

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

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## **Board Meeting Minutes Wednesday, February 22, 2023**

The meeting of the Board of Trustees Public Meeting was held on Wednesday February 22, 2023 via Zoom at 6:30p.m.

### **Open Session**

#### **Meeting Called to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.  
by Board Chairman Maurice Baynard

#### **Board Members Present:**

Maurice Baynard  
Joseph Foster  
Donna Holmes- Lockett  
C. Wade Mosely  
Jan Gillespie- Walton  
Renee Whitby  
Charis Jackson

#### **Board Members Absent:**

Larry Bell

#### **Others Present:**

Gregory Shannon	CEO
Michelle Thornton	CFO
Deleah Archer	Assistant Principal of Specialized Services
Nakia Brown	Assistant Principal of Instruction
David Rosario	Assistant Principal of School Operations
Danielle Bryant	Executive Assistant to the CEO
Terrance Jenkins	Facilities Manager
Jenita Lunsford	Board Liaison

#### **Libation (Board member Renee Whitby)**

Libation was lead by cultural leader and Board member Renee Whitby.

### **Introduction of Visitors and Others Present**

Matt Melady- ICS  
Roselyn McPherson- Fund Raising presentation  
Dr. Shawn Blue- prospective new Board member

### **Roll Call**

Board Chairman Maurice Baynard 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 January 25<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting Minutes (Approval of minutes)**

Dr. Baynard asked if there were any corrections and/or additions to the minutes. He opened the floor to Board members for comments. Board member Wade asked two questions and noted corrections to be made to the January 25<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. Board member Wade made a motion to accept the minutes as presented with corrections, seconded by board member Charis. All were in favor, none were opposed and there was a unanimous motion to accept the minutes as presented.

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

### **CEO Report, Greg Shannon**

#### **Fundraising and Development**

Greg told members that he is asking each member of the faculty, staff administration and Board to support their HBCU post secondary tour by donating \$40.00 per month in the months of February, March and April. He noted that all proceeds would benefit this great fundraising activity. He thanked those who have already donated and for those who have not, he said that it is still not too late to do so. He said that a flyer was emailed out to everyone with a QR code and a link that will allow you to make your donation by clicking the link, which will go directly into that line item in their budget.

Greg announced that fundraising activity number two is their panel discussion much like the one that took place last year. He noted that Roz McPherson would be joining the meeting to provide a brief presentation and speaking specifically about the event, which will take place on Wednesday May 17

<sup>th</sup> at the Pyramid Club from 5:30-8:00 pm. He said that much like last year it would provide exposure for their organization and most importantly exposure for the students. He said that this year's theme is around University Presidents Then and Now. They have already confirmed with the Presidents of Cheyney University, Lincoln University, Community College and they are waiting for confirmation from Swarthmore College. The topic this year is about post secondary education and gaining a perspective from them about what it was like when they attended middle school and what it is like now as a University President. Greg noted that there are different sponsorship packages and he is asking the Board and senior leaders to participate. He noted that the initial package is \$2,500 dollars give or get. He said that everyone should receive a save the date for May 17<sup>th</sup> in their inbox tomorrow. He asked that everyone share this information with all of their networks. He gave Kudos to Rosario and Terrance for reaching out to the graduate chapter of their fraternity Omega Psi Phi who has pledged \$2,500 dollars for the event. Greg told members that Roz would be joining the meeting momentarily and asked if there were any questions before she joins the meeting. Rosario asked if there would be a signature based announcement so that the people who he would be asking to donate would know or be able to identify that it is coming from him. Greg answered yes, that in the QR code it asks whom the person is supporting and the donor simply has to give the persons name that they are supporting and it designates both the person and the donor.

Board member Charis asked if the fundraisers will always be in this style or will there ever be a Gala style fundraiser. Greg said that yes they would like to do a Gala style fundraiser and that this year they are just building on the success that they had last year, so they wanted to keep the momentum going with the STEM panel.

Board member Wade asked if there is a link on the website where contributions can be made. Greg said yes and asked Danielle to share the information. She instructed everyone to go to the bottom of the page on the website and click on the red icon where it says GIVE. This will take anyone to the page where donations are accepted.

