

Wissahickon Charter School (WCS)
Board of Trustees Meeting
October 18, 2016 6:38pm - 8:28pm

Wissahickon Charter School Fernhill Campus (Library)
4700 G Wissahickon Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19144

Board Members Present: Richard Binswanger, Fran Bradley, Rosemary Barbera, Justin Wheeler, Justin DiBerardinis, Charles Rice

Board Members Absent: Ellen Lutz, Ebiho Ahonkhai, Martin Millner

Staff Present: Kristi Littell (CEO), Jamal Elliott (COO), Anne Pennington Wang (Development Director), Allie DiTucci (Development Associate)

Board chair called the meeting to order at 6:38pm.

Approval of Meeting Minutes (Fran, Board Chair)

The September 2016 Meeting Minutes were approved unanimously. Motion to approve was led by Fran and seconded by Richard.

Financials Update (Justin W., Treasurer)

Justin presented on financials for the month ending September 30, 2016. There has been a delay in receiving federal funds due to change in name of our bank. Despite this minor setback, we have a sufficient cash balance on hand. We are still using the Board approved budget, but the Finance Committee is working to develop a revised budget, to be presented at the November Board Meeting. We are already at budget for Special Education. The auditors have completed their fieldwork and we are pressing for a draft of report by end of October so that we can close the audit.

The September 2016 expenditures were approved unanimously. Motion to approve was led by Richard and seconded by Justin D.

Charter Renewal Update (Kristi, CEO)

Today was the site visit for both sites from the Charter School Office to assess organizational viability and compliance. The visitors looked at various documents and observed classes. The site visit culminated with feedback provided to Jamal and Kristi. The feedback spurred a conversation about how we assess student engagement as a school and a Board. Rosi is the academic point person on the Board, and will report to the Board on this periodically.

We are asking for an enrollment increase of 12 students. WCS is already serving these students, but does not receive funding for them.

Development Update (Anne, Director of Development)

We received an anonymous gift for improvement of the salary scale over the next three years. In addition, the Awbury library will be fully funded this year. Therefore the Development team is switching its focus to general operating support. There is already \$115,000 pledged toward our annual fundraising goals, and the Development team will make an additional \$123,000 in asks by the end of October. The fundraising pitch has been revised to emphasize preserving the programming that makes Wissahickon unique. The Development team re-launched their major donor campaign, focusing on gifts of at least \$1000, and asking past donors to increase their gifts.

There are two asks of the Board: 1. Identify new people who may be interested in giving, 2. Make pledges to the Annual Fund.

Personnel Update (Kristi)

There are two Assistant Teacher positions left to fill and we are still actively searching. This is the longest it has ever taken to fill these roles. One Special Education Assistant Teacher position has become open since the beginning of the school year.

The Board entered a closed session to discuss a personnel issue, as allowable by PA State Sunshine Laws.

Policy for Parent Participation in Board Meetings (Richard)

Parents attended the September Board Meeting and at the end of the board meeting we invited them to address the board.

The current policy about guest participation in Board Meetings, as published in the Student/Parent Handbook, is as follows:

Parents also have the right to address the Board of Trustees about concerns that they have, if they have exhausted other options. Concerns must be submitted in writing and addressed to the Board Chair, and dropped off at the front office of the school. The Board of Trustees will respond to the concerns in writing after having time to review the issue. Please note that the Board meets the third Tuesday of each month, so response times may vary. Parents may also email the concern to BoardChair@wissahickoncharter.org.

There is concern that the current policy doesn't make it easy enough for families to address the Board. It is suggested that members of the public who are present at the start of meeting are allowed three minutes to speak at the end of the meeting, with the understanding that they will not receive a response from the Board at that time. Richard will draft a policy reflecting this for consideration at the November Board Meeting.

Evaluation Follow-up (Fran, Board Chair)

Fran spoke with five school leaders to get to know them, indicate that the board has paid attention to their feedback, and to get input about how a consultant should be used. Responses are summarized in the attached handout, "Fran's Meetings with Administrators."

A four-person committee was established for selecting a consultant and deciding which areas will be addressed by a consultant. Their first meeting is scheduled.

Gift for Salary Scale Improvement (Kristi, CEO and Jamal, COO)

We just received the first installment of the anonymous gift to improve the WCS salary scale. Kristi and Jamal propose that we use this first installment to deliver one-time bonuses around the Winter Break. Bonuses will prioritize salaried staff (the intended focus of the gift). This will hopefully convey to salaried staff that the salary scale will become more competitive in the coming years. All full-time salaried staff will get the same bonus this year, and all part-time staff will get the same bonus (though different from that of full-time staff). Salaried staff will experience different raises for next year. The Board agrees to this plan unanimously. A new salary scale will be proposed at the November Board meeting.

The Board meeting was adjourned at 8:28pm.

Action Items:

- A new budget will be proposed at the November Board Meeting.
- Rosi will report on student engagement to the Board periodically.
- Board members will identify new people who may be interested in giving.
- Board members will make pledges to the Annual Fund.
- Richard will prepare a new policy on family participation at Board Meetings for presentation at the November Board Meeting.
- Consultant committee will meet to select consultant and to identify the areas that the consultant will address.
- A new salary scale will be developed for presentation at the November Board Meeting.

Handouts that were distributed are attached.

- Financial Statements, September 30, 2016
- Board Pledge Card
- Fran's Meetings with Administrators
- Board Meeting Minutes 9/20/16