

# Charter School of Inquiry

## Regular Monthly Board Meeting Minutes

July 7, 2020

### 1. Call to Order:

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of the Charter School of Inquiry (the “School”) was called to order by Helene Kramer, the presiding officer, on Tuesday, July 7, at 5:04 p.m. via Zoom video conferencing.

Trustees Present: Melvin (Trey) Bankhead III  
Peter Dow  
Richard (Bruce) Haydon  
Helene Kramer  
Janet Peters  
Deborah Porter  
Mary Jo Pfeiffer

Excused: Betty Evans

Proposed Trustees: Nichelle Gray  
Latise L. Hairston

CSI Staff: John Sheffield, Head of School

Board Counsel: Steven Polowitz

Guest: Karen Burhans, CPA  
Kirisits & Associates CPAS

### 2. Proof of Public Notice:

Pursuant to the Open Meetings Law, Helene Kramer shared a notarized affidavit listing the places where the Notice of Meeting held on July 7, 2020, were posted and a list of media outlets who were asked to publicize the meeting on their community calendars, in their print notices or broadcasts. This notarized affidavit will be kept on file.

### 3. Conflict of Interest.

Ms. Kramer reminded board members about the CSI policy on conflict of interest and asked anyone with a conflict to disclose it.

### 4. Approve Minutes:

- a. Minutes of Business Meeting – June 2, 2020. Call for motion to approve by Mary Jo Pfeiffer, Board Co-chair. Motion made by Trey Bankhead. Seconded by Peter Dow. Approved unanimously.

### 5. Announcements/ Updates

- a. Charter Renewal Update. Helene Kramer briefed attendees on New York State’s two-year renewal of the CSI charter. She noted that Regent Catherine Fisher Collins wants to be kept

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informed on CSI's progress. Mr. Polowitz recommended that CSI directly maintain contact with Collins.

**6. Parent Association Report:** None.

**7. Board Professional Development:** None.

**8. Head of School Report – John Sheffield**

- a. Consolidated Dashboard Report: John Sheffield presented to the board. Notes work with WGRZ-TV Channel 2 for series of commercials for CSI.
- b. Organizational Chart 2020-21: Mr. Sheffield noted proposed changes to school administration hierarchical structure, including appointing an assistant principal. Mary Jo Pfeiffer called for motion to approve. Ms. Pfeiffer moved, Mr. Haydon seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously by the trustees. Motion carried.
- c. School Calendar 2020-21: Updates to school calendar discussed. Note that Buffalo Public Schools have not yet finalized its calendar. Call for motion to approve by Mary Jo Pfeiffer. Motion by Mr. Dow, seconded by Ms. Pfeiffer and approved unanimously by the trustees. Motion carried.

**9. Academic Committee – Peter Dow, Chair**

- a. Peter Dow noted discussion of strategic plan amid Academic Committee. One key discussion centered on better methods of tracking student performance, as well as keeping the board informed “in ways that are measurable and in ways that can be quantified.”

**10. Finance/Audit Committee Report – Bruce Haydon, Chair**

- a. Financial Statements – period ending April 30, 2020: Ms. Kramer notes board's oversight of not having voted to accept financial statements for April. Mary Jo Pfeiffer called for motion; Ms. Kramer moved, Bruce Haydon seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously by the trustees. Motion carried.
- b. Financial Statements – period ending May 31, 2020: Bruce Haydon updated board. Discussion followed on various aspects of financial statement. Mary Jo Pfeiffer called for motion to accept; Bruce Haydon made motion, Ms. Pfeiffer seconded, and the trustees approved the motion unanimously. Motion carried.
- c. Budget – Fiscal Year 2020-21: Ms. Kramer asked Karen Burhans for an “executive summary” of budget. Karen briefed board. Discussion followed on various aspects of budget. Ms. Pfeiffer called for motion to approve. Mr. Haydon made motion, Mr. Dow seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously by the trustees. Motion carried. Steve Polowitz noted that, with only a two-year renewal amid the COVID-19 pandemic, CSI should consider spending more freely in order to prove to New York State that the “kids are showing academic improvement.” Discussion followed.
- d. MOA 1% COLA for union members: Mr. Sheffield briefed board. Notes that no talks with union have happened as yet. COLA will help to offset rise in health care costs for employees. Ms. Pfeiffer called for motion to approve. Peter Dow made motion, Trey Bankhead seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously by the trustees. Motion carried.
- e. Capital Reserve Fund Allocation: Ms. Kramer briefed board. Allocation for 2020 is \$80,500.00, meaning that \$6,708 will be transferred monthly from operating budget to capital reserve fund.

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- f. PPP Loan Application, Evans Bank: Bruce Haydon briefed board on application process. Noted that COVID-19 has hurt state budget, resulting in cuts to school districts. Current CSI budget reflects a 2% expected reduction in per pupil revenue, although it could be much more or a reduction. PPP Loan would support CSI finances. Uncertain as to when we'll hear back on application. Mr. Sheffield added that CSI has not yet received the July payment (the first of 6 bi-monthly payments), from Buffalo Public Schools.

## 11. Human Resources/Personnel Committee Report – Jan Peters, Chair

- a. Continuing to map out transition from Human Resources committee to a Governance committee. Next step is to determine what responsibilities should fall under Governance committee aegis.

## 12. Old Business. None

## 13. New Business.

- a. Resolution to Select Latise L. Hairston as Final Trustee Candidate: Ms. Pfeiffer asked for a motion to approve resolution. Trey Bankhead made motion, Deborah Porter seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously by the trustees. Motion carried. Board wishes Latise a happy birthday.
- b. Disclosure of Financial Interest Form. Ms. Kramer asked that board members fill out Disclosure of Financial Interest Form and submit them.
- c. Approval of Strategic Plan: Ms. Kramer led discussion on changes to final draft of Strategic Plan, as provided by Adam Aberman, consultant. Ms. Pfeiffer called for a motion to approve, pending one correction in Section I.E. Mr. Bankhead made motion, Mr. Dow seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously by the trustees. Motion carried.

## 14. Policy Review.

## 15. Other / Open Discussion.

- a. Website and Public Relations: Mr. Bankhead discussed failings of current website and suggested a complete redesign of the website. When asked if this would be part of an overall new public relations effort, he said that the website is already a part of the PR effort. He noted that, in his new role as part of the upcoming Governance committee, he'll push for stronger PR efforts. He suggests board consider what is desired in a new website. Mr. Dow suggested reviewing other schools' sites. Ms. Kramer suggested forming an ad hoc committee to study the issue. Ms. Peters suggested that Governance committee take the task.
- b. Change Date of November 2020 Board Meeting. John Sheffield suggested moving the date of the November board meeting, as it is Election Day. Ms. Kramer said she would check into alternate dates and bring them to the board at the August meeting.

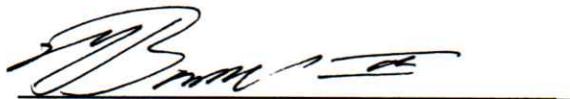
## 16. Next Meeting: Tuesday, August 4, 2020 – 4:45 pm

## 17. Adjournment

Ms. Kramer called for a motion to adjourn at 6:47 p.m. Motion was made by Peter Dow, seconded by Mary Jo Pfeiffer and approved unanimously by the trustees. Motion carried.

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Respectfully submitted by:



Melvin Bankhead III, Board Secretary

7 Aug 2020

Date