Greg introduced Roz McPherson and indicated that she would share in detail all of the information about the 5/50 fundraiser. Roz greeted everyone and shared her screen so that everyone could see her slides for the fundraising activities that they are embarking upon. She told members that that they have been working on a couple of fundraising initiatives, but this an example of a new approach that they are borrowing from Dr. Naomi Booker from the Global Leadership Academy.

She said that this is rooted in Barak Obamas approach to getting the smallest dollars to amass a fortune to run his campaign which was a very successful glimpse at how you allow people to participate at what ever level they can and look at what happened with his campaign. She said that this is an opportunity for

student's to get involved with philanthropy with their families. She said that they launched the campaign in early February and it will run through April. They are hoping to raise enough to contribute to the 2023 HBCU tour. She stated that parents, staff administration, vendors and Friends of Harambee have an opportunity to make a contribution during this 5/50 campaign.

She also noted that they are in the midst of Harambee's 50th anniversary so they are trying to generate a lot of excitement. She said that in this first effort a goal of \$5,000 dollars should be attainable. She asked that everyone contribute and that everyone exercise patience because in the first year of an effort it takes a while to get into rhythm, but they do think that \$5,000 dollars as a goal is achievable. She shared the flyer for the fundraiser that Harambee students designed to promote the 5/50 fundraiser. Roz reminded everyone that last year they had a wonderful stem panel discussion with black scientist and doctors; their first attempt at a fundraiser that was non traditional, but turned out to be very successful. She said that they are now confirmed to do another classy event at the Pyramid Club on May 17<sup>th</sup>. She said that this year they have contacted several black College President's and this will be a conversation about what it was like for them as children when they were considering what would be next in their lives and how they decided their career path. She said that they have confirmed Dr. Generals from Community College, Dr. Brenda Allen from Lincoln University, Mr. Aaron Walton from Cheyney University and they are trying to pursue Dr. Valerie Smith from Swarthmore College.

Roz asked everyone to send her names of people to add to the invite list to buy individual tickets of \$250 dollars and to turn her on to sponsors and individual donors. She told everyone that they are welcome to contact her by email with any questions and that she would put together and share with everyone the sponsorship package. She reminded everyone to save the date (May 17<sup>th</sup>) for the second annual Stem Panel Discussion. They will be sending out more information and they can now add the names of confirmed presidents. Roz concluded her presentation and opened the floor for questions.

Dr. Baynard asked if there is a target goal that we would like to raise with the panel discussion and is it greater than what was raised last year. Roz said that the goal is greater; they want to raise \$50,000 dollars in celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. She said that they believe that it is an attainable goal that will require a lot of hard work and participation from everyone on the Board in terms of Give or Get and sharing information with her about who she might approach so that they can do the presentation and the ask. They are hoping to get a lead sponsor at \$10,000 dollars.

Board member Wade asked if there is a budget for the projected expense for the Pyramid Club event. Greg said yes, as usual they have a budget for the venue, the catering and all related expenses. He told Board member Wade that he and

Michelle would get all of that information out to him soon. Board member Charis asked if the Give or Get allows Board members to bring a guest to the event. Roz said that the Give or Get of \$2,500 is the Board minimum. Greg thanked Roz for her presentation and encouraged members to support these initiatives in order to provide Harambee students with the “green dot” experience. Board member Wade asked which students and how are they selected to go on the HBCU tour. Greg said that this past year the eighth grade, seventh grade and approximately five 6<sup>th</sup> grade students were selected. He said that they were very selective last year because it was their first time on the road, so they chose students that would present them away from home in the best light. He said that next year they would open it to more students. Greg thanked everyone and moved on to Board Updates.

### **New Prospective Board Member**

Greg shared with members that he and Dr. Baynard had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Blue two weeks ago. He feels that she will bring richness to the Board and will be a great asset to both the Board and the students. Greg introduced Dr. Shawn Blue, welcomed her to the Board meeting and thanked her for considering joining the Board.

### **Enrollment/Lottery**

Greg reported that they have concluded their enrollment lottery and he gave Kudos to Rosario and Shakeira for working through the enrollment lottery process. He reported that next year their opening day enrollment will be up to 635 students provided everyone participates in the registration process. They have a deadline of Friday March 24<sup>th</sup> for parents to submit their enrollment packages and then they will begin calling students off of the wait list.

