

Board of Trustees Meeting  
Tuesday, March 24, 2015  
Our World Neighborhood Charter School  
Elementary School  
36-12 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Astoria, NY 11106  
7:00 – 9:00

**The Trustees present were:**

Jeanette Betancourt, President  
Maura Fitzgerald, Secretary  
Rich Bogle  
Melissa Chin  
Sarah Espanol

**Also present were:**

Brian Ferguson, Executive Director  
Karinne Montaque, Business Manager  
Yvette Strachan, Executive Assistant  
Jamey Greco, Special Education Director  
Olubunmi Emigli, PTO Co-Chair

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

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***Board Business***

***Jeanette Betancourt***

Ms. Betancourt reminded the board that the Strategic Planning meeting has been rescheduled to April 25 at 9:00 am at the Elementary School. The primary topics to be discussed will be: Facilities; Development; Future Charter renewal.

***Director's Report***

***Brian Ferguson***

***Athletics Program***

Mr. Ferguson shared the news that the girls' basketball team won the Division Championships. He said that the team experienced taunting by parents of other teams throughout the season that was so noticeable that the referees got involved to get the fans in order. In contrast, he was pleased to report that our PE program and our coach have made a concerted effort to focus on both skills and sportsmanship, and that our students are well-coached on how to gracefully win and lose.

### *2015-2016 School Year*

Mr. Ferguson informed the Board that the academic calendar next year will incorporate two Muslim holidays for the first time. The administration is working out the details of a calendar that will closely track the DOE calendar, but with an early start.

He also noted that the school has a perpetual internal calendar that includes some fixed points such as SPED/ESL reporting dates, and the preparation leading up to those reports, and discretionary items such as Black History Month, and the exact timing of Quarters and mid-terms, which, so far, have been scheduled to accommodate the 8<sup>th</sup> grade high school application process. Going forward, he would like to incorporate Business Office deadlines into the calendar as well, so others at the school can anticipate the need to contribute their part in a timely way. The draft will go to the Education Committee for review before being submitted to the full board, and he will be asking the Committee for input on the discretionary elements.

### *Technology*

Mr. Ferguson reported that he has initiated discussions with his senior team to assess and share learning about current technology initiatives and to think about how we want to develop them in the future. In addition to analyzing the ease and frequency of technology integration and our infrastructure/equipment, they will be examining the connection to foundational STEM instruction at the Elementary School and a possible expansion into “STEAM,” incorporating the arts and project based learning into the curriculum, and how to connect this with our annual Middle School Science Fair to create a richer more integrated curriculum. Mr. Ferguson has also been exploring Blended Learning at conferences: what it is; what should it look like; and how to implement it, and has brought this topic into discussions with the team. They may recommend working with a consultant to review possible curriculum shifts and/or engage in a partnership of some sort – always keeping in mind that any changes we undertake must be sustainable.

### ***Joint Finance & Administration / Audit Committee Report***

#### ***Karinne Montaque and Maura Fitzgerald***

Ms. Montaque reported that an A133 audit had been completed, and there were no findings or deficiencies found. The audit report has been circulated for filing on March 31. The Audit Committee will meet to review the audit with the auditors in advance of the filing date. Ms. Montaque also reported that the draft 990 is almost ready and will be distributed to the full board for review, as required.

Ms. Montaque went on to review the highlights of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Financial Report that was previously reviewed in more detail by the Finance & Administration Committee, focusing on reasons for any significant variances which are also referenced in the Committee minutes, as well as the school’s strong cash position.

On a different topic, Ms. Montaque reminded the Board that the school moved away from a co-employment relationship with a Professional Employer Organization (“PEO”) a few years ago to save money. This naturally resulted in a greater work load in regards to Human Resources for

the staff at OWN, but we did not add staff at that time. Since then, the Business Office and HR have assumed more responsibility for grants management along with HR management of staff allocated to new grants the school has received as well. As a result, they are finding that the staffing levels may not be adequate and they have begun to consider whether it might make more sense to return to a co-employment model. They are arranging meetings with several PEOs in the hopes of identifying savings opportunities by participating in a larger health insurance group while also easing the HR compliance workload.

Ms. Fitzgerald also reported that they have established a regular monthly schedule of meetings, and that Mr. Guadagnolo is continuing conversations with Ms. Montaque regarding the facilities financial model.

***Development Committee***  
***Jeanette Betancourt***

There will be an A133 visit to our federally funded after school program tomorrow. Ms. Betancourt reminded the Board that there is some risk that funding for this program will be cut from the federal budget in the coming fiscal year, therefore the school is exploring alternate funding to fill in the gaps but is unlikely to cover the entire amount. Our ability to offer after-school remediation programs was broadened by the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning grant, and we may have to scale back. The NY Junior Tennis League after school program at the Elementary School, which also receives some 21<sup>st</sup> Century funding, may also be impacted, though it is primarily funded by the city. She projected that funding for our middle school after-school program is unlikely to survive this year's budget process.

The Committee and the development department are exploring a variety of grant opportunities though each presents a unique challenge: some are shared grants that would require us to seek grants with potential affiliates; and we may not have the space for others such as an American Heart Association grant for an outdoor garden.

The Committee would like to review our current fundraising strategy, identify roadblocks and ways of working more effectively, and determine the best way to tie in to our strategic plan priorities. They recommend we engage in much more overt, specific planning. Mr. Bogle, the chair of the Facilities Committee added that we should find the through line between our facilities needs and the fundraising and development goals.

***PTO***  
***Olubunmi Emigli***

- The foreign language department gave presentations that were really appreciated by the parents
- Annual elections are coming up shortly, and Ms. Emigli's term is coming to an end. She is likely to join the Executive Committee and will continue as the parent coordinator for the Urban Advantage program at the Middle School.

- The PTO is hosting a K-2 Family Fun craft day on April 18 as a community building event.
- The PTO is selling tickets for a Mets game on April 19. Our block of tickets is at field level, and attendees will be allowed to run the bases. They sold 350 tickets in less than a week and have bought another 100.
- A school-wide Read-a-thon fundraiser is being planned with proceeds to go to fund the PE program and the library. During the Read-a-thon authors will be invited to speak.
- The Free Art Saturdays are coming to a close. One of the highlights of the program was when a Marvel illustrator came to talk about the history of comic books. A follow-up program will offer a free drama program for K-2 students.
- The PTO made a contribution to cover the costs of producing the annual Black History Show, which was the “best one yet!” It was led by the Arts department including Film, Music and Art.

### ***Resolutions***

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the Trustees:

**RESOLVED** to approve the unaudited financial report for the quarter ending December 31, 2014, as presented.

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the Trustees:

**RESOLVED** to approve the bank reconciliations for October, November, December 2014, per the recommendation of the Finance Committee.

Respectfully submitted by:

Maura Fitzgerald, Secretary, OWNCS Board of Trustees