



Atmosphere academy

Atmosphere Academy Public Charter Schools Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes January 26, 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. Benjamin Pah
Mr. Gabriel Rosenblum
Mrs. Katherine Brennan
Mrs. Elizabeth Kelly
No other public in attendance

Agenda Item 1. Call to Order

At approximately 5:16 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. Mr. J. Greene recapped that Atmosphere now has a process in place for collecting grants receivable and is moving along in collecting grant funds. Additional topics will be covered later in this meeting during the Finance Update.

The Middle and High School Committee topics will be 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 January 2022.

Mr. Spitzer 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 12/31/2021. Mr. Markey started by showing the financial scorecard and highlighting a few important line items – payables, revenue, etc. For the month of December, Atmosphere was profitable due to the inflow of grant funding, as mentioned above.

Mr. Markey transitioned to speak about the Atmosphere's Statement of Activities. Mr. Markey discussed some discrepancies in payments from the city, and how he is addressing those issues. Mr. Markey went on to discuss the grant receivable that Atmosphere is waiting for. Atmosphere's finance team will meet monthly on grant funding in order to ensure that issues are being resolved and funds are being received. Prior to January, Atmosphere was filing for grants every two months. After reaching out to NYSED, Atmosphere learned that they can bill on a monthly basis, something that Atmosphere will begin doing.

The board asked further about the grants and the reasoning for the sudden increase in grants receivable. Mr. Markey and Mr. C. Greene explained the reasoning behind this, including a misalignment in the grant payment process. These issues have since been resolved.

The board also discussed the \$400,000 owed to Atmosphere by the city for the lease amendment with the Riverdale Jewish Center. These funds were not paid to Atmosphere when they should have been. The issues have since been discussed with the city and are in the process of being resolved.

The board discussed the need to account for funds that are past due in our financial reporting.

Agenda Item 6.2. Board Meeting Minutes

Mr. Rosenblum presented the December 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 December 2021.
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. Rosenblum presented Atmosphere's year-to-date attendance. Mr. Rosenblum and Mr. C. Greene noted that due to the surge of the Omicron COVID-19 variant, Atmosphere's attendance percentage has regressed slightly. That said, Atmosphere is optimistic that its attendance rate will increase in the coming weeks as the Omicron COVID-19 variant becomes less prevalent. The board asked about the negative implications of attendance, and whether it impacts things like revenue. Mr. C. Greene noted that it does not impact revenue, but it is important to have a strong attendance rate for other reasons.

Mr. C. Greene presented an update on Atmosphere's English systems that students use in the classroom daily. Mr. C. Greene discussed the fact that Atmosphere is resetting scholar writing habits when it comes to the English systems that Atmosphere utilizes. The leadership team has stepped up to help ensure that students are using the English systems properly while writing passages and essays.

Mr. Pah provided an update on Atmosphere's Q1 STARS status for students. Mr. Pah noted spoke about the rewards and awards that Atmosphere scholars will receive this month.

Mrs. Brennan gave an update on Instructional Rounds. During Instructional Rounds, Atmosphere administrators focus on differentiation, checks for understanding, gradual release of responsibility, classroom management and rapport with scholars. Atmosphere is not seeing the rates of proficiency that they would like. Instructional leaders will be reviewing these narratives with teachers who were observed during rounds. Atmosphere will focus on professional development in these areas to ensure that all teachers are able to get up to speed. Mrs. Brennan also discussed results of the Student Survey. Some of the responses were very positive and worthy of praise, however, there were other items that will need to be addressed with teachers, especially around rapport with students.

Mr. C. Greene briefly shared the New York State Exam data from last year. He discussed trends across the city, including the lack of students that were tested. Compared to schools that have more than 30 students enrolled, Atmosphere's 8th graders were the 5th most proficient school in the city for math.

The Officers then presented on their Key Performance Indicators from SY 20-21. Mr. Pah presented Programs KPIs and Mrs. Brennan presented Academic KPIs. Mrs. Kelly and Mr. Rosenblum will present their KPIs at the next board meeting in the interest of time.

Agenda Item 6.4. High School Update

Mr. C. Greene kicked off the high school update by discussing a mock schedule that was created by the officers. This schedule will be populated with real teachers. Scholars will be able to take classes that suit them and their needed level of rigor.

Mr. Rosenblum and Mr. C. Greene presented application numbers for next school year. The board had a few questions related to filling 10th grade seats. Atmosphere spoke about their approach to recruiting 10th grade students and ensuring that those in the community are made aware of our school.

Mr. C. Greene also spoke about hiring. To date, Atmosphere has 16% of high school staff hired. In future board meetings, this number should increase to show that more and more staff have been hired for next school year.

Mr. C. Greene reviewed the changed to the RJC Lease Amendment that needs to be approved by the board.

Mr. J. Greene moved to approve the language change.
Dr. Lagas seconded the motion.

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

Vote no: None

Agenda Item 7. Executive Session

At approximately 6:57PM, 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. Spitzer seconded the motion.

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

Vote no: None

After the discussion, at approximately 7:13PM, 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, 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.

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Agenda Item 11. Adjournment

At approximately 7:13PM the Board moved to adjourn the meeting.

Dr. Lagas moved to adjourn.

Mr. Spitzer seconded the motion.

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

Vote no: None

Meeting adjourned.