### **Mid-Year Appraisals**

Greg reported that they are in the midst of their mid-year performance appraisals. Every member of the organization is in the process of receiving a mid year performance appraisal which rolls into the year-end appraisal.

### **2023-2024 School Calendar**

Greg reported that they are submitting their 2023-2024 School Calendar and asking the Board for their vote. The calendar has a total of 181 school days. It has a start date of August 14<sup>th</sup> for staff and a start date of August 28<sup>th</sup> for students. This will give them a two-week window for teacher and staff institute. They have a terminal day for students of June 13, 2024 and a terminal day for staff of June 14<sup>th</sup> 2024. Greg said that for the most part next years calendar mirrors this year’s calendar with respect to report card conferences and the number of days in each marking period. Greg concluded his report and opened the floor to questions.

Board member Joseph asked if there were any ASA considerations with the

calendar and if they were able to match the professional development dates that they had discussed. Greg said yes they can do it without losing any of the 181 school days. He said that they can toggle any of the days to an asynchronous day by utilizing the G suite or Google platform.

Board member Charis asked if Sherehe and other events are still taking place even though they do not appear on the calendar. Greg reminded her that the question was posed last year and he explained that there is one master calendar that they have to submit to the School District and then they have a secondary calendar that includes all of their cultural events. He said that all of the cultural practices are still in place for this year. Board member Charis asked that they keep the Board posted when those events take place so that members can possibly attend. Dr. Baynard suggested that they make it standard Harambee practice that when they are voting on the calendar that gets submitted to the School District that they also share the cultural calendar with the Board. Greg said that it is a great idea and they certainly would do that going forward.

Board member Wade asked if it was stated that enrollment is at 650 and is that number projected for the next fiscal year, or is that the current enrollment. He said that the number seems to be at an all time high. Greg said that their current enrollment is 578 students, but based on his experience, it is better to over enroll the building to start, than to under enroll because there is attrition over those 180 school days. He said if you chase students over the 180 days many of the students that come in December, January and February are running from a negative situation in another school, which causes them to take on another schools challenges. This is the reason that they over enroll in the beginning of the school year.

Dr. Baynard asked if there is a negative consequence by over enrolling and then not having seats for some portion of the kids that they have already been placed on their roll. Greg explained that because of the attrition rate they over enroll knowing that some students will not attend in grades like kindergarten. For example, they may enroll 35 students in each class knowing that only 28 will actually attend. He said that because of attrition they run the enrollment on paper at 635, but they know that on the first day of school only 605 will attend and by the time they level around October 1<sup>st</sup>, the number will be down to 590. Greg turned the meeting to Nakia for her report.

### **Curriculum and Instruction, Nakia Brown** **Curriculum**

Nakia reported that they are about 45 days before their PSSA's and teachers are continuing with their data chats and growth monitoring. Growth monitoring is their opportunity to see what their IREADY system will predict and whether or not students will leave them on grade level by the end of the year.

### **Teacher Peer Observations**

Nakia reported that she has completed all formal observations for teachers and paraprofessionals. She noted that they participated in teacher peer observations with teachers having the opportunity to observe each other and with some of their partners in the African School Association.

### **Building Student Learning Stamina**

Nakia reported that they are focusing specifically on building student-learning stamina around reading and independent practice. They have increased the use of independent practice in their classrooms by providing a two day a week program where they begin with independent practice in ELA and Math in the beginning of the period instead of at the end of the period. This gives them an uninterrupted 20-25 minutes of independent practice. This gives the student the same experience that they would have on the PSSA. They are also introducing Scantrons in their next assessment so that students get the practice of all of the things that they would do on the PSSA.

### **Second marking period honor roll celebrations**

Nakia reported that they are celebrating their students that are on the honor roll. They have 198 students currently on honor roll and for this marking period they will be doing two incentives. The first will be an honor roll trip for their student's grades 3-8. The second will be an in school honor roll celebration for their students in grades K-2.

### **Black history door decorating contest**

Nakia reported that they had an outstanding door-decorating contest. She noted that they had members from the community to participate and they had the police department serve as judges. Their next event will be Sheeree, which is scheduled for March 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup>. Nakia told members that she would be sure that everyone on the Board receives an invitation.

