New Dawn Charter Schools Board of Trustees

August 13, 2024

11:00 a.m.: Board Meeting

New Dawn Charter High School
242 Hoyt Street
Brooklyn, NY 11217

New Dawn Charter High School II
89-25 161st Street
Jamaica, NY 11432
347-505-9101

Board Members present: Mr. Ronald Tabano, Chairperson, Ms. Jane Sun, Vice Chairperson, Mr. Brian Baer, Secretary, Ms. Katharine Urbati, Treasurer

Board Members Absent: Mr. Daniel Lewis, board member.

Staff Members/ Visitors Present: NDCS: Dr. Sara Asmussen, Executive Director; Mr. Jose Obregon, Director of Operations, Mr. Steve Sedaris, Attorney at Law

Mr. Tabano welcomed all the board and staff members to the meeting. Mr. Tabano then asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the August 2024 Board of Trustees Meeting Agenda.

I. Resolution: August 2024 Board Agenda—Mr. Ronald Tabano

Motion: Mr. Brian Baer motioned to accept and approve the August 2024, Board of Trustees meeting agenda.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the August 2024 Board of Trustees meeting agenda.

II. Resolution: July 2024 Minutes—Mr. Ronald Tabano

Mr. Tabano then asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the July 2024 Board of Board of Trustees Minutes.

Motion: Mr. Brian Baer motioned to accept and approve the July 2024, Board of Trustees minutes.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Katharine Urbati seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the July 2024 Board of Trustees minutes.

III. Queens Lease—Mr. Steve Sedaris, Attorney at Law

Commented [SA1]: Folks, should this much detail be in the minutes? Can we separate it out? Especially since this version goes to the state because of the Board vote for the new member.

Mr. Steve Sedaris explained to the board members that the first thing that will be done is to create a condo. The condo will consist of unit B1, which is the basement floor. The units including the first through the fourth, including the roof top, will be Unit B2. The units split up the ownership percentages such that unit B1 will be 13.28% and B2 86.72%. The goal will be that there will be no real estate taxes while the Friends of New Dawn is the direct tenant, and the owner of the condo lease holds interest. Mr. Sedaris explained to the board members that once the second and third amendment of the lease condo agreement are signed, he will submit those condo documents to the Attorney General for approval. New Dawn will be responsible for the payment of all the real estate taxes, including what Barone Management is responsible for. This includes any real estate tax increases. Once the condo agreement is approved, New Dawn will then get reimbursed for the actual tax payments that it made retroactive to when it first made the payment from the date that the third amendment is entered.

Mr. Tabano asked Mr. Sedaris what the timeline is for completion of the condo lease agreement to be approved by the state, city, and then go into effect. Mr. Sedaris replied that it can be between nine (9) months to one (1) year before everything is approved by the State and city. Ms. Urbati asked what would happen if New Dawn ceased to exist before the thirty (30) year term. Mr. Sedaris stated that none of the Board Members can be held liable. However, he also stated that the school itself can be held liable and that this was one of the inherent risks that was relevant to this condo-lease agreement.

Mr. Tabano asked the board if there was a motion to approve and accept the Queen's lease and the condominium agreement .

a. **Resolution:** Queens Lease and Condominium agreement

Motion: Mr. Brian Baer motioned to accept and approve the Queens Lease and Condominium agreement

Motion Seconded: Ms. Katharine Urbati seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the Queens Lease and Condominium agreement.

IV. Financials— Mr. Steve Ramkissoon- Director of Finance
Benchmark 4: Financial Condition
Benchmark 5: Financial Management

Mr. Tabano asked Ms. Urbati if she was able to look at the July 2024 Financials and Ms. Urbati said that she did and did not see anything that was of concern. Mr. Tabano then asked the board members if anyone had any questions or concerns regarding the July 2024 financials. There were no questions or concerns. Mr. Tabano then asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the July 2024 financials**.**

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve the July 2024 financials.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Brian Baer seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the July 2024 financials.

a. Update on Audit

Mr. Tabano asked Dr. Asmussen for an update on the upcoming audit. Dr. Asmussen stated that the auditors will be at the school tomorrow.

