

Harambee Institute of Science and Technology Charter School Board of Trustees Public Meeting Minutes

Wednesday October 23, 2019

John Skief Hall

6:00-8:00 P.M.

The meeting of the Board of Trustees Public Meeting was held on Wednesday October 23, 2019 in the conference room at 638 N. 66th Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19151.

Meeting Called to order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Introduction of Visitors and Others Present

Rosalyn J. McPherson from The ROZ Group was introduced and gave an overview of her organization.

Roll Call

The Board Chair Dr. Maurice Baynard took roll call

Board Members Present:

Maurice Baynard

C. Wade Mosley

Donna Holmes-Lockett

Joseph Foster

Renee Whitby

Charis Jackson

Lakeisha Creighton

Board Members Not Present:

Marirose Roach

Larry Bell

Others Present:

Gregory Shannon CEO

Michelle Thornton CFO

Sara Ferguson Assistant Principal of Instruction

Angela Dennis Assistant VP of Specialized Services

Joel Rodriquez Director of Technology

September Minutes Review

The minutes were reviewed with a correction of the date that the Education Committee met. It was noted by board members Charis Jackson and Lakeisha Creighton that the correct meeting date was Thursday September 5, 2019.

Dr. Baynard entertained a motion.

Motion:

A motion was made to approve the September 2019 meeting minutes with the correction as noted above.

Approval AYE: 7 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 2

Parents Report

Board member and parent Lakeisha reported on the Miss Chocolate fundraiser and indicated that the distribution took place at the school with the help of the students. The fundraiser is to run October 20th through November 21st. She also noted that there was a meeting last week and today 10-23-19 with the representative from Scholastic, where it was learned that there is more money in the Scholastic fund than they had anticipated. Additionally, she noted that there will be a coat give away next Tuesday at the Parents Meeting, sponsored by the Auto Dealers Association.

Board Member LaKeisha was asked to share information with members about the upcoming meeting that is scheduled on November 5th with Cramers Uniform company. The purpose of the meeting is to make changes to the current school uniforms. Board member Charis stated that the plan is to bring continuity to the uniforms so that all students will have the same uniform. She also mentioned that they have discussed and suggested that the student's parents deal directly with Cramers. To that end, Mr. Shannon, CEO will have a series of meetings with parents surrounding the new design and to get their input on what they would like to see in the uniforms. A series of meetings are set for November, December and January to obtain feedback from the parents.

Dr. Baynard inquired about a plan to help parents unable to afford the cost of the uniforms. Michelle Thornton, CFO indicated that there are funds available to assist parents, however, Parents must make a request for financial support. Mr. Shannon also mentioned that Title I dollars are used to help parents as well.

Board member Charis and members mentioned that Umoja Karamu is fast approaching and will be held on November 27th around 10:30 a.m. Everyone was urged to come, serve and eat with the children to support a great community event.

Leadership Report- Gregory Shannon, CEO

- **Property Acquisition-** Mr. Shannon, CEO discussed plans to contract services with The Flynn Group.
- **Development and Fundraising-** Mr. Shannon discussed plans to contract services with The Roz Group. He shared information on their history and background and also spoke highly of their track record. He also informed members that Rosalyn J. McPhearson, president and CEO would be here later this evening to deliver a presentation and answer any questions from the Board.

He indicated that he and Michelle feel strongly about her candidacy and partnering with Harambee.

- **Government Relations-** Mr. Shannon also reported that Harambee plans to contract services with Sandra Dungee- Glenn for Organizational Expansion. He reported that she would like to return to help with school safety and protocol. Mr. Shannon also discussed Sandra's background in Government Relations and her ability help with safety and infrastructure. Ericka, School Operations will also be instrumental in helping to develop the plan and infrastructure as she has previous experience statewide in training and safety.
- **Instruction-** Mr. Shannon reported that there was a great Instruction Committee meeting. He stated that they will have for the first time an Instructional walkthrough, which is a cross sectional team performing rounds. The walkthrough will identify instructional trends with respect to data, debrief the staff and align the instructional program with trends relative to the delivery of the instruction. They will continue to identify school wide trends and develop action plans accordingly. Harambee will continue its instructional focus with respect to setting learning targets and writing objectives for the classroom; along with implementing total participation techniques in the classroom rather than focusing on one student at a time.

Sara, Assistant Principal of Instruction was asked about what her findings have been in reviewing the diagnostic data. She reported that the data was very encouraging and she is hoping to move forward and remain on track. Board member Renee asked if there would be support for teachers who have students in the red. Sara indicated that they have a meeting scheduled for tomorrow to discuss specific targeted intervention plans for those students that are below, on track, and above. The purpose is to focus on all students even those that are above, because the goal is to push those students even further as well. The next administration of the diagnostic test is scheduled for February; there will be three (3) diagnostics per year, a baseline in September, mid year in February and year- end in May.

- **Operations-** Mr. Shannon, CEO reported that a Facilities Supervisor, Andre De Shields has been hired. He worked for St Joe's Prep where he was the Facilities Manager and will be a great asset to the team. Matt Malady in Facilities, who is a contract employee will remain and work closely with Andre. Matt will work with high priority building repairs and with the HVAC and fire suppression systems.