### **Assessments**

Nakia reported that they are working on their student success plans. She said that at the end of the second marking period they run a DF report to determine if any of their students are at risk of failing because they have a D or an F in either ELA or Math. In this case, the instructional coaches and the entire team in specific grade levels contact the parents for a ZOOM meeting to discuss the student's success plan. They look for some of the barriers to the student's success and then put together a plan over a 4, 6 or 8 week cycle. They hold the student, parent and teacher accountable. She noted that the process began on February 13<sup>th</sup> and will continue through March 31<sup>st</sup> 2023. She informed members that their goal is to reach all of the parents that have students on the DF list and any parent that they have not reached by March 31<sup>st</sup> will receive a certified letter, which would be their second attempt to contact the parent.

### **IREADY Growth Monitoring**

Nakia reported that their unit testing is in their planning and scheduling timeline and at the end of each six weeks they are tracking that data.

### **Science Assessments**

Nakia reported that their 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are taking science, which enables them to obtain assessment data. Nakia concluded her report and opened the floor for questions.

Board member Renee told members that the cultural workshop that Nakia conducted with Dr. Imani was excellent. She said that she was at the school and observed that the composition of Harambee staff is younger. She said when teachers are first starting out they need to be given more professional development in strengthening their skills and confidence with children. She mentioned that she is aware that Harambee has a system of coaches for teachers, but she really wants to stress the importance of leadership and making sure that leadership is consistently building confidence in their young staff. She said that Harambee is pushing for academic excellence and for students to do well in testing, but the key is the teachers. She encouraged them to be sure that Harambee is investing enough in new teachers so that they carry confidence into the classroom to better prepare the students.

Dr. Baynard asked how many of all of the students at Harambee are on the DF report and based on what is known about students and their progress, how will the students fair on the PSSA's. Nakia said that there are 564 students and approximately 40 students in grades 3-8 are on the DF report. She said in terms of their growth monitor and predictor, their first predictor from their curriculum partners that will predict how well the students will do on the PSSA's should happen in the week of March 14th. She explained that they had to have two data points before they could pull the report, which would give a clear indicator of how well students will do. She noted that they would most likely have that data at the next Board meeting.

Board member Wade commented that there was mention of 198 students on the honor role students; He inquired what this data means and what can he assume from it. For example he inquired how does that data relate to how the kids are performing on standardized tests. Does it mean 1/3 of our students are proficient, or above that are on the honor roll or are some students below grade and showing up as less than proficient, on some of our other testing modules.

Nakia replied that in the 198 students it includes the Kindergarten through 2

<sup>nd</sup> grade students who are not tested. She noted that they have benchmark, school wide and local data also in the equation. She also said that some of the students in their Specialized Services department with EIP's do receive modified work, so all of the students may not be on grade level, they may be 1-2 years below, but are also on honor roll. This is specifically according to what they are doing in the classroom i.e. classwork, participation and formative assessments that happen in the classroom and all this information is included in that honor roll grade along with the K-2 students.

Board member Wade asked if they have any indication that they are going to meet their 4% increase or any metric that can affirm how Harambee is doing given that it is February and not much time left in the school year. Nakia answered yes and reported that she and Greg are striving for 44% proficiency in ELA in order to make the appropriate growth and they have broken it down over three benchmarks and set a goal for each benchmark. She stated that they are shooting for 36% proficiency in ELA and 17% proficiency in math. She noted that they have already exceeded those goals and the indicators show that they are trending in the right direction. She said that they have met each benchmark goal and all of their data is trending upward which she uses as a predictor and they are watching this data very closely.

Dr. Baynard asked Nakia if she thought that the performance improvement of the students is due to instruction or are the students working harder. He asked her to speak to that level of improvement.

Nakia stated that she would like to think that it is both and would attribute it to teachers and students working harder. She pointed out that they have put some very clear systems in place around teacher expectations. She said that another contributor is that they moved from the lesson plan system to the assessment plan system, which the instructional team is watching very closely. In addition, they have put a number of mechanisms and interventions in place to support the teachers, yielding success on their benchmark assessments. She said that the students are working hard as well and are now more cognizant of their own data and their growth goals. She remarked that it is all coming together yielding results on their benchmark assessments.

