

Conservatory Lab Charter School Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

September 19, 2017

5:00pm-7:00pm

Carney Hospital Board Room

2120 Dorchester Avenue, Dorchester MA 02120

Present: Gary Gut, Lisa Wong, Kimberly Nelson, Kay Sloan, Myriah Johnson, Lynn Cetrulo, Martha Kleinman, Kitty Pell, Erika Sanchez, Bethany Ford, Tyrone Sutton, Brad Richardson, Keree Simmons, Danna Mauch, Melanie Sheffield, Staverne Miller, Maisha Douyon Cover

Staff: John Chistolini, Nicole Mack, Bea Abascal, Bithyah Israel, Peter Handy, Gerami Groover, Allison Chow, Rachel Sacks, Tamesha Webb (CAS), Jill Davidson (CAS), Linda Nathan (CAS), Seth Racine (CLCS consultant)

Guests: Bob Baldwin, Jonathan Garland, Brad Mahoney

Absent: Reverend Groover, Bob Grinberg, Clay Rives

AGENDA

Gary confirmed that a quorum was present so that votes could be taken at the meeting. The meeting began at 5:11pm.

Gary asked everyone to introduce themselves.

- I. Public Comment
 - Bethany Ford passed along concerns from 6th grade parents regarding the school's decision to assign 6th grade students to MBTA busses. In years past, 6th grade students have been eligible to utilize the yellow bus system. This decision seemed to have been made without consulting 6th grade families. Some MBTA busses do not stop near families' homes, which makes the pick-up/drop off process difficult for families. This is a particular concern for families who live in Brighton. Linda noted that the public comment was being recorded, and that the school would follow up with this comment soon.
- II. Approval of minutes from June 20, 2017 Annual meeting of the board.
 - Gary made a motion to approve the board minutes from the June 20, 2017 Annual Meeting of the Board. This motion was approved unanimously by all board members.

- III. Linda introduced principal Nicole Mack to talk about school goals and vision for the 2017-2018 school year. Highlights of this overview included:
- With the hiring of additional teaching staff, there are now three classrooms per grade level in Pre-K through third grade. This has brought classroom size down from 22-25 students per class to 16-17 students per class in certain lower school grades.
 - Hired Directors of Curriculum and Instruction in an effort to improve instruction and create more support, coaching and feedback opportunities for teachers.
 - Created an instructional leadership team.
 - Leadership is focused on creating a strong, cohesive school culture amongst all grade levels.
 - Emphasis on music integration: finding ways of tying music and academics together in a more cohesive way.

IV. Deep Dive Topic: Facilities and Financing

- Linda introduced the video: *We'll Still Rise*. This video was the result of a student music composition that expressed the students' desire for a new building to meet their academic and musical needs. Everyone watched a one minute clip of this video.
- Gary read a statement from Bob Grinberg, a CLCS Trustee and Executive Committee member, expressing his thoughts on the new school building. Bob, a member of the Facilities Task Force, was unable to attend the meeting, and thus the statement was read by Gary.
- Bob Baldwin provided an update on the new building project, letting the Board know that response to the project from community members has been positive. The next part of the process will take about 5-6 weeks. This process involves more community meetings and permit filings.
- Jonathan Garland, representing Arrowstreet Architects, presented on the potential plans for the new building. His presentation included various mock-ups of the building layouts, known as the schematic design. A discussion ensued regarding the building design.
- Gary presented the projected budget for the new building project. This presentation included three different scenarios based on various appraisal projections. Gary then introduced the idea of a capital campaign, which he stated was crucial to off-set some of the costs of the new building. Melanie Sheffield offered insight on the capital campaign, explaining that this would be an insider campaign, and that an outside consultant would be brought on to support the campaign. A discussion ensued regarding the projected budget, and the financing options for the new building.
- After the discussion, Gary proposed the following resolution:

Resolved, the Conservatory Lab Charter School (CLCS) Board hereby recommends to the Conservatory Lab Foundation, Inc. that it authorize, in

addition to the initial \$250,000 previously authorized, the further expenditure of funds, described below, for the continued development of the Columbia Rd. project for use as a school building:

- in an amount not to exceed an additional \$700,000 for the purposes of deposits, design, permitting, legal, financing and evaluation of the project, subject however,
 - to a subsequent majority vote by the CLCS Executive Committee prior to beginning Design Development work, to approve the commencement of such work by Arrowstreet, estimated at \$317,500
- Gary made the motion to pass the resolution. Brad seconded the motion. The motion passed with one abstention. Note: Immediately after the vote, the abstainer indicated to the chair that the abstention was the result of arriving late and not being present for the discussion.

V. Discussion on the proposed minor amendment

- Linda introduced the proposed minor amendment to the school's charter, and a discussion ensued regarding the need for amendment, which would shorten the school year from 190 days to 185. Nicole Mack, principal, reviewed the reasoning behind this proposed change. Reasons in favor of this amendment were:
 - Desire to make the school a competitive place for teachers and students.
 - Able to work with kids to get them into competitive music programs.
 - Longer school year is problematic for families and summer planning.
 - Longer school year makes it more difficult for teachers to schedule summer jobs for supplemental income.
- Linda reminded the board that this minor amendment would be voted on at the Board meeting in November.

VI. Review of Board Goals

- Gary presented the three Board goals for the 2017-2018 year:
 - Plan for new capital campaign and successfully complete interim goal of 50% pledged by 3/18
 - Keep new building project on track to be occupied by 7/19
 - Approve completed Joint Strategic Plan, including goals, milestones and metrics for implementation for student outcomes, staff/career ways and agreed upon plans for sustainable school operating economics
- Gary made a motion to vote on these goals. Kay seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with none opposed and none abstaining.

VII. Due to time, the Board reports were not able to be discussed in detail.

Martha made a motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:08pm.

Documents/Exhibits used during the meeting

- CLCS Board Meeting Agenda
- Minutes from June 20, 2017 Board Meeting (for purposes of approval)
- School Reports
- Foundation Report
- Center for Artistry and Scholarship Report
- Draft of a minor amendment calling for a shortened school year
- Draft of the CLCS Board Goals
- The Final CLCS Workplan
- CLCS Real Estate Advisory Committee Financial Projections (regarding new building purchase)
- Presentation from Arrowstreet Architects regarding schematic design for new building project
- Clip from CLCS video, *We'll Still Rise* (final class project)