



Board Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2015

The Board of Trustees of the NYC Autism Charter School (NYCACs) met on Monday, March 16, 2015 at the offices of New York Collaborates for Autism, 3 E 54th St., New York, NY 10022. Remote video access was made available at NYC Autism Charter School 433 East 100th Street New York, NY 10029

Attending Trustees:

Mitchel Baum
Ashley Garrett
Ilene Lainer
Hugh O'Rourke
Carol Santiago

Absent Trustees:

Maureen Bateman
Chas Chigas
Benjamin Hartman
Nancy Needle

Attendees at the Invitation of the Board:

Julie Fisher, Executive Director
Mark Saretsky, Chief Financial Officer
Moirra Cray, Director of Transition and Community Outreach
Nicole Pearson, Director of Education
Susan Michaelson, Compliance Officer
Joy Resmovits, writer from the Huffington Post
Toni-Anne Stewart, Temporary Administrative Assistant by remote video access at NYC Autism Charter School site
Alvin Shih, Trustee Candidate

1. Call to order

- In the absence of Ms. Needle, Board President, Mr. O'Rourke, Vice President, called the general meeting to order at 4:10pm.

2. Board Business

- The minutes of November 17, 2014 meeting were reviewed. (It is noted that the January 26, 2015 was cancelled due to a snow emergency, as was a scheduled meeting on Monday February 2, 2015. The missed meeting will be made up June 15, 2015)

- **Action: A vote was taken and the minutes of November 17, 2014 were approved.**

3. Committee Reports

a. Operations

- Administrative Assistant: Veronica Pichardo has been hired as Executive Administrative Assistant starting March 26, 2015.
- Book Project: Ms. Resmovits, writer with the Huffington Post was introduced. She is writing a book about the NYC Autism Charter School as a model for achieving positive outcomes for students with disabilities. As part of her research, she has been shadowing staff and students at the school.
- Drumm Letter: A request for information from Daniel Drumm, NYC Council Member, was discussed. Mr. Drumm is researching controls among Charter Schools to prevent fraud, waste and mismanagement. As the letter is not a request for information under FOIL, it was determined not to respond at this point.
- **Management Consulting:**
 - NYC Autism Charter School has been chosen as the focus of a Morgan Stanley Challenge Team. The team will provide consultation to assist the school in identifying and developing dissemination goals and strategies.
 - Additionally, Ms. Fisher requested that funds be approved for the purposes of management consultation – to ensure efficacy of roles and responsibilities, and in an effort to build capacity for future growth and dissemination.
 - **Action: A vote was taken approving up to \$30,000 for the purpose of management consultation.**

b. Governance

- Succession Planning and Recruitment:
- Ms. Fisher announced the impending resignation of Nancy Needle, President - scheduled to be effective May 18, 2015. As per the NYC Autism Charter School Bylaws, if Ms. Needle must leave her role prior to a new President being elected, Ms. Bateman, in her role as Vice President, will assume the role of interim President until that time. It is presumed that a new President will be elected at the May 18, 2015 Board meeting. Ms.

Needle, in absentia, was thanked for her dedication and skilled leadership of the NYC Autism Charter School Board of Trustees.

- The Board discussed the need for succession planning and new trustees with particular skill sets. Specifically, trustees with expertise in management, finance, applied behavior analysis, public relations, and charter education are needed.
- New Trustee, Alvin Shih
- **Action: A vote was taken approving Alvin Shih as a Trustee, pending approval by the DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships.**

c. Finance Review

- Mr. Saretsky updated the Trustees on the year-to date (January) financials, including a forecast for the remainder of the fiscal year. It was indicated that salary related expenses were running considerably below budget due to higher than anticipated staff turnover. It was further indicated that fundraising proceeds were exceeding plan, primarily related to unbudgeted events, including the Giving Tuesday appeal. Mr. Saretsky indicated that due to these expense savings and additional fundraising revenue it is anticipated that the school would end the fiscal year with a surplus.
- Mr. Saretsky indicated that the fiscal year 2016 budget would be presented to the Board at the June 15 meeting. Interim reviews with both the Board and the Finance Committee will take place in May. He indicated that there would be a comprehensive review of salaries and benefits to ensure the school remains competitive and fair in its compensation package.

4. Education/Operations Update:

- Ms. Fisher provided updates on the charter renewal process, in particular the upcoming renewal site visit. In addition, some staffing shifts were reviewed, along with an update on the progress of the school's new website construction.

5. Additional Items and Public Comment

6. Closing Items

- The Public Meeting adjourned at 5:05pm and was followed by a Strategic Planning Executive Session.