

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

Board Meeting Minutes Wednesday November 20th 2024

The meeting of the Board of Trustees Public Meeting was held on Wednesday, November 20th 2024 at 6:40 p.m.

Open Session

Meeting Called to Order

Board Chairman Maurice Baynard called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

Board Members Present:

Maurice Baynard
Jan Gillespie- Walton
Renee Whitby
Charis Jackson
Larry Bell
Shawn Blue
Heloise Jettison
C. Wade Mosely

Board Members Absent:

Donna Holmes Lockett

Others Present:

Gregory Shannon	CEO
Danielle Bryant	Compliance Officer
Nakia Brown	Chief Academic Officer
David Rosario	Chief of Operations and Administration
Deleah Archer	Chief of Student Support & Innovation
Michelle Thornton	CFO
Jenita Lunsford	Board Liaison

Libation (Board member Renee Whitby)

Libation was lead by Board member and cultural leader Renee Whitby

Introduction of Visitors and Others Present

None

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 and approval of the October 30th Board Meeting Minutes

Dr. Baynard asked if there were any corrections and/or additions to the Board Meeting Minutes from the October 30th meeting. He opened the floor to Board members for comments. There were no corrections or additions. Board member Larry made a motion seconded by Board Chairman Maurice to accept the minutes as presented. All were in favor, none were opposed and there was a unanimous motion to accept the minutes as presented.

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

Board Chairman Maurice Baynard turned the meeting over to Greg for the CEO report. Greg began with reciting the Mission, Vision and Core Values of the organization.

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

CEO Report, Greg Shannon

Mid Year Retreat

Greg reported that it is his intent to have a one-day mid year retreat with the executive leadership team. They will focus on their organizational performance in the areas of instruction, school operations, specialized services, business and finance and HR. They want to ensure that they are performing optimally going

into the spring semester so that they can make any course corrections that are needed relative to their organizational performance data.

He said that he and Michelle would be aligning with the executive leadership team to look at the budget in the new fiscal year to align the budget with their new program highlights that they want to move into the 2025-2026 school year knowing that it is their year for renewal. Greg said that they are off to a great start and are really excited about the direction that they are moving in and also excited about their future. He said that they have moved the dial for the students as they have expanded their horizon relative to exposure. He said that Dr. Archer, David and the counselor's did a great job on their empowerment expedition and they will do a presentation in next months meeting for the Board.

Greg told members that a few years ago Harambee was granted the Ruby Bridges Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society. They currently have nine students from last year's class and they want to take them to Chicago in February to the National Junior Honor Society conference and convention. He said that Dr. Archer and the counselors have worked diligently to be able to facilitate the trip. However, they are going to fundraise for the trip so that they can take all nine of the students and four chaperones to the conference. The cost is approximately 14,000.00 dollars. Greg is asking Board members and Executive Leaders to contribute a minimum of 200.00 dollars per person give or get. He said if everyone weighs in they could raise a total of 2,800.00 dollars. They are asking give or get between now and February 1st which will give everyone 8 weeks to raise 200.00 each.

Greg asked for financial support for the student's ability to attend the conference and emphasized that all of the students have a grade point average that exceeds 3.5. He said that members of the Board and the Executive leadership team would receive information from the Business Office with a QR code to pay electronically. He said that they would accept checks as well. Greg concluded his report and opened the floor to questions.

Board member Wade asked if the ACE report is out or is it coming out. Greg responded that they received their ACE preview on Monday. They have to revise their Student Instruction Policy to include Transgender policies. Danielle will meet with the Charter School Office to receive guidance on exactly how the policy should read. They are currently in the preview window, which gives them an opportunity to contest anything before January 1st.

Dr. Baynard asked if they would be ready to make a presentation to the Board at the March meeting, after the students return from their trip to the National Junior Honor Society conference in February. Greg responded yes they would be prepared to make a presentation in March.

Instruction, Nakia Brown

PSSA Presentation

Nakia shared her screen to provide the results of the spring PSSA Summative Assessment/ School Summary SY 2024-2025 that is given by the state. She said that student's grades 3-8 participate in the assessment and are tested in three areas ELA and Math and the 4th and 8th graders are tested in Science.

She provided an overview of how Harambee students performed compared to previous years in ELA, Math and Science and how their students performed in comparison to similar schools as deemed by the School District of Philadelphia. Nakia said that the data she provided would show early indicators of success and grade group highlights. She guided members through each of the slides and narrated the results in each category. She began with the overall summary and pointed out the percentage of students that scored proficient and advanced in all categories. She then moved to the comparison to similar schools and finalized her presentation with Early Indicators of Success. Nakia concluded her report and opened the floor for questions.

Dr. Baynard asked what constitutes the similar school groupings in different parts of the city and why are these particular schools considered peer schools. Greg responded and said that it's based on socioeconomics and title I. Every year through their federal title I program as well as the food services program they determine the socioeconomic base of the students. The group compares students around the city that share a similar socioeconomic background.

Board member Wade said that he recalled that in the past the report showed other levels of proficiency such as borderline proficiency, below proficiency and other categories. He asked if they have that data. Nakia said that the data that Board member Wade is speaking of is from their benchmark report. Dr. Baynard said that there is a report that shows the entire distribution of where everyone lands. He said that the Board would benefit from the report that gives the complete story. He said that if you look at the report it appears that 100% of the students made progress in all categories, which he finds incredible. He said that the report that shows the complete picture would be helpful to the Board and should be distributed for review. Greg turned the meeting to David for his report on Operations.

