

**Wissahickon Charter School (WCS)
Board of Trustees Meeting
September 20, 2016 6:35-7:42pm**

**Wissahickon Charter School Awbury Campus (Conference Room)
815 E Washington Lane Philadelphia, PA 19138**

Board Members Present: Richard Binswanger, Fran Bradley, Ebiho Ahonkhai (phone), Martin (Marty) Millner, Ellen Lutz (phone), Justin Wheeler

Board Members Absent: Justin DiBerardinis, Rev. Charles Rice, Rosemary Barbera

Staff Present: Jamal Elliott (COO), Allie DiTucci (Development Associate)

Staff Absent: Kristi Littell (CEO)

Guests Present: Mike Whisman (Charter Choices), Frank Chism (Fernhill parent), Angela Farranda (Fernhill parent)

Board Chair called the meeting to order at 6:35pm.

Financials Update (Mike, Charter Choices)

Mike presented on WCS's financials for the month ending August 31, 2016. It is a busy time for WCS financial services (Charter Choices) due to the ongoing audit. Mike will provide a draft of the report for the audit at the next Board meeting. Mike reported that there were no substantial changes to the numbers since the beginning of the fiscal year.

Mike reminded the Board that the District is paying WCS based on last school year's enrollment (903 students as opposed to our current enrollment of 960 students). This discrepancy will be rectified in October and/or November when the District will retroactively pay us for these additional 57 students.

Mike may propose a revised budget at the October Board Meeting to reflect new fundraising since the start of the current fiscal year.

Richard moved that we approve expenses, and Justin seconded the motion.

Approval of Meeting Minutes (Fran, Board Chair)

The May 2016 Meeting minutes were approved unanimously. Motion to approve was led by Richard and seconded by Marty.

The August 2016 Board Retreat minutes were approved unanimously. Motion to approve was led by Marty and seconded by Justin.

Mt. Airy Transit Village (MATV) Update (Jamal, COO)

MATV owns the Awbury campus land and building. An issue has come up around real estate taxes and MATV's tax exemption status and a lien was put on the property. We therefore need to prove to the tax board that MATV is a nonprofit and deserves tax exemption. There is a court hearing for MATV on December 22nd, but Jamal hopes that this issue will be resolved before then. If MATV isn't granted tax exemption status, MATV will have to make up the funds to pay the taxes because WCS will not provide them. Marty asked what precipitated this issue, and Jamal clarified that the issue arose, in part, due to the fact that the Awbury site used to consist of two addresses (815 and 825 E Washington Ln).

Start of School Update (Jamal, COO)

Jamal reports that the start of the school year has been smooth, with the only major exception being the school buses. The school district gets our student information from the school computer network to make route sheets. Due to the persistent issues, our administrative staff have had to recreate the routes with the bus company. The problems have been more severe at Fernhill, where a much larger proportion of students ride the bus. Parents have largely been extremely supportive and patient, and the school has tried to communicate frequently and clearly about efforts to remedy the situation.

Jamal also notes that at Fernhill in grades 3-5, five of the six teachers are new to WCS this year. These new teachers seem to be adjusting well.

The Awbury campus is fully enrolled for the first time. At Fernhill, there are five slots to fill from the waitlist.

Personnel Update (Jamal, COO)

All full-time faculty are hired except for the Fernhill librarian. The long-term substitute (who was hired to be the Library Assistant) has been doing well, and will be asked to take on the permanent librarian position.

There are five openings for part-time Assistant Teachers (three at Fernhill and two at Awbury). There is one opening for a Behavioral Support Team member. There is one administrative assistant position open at Fernhill. There are two part-time openings for Middle School administrative support. We are still actively searching to fill these roles.

For classes that don't have Assistant Teachers, we have been filling in with other classroom support staff. It has become more difficult to fill Assistant Teacher positions in recent years because they require a high quality applicant, but the rate of pay is not competitive. This part of the staffing model may need to be revised.

Charter Renewal Update (Jamal, COO)

All required documents for the charter renewal process were submitted by August 31st. The site visit (to both Fernhill and Awbury campuses) will take place October 18th. Jamal reports that there is no reason for us to believe that our charter will not be renewed, though there are some political challenges facing charter schools in general.

Evaluation Follow-up (Fran, Board Chair)

Fran reports on the ongoing evaluation of the school through survey and individual conversations. There has been largely positive feedback, particularly for the leadership demonstrated by the CEO and COO.

Fran, Kristi, Jamal, Justin, and Justin propose that an external consultant be hired in October or November to assess areas such as staff structure, management, and decision-making. The consultant will be selected by a Board committee. The committee will also determine which specific areas the consultant will pursue for assessment and coaching.

Before the launch of the consultant committee, Fran will meet with a team of school leaders to identify any areas they think need special attention from the consultant.

The Board Meeting was adjourned at 7:42pm and the Board of Trustees entered a closed session to discuss a confidential development update, as allowable by PA State Sunshine Laws.

Action Items

- Board members will indicate which board members and senior staff on the "Prospective Foundation Relationship Table" they know so that we can strengthen our relationships with these prospective grant-making groups.
- Consultant Committee will be formed and will begin the selection process for a consultant.

Handouts that were distributed are attached.

- 2016-2017 Board Expectations
- 2016-2017 Prospective Foundation Relationship Table
- Board Meeting Minutes 5/17/2016
- Board Retreat Minutes 8/1/2016