

Charter School of Inquiry

Regular Monthly Board Meeting Minutes

September 1, 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, a lawful quorum being present, on Tuesday, September 1 at 4:50 p.m. The meeting was held via Zoom videoconference (meeting id 4302549703), in accordance with Executive Orders by the Governor of the State of New York,

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

Excused: Deborah Porter

Proposed Trustee: Nichelle Gray

CSI Staff: John Sheffield, Head of School

Board Counsel: Steven Polowitz

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 September 1, 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 that anyone with a potential conflict of interest concerning a subject under discussion by the Board has an obligation to disclose the potential conflict and, if deemed a conflict, recuse themselves and leave the room during any discussion and vote on the subject. No such declarations were made at this time.

4. Approve Minutes:

a. Minutes of Business Meeting – August 4, 2020

Ms. Kramer noted that Mr. Polowitz, board attorney, stated a concern that we should include language noting that CSI’s virtual meetings are held in accordance with executive orders issued by New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo. Ms. Kramer said that she will revise the minutes accordingly.

A motion to approve minutes of the business meeting on August 4, 2020, revised to include language about the meeting being held in accordance with Governor Cuomo’s executive orders, was made by Melvin Bankhead III, seconded by Jan Peters and approved unanimously by the trustees.

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Committee Meeting Minutes – Human Resources, Academic and Finance. Ms. Kramer noted that meeting minutes of the Human Resources, Academic and Finance Committees were included with the Board packet.

5. Announcements/ Updates

- a. The Board extended belated birthday wishes to Mary Jo Pfeiffer.
- b. Ms. Kramer regretfully reported that Betty Evans has resigned from the Board due to her inability to attend board meetings. She is the primary caregiver for her brother in California who was seriously injured in a car accident.
- c. CSI reopening letter (dated August 12) was sent to parents informing them that CSI would open as a virtual school, and an assessment would follow to determine if and when it would be safe to physically open.

6. Academic Committee Report – Peter Dow, Chair

- a. Reopening Plan: Mr. Dow noted that the main change in academics, after a great deal of research, was to switch from in-person to remote learning. He briefed the Board on John Sheffield's training on "how to use the Zoom technology." He and Mr. Sheffield agree that, unlike in the spring, remote instruction will be much more structured, and more in line of what parents had asked for, including a set schedule, more direct instruction, and making all remote platforms available from Google Classroom. Now, instead of multiple platforms and passwords and invitations, CSI is using a more "one-stop shop" approach by installing all the software.
- b. Computers. CSI currently has enough computers for every student who is enrolled, but several more students have since registered, and CSI is looking for computers for them, as well.
- c. Data Collection: We do not know what State Ed will be using to assess CSI's performance, especially if NYS's standard assessments are not used. Mr. Sheffield related that AIMSweb is *not* an efficient way of performing a benchmark assessment online. He notes that Renaissance Star Assessment has "a very efficient and easy to use online benchmarking assessment" tool that can be used virtually; has shorter tests, so we do them more frequently; and it can "give us at least as much data" as the AIMSweb. It also has a mapping program specifically for virtual learning.
- d. Deficiency Report: Discussed NYSED's need for more information on CSI's enrollment of Special Ed and ENL students, as well as regular feedback on the academic performance of all students (ELA and Math). Mary Jo Pfeiffer noted that since students were still enrolling at the time of the report, and school has not yet started, an accurate answer is not possible at this time: "At this point, the Deficiency Report is just at a standstill until school starts." John Sheffield added that potential ENL students cannot be assessed "within the first two weeks of the school opening" and, again, the school year has not yet begun. Still, "we're at least holding our own in those two areas." We will carefully monitor these areas going forward.

7. **Parent Association Report:** None.

8. **Board Professional Development:** None.

9. Head of School Report – John Sheffield

- a. Consolidated Dashboard Report – August: Enrollment up from 239 to 253, with waiting lists for grades 1, 2, and 3.

