

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

Board Meeting Minutes Wednesday, April 27th 2022

The meeting of the Board of Trustees Public Meeting was held on Wednesday April 27th 2022 via Zoom 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Open Session

Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m.
by Board member Joseph Foster

Board Members Present:

Joseph Foster
Donna Holmes- Lockett
Renee Whitby
Larry Bell
C. Wade Mosely
Jan Gillespie- Walton
Charis Jackson
Monique Braxton

Board Members Absent:

Maurice Baynard
Lakiesha Creighton

Others Present:

Gregory Shannon	CEO
Ericka Washington	Assistant Principal of School Operations
Michelle Thornton	CFO
Sara Ferguson	Assistant Principal of Instruction
Deleah Archer	Assistant Principal of Specialized Services
Nakia Brown	Succeeding Assistant Principal of Instruction
Jenita Lunsford	Board Liaison

Libation (Mama Renee Whitby)

Board member and Cultural Leader Renee Whitby lead members with libation.

Introduction of Visitors and Others Present

There were no visitors present at this public meeting

Roll Call

Board member Joseph Foster asked Board members and the senior leadership team to give introductions. Board members and the senior leadership team introduced themselves, stated their names and titles.

Review of the March Board Meeting Minutes (Approval of minutes)

Board Member Joseph asked if there were any corrections and/or additions to the March meeting minutes. He opened the floor to Board members for comments. There were no additions or corrections. Board member Wade made a motion to accept the March minutes as presented, seconded by board member Larry. All were in favor, none were opposed, and there was a unanimous motion to accept the minutes as presented.

Approval: 8 AYE: 8 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 2

CEO Report, Greg Shannon

Board member Joseph turned the meeting over to Greg for leadership reports.

Organizational Leadership

Spring Fundraising Event

Greg reported that the Spring Fundraising Event will take place on Thursday May 19th from 5-7p.m. at the Pyramid Club on the 52nd floor. The address is 1735 Market Street Philadelphia, Pa. 19103. The event will be held as a panel discussion with some of the leading individuals in the Stem community. He stated that the ticket purchase price is \$200.00 per person and that all of the information is available on the Harambee website. He also indicated that there is a flyer in the Board packets for members and asked members to cascade it out to their networks. He gave kudos to Board member Jan and thanked her for her donation.

Charter Renewal Framework and Board By-laws

Greg reported that attorney Barbara McNeil has come aboard and is partnering with Harambee in support of the Board By-laws and Board Governance. He noted that he and Dr. Baynard have a meeting scheduled with her tomorrow to outline a plan on how to update the Board By-laws and to discuss Board governance.

Organizational Expansion & Property Acquisition

Greg reported that he and Michelle had a very good call today with the real estate brokers to discuss 6710 Haverford Avenue. In addition, they had a meeting one-week ago with Sandra and she will be supporting Harambee with elected officials in

city council and state government. He also reported that Michelle and Ericka had a meeting with the Executive Director of the Charter School office today with respect to the steps they must take in order for Harambee to acquire additional property. He informed members that they are scheduled to meet next week with day care providers to develop a pipeline of kindergarten children from the county. He said that the pipeline of children would be the funding source to acquire additional property. He noted that Michelle is also working on a financial plan that will outline how they will afford and pay for the additional property.

School Reorganization 2022-2023

Greg reported that they are in the process of closing for this school year and planning for re-opening of the upcoming school year. He said that they are looking at the building and plant facility to determine which classrooms need to be moved and how the grade levels will be clustered. He stated that Ericka is organizing everyone to close out this school year and reorganize for next year in an efficient manner.

Summer Program 2022

Greg reported that it is their intent to run a robust Summer School Program. The Summer Program is scheduled to begin on June 27th 2022 and will run Mondays through Thursdays and conclude on July 21st. He said that due to the learning loss that occurred during the pandemic it is important to continue to afford their students extended learning opportunities. He indicated that this would be the conclusion of his Board updates and asked if there were any questions.

Board member Joe asked which grade levels would occupy the 6710 Haverford Avenue location. Greg responded that it is their intent to establish an Early Learning Center with grades K-1 and 2. He said that the Media building would be for grades 3-8 and that they anticipate the start in January 2023.