Board member Jan asked Nakia if teachers are at any time submitting their assessments to her and does she approve their assessments so that there is some alignment with what her expectations are and what the assessments are presenting.

Nakia replied that at this time teachers do not have to turn in their assessments because the expectation is that they are utilizing the assessments from the curriculum resources. All of the assessments are provided for the teachers through IREADY for Math and Collections & Journeys for ELA. She noted that if

they pull an assessment folder and find that there are some issues then the instructional coaches will work with the teacher to create the assessment for them. She indicated that the next steps at the next level would be to ask teachers to turn in their assessments, but for now, that is something that would only happen if they notice a flag. Nakia concluded her report and turned the meeting back to Greg and he introduced David for his operations report.

### **Operations, David Rosario**

#### **Bathroom Stalls**

David reported that they are looking for a Board vote on the installation of bathroom stalls.

#### **Successful Food Service Onsite Audit**

David reported that they had an administrative food service audit back in November that went very well and then in late January they had the onsite food service audit, which passed very well with no capital findings. He said that they have some very minor technical findings that they have to clean up and send back to PDE, and after those corrections have been made, they will not have another audit for the next five years.

#### **Robo Call System**

David reported that the robo calling system is up and running and they are currently utilizing the system. They are looking at their utilization and setting more of the triggers for what they want to call for. Currently they are using it for inclement weather and special events, but they want to use it for tardiness and other modalities of school functions as they investigate more about setting the triggers. David noted that receiving more clean data from the student and parent side would allow them to create a better intervention with the triggering process.

#### **Student Attendance Incentives**

David reported that they are moving forward with their student attendance incentives and have had a couple of school store redemption days. They are now working on their major perfect attendance incentives, which are taking place everyday. He noted that they are making announcements daily and the momentum is really picking up.

#### **ICS Update**

David announced that he would be turning it over to Matt Melady and Terence Jenkins for an ICS update. Terence reported that they have submitted the ad for their second round of bidding. He reported that the bidding would include windows, siding, roof access and repairs on their flat roofs and repairs to the fascia of the building.

Terrance said that since they have had difficulty obtaining Black contractors, he would like to provide an update of what they have done since the last meeting. They have contacted the African American Chamber of Commerce and

Harambee is now a member. He reported that they have submitted their ad and their scope of work to them. They have reached out to their personal networks of contractors to ensure that they receive the proper amount of bids. He said that they are asking the Board to reach out to their contractors, which was mentioned on the call this morning and he received a contractor from one of the teachers. He said that he is confident that they will receive participation, but they really need to get the bids in front of every general contractor in the tri state area. Terrance concluded his report and asked Matt if he would like to add anything to the report that he just provided.

Matt indicated that the bids will open on March 14<sup>th</sup> and they will do a walkthrough of the building next Tuesday. They are excited and are waiting for contractors to show up and take a look at what they have. David opened the floor for questions. Board member Joseph asked if they could provide a copy of the bids so that they can shop it through their networks. Terrance said that he would make sure that they get a copy tonight.

Board member Wade asked if they have included as a requirement in the specifications of the bid documents that a certain percentage is minority or female. Terrance answered yes, that they will see it in the bid ad and the ask is 15 percent. Greg turned the meeting over to Dr. Archer to give her report on Specialized Services.

### **Specialized Services, Deleah Archer**

#### **Little Library Project**

Deleah shared pictures of the little libraries that are currently in Skiff Hall and reported that five little libraries will be installed throughout the building. It is a collaboration between ISFA, a youth workforce development non-profit and the Haverford School for Boys. She said that teenagers constructed all five of these little libraries and this series will support their students. They have been collecting books and have many African American books so that students can see themselves, so if anyone has books, please feel free to donate books to help fill the libraries.

