

Board of Trustees Meeting  
Tuesday, May 24, 2016  
Our World Neighborhood Charter School  
Middle School  
31-20 37th Street, Astoria, NY 11106  
7:00 pm

**The Trustees present were:**

Jeanette Betancourt, President  
Charles Guadagnolo, Treasurer  
Maura Fitzgerald, Secretary  
Manu Bhagavan  
Rich Bogle  
Olubunmi Emigli

**Also present were:**

Brian Ferguson, Executive Director  
Lisa Edmiston, Principal  
LaToiya Revell, Vice Principal  
Yvette Strachan, Executive Assistant  
Anna Evenhouse, 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 June meeting is particularly important because we need to complete our review of the budget in time for the start of the new fiscal year. She thanked all those who attended the Strategic Planning meeting the previous Saturday and for the progress made on tackling key issues regarding facilities, financial planning, our current school, and potential new school. She proposed that we circulate dates early for our next meeting in November so that we block out the dates.

***Director's Report***

***Brian Ferguson***

***Review of Policies***

Mr. Ferguson circulated copies of the Code of Ethics, Conflict of Interest, Whistleblower and Disclosure of Financial Interest policies, along with an Annual Acknowledgement of Review and Receipt of the policies and Conflict of Interest forms for the members of the Board to complete. The attendees reviewed and discussed what types of conflicts need to be declared.

### *Safety*

Mr. Ferguson reported that water testing had been completed at both buildings and the results for both were well below the thresholds. He explained that mold testing is conducted annually, and that he has asked for an updated testing of asbestos levels. Once all results are received he will circulate results to the school community.

Mr. Ferguson described a recent incident at “Bear Park” a few blocks from the Elementary School. He said that the mother of a toddler was upset about the behavior of some of our students when they were playing at the park during school hours. There are very different reports about the exact nature of the interactions with our students, but it appears that four to five students were pushed or jostled by the mother who felt she needed to protect her child. No one was hurt, but the police were called, the students were all sent to the school nurse, and the Vice Principal contacted each family. As a result of this incident, the administration has decided that the school will no longer make use of this public park. Instead they will make inquiries into using the park space at the Arrow Community Center.

Mr. Ferguson also described a recent incident at the Middle School. Three students were observed to be acting erratically and confessed to taking prescription drugs that were not their own. They had fast heart rates and were not feeling well so were taken to the Emergency Room, and their parents were called. The administration has followed up with corrective action and conversations with the families to help them address the problem. Since there are many stories circulating, Mr. Ferguson plans to send a letter that explains what happened and how the school responded while also protecting the privacy of the individual students.

### *FY17 School Calendar*

Mr. Ferguson finalized the school calendar. As mentioned last month, in addition to starting earlier than DOE schools, OWN will forgo two holidays that the DOE has granted in order to reach the required 190 instructional days next year. The two holidays, Chinese New Year, and the second day of Rosh Hashanah were selected to have the least impact on our population. The Board of Trustees calendar has also been posted

### *Staffing for 2016-2017*

Mr. Ferguson noted that the personnel budget for the coming school year will include three new teaching positions for the co-teaching teams to be piloted at three grade levels.

### *Preparation of 2015-2015 Annual Report*

In light of the fact that we need to prepare both an annual report and charter renewal application in the first few months of the new fiscal year, Mr. Ferguson has decided to hire the consultant who worked on the replication application to assist him in drafting the documents. The Board strongly supported this decision.

### ***Finance & Administration Committee***

#### ***Charles Guadagnolo***

Mr. Guadagnolo reported on the Committee's formal review of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter financials which were in good order, and which informed the development of the mid-year budget revision which was previously approved by the Board. He also noted that the Committee had reviewed the draft budget for the coming fiscal year which he said was very encouraging since it was balanced and even included a surplus, due to recent cost savings and an increase in per pupil income. The Committee was pleased to point out that the budget included a reasonable salary increase for administrative staff following several years of small (1%) increments.

Risk management is among the next agenda items for the Committee, and will include a review of insurance coverage and HR policies.

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

**RESOLVED** to approve the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Financial report and the bank reconciliations for the months of October, November and December, 2015 per the recommendation of the Finance & Administration Committee.

### ***Facilities Committee***

#### ***Rich Bogle***

Mr. Bogle commented that there was nothing new to discuss since we had already covered this subject in great detail at the Strategic Planning Meeting a few days earlier. He said we are still waiting on a response from the EDC to learn whether they are open to our proposed building project and Brian added that he had posed the legal questions that arose at the meeting to our counsel.

### ***Education Committee***

#### ***Sarah Espanol***

Ms. Espanol gave a summary of the presentation made to the Committee by Ms. Rosello of the new Elementary School Social Studies and Science curricula. (The Board can see the full presentation on their Google Drive). The curricula were designed to integrate literacy and the Pillars of a Positive Community (school culture) into and across all subjects, and to explore the parallels between historical events to the present day. This cross-disciplinary approach, which has been critical to the success of our students over the years, is being further enhanced, while simultaneously taking into account the shifting testing landscape, and emerging standards and frameworks emanating from different sources (i.e. Next Generation Science Standards, and the NYC frameworks in anticipation of possible state level shifts to accommodate the Next Generation standards). It also corresponds to the demands of the Common Core standards where analysis of real historical documents and scientific texts are part of the ELA testing standards.

***PTO***

***Anna Evenhouse***

The Annual MultiCultural Day organized by PTO Co-Chair Una Studdert and Board Members Olubunni Emigli and Sarah Espanol was reported to be a huge success.

The PTO will work once again with local book store Story Nook to host book fairs at the Elementary and Middle schools with the support of parent volunteers to do the selling. All the attendees agreed that it's very important to support a local independent bookstore, and they're pleased that a new arrangement could be worked out.

The last meeting of the PTO and annual elections will be on June 3. Ms. Studdert will be stepping down as PTO Co-Chair but the PTO is seeing new people stepping up to volunteer for positions on the Board and as event organizers. The last PTO event of the year will be a June 9 orientation for new Kindergarten parents, and they are already planning a welcome picnic just before the start of the new school year.

Respectfully submitted by:

Maura Fitzgerald, Secretary, OWNCS Board of Trustees