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes November 18, 2020

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

### Board Members Attending:

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

### Board Members Absent:

### Others in Attendance:

Mr. Colin J. Greene  
Mr. Bryan Fryer  
Ms. Elizabeth Nash  
Mr. Christian Roman  
Mr. Ben Pah  
No other public in attendance

### Agenda Item 1. Call to Order

At approximately 5:05PM 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

There was no governance committee meeting this month.

Accountability committee meeting will follow this meeting so no report was available..

Finance committee did not meet this month.

#### **Agenda Item 4. Comments From the Public**

There were no comments.

#### **Agenda Item 5. Revision and Adoption of the Agenda**

The board had no objections or additions.

#### **Agenda Item 6.1. Finance Update**

Mr. Fryer updated the board on financial performance. He covered the school scorecard, and the year to date surplus. The surplus is strong at \$898,528 for four months of the school year. This is driven but the growth in student population from last year. Expenses are also up less year to year helping the net surplus.

He discussed the student enrollment levels and the sensitivity to changes in these levels on surplus. He next discussed the recent (November) compensation bonus payment and the accrual process leading up to that payment.

Certain Title money has still not been received or approved so has not been added to the budget.

Cash levels and flows are strong and expected to remain strong at least through year end. Year end cash balance is expected to be substantial enabling the planned December loan repayment.

Mr. C. Greene explained some of the student issues the school is dealing with due to Covid-19 and remote instruction. Some are struggling with attendance and some with grades, The school believes there is risk of losing some students in this environment.

Mr. Fryer discussed the \$230,00 federal grant supporting Covid-19 safety actions taken by the school. This grant application is underway and will be applied to Covid-19 driven costs.

Mr. C. Greene reviewed the new lease amendment at 5959 Broadway. Much of the funding for building upgrades in that amendment have been spent.

#### **Agenda Item 6.2. Board Minutes**

Mr. J. Greene presented the draft October 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 October 2020.  
Mr. Burton seconded the motion.

Vote Aye: Mr. Burton, Mr. J. Greene, Dr. Lagas, (Mr. Spitzer was not present at the last meeting and did not vote, Mr. Dillon joined the meeting by phone later).

Vote no: None

Motion adopted. October minutes approved.

A discussion of how minutes could be prepared in the future followed the approval.

### **Agenda Item 6.3. Fundraising Update**

Mr. Ben Pah reviewed his work with Custom Ink and the financial model for selling selected Atmosphere branded clothing. He noted that the parties were discussing a memo of understanding.

He also discussed Custom Inks desire to make a contribution to Atmosphere Foundation to help continue that entities work with charter schools.

Mr. Pah noted the ongoing legal and business reviews involving these matters. The board request that they continue and cover all issues, including any possible tax issues.

### **Agenda Item 6.4. Q1 Update**

Mr. C. Greene lead a discussion of the actions taken to deal with the problems created by remote learning. While Zoom has enabled remote learning during the pandemic, the quality of learning is worse than in person. He noted the need for strong classroom management to hold the attention and focus of the students.

Also strong attention to getting return of assignments so student progress can be determined is required.

Teaching protocols require enforcement to overcome these problems. Teacher coaching is a necessary action given these difficult times. Checklists have been established to be sure gradebooks are being kept up to date and properly used. Revised teacher evaluations and the application of best practices have been used.

3D instruction handbook is being used. Data driven analysis, scaffolding, differentiation and Socratic teaching methods are all being applied.

Achievement classes have been added but there is only so much screen time that can be effective.

Ms. Nash said that in some areas the school had to return to teaching basics, applying best practices, focus on attention of students and get data to verify what the needs are.

Mr. Pah reviewed his recent discussions with alumni of the school. Many say that their new schools are too easy. The high schools are not making the students perform to capability.

Mr. C. Greene noted that the Atmosphere honor students are doing well even under remote learning. Others require more personal supervision. Since there is a useful limit to screen time the focus has turned to the quality of instruction time. Closer supervision of teachers is part of that process.

A board member asked if the adverse Impacts of remote learning is permanent. Mr. C. Greene replied that the longer it goes on the more likely some impacts will be permanent.

Mr. C. Greene reported on staffing issues. There has been turn over in the math department and the school is moving to fill 3 key positions.

Mr. Roman reported on culture issues. He gave a quarter by quarter review of trends and the environment. He noted that the school has applied a revised attendance process. Going forward there will be close tracking, outreach and communication to parents of all attendance problems.

Mr. Roman next discussed the alumni scholarship program and where candidate stand in terms of meeting their commitments to help at the school.

Next there was a discussion of how to build the Atmosphere culture. Alumni visits, culture exchanges, open house activities, partnerships (SAR) and others are being used.

Mr. Roman continued with a discussion of high school application process for graduating 8<sup>th</sup> graders. He reviewed the number of options each student had regarding high school choice. The school is making efforts to increase the number of options available. More events to expose students to different schools are being planned. Also mock high school application process is being given to the students so that they know how to apply.

### **Agenda Item 7. Consent Agenda**

There were no consent agenda items.

### **Agenda Item 8. Executive Session**

At approximately 6:40PM the board moved to enter Executive Session to discuss

- a. The medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation and

b. The proposed acquisition , sale or lease of real property or the proposed acquisition, sale or exchange of securities, because publicity could substantially affect the value.

Mr. J. Greene moved to enter Executive Session.

Mr. M. Burton seconded the motion.

Vote Aye: Mr. Burton, Mr. Dillon, Mr. J. Greene, Dr. Lagas, Mr. Spitzer.

Vote no: None

After discussion, at approximately 7:17PM, the Board moved to exit Executive Session

Mr. J. Greene so moved.

Mr. Dillon seconded the motion.

Vote Aye: Mr. Burton, Mr. Dillon, Mr. J. Greene, Dr. Lagas, Mr. Spitzer

Vote no: None

#### **Agenda Item 9. Unfinished Business**

There was no unfinished business.

#### **Agenda Item 10. New Business**

There was no new business.

#### **Agenda Item 11. Adjournment**

At approximately 7:18PM the Board moved to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. J. Greene moved to adjourn.

Mr. Spitzer seconded the motion.

Vote Aye: Mr. Burton, Mr. Dillon, Mr. J. Greene, Dr. Lagas, Mr. Spitzer

Vote no: None

Meeting adjourned.