

Board Meeting Minutes

October 23, 2023 – 5:00PM

The Board of Trustees of NYC Autism Charter Schools (NYCACS) met on Monday, October 23, 2023, via videoconference and at the NYCACS East Harlem location.

Attending Trustees:

Mark Saretsky
Carol Santiago-DeJesus
Naeema Livingston
Alvin Shih
Hannah Hoch
Ilene Lainer
Elaine Florio
Mitchel Baum

Absent Trustees:

Ben Hartman
Paul O'Neill
Christine Sandler
Ashley Garrett
Alysia Steinmann

Attendees at the Invitation of the Board:

Julie Fisher, Executive Director
Tiffney Jones, Director of Finance

1. Call to order

- **Action:** The NYCACS general meeting was called to order at 5:04 PM

2. Board Business

a. Minutes from Board Meeting 09-18-2023

- At 5:05pm the minutes from the September 18, 2023 Board meeting were reviewed.
- **Action:** At 5:05PM Ms. Florio made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Hoch seconded, at which point the board voted and the motion was unanimously approved.

3. School/Operations Update

a. At 5:06PM, brief updates were provided by Ms. Fisher on the following:

Life Skills

- The cost of a much-needed upgrade to the East Harlem Life Skills Center is being investigated. Grant funding is being sought for this project. More details will be provided at future meetings.

MBJ Foundation

- NYCACS was chosen by this newly formed foundation as the recipient of a \$50,000 grant. They also made a soft commitment to potentially fund us moving forward for multi-year periods.

Crain's 2023 Notable Non-Profit Board Leaders

- NYCACS Trustee Ashley Garrett was awarded this honor for her work on the schools' behalf as well as her board service more broadly.

NYCACS 2023 Holiday Board Mixer

- This will be held at the home of Ashley Garrett on November 29th starting at 5:30pm. A paperless post invite is forthcoming.

b. Impact Catalyst

- At 5:09PM Ms. Lainer reviewed the meeting that she, Ms. Fisher and Ms. Sandler held with Impact Catalyst earlier in the day. Impact Catalyst has dug into what gaps and opportunities exist as we look at building the leadership team. They've gathered information from the Executive level staff, Heads of School, and mid-level positions to ensure they touched every level of leadership. They've begun to put together specified proposals for new leadership structures for the future. More information is forthcoming after Thanksgiving with a timeline and more details.

c. Giving Tuesday Gameplan

- At 5:14PM Ms. Fisher provided an update on the upcoming Giving Tuesday effort. Board members will be hearing from Ms. Poli shortly in an effort to maximize Trustee networks. The Giving Tuesday video was completed and will be shared separately. The donation page and messaging are being finalized.

d. NY State Education Department Safety Plan

- At 5:18 Ms. Fisher reviewed the NYCACS Safety Plan recently updated by Ms. Johnson and incorporating all elements required by the NY State Education Department. Some Trustees requested more time for review.
 - Action: At 5:21PM, Ms. Lainer made a motion to approve the updated Safety Plan policies provided there are no objections within the next four days. Mr. Saretsky seconded the motion at which point the board voted and the motion passed by majority with Ms. Livingston abstaining.

4. Finance Committee

a. FY23 Draft audited Financials and 990's

- At 5:23 Ms. Jones shared the results of the FY2023 audit already reviewed by the finance committee. The audit was clean with no management letter issued and no areas of concern identified by auditors.
- Ms. Jones requested that Trustees review the 990's before the end of this week as they need to be finalized before being filed in advance of the November 15th deadline.

b. Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERC)

- Our ERC filing is with TriNet and they will be submitting them shortly. The IRS has imposed a temporary pause on processing, and this could impact the timeline of receiving funds.

5. Governance Committee

a. Board Self Evaluation Survey

- At 5:51 Mr. Baum reviewed the Board Self Evaluation Survey results. He suggested that Trustees think about whether or not this survey is capturing what we want to capture and if there are additional questions it might make sense to add for next time. Ms. Lainer suggested that questions could be asked in a way that requires Trustees to challenge themselves more. Ms. Santiago suggested questions that address the Board as a whole rather than focusing only on individual participation. Ms. Fisher and Ms. Lainer both suggested that the ability to elaborate on the “why” of certain responses would be beneficial. Ms. Fisher highlighted some of the lower scores and encouraged Trustees to work toward increased participation and engagement in school events.

6. Executive Session

- At 6:01 Ms. Lainer made a motion to move into executive session to discuss a previously reviewed personnel matter. Mr. Shih seconded the motion at which point the Board voted unanimously to move into executive session.
- At 6:11 Ms. Lainer made a motion to move out of executive session. Ms. Florio seconded the motion at which point the Board voted unanimously to move out of executive session.

7. Closing Items

- At 6:12 Ms. Florio made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Baum seconded the motion at which point the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.