



Atmosphere
academy

**Atmosphere Academy Public Charter Schools
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**
April 27, 2022

Atmosphere Academy Charter School
Meeting held over Zoom

Board Members Attending

Dr. Michael Lagas.
Mr. Jesse J. Greene, Jr.
Mr. Alan Dillon
Mr. Colin J. Greene (ex officio, CEO)

Board Members Not In Attendance:

Mr. Jim Spitzer

Others in Attendance:

Mr. Peter Markey (Item 6.1 only)
Mr. Gabriel Rosenblum
Mrs. Elizabeth Kelly
Mr. Christian Roman
Mrs. Katherine Brennan
Mr. Benjamin Pah
Mr. Darryl Jenkins (item 6.4)
No other public in attendance

Agenda Item 1. Call to Order

At approximately 5:44 PM, Dr. Lagas called the Board meeting to order.

Agenda Item 2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was not performed.

Agenda item 3. Board Reports

The Finance Committee met this month. Those topics were covered later in this meeting.

The Middle and High School Committees met this month. Those topics were covered later in this meeting.

Agenda Item 4. Comments From the Public

There were no comments at this time.

Agenda Item 5. Revision and Adoption of the Agenda

Mr. C. Greene presented the Agenda for approval by the Board.

Mr. J. Greene moved to approve the Board Agenda for April 2022.
Dr. Lagas seconded the motion.

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

Motion adopted. Agenda approved.

Agenda Item 6.1. Finance Update

Mr. Markey presented the financials for the month ending 3/31/2022. Mr. Markey began by presenting the financial scorecard and touching on cash planning, payables and key performance indicators. Atmosphere generated a loss in March due to high expenses regarding end of year events and field trips.

Mr. Markey presented his cashflow analysis from May through November, which will take Atmosphere through the merit bonus that is paid out to staff members. This cashflow analysis allows Atmosphere to plan for big upcoming expenses and test affordability of programs by entering cost data for proposed programs or expenses that may be added.

The board asked about the outstanding grants and whether the outstanding funds are expected to be received soon. Mr. Markey spoke about each outstanding grant and the expected timelines for collecting each grant funding.

Agenda Item 6.2. Form 990 Approval

The board discussed the need to approve the Form 990 for SY 2020-2021.

Mr. Dillon moved to approve the Form 990.
Mr. J. Greene seconded the motion.

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

A brief discussion regarding the outstanding payments on real estate taxes and lease assistance from the DOE followed the board vote. Mr. C. Greene and Mrs. Kelly also spoke about DOE billing and per pupil payments. There is a lack of transparency from the DOE around actual per pupil pay dates. Mrs. Kelly reviewed the process for the board, and then discussed the multiple submissions that ensue once the DOE responds to Mrs. Kelly with necessary edits. There is often a lack of transparency on why the information trickles out from them slowly in multiple tranches.

Mr. Rosenblum and Mr. C. Greene briefly recapped the conversation with the DOE that took place this past week on the outstanding funds.

Agenda Item 6.3. Board Meeting Minutes

Mr. Rosenblum presented the March 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 Board meeting minutes for March 2022.
Mr. Dillon seconded the motion.

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

Agenda Item 6.4. Middle School Update

Mr. C. Greene opened the Middle School Update by discussing the New York State Math Exam. Mr. C. Greene noted that having the state exam right after a break will hopefully not be done in

future years. Mrs. Kelly further touched on the efforts of Atmosphere's students. A large majority of students worked as hard as they possibly could on the exam. Mrs. Kelly noted that more training on proctoring is needed for new staff in future years.

Mr. C. Greene moved on to the enrollment update. Mr. C. Greene and Mr. Rosenblum created a chart listing "Enrollees Needed", "Total Current Enrollment" and "Estimated Attendees" to show the board the current enrollment numbers, but also to demonstrate Atmosphere's goals to ensure that the maximum enrollment of 1200 is achieved for SY 2022-2023. Atmosphere's enrollment numbers are very strong at the moment, and Atmosphere hopes to continue to build them up. Mr. C. Greene further noted that it is important to enroll above your maximum enrollment now as some families rescind their seat acceptance before the school year begins.