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- b. Staffing: Reviewed staff resignations, as well as new hires and staff changing positions. As three potential staffers declined employment offers from CSI based on the salary, a discussion of CSI's pay scale as compared to Buffalo Public Schools ensued. Helene Kramer suggested John Sheffield contact CSI's labor attorney at Hodgson Russ for guidance.
- c. Chromebooks: CSI's IT team is still trying to find computers for those students who were registered (239) prior to this week. But more students have registered since, and CSI is having issues finding computers for the newcomers. PC Nation made IT aware of a New Jersey college that is willing to sell CSI its overage of Chromebooks (200) at a total cost of \$54,000. Mr. Sheffield requested the Board's approval for the purchase. Ms. Kramer suggested that Board Counsel review the paperwork and make the purchase subject to approval of Counsel.

A motion was made by Bruce Haydon to approve purchase of Chromebooks, subject to review of Board Counsel. Motion seconded by Mary Jo Pfeiffer and approved unanimously by the trustees.

- d. Reopening Letter to Parents. Letter sent to parents this week describing how virtual learning will look and inviting parents to a socially-distanced in-person orientation at the school.

10. Finance/Audit Committee Report – Bruce Haydon, Treasurer (Helene Kramer reporting)

- a. Financial Statements for period ending June 30, 2020:
- b. Financial Statements for period ending July 31, 2020:

A motion to accept the financial statements for period ending June 30, 2020 and for period ending July 31, 2020 was made by Melvin Bankhead III, seconded by Peter Dow, and approved unanimously by the trustees.

- c. Audit 2019-20. The audit started last week and is expected to be done and ready for Board approval at our October meeting. Finance Committee will review it at their September meeting. The report is due to State Ed in early November.
- d. Resolution: CARES Act Agreement between Erie County and CSI: Erie County is distributing CARES Act funding to schools for expenditures related to personal protective equipment. CSI's share is \$34,500. The Board needs to authorize Lynn Monin to sign the contract with Erie County to receive this funding.

A motion to approve signing the contract with Erie County for CARES Act Agreement funding was made by Mary Jo Pfeifer, seconded by Melvin Bankhead III, and approved unanimously by the trustees.

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

- a. Charge for New Board Governance Committee. Reviewed draft charge for the proposed new Governance Committee's responsibilities. Language amended for clarity. Ms. Peters will make the suggested changes and send to all Board members as the final understanding of the Governance Committee's charge.
- b. Bylaws revision to remove HR/Personnel Cmte & add Governance Cmte. The Board reviewed the change in language required in the bylaws to remove the HR/Personnel Committee and add a Governance Committee.
- c. Resolution to Revise Bylaws. Ms. Kramer asked for a motion to approve the change in CSI's bylaws to reflect the removal of the Human Resources/Personnel Committee and addition of a Governance Committee, using the language reviewed in the last item.

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A motion to approve revising the Board bylaws to remove the Human Resources/Personnel Committee and add a Governance Committee was made by Peter Dow, seconded by Melvin Bankhead III, and approved unanimously by the trustees.

12. Ad hoc committee – Media and Community Engagement – Melvin Bankhead III, Chair

- a. Discussion on committee's goals. Walked Board through the best website features of the following schools: Reach Academy, Persistence Preparatory Academy, Tapestry Charter School, and Regent Park Scholars Charter Academy. After further discussion, committee now charged with determining specific goals for a website that could be included in a Request for Proposals. Discussion on whether to ask CSI parents for their input on the content to include in a website.

13. Old Business

14. New Business

- a. Resolution to Revise Mission Statement as Non-material Revision to Charter. The Board drafted a revised mission statement in the strategic planning process facilitated by Adam Aberman. The new mission statement must be submitted to the Charter School Office for their approval of a non-material revision. Ms. Kramer asked for a motion to approve the revised mission statement.

A motion to approve the revised mission statement was made by Jan Peter, seconded by Latise Hairston, and approved unanimously by the trustees.

15. Policy Review. No report.

16. Other / Open Discussion.

- a. Board discussion of November meeting. Decision made to shift meeting from November 3 (Election Day) to November 10. Change approved by all members with added change of moving meeting that day to 5:00 pm.

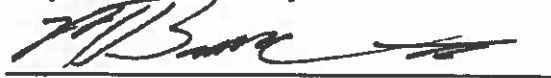
17. Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 6, 2020 – 4:45 pm

November meeting – change from November 3, Election Day to November 10, 5:00 pm

18. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Peter Dow, seconded by Mary Jo Pfeiffer, and approved unanimously by the trustees at 6:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:



Melvin Bankhead III, Board Secretary

7 October 2020

Date