

MEETING MINUTES
OF
CATALYST ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL
Held
July 7, 2020
Remotely via Zoom

Trustee Attendees: Rachel Amankulor, George Childs, Carl Cooper, Erin Stilling, Dr. Gretchen Generett, Bob Jones, Allison McCarthy (joined at 7:23 PM, after voting)
Excused: Tom Walenchok, Carey Harris

Other Attendees: Brian Smith, Darren Gray, Jean Novak (Strassburger McKenna Gutnick & Gefsky)

The meeting convened at 6:09 PM.

The Board reviewed a policy regarding rules for public speakers at board meetings. Gretchen Generett moved to approve. George Childs seconded. The Board approved by unanimous vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Carl Cooper moved to approve the minutes of the June 2, 2020 meeting. Erin Stilling seconded. The Board approved unanimously.

POLICY ADOPTIONS

Brian Smith discussed the draft policies (a list of which appears below) in general. He explained origin of policies relative to other schools and best practices. Of note, Mr. Smith explained that although there is a visitation policy, he expects in the short-term, visitation will be limited due to current health concerns.

After initial discussion, the following policies were moved (by Carl Cooper; seconded by George Childs) for approval:

Allowability of Cost Policy
Anti-Discrimination Policy
Behavior Support Policy
Child Abuse Detection and Response Policy Discussion
Clearance Policy for Volunteers
Conflict of Interest Policy
Document Retention Policy
EEO Statement
Food Allergy Management Policy
Homeless Student Policy
Medication Administration Policy
Nondiscrimination of Transgender Students Policy
Parent Involvement Policy
Return to Work Program
Sexual Harassment of Employees Policy
Student Truancy Elimination Plan
Title I Complaint Resolution Procedures
Travel Reimbursement Policy
Visitation Policy

Wellness Policy

Another call for discussion was made to ensure that the Board members had read the policies and understood that they were voting to approve all of the policies as presented. The vote to approve all of the policies was unanimous.

PRINCIPAL

The Board reviewed a resolution naming Darren T. Gray as principal for 2020-21 school year. Mr. Smith discussed Darren's qualifications. Erin Stilling moved to approve. George Childs seconded. The vote to name Darren Gray as principal was unanimous.

FINANCIAL-FUNDRAISING

Charter School Capital (CSC) – Accounts receivable sale agreements (resolutions)

Mr. Smith explained CSC and cash flow management for the school. He stated that by selling "future receivables" (i.e., anticipated tuition), CSC would provide financing (i.e., cash) for the school. The sale agreements set up structure and authorization for selling the receivables. Mr. Smith clarified that student tuition varies by school districts; also, students requiring special education receive additional funding. Those issues are accounted for in determining receivables.

Therefore, upon motion duly made by George Childs, seconded by Carl Cooper and unanimously approved by the voting members (Rachel Amankulor, George Childs, Carl Cooper, Erin Stilling, Dr. Gretchen Generett, and Bob Jones all voting "Aye." No members voting "Nay." No members abstaining, and three members absent at the time of voting: Allison McCarthy, Tom Walenchok, and Carey Harris), the resolutions attached to these minutes, incorporated herein by reference, are hereby adopted by the Board.

Ed-Ops contracts- Accounting & Finance, Data Services, & HR Support

Mr. Smith explained that the Ed-Ops proposed contracts covering three different components: accounting/finance, data and HR support. This matter came before the Board to add HR Support. The school budgeted \$100,000 for Ed-Ops. Accounting/finance is \$60,000; data is \$30,000. HR support would be added at an hourly rate, but Mr. Smith believes the school could keep the expense to \$10,000; thus, keeping the total contract cost to \$100,000. Payroll is included in the accounting/finance portion. The data portion includes compiling student data for the information system, Powerschool. The data would be used (among other things) for preparing assessments, analysis, etc., for reports to the Board. Also, it can be used for report cards. The services (three components) were presented as package. Motion to approve was made by George Childs, seconded by Bob Jones. The vote to approve was unanimous.

