

Board of Trustees Meeting  
Tuesday, October 27, 2015  
Our World Neighborhood Charter School  
Elementary School  
36-12 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Astoria, NY 11106  
7:00 pm

**The Trustees present were:**

Melissa Chin, Vice President  
Charles Gaudagnolo, Treasurer  
Maura Fitzgerald, Secretary  
Rich Bogle  
Olubunmi Emigli  
Sarah Espanol

**Also present were:**

Brian Ferguson, Executive Director  
Karrine Montaque, Business Manager  
Jamey Greco, Special Education Director  
Mark Crusante, Director of Development  
Lucille Ranchor, Admissions  
Tabitha Daye, Elementary School Secretary  
Anna Evenhouse, PTO Co-Chair  
Nicole Cuttino, Lawyers Alliance

Melissa Chin, Vice President of OWNCS Board of Trustees, chaired the meeting.

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***Director's Report***

***Brian Ferguson***

*Upcoming Events & Recent Accomplishments*

Mr. Ferguson thanked the volunteers from NY Cares who did painting projects in both the Elementary and Middle school buildings including murals and designs in the multi-purpose rooms, hallways and stairwells which incorporated elements tied to the Pillars of a Positive Community and to the curriculum.

He informed the Board that the PowerSchool program that has been in use at the Middle School for several years to access student grades has been introduced to the Elementary School. He was pleased to report that the Middle School sports program is doing well and that our flag football and volleyball teams are having winning seasons.

He went on to bring our attention to a new announcement by Education Secretary, Arne Duncan, encouraging a better balance between testing and teaching, which ties to ongoing conversations that we are already engaged in at OWNCS.

### *Audits*

Mr. Ferguson reported that the school lunch audit was more complex than usual this year but that it is close to wrapping up.

### *Enrollment and Admissions*

Mr. Ferguson informed the Board that the school has experienced an unprecedented drop in enrollment across grade levels due to families moving out of state and even out of the country. He said we lost two families including five students just today, bringing our total to 70 students. This prompted a robust discussion about the proactive measures that are being taken to bring our enrollment numbers up, which in turn generated a few new ideas. However, it was noted that families are often reluctant to move their children once the school year is under way. Therefore, we will continue to analyze whether we should accept more students at the outset each year to anticipate attrition, recognizing that it's hard to know whether this year is an exception to the rule, or whether it may signal the new normal pattern of a very mobile population moving from NYC to less expensive locations.

### *Presentation by Lawyer's Alliance*

#### *Nicole Cuttino*

Pursuant to the Board's decision at the Strategic Planning Meeting on October 3, to submit a proposal to SUNY CSI to replicate OWNCS, Mr. Ferguson arranged for a presentation by an attorney from the Lawyer's Alliance who is expert in NY State Charter School law to explain the pros and cons of the different legal structures available to us to govern a new school so that we can eventually make a well-informed decision. Over the course of an hour, Ms. Cuttino gave a detailed presentation, answered numerous questions from the Board, and also reviewed the new regulations regarding rental assistance for new charter schools.

### *Audit Committee*

#### *Maura Fitzgerald and Karrine Montaque*

Ms. Montaque and Ms. Fitzgerald informed the attendees that the Audit Committee met with the Auditors on October 21, and they were pleased to report that we had once again received a clean audit. All the numbers were as expected per the year-end financial statements. A final report is pending and will be distributed to the Board. Ms. Montaque went on to note that there will be management comments noting the considerable investment in construction-in-progress on our books, but the Committee informed the auditors that the Board and administration are fully aware of the situation and have made a decision to move forward full throttle to bring our building project to fruition.

### *Finance & Administration Committee*

#### *Charles Guadagnolo and Karrine Montaque*

Ms. Montaque reported that the business office is continuing work to identify savings for the coming year with a particular focus on benefits plans. They are analyzing whether it

would be more cost effective to return to a PEO (Professional Employer Organization) model, and whether changing medical insurance carriers would be disruptive to our staff. A selection committee has also evaluated alternative 401(k) plan providers and has selected TransAmerica to replace ADP who has provided very poor service.

***Education Committee***

***Melissa Chin***

This committee reports that it has reviewed and updated its schedule of topics for the coming year.

***Development Committee***

***Mark Crusante***

Mr. Crusante reported that he is working with OWN alumni attending the High School for Careers in Film and Television to revamp our marketing video. He will seek guidance from the committee regarding the audience and purpose of the film. Mr. Crusante also stated that he will have a preliminary meeting with a new foundation on November 12 and that he's looking into options with two other foundations, and is beginning to review alternatives for after-school funding should our 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Center grant not be renewed.

The Board and administration also discussed and agreed upon the need to communicate effectively with our school community about plans to replicate the success of OWN in another district in Queens.

***PTO***

***Anna Evenhouse***

Ms. Evenhouse reminded the attendees about the upcoming auction and said they are in need of donated items. She stated that Spirit Week was fantastic and buckets of coins were collected. The PTO is pleased to have given an \$800 check to Coach Brown for team uniforms. Registration for the November 2 Read-a-thon continues.

Respectfully submitted by:

Maura Fitzgerald, Secretary, OWNCS Board of Trustees