#### **Healthy Relationship Series**

Deleah reported that coming soon they will have their Healthy Relationship Series for students in grades 5-8. She said that this is another collaboration with the Mazzone Center, which specializes in health and wellness for all ages. This series will support their students in the month of March. For grades 5 & 6 they will have a series related to healthy relationships and puberty power. For Grades 7 & 8 they will have digital decision-making, safer sex practices and STI prevention and production. Deleah told members that one week ago they sent out permission slips for parents to opt in or out of the series. She said if the permission slips are not returned from parents they will consider it an opt out so that they can be sure that families are clear. She shared that this was something that the counseling

department saw a need for last year and they were able to make it come to fruition ensuring that a schedule could be made and not have it interrupt instruction.

### **Career Pathways Event**

Deleah reported that they had the first Career Pathways event last year. This year it will be held on May 26, 2023 with a half day before the long weekend. The purpose of this event will be to provide career information all across the board and to introduce students K-8 to careers that require degrees and to those that do not. There will be information provided to the students virtually, pre-recorded and face-to-face with interactive activities to get students engaged. Deleah said that they are looking for volunteers or individuals that anyone knows that might have an interesting career pathway. She said that last year they had people from many different diverse career paths to participate.

### **ESY 2023- 6/27 - 7/20**

Deleah reported that they have finalized the ESY program. For students with disabilities that show aggression they have taken pre and post data over winter break and created a list of students and finalized the summer program which will run from June 27<sup>th</sup> to July 20<sup>th</sup> Monday through Thursday 9-12 at Harambee.

### **Get on the Bus– Fall 2023**

Deleah reported that they have started to prepare for their Get on the Bus fall 2023 tour. She said that they currently have 74 students identified with 5 pending for a total of 79 students. Deleah concluded her report and opened the floor to questions. Board member Joseph asked if they could have information on the Career Pathways event so that they can shop it through their networks. Deleah said that she would get it out to everyone. Greg turned the meeting over to Michelle for her report on Business, Finance and HR.

### **Business, Finance and HR Michelle Thornton**

Michelle reported that she only had one highlight that she wanted to share with members tonight. She said that she would read a letter that she received from the PA Department of Education. The letter congratulated Harambee on being chosen for a food services equipment grant for \$24,175 dollars for the purchase of a walk-in freezer. She thanked the team for helping her to put the grant together. Greg commented that only two schools within the entire city received that grant. Greg turned the meeting over to Dr. Baynard.

Dr. Baynard reminded the Board that according to our bylaws we have a two-part system to onboard a new Board Member. The process begins with the person being recommended by one of the Board members or the CEO. Then the candidate meets with the Board Chair and the CEO to traditionally receive a tour

of the school. After this, the prospective new Board Member presents themselves and has a conversation with the Board about their interest in joining and one month later at the next Board meeting, the Board takes a vote. Dr. Baynard opened the floor to Dr. Blue to share a bit about her impressive background.

Dr. Shawn Blue introduced herself to members and stated that professionally she works as a Clinical Psychologist at Thomas Jefferson University. She noted that she started the counseling center with a Psychiatrist about 13 years ago to provide services to the health professionals at Thomas Jefferson in individual, couples, and group therapy. She noted that she also has a private practice as well. She told members that she fell in love with Harambee through her professional organization The Links Incorporated. She said that they have done some outreach programming with Harambee and admired the energy and spirit of the students and faculty during those activities. She told members that she is really happy and excited to be here and is ready to get to work. Dr. Baynard remarked that it is an honor to have her join them and they look forward to having her back next month and as a first order of business they will take a vote.

### **Old Business**

None

### **New Business**

2023-2024 School Calendar

Bathroom Stall Installation

### **Action Items**

New Trustee consideration

### **Public Concerns**

None

Dr. Baynard asked if there were any further questions or concerns from the Board. Hearing none he informed members that there were two items for consideration and a vote this evening.

Item 1) The 2023-2024 up loadable School Calendar

Item 2) The Bathroom Stall Installation proposal

Dr. Baynard said that because everyone has reviewed both of those items together, they will pass them as an omnibus vote and opened the floor for a motion to each of them as they have been presented.

**Item 1)** Vote to approve 2023-2024 up loadable School Calendar

**Motion:** Board member Joseph made a motion to pass both items together as they have been presented, seconded by Board member Renee and Jan. All were in favor, none were opposed and they were passed unanimously.

Approval    AYE: 7    Nays: 0    Abstentions: 0    Absent: 1