Operations, David Rosario

Baba Joe Parent Portal Functions

David explained to members that he wanted to share some of the ideas that they have currently been discussing as possibilities for the parent portal and some of its functions. He said that currently they are able to engage with parents in a very basic way such as attendance and grades. He said that with title I they will be able to offer parent enrichment data where parents will be able to access resources. He said that parents could look at attendance by accessing pie charts and other visual graphics that are not just numbers and words. They will have the

ability to access school culture and messaging with parents as well as a community discussion board, which will include social and emotional learning for parents. One of the future possibilities will be providing parents with links and parent workshop connectivity. David said that they want to continue diving into innovations all in support of the students. David concluded his report and opened the floor to questions.

Business, Finance and HR, Michelle Thornton

Michelle reported that her points this evening would be very brief. She said that she wanted to provide updates on where they are with the audit. She told members that they are in the process of their annual independent audit. She said that they were behind but are currently catching up and she expects that they will meet the 12/31 deadline. She said to stay tuned for any adjustments around their board approval that may need a Board vote.

Human Resources

Michelle reported that over the past thirty days they have had 3 exits from Harambee, one in special education, one in general education and one in business. She said that they also had a workers compensation event that has one staff member out. They have two new hires that have filled some of the vacancies. Michelle concluded her report and opened the floor to questions.

Board member Wade asked when the draft of the audit would be coming out for the committee and eventually to the Board. Michelle responded that she does not have a date for the draft yet, but will follow up with Robin and give them a date for when they will have a draft.

Dr. Baynard asked if there is something that the Board needs to do between now and the December meeting to make sure that she is able to meet the deadline.

Michelle responded yes that the Board would need to be available to vote. Dr. Baynard said that it may come down to needing to take a Board vote on December 30th. He said that they want to be sure that the execution is done according to their bylaws and state rules. He said that they would think it through and get a primer out to everyone since everyone is present and knows that it has to be done before the deadline. He said that the Board would do whatever needs to be done in order for it to be submitted on time.

Board member Wade commented that they might need to look toward some automation or technology to assist them so that they are not always in a crunch each year and can get the information out faster.

Board member Larry commented that you don't know ahead of time what the auditors are going to ask for, so automation doesn't help because you have to wait to see what they are going to ask for unfortunately.

Michelle commented that they are moving toward automation and are somewhat automated already. She said that the issue around the audit is not automation, especially this year. There were a number of other audits taking place at the same time this year, which took her attention and caused a delay on her end. She said that she and Greg have discussed having additional help during the audit each year. Greg turned the meeting over to Dr. Archer for her report on Specialized Services.

Specialized Services, Deleah Archer

12/1 Compliance Report

Dr. Archer reported that her report would be brief and the only item on her agenda for today is the Child Find Count, which is the December report due to the state. She said that she is working with their new provider and they have submitted 2/3rd of the report and she will be working on the remaining portion with an anticipated submission by Friday or Monday at the latest. The report is due on December 1st so they are ahead of schedule. Dr. Archer concluded her report and opened the floor to questions.

Greg indicated that there is one additional agenda item that he wanted to bring to the floor this evening for a vote.

Greg said that in late August through mid September they had extreme challenges with their HVAC system. He said because of those challenges they had to move to an emergency single source procurement for an HVAC company in order to keep the system up and running until ICS and the other contractors got back on board, otherwise he would have had to shut the building down. They moved to single source procurement in the emergency and the information was brought to Board members Wade and Larry and to the facilities committee. He noted that it was also discussed in the October Finance Committee meeting. Greg told members that it is before the Board this evening for approval and the approximate amount is \$18,000.00. He said that they intend to subtract \$18,000.00 from the balance due to the contractors who did not do their jobs.

Michelle commented that the payments have actually not been made yet and it is not one invoice for \$18,000.00 dollars, the invoices have accumulated to that amount because they had to bring someone in to address the HVAC issues so that they did not have to close the building. She said that the initial cost was \$650.00 that accumulated from multiple visits over time.

Action Items

Emergency HVAC Repair Expenditure for the company named Precision.

Motion: Board member Wade made a motion to approve the contract and invoices with Precision for payment procured through single source procurement due to an HVAC emergency. The amount is not to exceed \$18,000.00 dollars.

Board member Larry seconded the motion and all were in favor, none were opposed and it was passed unanimously.

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

Dr. Baynard opened the floor for additional comments. Board member Renee asked with the holidays approaching, are there any special assemblies planned. Nakia responded yes, they have events scheduled next week on November 26th and 27th for Umoja Karamu and they are putting together their Kwanza program. She said that she would be sure to send that information to Board member Renee. Board member Renee asked how the events are organized. Nakia said that the teachings and lessons of Umoja Karamu happen in the classroom through the Culture Expressions classes and the specialist teachers are going into the classroom to teach about Umoja Karamu and the various periods. The feast includes a culmination of the food and some of the things that they have made during the period, along with a presentation of student performances. Nakia said that all Board members will receive invitations to the events.

Board member Wade asked Michelle to speak to some of the information in her turnover report. She said that the report showed turnover from August 2024 forward. She said that going forward she would include more information in the Board reports that comes from their Bamboo HR System. Michelle indicated that most of the staff turnover comes from staff members who have been there 0-3 years. She said that longer tenured staff members seem to be staying with the organization.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Public Concerns

None

Motion to Adjourn: Board member Wade made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Board member Jan. All were in favor, none were opposed and it was passed unanimously.

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

Next Meeting: Wednesday, December 18, 2024