Mr. Roman and Mr. Jenkins presented a High School Placement update. They started by showing a chart with comparative high school placement data to previous years. Mr. Roman and Mr. Jenkins provided ranges for the percentage of students that they expect to attend each type of school (Atmosphere High School, Parochial, Independent, Charter, etc.). Currently, Atmosphere has 168 8th graders that intend to enroll in Atmosphere's high school, which is very strong percentage. Mr. Roman stated that Mr. Jenkins will present at the board meeting each month through August when all scholars are placed at their chosen high schools. Mr. Jenkins noted that the public school acceptances have not yet been released, which is a major delay from previous years. The board asked about parent response to Atmosphere's high school opening. Mr. Jenkins responded that the feedback is incredibly positive – many families are excited to have their scholars continue with Atmosphere. Mr. Jenkins discussed key strategic meetings that he is holding with specialized schools in coming weeks. Mr. Jenkins also spoke about certain measures he would like to take to boost Atmosphere scholars' specialized high school admissions – prep programs, SHSAT test scores, etc.

Mrs. Kelly spoke about the Summer Rising program, which is additional funding Atmosphere could receive through Michael Bloomberg's donation to the city. All schools are eligible for this if they follow certain criteria and complete the sign up form. Atmosphere is on the fence about signing up as it would require major changes to its summer program, including the addition of a full week of instruction. Mrs. Kelly further touched on some of the pros and cons of implementing our school selected curriculum to join this program.

Mrs. Brennan went on to discuss paid partnerships with universities. Pursuing paid partnerships with universities allows Atmosphere to build pipelines for hiring teachers and ensure that they are certified in a timely manner. Mrs. Brennan touched on three different partnerships – Manhattan College, NYU and Relay. Mrs. Brennan gave some background on each program, such as student teaching requirements, and included pros and cons. NYU's program dictates how much Atmosphere pays employees, which is not something Atmosphere thinks is fair. Mrs. Brennan discussed the Relay program and how it churns out strong teachers with lots of potential. Atmosphere would hire Teaching Assistants who would then enroll in the Relay teacher certification program. These TAs would have to pay their own tuition to Relay, but it is

greatly discounted. Additionally, this allows a rookie teacher to get their foot in the door with Atmosphere and become certified at the same time. There are restrictions to the amount of hours one of these TAs can teach. Mrs. Brennan and the board discussed certain changes that may need to take place in the wording on the contract to ensure that we can move forward. Atmosphere will explore paying Relay directly to compensate staff members enrolled in this program instead of paying the staff members directly.

Mrs. Kelly and Mr. Pah presented details of the Florida trip that took place at the beginning of April. The GLA staff were extremely helpful in setting up meaningful programming for Atmosphere scholars. This program and curriculum is very closely aligned with what scholars are learning or focusing on in school.

Mr. Roman presented the New York Enrichment Group contract for approval by the board. The New York Enrichment Group will run certain enrichment programming for Atmosphere in May and June. This enrichment programming will include special curriculum and external instructors. Mr. Pah and Mr. C. Greene further went over the rates that NYEG is offering Atmosphere and the next steps that Atmosphere will take to evaluate and analyze the program once it begins. The board reviewed the terms of the contract and left the decision up to Atmosphere's officers if any additional terms need to be added.

Dr. Lagas moved to approve the NYEG contract.
Mr. J. Greene seconded the motion.

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

NYEG contract approved.

Agenda Item 6.5. High School Update

Mr. C. Greene opened the high school update by discussing Atmosphere's current hiring numbers. Mrs. Kelly spoke specifically about her department and some of the hiring issues that have arisen, including candidates requesting unrealistic salaries, and other candidates dropping out for various reasons. Mrs. Brennan went on to discuss the hiring for her department. Some staff members that were slated to continue with their middle school employment at Atmosphere will be moving to the high school. Mrs. Brennan also spoke about some of the leaders Atmosphere is hiring and bringing on board in the near future. Some of these leaders are already hired.

Agenda Item 7. Executive Session

At approximately 8:00 PM, 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.

Mr. J. Greene moved to enter Executive Session.

Mr. Dillon seconded the motion.

Vote Aye: Dr. Lagas, Mr. J. Greene, and Mr. Dillon

Vote no: None

After the discussion, at approximately 8:58 PM, the Board moved to exit executive session.

Mr. Dillon moved to exit Executive Session.

Mr. J. Greene seconded the motion.

Vote Aye: Dr. Lagas, Mr. J. Greene, and Mr. Dillon

Vote no: None

Agenda Item 8. Consent Agenda

There were no consent agenda items.

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 8:58 PM the Board moved to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. J. Greene moved to adjourn.

Mr. Dillon seconded the motion.

Vote Aye: Mr. J. Greene, Dr. Lagas, and Mr. Dillon

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Vote no: None

Meeting adjourned.