



Atmosphere academy

Atmosphere Academy Public Charter Schools Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes February 28, 2022

Atmosphere Academy Charter School
Meeting held over Zoom

Board Members Attending

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

Others in Attendance:

Mr. Peter Markey (Item 6.1 only)
Mr. Gabriel Rosenblum
Mrs. Elizabeth Kelly
Mr. Christian Roman
No other public in attendance

Agenda Item 1. Call to Order

At approximately 5:06 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 Committee's 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. Spitzer moved to approve the Board Agenda for February 2022.

Mr. J. Greene seconded the motion.

Vote Aye: Dr. Lagas, Mr. J. Greene, Mr. Spitzer 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 1/31/2022. Mr. Markey started by presenting the financial scorecard. Atmosphere expenses have tightened up in the past few months – most expenses are staying in a tight range, which is a positive trend. On a month-to-month basis, Atmosphere has had a surplus over the past few months.

Mr. Markey discussed some of the payables that Atmosphere currently is paying down. One major payment is the additional rent to the RJC. Mr. Markey also presented a statement of activities to show budgeted amounts versus actual amounts spent each month. Atmosphere's grant funding has started to be received on a more regular basis in recent weeks and months, which gives Atmosphere more flexibility to manage payables.

Mr. Spitzer, Mr. C. Greene, Mr. J. Greene and Mr. Markey further discussed the additional rent payment from DOE. A portion of this payment is still outstanding. Mr. Markey also further

discussed outstanding grant funding and the dates that he expects to receive these funds. The board discussed putting together a weekly report on cash receivable to determine if funds are coming in on-time.

The board asked about planning for the bonus in the fall. Mr. Markey said he would begin to look into this and plan for it based on current cash balance and historical data on the amount of the bonus paid.

Mr. C. Greene and Mr. Markey brought up the Form 990 that needs to be approved by the board. At some point in the next month or two, the board will have to approve the Form 990 so the auditors can file it. The board will review the form offline and vote on it in March.

Agenda Item 6.2. Board Meeting Minutes

Mr. Rosenblum presented the January 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 January 2022.
Mr. Spitzer seconded the motion.

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

Agenda Item 6.3. Middle School Update

Mr. C. Greene opened the Middle School update with a presentation on the midline exam data. Scholars took their midline exam in late January. In English Multiple Choice, the percentage of 6th and 7th grade scholars who were proficient on the exam increased from the baseline exam by 5.8% and 11.5% respectively. The percentage of 8th grade scholars who were proficient decreased from the baseline exam slightly. In English constructed response, 6th and 8th grade improved from the baseline exam in the amount of scholars who were proficient. The percentage of 7th grade scholars who were proficient decreased from the baseline exam slightly.

Mr. C. Greene went on to present a historical comparison of this year's English midline scores and scores from all previous years that Atmosphere has been in existence. In 6th and 7th grade, growth between the baseline and midline exam has not been as strong as in previous years. In 8th grade, growth was stronger this year in both the English multiple choice and English constructed response than in previous years. Each grade has different areas of growth that they will focus on in coming weeks and months to prepare for the New York State Exam.

The board asked about Mr. Greene's main areas of focus in the coming weeks and months. Atmosphere's greatest area of improvement right now is the 7th grade writing score. Mr. C. Greene briefly presented on the math scores from the midline exam. Mr. Greene referenced some of the steps that are being taken to increase scholar performance on these exams. These measures include added Achievement days, which have been very successful, ensuring fidelity to Atmosphere's systems, and calling Atmosphere's team to action to create successful plans for Achievement Days.

Mrs. Kelly spoke about Q2 grades. Atmosphere is still seeing some grade inflation from teachers. To address this, Atmosphere held a professional development session with teachers to review gradebooks and grading policies. The session was very successful, and Mrs. Kelly was able to reset expectations with teachers. Academic rigor is another area of growth for certain teachers at Atmosphere. Teachers will continue to review what rigor really means in the classroom. Atmosphere currently has a record low of Fs, which shows that there may have been a misalignment in policy among staff.

Agenda Item 6.4. High School Update

Officers have created both a 9th and 10th grade schedule for Atmosphere's high school. Mr. C. Greene discussed how some items during the day will have to be changed to accommodate the larger number of scholars in each building. Mr. Greene spoke about blocking scholars together to ensure that they can take the classes that work best for them in high school.

Mr. C. Greene went on to discuss hiring for the high school. Atmosphere is slightly behind on hiring efforts, but will continue to push forward and secure staff for next year. There is an opportunity to decrease the amount of staff based on the currently expected enrollment.

The board asked about compensation for staff and how they reacted to the positive changes that are being made (tuition reimbursement, increased raise percentage, etc.). Mrs. Kelly noted that the response has been positive – staff are excited for these changes to come to fruition.

Mr. C. Greene presented the Atmosphere High School Program slides. These slides include programs that Atmosphere will tap into to give scholars career exploration experience outside of the classroom. Atmosphere is finding programs that already exist, but will also customize programs for their students based on current offerings. Many of these programs can be leveraged to tell the story of Atmosphere's high school and to get people interested. Atmosphere will offer many different tracks for scholars to explore, such as law, medicine, engineering, aviation, etc. Some examples of these external programs are space camp, NASA internships, intro to law programs with NYU Law School, business programs with Columbia Business School, Google's Code Next program, etc.

The board discussed further opportunities that could be beneficial for Atmosphere scholars.

Agenda Item 7. Executive Session

At approximately 6:39PM, 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.
- b) the proposed acquisition, sale or lease of real property or the proposed acquisition, sale, or exchange of securities, but only when publicity would substantially affect the value.

Mr. J. Greene moved to enter Executive Session.

Mr. Dillon seconded the motion.

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

Vote no: None

After the discussion, at approximately 7:51PM, the Board moved to exit executive session.

Mr. J. Greene moved to exit Executive Session.

Dr. Lagas seconded the motion.

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

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At approximately 7:51PM the Board moved to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Dillon moved to adjourn.

Mr. J. Greene seconded the motion.

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

Vote no: None

Meeting adjourned.