Jounce Contract – Instructional leadership team support

Mr. Smith explained that the Jounce Contract covers coaching and development for instructional leaders, at this time Darren and, Laura. Mr. Smith explained that Jounce can help with COVID-19 classroom and teaching planning. The current amount is \$26,000, although the actual amount will depend on travel, which is currently included. If there is no travel, the cost will be less. This contract was part of the federal grant request for coaching and development. The federal grant amount was \$30,000; so, this contract is fully covered by federal grant funds. Motion to approve was made by George Childs; seconded by Erin Stilling. The vote to approve was unanimous.

HANDBOOK ADOPTIONS

Employee handbook

The Employee Handbook and Family/Scholar Handbook were discussed together. Mr. Smith explained that both handbooks are "living documents." They will change over time and come back to Board. They have been changed (made "tighter") from originals, but they will require additional review and modification. In the meantime, it is important to have something in place as the school opening is close. George Childs moved for the approval of the Employee Handbook. Gretchen Generett seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve.

Regarding the Family/Scholar handbook, the Board discussed consequences for parents and students being non-compliant with the rules, for example, uniform rules. According to Mr. Smith, there are methods of dealing with some issues (e.g., extra uniforms at the school, requiring parents to bring the proper uniform to the student), but he acknowledged the limitations of some those consequences. He noted that parents will be required to sign an acknowledgment of handbook, which will be distributed to parents before the start of school. The handbook will be part of secondary package to parents. Carl Cooper moved to approve the Family/Scholar handbook. Gretchen Generett seconded, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.

COVID-19 PLAN (UPDATE) APPROVAL

Mr. Smith presented the updated COVID-19 Plan. This was a new template, which generally contained the same information as the prior plan. Mr. Smith also explained broadly the changes in protocols and screening. Specifically, he explained some major points such as ventilation, cleaning, and small classroom cohorts of 18 to limit exposure and promote social distancing. The staff will wear masks or shields. Students will be encouraged to wear face masks on bus. There may be different (more relaxed) mask (or, alternatively, shield) requirements for students in the school. The plan is to be submitted to state, but there is no need to get state approval. Mr. Smith needs to get the plan recommendations to parents, but due to evolving state guidelines, he may come back to Board with updates. George Childs moved to approve the plan. Carl Cooper seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve.

HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT APPROVAL

Mr. Smith discussed new hires including Malisha Scott in the front office. Six teachers have accepted offers of employment. Several positions are still open; therefore, recruiting efforts are being expanded. Erin Stilling moved to approve the report. George Childs seconded. The report was approved unanimously.

FINANCE REPORT

APPROVAL OF PAYMENT OF BILLS

Mr. Smith explained why bill payments must be approved and explained how process will work going forward. He noted the challenges related to meetings occurring early in the month. Therefore, approval will be "backward looking" because the prior month's books won't be closed before the Board meeting. Mr. Smith noted that, regarding income statement items, there was a positive variance regarding grants but expenses, particularly legal (due to the facility negotiations) and marketing, were higher than budgeted. Those bills, however, are still in the prior fiscal year. The new fiscal year started July 1. Motion to approve was made by Gretchen Generett; seconded by George Childs. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

OTHER UPDATES

- a. Facilities – Mr. Smith provided an update on the school. Demolition has started in advance of the bank closing, which is scheduled for Monday, July 13, 2020. Mr. Smith provided an update on progress for various parts of the building. Erin Stilling suggested having a list of emergency contacts for things such as plumbing, electrical emergencies. Mr. Smith has been working on that.
- b. Enrollment – Per the COVID-19 plan regarding the limited cohort size, there could be an additional classroom upstairs if enrollment requires. There is a need to consider how parent visits will be accomplished given the current health situation. One idea was a video feed from classrooms to another room in school. Regarding actual enrollment, current interest is about 105 families. There have been some issues with few families regarding proof of residency. About 50 families have completed sets of paperwork. The Board talked about possible strategies/plans to increase enrollment. Offering full day, which is different from what other schools may offer, may be attractive to families.
- c. Recruiting/Staffing – Mr. Gray reported that the pipeline for applicants has expanded through websites such as Indeed. The interview process has been truncated as the school gets close to opening. He is seeing more opt outs as candidates recognize they may not be good fit. He also reported that basecamp for the leadership team started yesterday and includes in-person training, which is going well.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:43 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

s/Jean E. Novak, Counsel