Mr. Shannon reported that Harambee has moved the Lottery date up to January of this year. This earlier date is so that Harambee can get ahead of other schools that begin their process in February and will also help to attract greater student enrollment.

Mr. Shannon noted that the School has issued every staff member a chrome book so that they have a desktop and Chrome book to work with. There were also 110 chrome books for students purchased and distributed for school wide use.

- **Specialized Services-** Mr. Shannon reported that 5 referrals were made to Mental Health Agencies in the past month. In Addition, Harambee participated in a high school fair, facilitated completion of the high application process and for the first time completed full athletic physicals for every student participating in basketball, football and cheerleading. There were 58 students and 56 physicals were completed 56/58.

Financial Report- Michelle Thornton, CFO

Michelle Thornton shared the financial report with the Board and highlighted key areas in the financial summary for July and August. She mentioned that they are doing very well with enrollment; student enrollment is currently 568 above the average budgeted projection of 555. She also pointed out that most of the major spending has been around the Math and Science curriculum as indicated in the Financial Report

- **Audit and Taxes**

Michelle reported that her department began early with the audit process and is now in the final stages of the report. She also indicated that they are on target to meet the December 31st deadline and in addition, the Annual Financial Report will be filed within the next 30 days. She also shared that her department has asked for an extension for the tax return that is due in November, because it is better to have final numbers before filing the tax return. The return is extended through May, but will be completed before then. Also, the finance committee had their regular meeting yesterday by phone to review details of all of the financials.

- **Human Resources Monthly Metrics**

Michelle also distributed the Human Resources Monthly Metrics Report to Board members and explained that it will become a part of the financial report as well. She reviewed the data, highlighted Human Resources activity and answered questions from the board surrounding the data. She also urged everyone to go to the website to review the vacancy list and if anyone knows of viable candidates to please encourage them to apply for open positions.

Dr. Baynard commended Michelle on the preparation of her financial report and indicated that it was one of the best that he has seen. He also asked if there is a formal exit process, so that they know whom we are losing and why we are losing people. Michelle noted that they have an onboarding process and exiting process, but they don't always have the opportunity to exercise the process. She stated that it is designed in a way that staff that are leaving have to communicate with her. She listens to their concerns, recommendations, and anything valid that may need attention she shares with Mr. Shannon, CEO. In the future they would like to be more data informed and would like to use surveys and other sources to gather data in the exiting process.

Board member Joel noted that we have to be competitive with Training and Development in order to retain the best and most talented teachers. Mr. Shannon stated that we are now paying competitive rates for teachers along with a strong training and development plan, which will help with staff retention. Dr. Baynard commented that we must also provide opportunities to teachers of color who are really good at what they do, and train teachers of color as well, because there are not enough who are really good at what they do.

New Business

- **Property Acquisition-** Mr. Shannon discussed contracting services with The Flynn Group. He was also asked to explain how the acquisition of new property or leasing property would accommodate students with the current space constraints that they face in this building. He explained that moving the middle school grades 6th 7th 8th would create additional classroom space and help to accommodate the substantial waiting list of students that are anxious to enroll at Harambee
- **Friends of Harambee 501c- Introduction of THE ROZ GROUP**
Mr. Shannon introduced Rozalyn J. McPhearson of THE ROZ GROUP and highlighted many of the company's accomplishments and their extensive experience. He noted that the company will be of assistance in Fundraising and Development for Harambee. Rosalyn gave an overview of her organization and her own background. She shared many of their achievements, both past and present. She also shared with the group the ways in which her group engages with the community and also shared exhibits of their work. She provided snapshots of their approach to strategic planning as well. After her presentation, she opened the floor for questions and shared with the group her enthusiasm to begin working with Harambee Institute. The Board discussed their impressions of her presentation and Dr. Baynard asked Michelle, CFO to share the document that they will be signing with the Board, once it has been finalized for **THE ROZ GROUP**. Mr. Shannon also noted that he was hoping to get started with those services in this school year.

Old Business

None

Action Items

Student Withdrawal Policy- Mr. Shannon distributed the Student Withdrawal policy for review and approval. The policy is aligned with best practices for student withdrawals and keeps Harambee aligned on the ACE report. Dr. Baynard opened the floor for questions regarding the policy. A question was posed by Board member Joseph, asking if there is a reason that we have a 90 minute block on the ELA and 120 max and not the other way around given our math scores are behind? Mr. Shannon explained that research shows that if students learn to read by the age of eight, the rest of the content falls in line. Another question was asked by Board member Wade about the age range in the policy. He asked why the policy indicates K-12 instead of the population that is

served K-8? Mr. Shannon explained that the policy aligns with the law and is required for all schools not just to include Middle School.

Motion: A motion was made to accept The Student Withdrawal Policy

Approval:

AYE: 7 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 2

Public Concerns

There were no public concerns

Motion: To dismiss

All agreed

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

A change was made to the next meeting date from November 27, 2019 to November 20, 2019.

The next Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 20th, 2019

