

**YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
1231 North Broad Street – 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
September 29, 2017**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Martin Brigham, Kiley Smith Kelly, Scott Lillis, Melanie McCottry, James Mergiotti, James Multari, David E. Thomas (arrived 8:59 a.m.), Robert Totaro.

**Attending by phone:** Erin Horvat, Roxanne Tillman (joined at 9:09 a.m.).

**Absent:** Alfred Essandoh, Jared Farbman, Khalilah Lawson, Michael McPhilly, Nathan Norstrud, Shannon Phillips.

**Guests:** Chuck Esser, Christina Grant.

**Staff:** Ameen Akbar, Scott Emerick, Adesanya Karade, Brian Leffler, Eva Lexie, Meredith Molloy.

**Staff guests:** Colleen Counihan, Ted Molloy, Nikkia Moss, Alex Rocke.

**The meeting was chaired and called to order at 8:49 a.m. by Board Chair M. Brigham.**

**Introduction:**

- M. Brigham welcomed the guests and asked them to introduce themselves.
- S. Emerick announced that A. Akbar had been added to the Senior Management Team.

**Approval of Minutes:**

The minutes of the June 9, 2017 annual board meeting, the August 11, 2017 regular meeting via conference call, and the August 24, 2017 special meeting were distributed to the board in advance of this meeting. Eight board members were present to vote on the following resolution:

- **Motion by J. Mergiotti: To approve the minutes of the June 9, 2017, August 11, 2017 and August 24, 2017 board meetings as submitted.** S. Lillis second, motion **unanimously approved.**

**Finance Update: (J. Mergiotti)**

Annual Financial Report of Friends of YPBCS

The annual financial report of the Friends of YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School for 2016-17 was distributed to the board in advance of this meeting, and a copy is on file with these minutes.

- There has been minimal activity. The income came primarily from automatic donations through Network for Good.
- Eight board members were present to vote on the following resolution:
- **Motion by J. Multari: To approve the annual financial report of the Friends of YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School as submitted.** K. Smith Kelly second, motion **unanimously approved.**

YBPCS Financial Statements as of 7/31/17

Financial statements as of July 31 were distributed to the board in advance of this meeting, and a copy is on file with these minutes.

- The balance sheet shows a very strong cash position, in part because we have already received funds from our Berwind and Lenfest grants.
- The receivables were up in July, primarily due to PYN and AmeriCorps. However, those have been mostly caught up since that time. We believe all the receivables are collectable and don't anticipate a threat to our cash flow.
  - We will soon have \$800,000 available in our line of credit, should we need it.
- On the income statement, the variance in salaries is due to the timing of accruing teacher salaries. Student-related expenses such as incentives do not start to pick up until after the school year begins, so we see a variance there during July. Conversely, partnership and training costs tend to be front-loaded leading up to the school year, and will even out as the year progresses.
- Overall, the financials are in good shape and there are no surprises.
- A. Karade added that the Finance Department will be working on reflecting seasonal variation in the budget figures for each month based on when activity is expected, rather than straight-lining the budget as we have been doing. This will allow for better comparisons.
- D. Thomas arrived at the meeting during the review of financial statements.

#### Audit

- A. Karade noted that the auditors were here for five days. We were well prepared. We expect the audit report around mid-November. The Finance Committee will meet to review it in early December and then it will be brought to the board for approval at its December meeting.

#### **HR Update:** (S. Emerick)

A draft Introductory Period Policy and an Introductory Period Evaluation Form, as well as a written HR Report, were circulated to the board in advance of this meeting and copies are on file with these minutes.

- M. McPhilly was unable to attend the meeting, so S. Emerick reported in his absence. He explained that the Introductory Period Policy formalizes what we have been practicing with regard to the first 90 days of employment to ensure that performance meets expectations.
- He reviewed highlights of the HR report:
  - There was a conversation about the fact that it has been more difficult this year than in the past to fill AmeriCorps and VISTA positions; we still have one open position.
  - The Senior Management Team has been giving a lot of thought to staff professional development.
  - We have a good new performance management tool and are working on getting all staff to complete their reviews before a November merit-based salary increase.
- M. Brigham stated that he and R. Totaro have begun a performance evaluation process for the Executive Director.
- R. Tillman joined the meeting by phone at this time.
- Ten board members were present to vote on the following resolution:

- **Motion by J. Mergiotti: To approve the Introductory Period Policy and Introductory Period Evaluation Form as submitted.** R. Totaro second, motion **unanimously approved.**

**Governance Update:** (E. Lexie)

K. Lawson was unable to attend the meeting, so E. Lexie reported in her absence. She handed out YouthBuild Philly ballpoint pens to board and committee members, and also welcomed new board member M. McCottry by presenting her with a YB mug. E. Horvat (attending by phone) will receive hers at the next opportunity.