V. New Board Member - Dr. Asmussen

Dr. Asmussen reported to the board that she met in person with Mr. Jeffrey Casio. Dr. Asmussen stated that Mr. Casio lives in Jamaica, Queens and he has a large charter school portfolio in Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New York, and Arizona. Mr. Casio stated that he wants to be part of a board, and he wants to be on a board in his community. He is a graduate of Jamaica High School and spent four (4) years in the armed services. After leaving the service, he went into banking and has been in banking ever since. Dr. Asmussen stated that she believes that he is a good fit. Mr. Casio is also very interested in one of the Queen's school goals for next year which is getting the community more involved and getting a Parent Teacher Association formed.

Mr. Tabano also stated that he spoke with Mr. Casio, and he thinks that Mr. Casio will be helpful with the school's investment policy and especially managing the school's investments. Mr. Tabano stated that he believes that Mr. Casio is well experienced in that field and will be a good addition. Mr. Tabano then asked the board members if there was a motion to accept Mr. Jefferey Casio as a new board member.

a. Resolution: New board member

Motion: Mr. Brian Baer motioned to accept and approve Mr. Jeffrey Casio as a new board member on the New Dawn Charter School Board of Trustees.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Katharine Urbati seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve Mr. Jeffrey Casio as a new board member on the New Dawn Charter School Board of Trustees.

VI. Contracts/Policies— Dr. Sara Asmussen – Executive Director
Benchmark 1: Student Performance
Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning

Benchmark 5: Financial Management
Benchmark 6: Board Oversight & Governance

Dr. Asmussen explained to the board members that the Land Use Attorney will be used to file for a change converting the Mechanical Room on the rooftop floor to a classroom space. Dr. Asmussen stated that the land use attorney stated that this change is feasible and that he will be able to file asking for that change. Mr. Tabano then asked the board members if there was a resolution to retain the land use attorney for the purposes that Dr. Asmussen described.

a. Resolution: Land Use Attorney

Motion: Mr. Brian Baer motioned to accept and approve the retainment of the Land Use Attorney.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the retainment of the Land Use Attorney.

Mr. Tabano then asked the board members if there was a resolution to retain a lease attorney.

b. Resolution: Lease Attorney

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve the retainment of a Lease Attorney.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the retainment of a Lease Attorney.

Dr. Asmussen explained to the board the need to use the money available for the installation of the culinary kitchen in Queens sooner than later before time runs out. She explained that this why she is in favor of purchasing the kitchen equipment now. Mr. Brian Baer concurred with Dr. Asmussen’s assessment and stated that the company who the school will buy the equipment from will install it when the kitchen is ready. Mr. Tabano also mentioned that he is familiar with Johnson Equipment company, but he believes that since pricing is similar between the two bidding companies, going with the company that will install the equipment is the best course of action. He asked the board member for their thoughts. Ms. Urbati agreed that going with the company that will install the equipment sounds like the best option. Mr. Tabano then asked the board members if there was a resolution to use Island Equipment Company as the provider of the kitchen equipment

c. Resolution: Kitchen Equipment

Motion: Mr. Brian Baer motioned to accept and approve the kitchen equipment bid from Island Equipment Company.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Katharine Urbati seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the kitchen equipment bid from Island Equipment Company.

d. **Discussion: Barone Maximum Bid – Mr. Brian Baer**

Mr. Brian Baer informed the board members that an agreement including a GMP had been reached but there are a few details that still needed to be worked out. Mr. Baer further stated that the school's land use attorney would be reviewing the agreement within the next week to ensure that the necessary details of that agreement are finalized. Mr. Baer stated that he will keep the board appraised.

e. Resolution: Computer bids

Mr. Tabano then asked Mr. Obregon to speak to the board regarding the bids that he obtained for the purchase of new laptop computers for new staff coming on board. Mr. Obregon informed the board that in his experience, Dell offered better service for those laptops that needed repair. Therefore, he recommended that the board accept the Dell bid. Mr. Tabano then asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the bid from Dell, Inc. for the purchase of new laptop computers.

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve the bid from Dell, Inc. for the purchase of new laptop computers.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the bid from Dell, Inc. for the purchase of new laptop computers.

