

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Our World Neighborhood Charter School
December 17, 2013
7:00pm-9:00pm

The monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of Our World Neighborhood Charter School was held on Tuesday, December 17, 2013 at 7:00 pm at the Middle School of Our World Neighborhood Charter School (31-20 37th Street, Astoria, NY 11103).

The Trustees Present were:

Jeanette Betancourt, President
Steven Solinsky, Vice President and Treasurer
Maura Fitzgerald, Secretary
Josh Adland
Richard Bogle
Melissa Chin

Also present were:

Brian Ferguson, Executive Director
Karinne Montaque, Business Manager
Jamey Greco, Special Education Director
Marc Crusante, Development Director

Jeanette Betancourt, President of OWNCS Board of Trustees, chaired the meeting.

Board of Trustees Business - Jeanette Betancourt

- A Strategic Planning meeting has been scheduled for Sunday, January 12, 2014 at the Elementary School from 9:30 am – 1:00 pm. The meeting has been posted on the school calendar, and she asked that the Executive Director to invite members of the staff.
- The Executive Committee is preparing for the annual review of the Executive Director, using the same collaborative model used in the past. The input of the full board is being sought in advance of a meeting that has been schedule with the ED on January 30.
- Updated documents detailing Board and committee membership are due to the Charter Schools Institute. Rich Bogle was not able to be present at our annual meeting last month, but has since confirmed his willingness to chair the Facilities Committee.

Director's Report - Brian Ferguson

- December will be a very busy month at the school. The Winter Arts concert had to be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances, but the Middle School students will still have the opportunity to perform for the Elementary School students instead.
- Our sports programs continue to experience success. Both the co-ed flag football and volleyball teams won championships and the basketball season is off to a great start, winning both of their

initial games. We have heard that some of our alumni who are currently in high school are getting scouted for pro teams.

- There have been a couple of incidents of parents modeling inappropriate behavior in front of students: one pushed a teacher out of the way to enter the school during dismissal because she was double parked and in a hurry; another yelled at a staff member who was following protocol by stopping a parent to ask for identification before allowing him to enter the school. The Board wholeheartedly agreed that the dismissal procedures and rules about entering the school are in place to protect students, and approved his suggestion of reinforcing messages about student safety, especially in light of yet another school shooting.
- OWNCS has been selected for field testing of online state tests. Students in grades 5 and 6 will take practice tests at different points in the school year. This experience will help the school learn what's needed to prepare our students for the future of online testing. In the meantime, the school has been assessing our students' online readiness, and they have tested above the national norm. We have also surveyed internet access at home for 6th and 8th graders, and have found that most do have access. The tech department is reviewing and further analyzing the results with the intention of bringing them to the Education Committee to develop a plan of action. For instance, 100% of the students displayed mastery of required "drag and drop" actions, but we know we will need to work on touch typing skills so students can write essays using a computer keyboard.

Facilities Committee Report - Brian Ferguson

- The school is moving ahead with a straightforward lease renewal for the Elementary School building. It is a five year extension through from September 30 2015-2020 that will spell out the exact rent in lieu of annual cost of living increase which will allow for better planning.
- Without an expansion, we will need to find other ways to fulfill educational needs such as a science lab.
- The school has completed filings with the buildings department required to proceed with replacing a broken heater at the Elementary School over the holidays. The affected classrooms have been making due with space heaters in the meantime, but they are competing with the classroom computers for available current.

Education Committee Report - Melissa Chin

- The Committee reviewed the film component of our lease requirement in the Elementary School, in the hopes of formalizing our existing program and completing a film curriculum across the school, which is expected to include the addition of one more certified teacher. Mr. Ferguson has set up a meeting with a specialist to seek advice. The Board also discussed whether there could be fundraising opportunities associated with our film curriculum, and possibly for our physical education program as well.

Development Committee Report - Josh Adland

- Funds from the 21st Century Learning Center award have not yet been disbursed, but we have received assurances that we will receive funding for activities dating back to the official start date of July 1. This is a three year award with a possibility of renewal. Due to the timing of the announcement of the award none of the schools were able to start activities promptly, but the

donor has acknowledged that they are behind and the school is not at fault. Nonetheless, we still need to meet the program objectives by the end of year three. Our in-house team is working on realigning the work plan accordingly. In the meantime, OWNCS Business Manager, Karinne Montaque has attended training and is providing required documentation.

- The school has received a federal grant for physical education as part of a consortium led by the Renaissance Charter School that will help us enhance current efforts (such as Move to Improve; and Walk/Bike to work) to increase physical activity amongst our student population. The Carol M. White Physical Education Program is aligned with and supports First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! Initiatives, and will provide the school with \$38K for equipment and \$60K in discretionary funding.
- The school is assessing whether or not to pursue a state and/or federal dissemination grant that are expected to be announced. The administration is speaking to potential partners ahead of time. Options include non-charters and schools in upstate NY. Our prior experience with a dissemination grant was time consuming and disappointing, but there is still some hope that participating could have intangible benefits for the school, combined with interest in supporting the concept that charter schools can be incubators, and in fostering an exchange of ideas with other educators.
- School representatives attended an event at Kaufman Astoria studios, and the development office is setting up a VIP breakfast to include local political representatives. The school received \$7500 in discretionary City Council funding 3 years ago and has received indications that an application for further funding would be well received.
- The Committee has been discussing the addition of a new staff position to aid with grants compliance, record-keeping and data collection and analysis. They have been conducting some due diligence about the nature of this role at other schools. The Board was supportive of the concept and noted that the PICCs grant required a full time staff member for data collection and analysis. It was also suggested that a new position might support the development department by creating infographics and other compelling ways to represent data.

Finance & Audit Committee Report - Steven Solinsky

Mid-year Budget Revision

A mid-year revision has been prepared for submission to the Charter Schools Institute as an update, and was circulated to the board for review. Changes to highlight include the following details:

- As anticipated, there are changes to income and expenses to reflect the 21st Century Learning Center award. A detailed summary was provided that showed that some grant monies could be allocated to previously budgeted expenses, resulting in a savings of about \$78,000.
- Year-to-date salaries are lower than projected, but have been offset by other expenses such as contracted services (substitute teachers).
- The Middle School rent costs have increased per the terms of our new lease.
- The updated budget reflects the decision last summer to postpone some capital expenditures and buy fewer computers this year. This resulted in lower depreciation costs and a reduction of the projected deficit by \$55K to \$21K.

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the Trustees:
RESOLVED to approve the revised mid-year budget.

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the Trustees:
RESOLVED to approve the August and September, 2013 meeting minutes, as presented.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:
Maura Fitzgerald, Secretary, OWNCS Board of Trustees