Board member Wade asked about the meeting with the Executive Director of the Charter School office and inquired about what they have to do to satisfy the Charter School requirements.

Greg responded that there is an application process that Charter schools must complete in order to annex or change plant or facility locations. He said that this includes having a series of community meetings, parent meetings and meetings with local businesses. It also includes engaging local elected officials and submitting the application to the School District.

Board member Wade also asked if the application gets passed through to the School Board or does the Charter Office have to approve it first. Greg indicated that the Charter Office must review and approve it first and then it gets passed on to the School Districts Board for a vote. Greg turned the meeting over to Sara for the Curriculum and Instruction report.

Curriculum and Instruction, Sara Ferguson

Full day Professional Development

Sara reported that she would provide updates from the instructional team on what took place on the full day of professional development. She noted that they had a formal walk through and based on that data they wanted to deliver professional development to staff around rigor. She said that they wanted to provide instruction on how to implement rigor in the classroom and how to keep the instruction challenging and keep students engaged. She indicated that Nicole Brown provided a presentation that included some very useful information on academic rigor and it was well received by staff. She noted that their next steps are to look at the implementation of the ideas that they received from the professional development training.

Departmental Meetings/ PSSA Protocols and Assessments

Sara reported that they have had departmental meetings and content meetings for ELA, Math and Science and the goal of those meetings is a vertical alignment from all grades to share best practices and better alignment of their curriculum. They also had a presentation on PSSA protocols. She told members that they delivered two trainings on the topic; one was provided on March 25th where staff were able to sign on and receive their training certificates from the website. The other training was provided on April 22nd, which was a review to reinforce all of the plans that they previously had in place, especially, because the teachers had not administered the PSSA test to students in two years.

Sara informed members that the PSSA is now underway and that there has been an extension. She said that the dates are now from April 18th through May 27, 2022. Students will test in Math on May 3rd and May 4th. Students will test in Science on May 10th and May 11th and this is only for grades 4-8. They will complete full scale testing on May 28th and there will be 18 classrooms testing in total. Sara shared that their testing is going well thus far and that she is not seeing the anxiety around testing that she expected. She said that she is grateful to the entire instructional team for their dedication and support along with the administrators at Harambee. Sara concluded her report and asked if there were any questions.

Board member Wade asked if the testing is electronic. Sara responded that testing is pencil and paper this year. Greg turned the meeting over to Ericka for the Operations report.

School Operations, Ericka Washington

Facilities Infrastructure Development

Ericka reported that there is a resolution on the agenda for this evening that requires a vote to approve the contact with ICS as it relates to their capital programs and the

use of their ESSER funds. She indicated that she has been reporting on this activity for some time and that they intend to use the bulk of the ESSER funds for capital improvements. The specific systems that they are looking to improve, repair and replace would include roof replacement, skylight work, masonry work, exterior façade, renovation of exterior windows, sealants and the replacement of the HVAC system. She reported that ICS will manage the project from beginning to end, beginning in spring of 2022 and ending in fall of 2023. She said that the contract amount is not to exceed \$498,987.00 and that ICS along with Matt Mallady Harambee's consultant will develop the RFP's, bid the work out and make the selection of vendors in order to see the project through to completion.

School Climate

Ericka reported that they have been focused on positive behavioral interventions and supports for the students and have designed and implemented an attendance campaign for students. They have emphasized to the students and their parents the importance of coming to school everyday on time. They have been hosting a series of incentives and positive rewards, which has developed healthy completion amongst the students. She told members that they have taken the students on several field trips, like skating and bowling, and given them walking taco parties and ice cream sundae parties. She noted that these positive behavioral interventions and supports are working well with the students. She said that they now have over two hundred students with perfect attendance and that they plan to start the next school year building on the excitement from those incentives. They will continue to monitor attendance and provide rewards. Ericka concluded and asked if there were any questions from her report.

Board member Joseph asked if there would be a Technology Master Plan for this evening. Ericka responded that it would be presented at the next Board meeting in May.

Board member Larry inquired about using a minority contractor for the capital improvements to the building. Michelle responded on behalf of Ericka and indicated that the ESSER funding guidelines require that they use a minority. She said that one of the reasons that they are using ICS is because they are familiar with the ESSER guidelines and the requirement for a minority firm. Board member Wade indicated that one of the primary designers for the project is a minority firm.