VII. Staff Recruitment—Mr. Ashish Abraham
Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning

a. Status of Current Hiring

Dr. Asmussen reported to the board that the Queens school has been looking for a math teacher for two (2) years. Dr. Asmussen stated that there are two (2) extremely strong candidates. The candidates have not been interviewed yet. Both candidates will be coming in for in-person interviews. If all goes well, the candidates will be hired by the end of the week. The new Project Director for the Stronger Connections grant is scheduled to conduct training for the Brooklyn staff this coming Thursday and Friday. The Project director will officially start on Thursday. Dr.

Asmussen also reported that she is still seeking an individual to head this grant at the Queens school.

1. **Brooklyn: Behavior Specialist (50% on Mental Health Grant)**

Dr. Asmussen confirmed that there were several interviews conducted and that a decision will be made within the next week.

2. **Queens: Behavior Specialist (50% on Mental Health Grant)**
   SPED (potentially 2), ELL, Math, PE/Health,

Dr. Asmussen reported to the board that there are two SPED teachers assigned to the Queens school and there are other candidates scheduled in the next two weeks to be interviewed for vacant positions at the Queens school. D. Asmussen stated that the goal is to have a full staff at the Queens school by September 5, 2024.

VIII. Student Recruitment—Mr. Ashish Abraham
Benchmark 6: Board Oversight & Governance
Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity

Dr. Asmussen reported that both schools are enrolling students.

IX. School Updates – Dr. Asmussen

a. **No changes focused on hiring staff and Regents**

Dr. Asmussen informed the board members that both schools are getting ready for Regents exams next week. Dr. Asmussen stated that she has some great interventions in place for next year. She stated that the schools will be using their Title III money to start a new ELL program. One of the objectives will be to spend the Title III funds to completely revamp the ELL program and re-write the curriculum. For the students who speak no English and are in the internship program, they will participate in a three (3) to four (4) hours of English class. Dr. Asmussen stated that the schools have the staff in place to do this. There are many ELL students who have well over 44 credits who transferred in from other schools because they were unable to pass the ELA Regents. These students will be taking the ELA Regents in six weeks and there is not enough time to get these students to increase their scores. Notwithstanding these challenges, Dr. Asmussen stated that both schools are doing everything possible to get these ELL students to pass the ELA Regents. Dr. Asmussen also reported to the board that this summer, there were stand-alone ELA Regents classes for ELL students specifically to deal with these issues.

X. Facilities—Dr. Sara Asmussen & Mr. Brian Baer

a. **Update on Kitchen work in Queens**

Dr. Asmussen reported that the kitchen work is going well. She also stated that she is feeling better now that the kitchen equipment can be ordered, and that maximum pricing is in effect or at least started and in the hands of the attorney. Dr. Asmussen also stated that demolition is ready to begin.

b. Update on roof in Brooklyn

Mr. Brian Baer stated the school is waiting on a revised price on the tiles. Mr. Baer also stated that a big concern is the sequence of delivery of the tiles and where the tiles can be stored because they are big and heavy. Mr. Baer also stated that storing them in a warehouse is going to be costly. Mr. Baer also stated that he is inquiring if the tiles can be delivered and stored on site, specifically in the cafeteria, and then relocate them to the roof when installation begins. Dr. Asmussen also stated that she requested pricing for the use of a crane to avoid bringing the tiles into the cafeteria and storing them there. Mr. Tabano agreed that this would be a better option than to bring them into the building and cause damage to the cafeteria floor.

c. TCO versus COO

Mr. Baer informed the board members that there was an email that Metropolis sent out earlier this morning asking GKV to sign a form. Mr. Baer also stated that the form has not come back from GKV yet and that he will wait another day before he reaches out to GKV. Mr. Baer further stated that he has provided all the documentation that the school has to Metropolis. Therefore Mr. Baer believes that this last document from GKV is all that is needed unless Metropolis informs the school that something else is needed.

Mr. Baer also confirmed that the TCO was applied for and hopefully the permanent COO will follow shortly thereafter the TCO is issued. Mr. Baer stated that one of the issues holding back the COO was that the property needed another inspection by both DOB and FDNY. Dr. Asmussen confirmed that the FDNY came out to conduct the Fire Exit sign inspection and all went well.

XI. New Business

Dr. Asmussen informed the board that the school will probably use some of the 3M dollars of revenue from last year to finish up the kitchen project.

XII. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

XIII. Adjournment

The next board meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, September 24, 2024. The board adjourned the meeting at 11:55 A.M.