Site visits

- E. Lexie handed out a site visit invitation request form and asked board members to submit names and email addresses of any contacts they would like to have invited to a site visit. This can also be requested at any time by emailing E. Lexie.
  - K. Smith Kelly added that site visits are very useful not only for growing the board but for increasing our partner and donor base. The Fundraising Committee also hopes to put on a couple of late afternoon visits for people who find it difficult to attend in the morning on a work day.
- T. Molloy has created an invitation and an online registration form that will make it easier to manage site visitor information, as well as capturing their email address and what topics they are interested in.
- Staff who are working with student and alumni leaders are eager to get them involved in helping with some visits.

Board recruitment

- The committee is creating a pipeline document to help us track candidates in various stages of recruitment, from the initial contact phase to those already serving on committees.
- For all potential candidates we include a site visit or attendance at an event, an exchange of information about our process and our committees, a conversation with a board member, and a conversation with the Executive Director. Usually candidates come on to a committee for a period of time before board membership is decided. We're discussing the appropriate amount of time on a committee for onboarding.
- We are considering several candidates for board membership and discussing when is the appropriate time to bring them on.

Governance committee needs

- Due to departures from the board, there are only two board members left on the committee. Board members are invited to consider whether they are interested in joining. Please contact K. Lawson to discuss, or E. Lexie if you want to attend the next committee meeting.

Other

- M. Brigham mentioned two issues related to the bylaws that the committee will be exploring, which he plans to discuss with our lawyer:
  - Bringing on additional board members mid-year
  - Possible ways to legally accommodate absentee voting on resolutions. Certain kinds of motions require a majority of the full board, and especially during the summer it can be difficult to obtain the required number of attendees due to vacation schedules.

- K. Smith Kelly asked about board recruitment via agency fairs for Leadership Philadelphia, United Way Young Leaders Program, and Young Involved Philadelphia. We do attend various agency fairs regularly.

**Program Update:** (D. Thomas, A. Akbar & B. Leffler)

B. Leffler distributed handouts to those present, copies of which are on file with these minutes.

Placement and retention outcomes for alumni

- B. Leffler reviewed placement and retention statistics for the class of 2016. We have seen a steady increase in these outcomes and have met our strategic plan goals in this regard.
- For the class of 2017 it is early to be assessing these outcomes, but we hope to be on track.
- There was a discussion about the high proportion of graduates that go into employment vs. postsecondary education, and the reasons for this. We are working to help students towards a balanced career pathway where ideally they can have employment but also further education that will lead to advancement. This is where some employer partners can do more to invest in the young people by providing postsecondary options.
- Our focus is now turning towards not just placement, but quality of placement and how to measure that.

Class of 2018

- B. Leffler reviewed our enrollment numbers for the current year, and the statistics about our students in comparison to the previous year.
- One area of improvement we focused on this year was to have a very strong recruitment process; the number of applications, the number invited to Mental Toughness, and the number who showed up on the first day all increased.
- Another focus is to communicate outcomes vs. goals consistently to staff.
  - There was a kickoff challenge to improve attendance for the first 20 days, and so far we have achieved an attendance rate 10% higher than last year for the same period.
  - We have launched a student dashboard portal with data that both staff and students can see.
  - Building relationships with students is integral to the program and supports good outcomes for the students. We are providing clear expectations and measuring how and how often our staff mentors are interacting with their mentees.
- We expect the number of special needs students to be even higher this year than it was last year,

Climate and Culture

- A. Akbar spoke about the evolution of restorative practices at the school over the past ten years. The focus is on relationships. It is not just a method of discipline but is how climate and culture is built.
  - We are currently honing in on staff-to-staff relationships. We had trainers from the International Institute for Restorative Practices at Staff Mental Toughness.

- We are looking at social identities for staff and students, and how you tell your own story.
- Informal and formal leadership opportunities for all students are key. There is a new format for our village meeting with students leading. Students led the recent Community Night.
- It has been a very good beginning to the year.
- Despite this, there will always be setbacks. There was an incident that resulted in scheduling an expulsion hearing in the coming week, and if expulsion is recommended we will schedule a board conference call.

**Fundraising Update:** (K. Smith Kelly)

- The Fundraising Committee had a really good mid-summer retreat to brainstorm about how to continue the success from the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year with some new approaches.
  - We will probably do smaller events and interact more with students, whether at the school or outside.
- The new subcommittee structure has two main areas of focus:
  - Events – monthly or bimonthly, headed by S. Yerrapathruni and N. Lomakin.
  - Cultivating new relationships – through existing board member networks, headed by K. Smith Kelly and M. McCottry.
- The committee needs more members and recommendations are welcome.
- Communications and branding is not a subcommittee this year, but the topic will be revisited at an annual committee retreat and we also would like suggested attendees for that.

