

HARAMBEE INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Board Meeting Minutes Wednesday, December 13th 2023

The meeting of the Board of Trustees Public Meeting was held on Wednesday, December 13th 2023 at The Pyramid Club at 6:05 p.m.

Open Session

Meeting Called to Order

Board Chairman Maurice Baynard called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Board Members Present:

Maurice Baynard
Joseph Foster
Larry Bell
Jan Gillespie- Walton (by zoom)
Donna Holmes Lockett
Renee Whitby
C. Wade Mosely
Charis Jackson

Board Members Absent:

Shawn Blue

Others Present:

Gregory Shannon	CEO
Danielle Bryant	Executive Assistant to the CEO
David Rosario	Assistant Principal of School Operations
Michelle Thornton	CFO
Nakia Brown	Assistant Principal of Instruction
Deleah Archer	Assistant Principal of Specialized Services
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

There were no visitors present at this meeting

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 November 2023 Board Meeting Minutes

Review and approval of the November 2023 Board Meeting Minutes was postponed until the next Board meeting in January 2024.

CEO Report, Greg Shannon

The CEO welcomed members to the Pyramid Club and opened with informing everyone of the Mission, Vision and Core values of Harambee. He advised everyone that they should be familiar with the Mission, Vision and Core values of the organization. He urged all members to review them and suggested that the core values be read and reviewed at the beginning of every Board meeting. Greg recited the Mission, Vision and Core Values of the organization. He stated as follows:

Harambee Institute exists to offer our community an education with a focus on the origins, current status, and future of the African world.

Our mission is to educate students to succeed as global citizens with a clear awareness of “who I am, where I am from, where I am going, and how I get there.”

Our vision is a collective and informed African American community utilizing science and technology as a means of promoting education for self-reliance, locally and globally.

Our core values are:

Greatness: Pursuit of excellence in all we do

Accountability: Owning what we do and who we are

Innovation: Open to new ideas with a growth mindset

Integrity: Honesty, transparency, and unity in all we do

Greg told members that the core values are living, breathing pillars of what they do at Harambee daily. He said that the administration refers to them in meetings and when they have conversations with a parent or staff member, they will reference the core values as stated. He informed members that we would begin momentarily and asked if there were any questions. Dr. Baynard asked if they could invite at least one student to every Board meeting to give them a sense of their reflection. Greg said yes he would like to have present students as well as former students attend the meeting. Greg turned the meeting over to Michelle to make the introduction for the auditor's presentation.

Michelle told members that they have the audit presentation with Robin Holland on ZOOM and that Board member Jan would be joining the meeting via Zoom as well.

Michelle introduced Robin from Joyce Miller & Associates and said that she would present their audit report. Michelle indicated that their Finance Committee received a copy last month of the report and reminded of the Board that they received a copy by email. She reminded members that Robin would have a hard stop at 6:00 pm sharp and that hopefully all members have had the opportunity to browse the report and ask any questions. She suggested that members send an email to her with any further questions and she would be sure that Robin receives them. Michelle told members that she is hoping for a vote on the audit report tonight and noted that they have a 12/31 deadline for submission to the Charter School Office.

Michelle turned the meeting over to Robin for her presentation. Robin greeted everyone and informed them that Harambee is subject to a single audit because they receive federal funds and because their expenditures exceed 750,000 dollars. Robin stated that they do an audit of the financial statements, which covers financial activities along with governmental funds. Robin shared a PowerPoint of the report and reviewed all of the schedules included in the report.

She discussed changes in the Pension rate (PSERS), Schedule of Federal Awards and ESSER funds. She said that they audited financial statements of governmental activities, the business activities, and each major fund for Harambee with the year ending June 30, 2023.

Robin stated that in their opinion, the financial statements that they referred to were presented fairly in all material respects. This included the respective financial position of their governmental activities, the business activities and each of the major funds for Harambee. Where applicable, cash flows for the year ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the U.S.

She said that they conducted their audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the U.S (“GAAS”) and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in Government Auditing Standards, which are issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Michelle asked Robin to clarify two questions to the Board.

1) Michelle asked Robin to clarify to members of the Board, the performance of the food service program. She pointed out in the report and explained that Harambee’s revenue exceeded expenditures by \$31,000. Michelle said that it was good to note that the higher quality food has increased the meal count and has allowed them to apply for a higher reimbursement and that operation is profitable.

2) Michelle asked Robin to explain the General fund performance. Robin pointed out in the report and explained that Harambee had 112,000. in excess revenue over expenditures. Michelle said that in the email that she sent, she tried to summarize the report and give some pointers on how to read it. She said it was difficult to do with a 60-page document of numbers, but the schedule of federal awards allowed members to see how much federal income they receive and how they are doing with the ESSER funding and Title I.

Board member Wade asked when they are in compliance with federal dollars does that mean that they are complying with the pre-established criteria of those funding sources. Robin answered yes that is correct. Michelle added that they are exceeding their covenants and their ratios.

Robin noted that next steps would be to file the audit with the School District by the December 31st deadline. She said that the AFR is almost done but they need some additional information that Michelle will provide and then the audit would be uploaded to the federal clearinghouse. She said that the other item would be the 990 after approval from the Board. There is a six-month extension for the 990 so there will be plenty of time to submit it by the deadline. Michelle indicated that the Annual Financial Report will need to be signed by Greg and Board member Joe and once finalized they will be sending it around to be docu-signed.

Robin thanked everyone and gave well wishes for holidays. Greetings were returned and the meeting was turned back to Dr. Baynard to conduct a vote.

Dr. Baynard said that in the past there had been timing issues with getting the report in on time but it appears that this year there were no problems. He asked Michelle how they were able to fix the problem and get the report in on time. She responded that they reached out to a couple of firms and brought on help. They were able to put a template together for them to follow and simply plug the numbers in. Also, Robin's team seemed to have a better understanding of how Charter Schools work and it was a much smoother process this year.

Dr. Baynard asked if there are places in which they could do better. Michelle responded that they could always do better. They could do better with monitoring and making adjustments when they need to and just being mindful that there are adjustments in the middle of the year and of timelines.

Board member Wade asked if Robins firm has multiple Charter Schools that they are auditing. Michelle said yes they do. How does Harambee fair with putting the process together and getting it out? Michelle responded that she could only determine that based on what Robin said last year. Robin said that she had some schools that did not meet the 12/31 deadlines last year. Dr. Baynard asked if there were any further questions from the Board. He opened the floor for a vote on the audit.

Action Items: Vote to accept the 2023 audit as presented

Motion: Board member Larry made a motion to accept the audit as it has been presented, seconded by Board member Joseph. All were in favor, none were opposed and the audit was unanimously passed.

Approval AYE: 8 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 1

Old Business:

None

New Business:

None

Public Concerns:

There were no public concerns

Submitted by Jenita Lunsford, Board Liaison

Next Public Meeting:

The next public Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 31st 2024