Specialized Services, Deleah Archer

Dental Exams

Deleah reported that on Friday grades K-1, 3 and 7 will have dental screenings. She noted that the PA state code requires that incoming kindergarten students or students attending school for the first time must have a mandatory dental screening by the age of six and by May 30

th of their first year. She also stated that students should have updated dental records in grades 3 and 7. She reported that approximately 40 students have already returned their consent forms for the screenings.

College and Career Fair

Deleah reported that they will host a Career Fair and the date that has been decided is Friday May 27th. This will be a half-day for the students and they will then follow up with a professional development day. She indicated that the College and Career Fair supports their Transition and Support Services which was an area that was identified by the School District that needed improvement. She said that it also supports the Future Ready Comprehension Plan.

Deleah noted that they are organizing the Career Plan in three (3) different pathways. She said that they are looking at careers that require a college degree, careers that require certification and individuals that might want to pursue entrepreneurship. She explained that this way, students can find their path to success that meets their natural talent. The theme for the career fair is “ If you can see it you can be it”. She informed members that they would have both pre- recorded and live presentations on the day of the fair.

Special Education

Deleah reported that the numbers are good and they are working on finalizing their re-evaluations and reports. Deleah concluded her report and asked if there were any questions.

Board member Wade asked what are the mechanics for the student dental exams once they are completed. Deleah responded that once the dental hygienist reviews the screening there is a portion at the bottom of the consent form that the hygienist checks and sends back to the parents that indicates the disposition of the student’s exam. Board member Joseph turned the meeting over to Michelle for the Business and Finance report.

Business & Finance, Michelle Thornton

Michelle reported that she only has one update for this evening and that the update is concerning the 2022-2023 budget and where they are in the process. She informed members that they had a detailed presentation on Monday with the Finance Committee. She said that the committee provided some comments and that they expect the Finance committee to have the presentation for 30 days and submit responses back to them to make updates for next month. Michelle informed Board members that she just emailed a copy of the 2022-2023 proposed budget along with the summary to all of the members. She noted that the Board will have until next month to review it and during next months presentation they will have the opportunity to ask questions. She asked if there were any questions on her report.

Board member Joseph asked if she had heard any news on the downward

adjustment. She responded that they have not heard anything so far. She told members that she did not hear anything last year until well into June and they are still waiting for the announcement for this year. She also indicated that the budget includes some assumptions around the adjustment until they receive the final news.

Board member Wade asked if he were to have questions regarding the budget, should they be submitted to her in advance of next months meeting. Michelle responded yes, that members could respond to the email that she sent, call her by telephone or ask questions during the presentation at the next Board meeting.

Michelle gave a shout out to Nicole Brown and shared with members that Nicole and the 8th grade students held a fundraiser and were able to raise \$2,600. She said that the funds would go towards 8th grade activities. Board member Joseph turned the meeting over to Greg for final comments. Greg indicated that this would conclude all administrative reports for the evening. He commented that it is their intent to place Harambee on the map and polish their brand in the broader Stem community. He said that their next best opportunity toward that goal would be participation in the Stem panel discussion. He indicated that anyone wanting to purchase tickets can do so by clicking on the link on the landing page of the Harambee website or by writing a check to the business office. He told members that he is expecting a full house and asked for full participation from senior leaders and Board members.

Old Business:

Board member Joseph asked if there was any old business or further discussions for the evening. He asked Board member Larry if he wanted to discuss Board protocols and election of officers from the last meeting. Board member Larry indicated that he did not receive any nominations so it would be better to table it until the next meeting. Board members Joseph and Larry acknowledged that Greg would be meeting with Barbara McNeil and that it would be better to have the discussion after they meet and determine any changes to the By-Laws.

New Business:

None

Public Concerns:

None

Action Items:

Vote- Proposal to execute and perform a contract with ICS.

Motion: Board member Larry made a motion to accept the proposal, all were in favor none were opposed and there was a unanimous motion to accept the proposal as presented.

Approval: 8 AYE: 8 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 2

Motion: Board member Larry made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Board member Wade. All were in favor, none were opposed.

Approval: 8 AYE: 8 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 2

Next Public Meeting:

The next public Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 25th 2022 at 6:00 P.M.

Submitted by Jenita Lunsford, Board Liaison