Annual giving

- There is a theme of trees, young people as seeds, and growth.
- Board members were asked to submit a handwritten note to be added to the mailing for their contacts, and to update their list of contacts.

Pledge form

- A board commitment document was distributed for each member to fill out and return indicating their planned donation and participation in fundraising for the year. 100% board giving is important because funders want to see that our board supports us.

New grants

- Our two-year DOL grant and three-year AmeriCorps PennSERVE grant have been secured. We are in the second year of our three-year AmeriCorps national grant.
- We received a \$20K grant from CREW to support our real estate/construction team.
- We received a \$25K grant from the Youth Hope Foundation.
- A construction grant for \$125K from TD Bank is a strong possibility.
- We are partnering with the Fairmount Conservancy on their grant application to Rebuild, which could lead to good construction projects for our students, and potentially some funding.
- PYN put out a pre-apprenticeship RFP; this could lead to great opportunities for our students.
- A pipeline document was distributed and board members were asked to look at it and determine whether they know anyone at the organizations listed and could help us make connections.

### Social impact investing

- S. Emerick stated that conversations have begun with Prudential, Turner Impact Capital and the Social Impact Fund. He will go to the Finance Committee to discuss the potential implications for our revenue stream, etc.

### **Strategic Initiatives and the Strategic Plan:** (S. Emerick)

#### Grads on Board

- We hope to get some YB alumni onto the board in the next year. Jahi Davis (class of 1996) helped us launch this initiative to do a board prep program that would potentially prepare 4-5 grads for service, either on our board or other nonprofits. For this, we are looking at people who graduated 4 – 7 years ago.
  - We expect to do the kick-off in early November and would like some board members to come and talk to them about board service and committee work. Anyone interested should notify S. Emerick.
- Separate from this initiative, there is also a current group of alumni advisors who graduated more recently who could provide feedback for committees or come and speak at meetings if requested.

#### Level Up

- Several board and committee members signed up to be mentors for students who have completed Year 2, and we have done the training for this. The kick-off event to introduce mentors and mentees will be on October 11.

#### Social Identities Training

- Part 1 of this two-part training for board members will be held next week. This parallels training that has been happening among staff and will be imbedded into our professional development this year.

#### Government Relations Committee

- This work group includes some board and staff members. It met once, and will find a date to reconvene after a statewide PA YouthBuild coalition convening in late October in Pittsburgh.
  - Some other states have a line item for YouthBuild in their state budget. We are developing a PA YB coalition (there are 10 YB programs in the state) and will set goals for meeting with state legislators. We will report back on progress made.
  - We are working on a contact data base for government relations connections that we already have.
  - We discussed certain issues where we might want to influence policy, such as food security, homelessness, childcare and transportation. But we are thinking about our approach more relationally in terms of who knows us and can influence state-level conversations on these topics, as well as prioritizing a state budget line item.
- Anyone interested in this work please let S. Emerick know.

#### Strategic Planning

- M. Brigham, D. Thomas, E. Horvat, T. Daniel, S. Emerick and E. Lexie met this week to launch the process.
- We will be drafting an RFP for a third party to support the process.

- We invited J. Mergiotti to come to the next meeting and describe the rolling strategic plan process used at Peirce College, so we can consider whether to take that approach.
- We talked about recognizing three or four key decisions facing the school and creating scenarios that we would get stakeholder input on.
  - Increasing our impact (learning exchange, right size enrollment, expansion?)
  - Facility – would we consider building ownership when our lease ends?
- Risk assessment and mitigation needs to be an important focus of the plan.
- The feedback from the last board retreat regarding the previous strategic planning process has been very helpful.
- M. Brigham commented that the last strategic plan has served us very well and we are in a far different place than we were four years ago.

#### Learning Exchange

- We will launch a pilot in 2018. Initial content will focus on partnership development. It will be shared with organizations who are co-grantees of Berwind.
- Senior management and program team met to talk about appropriate staffing for this initiative. We are considering at least one FTE employee who would prepare all the content that we already have for public consumption and take it to the next level. We may hire outside help to think about videography, case studies, etc.
- We don't want this to be just a one-time training, but want it to include a coaching/technical assistance element.
- We will likely post a Director of Learning Exchange position by the end of this year.
- Part of our strategic plan will be thinking about the business plan for the learning exchange, so that it eventually becomes a revenue stream.

#### Leadership Development

- We are talking about how we change the narrative for our students, how we support student voice in telling their own stories. Not just “who you were, who you are now and who you want to be”; but “who are you as a leader and how are you called to lead?” This also has implications for our external communications.

#### **Closing and Adjournment:**

- M. Brigham requested any feedback about the content of board meeting agendas.
- Ten board members were present to vote on the adjournment resolution:
- **Motion** by K. Smith Kelly: **To adjourn the meeting.** S. Lillis second, motion **unanimously approved.**

Respectfully submitted,

---

Eva S. Lexie