

SYLVAN HEIGHTS SCIENCE CHARTER SCHOOL

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Monday, December 20, 2021

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Ed Jaroch at 5:36 pm. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, attendance of the board members was taken, and it was noted the meeting was being recorded.

Attendance (all members were in-person unless otherwise indicated):

Ed Jaroch, Margaret Burton Connors (virtual), Merita Marek, Chad Hotsko (virtual), Lyndsay Bryce (virtual), Debra Simpson-Buchanan (virtual) and Amechie Walker (virtual- joined at 5:39pm), Erica Monroe (virtual) were present. Nicole Marshall was absent. Staff present onsite included Susan Roth (Principal/ CAO) and Lori Lauver; staff participating virtually included Jessica Nordai, Melena Overdorf, Dominique Buterbaugh, Renai Corson, Rebecca Doty, and Ashley Roufos-Abbey. Dr. Leigh Dalton from Stock and Leader was also in attendance.

It was noted that the Board met in Executive Session to discuss personnel matters on Monday, December 13, 2021.

Approval of Agenda:

It should be noted that public notice was given for this meeting in accordance with Act 84 of 1986. The preliminary draft agenda has been submitted to the Board for approval. Additionally, the preliminary draft agenda is also posted to the school's website at www.shscs.org at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled board meeting. The school will post the approved agenda on the next business day following the scheduled board meeting.

It was noted that the agenda needed to be amended to include the following item under Old Business: Recommendation for the approval of a contract renewal for Susan Roth, Principal/ CAO from July 1, 2021- June 30, 2022 at the salary of \$89,223.75 with all other terms and conditions remaining unchanged.

May I have a motion to approve the amended agenda?

Motion: Mr. Ed Jaroch

Second: Mrs. Merita Marek

Discussion: There being none, the meeting continued.

Vote: 7-0

Result: The motion passed.

Recognition of Guests and Scheduled Speakers: There being no guests or scheduled speakers, the meeting continued.

Comment Period

- A. Public: There being none, the meeting continued.
- B. Staff: There being none the meeting continued.

Reports

Finance and Facilities Committee

- An update on the Line of Credit with Citizens Bank was provided. *Recommendation:* continue line of credit in the amount of \$100,000.00 at the fixed Simple SOFR rate. Note: SOFR means, for any day, an interest rate per annum, equal to the secured overnight financing rate published by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

Principal's Report

- School Calendar
 - Early Dismissal on December 23, 2021
 - Winter Break begins December 24, 2021
 - Students return to school, Monday January 3, 2022
 - School Closed: January 17, 2022 in honor of Martin Luther King Jr.
 - Last day of Marking Period 2 is January 18, 2022
- Recent threats to schools on social media and encouragement of school violence:
 - The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) were aware of numerous messages circulating on social media, primarily TikTok, regarding school shootings and bomb threats to schools that was to occur on December 17th.
 - These social media posts warned of threats not specific to Pennsylvania and did not contain specific threats, schools, actors, or locations.
 - Sylvan Heights Science Charter School DID NOT receive any threats.
 - Reminder to all to report any suspicious behavior to Safe2Say at (844) 723-2729, or info@safe2saypa.org, or online at www.safe2saypa.org. In the event of an emergency, please call 911.
- Masking Order
 - Pennsylvania Supreme Court struck down the Acting Secretary of Health's school masking order on December 10, 2021. As per the Pennsylvania Department of Education, school entities still possess the authority and are encouraged to require masks in their facilities as recommended by CDC. Masking in school settings minimizes the spread of COVID-19, particularly in settings where individuals and students are not vaccinated, and allows for reduced quarantining to keep individual students and staff in school.

- Since the Pennsylvania Department of Education recommends still wearing masks, students and staff will continue to wear masks to keep down the spread of any COVID-19.
- Following our Health and Safety Plan has kept us from having any additional spread of COVID-19 in our school.
- Homeless Liaison/School Counselor, Marty Stevens:
 - Mr. Stevens reminded the Board and Public that Sylvan Heights receives and reserves a portion of Title I Funds available to assist students identified as homeless with clothing, shoes, backpacks, and supplemental school supplies.
 - Homeless students are defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and includes: sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; living in emergency, transitional, or domestic violence shelters.
 - Families are encouraged to reach out to Mr. Stevens for assistance.

Federal Grant Updates: Lori Lauver, STEM/Federal Programs Coordinator

- **ARP ESSER Set-Aside (7%)-application has been submitted**
 - Learning Loss: \$71,148
 - Social Emotional/mental health supports to students through additional Licensed Social Workers services
 - consultant services for school climate survey, team building, and creation of organizational support systems based on survey results
 - development of scaffolded material containing grade-level content at below grade-level reading skills
 - incentives to retain and attract qualified staff
 - Summer Enrichment Programs: \$14,230 (supports supplies and staffing)
 - Comprehensive After-School Programs: \$14,230 (supports supplies and staffing)
- **ARP ESSER (90%)**
 - The application process has been refined given additional funding allocation and schoolwide data
- Mrs. Lauver shared with the members an overview of what the Federal Funds will be used for from this school year 2021-2022 through summer 2024. Mrs. Lauver explained how Sylvan Heights Science Charter School is supporting our students who have had learning loss due to COVID-19. Mrs. Lauver also explained how we are adding new programs into our school such as additional student academic, social-emotional, and behavioral supports; after school clubs; and summer clubs to help our students.
- The School is currently in the process of planning the summer programming to ensure the proper staffing and transportation for the programs. The School will target the kids that need the help the most for learning loss; and we will also have enrichment activities for students. The

programs offered by the School to address learning loss will be open to all students with targeted assistance for those students who have suffered the most learning loss resulting from COVID-19.

By Laws and Policies Committee

- It was reported that no meeting was held.

Family Advisory Committee

- It was reported that no meeting was held.

Personnel Committee

- It was reported that no meeting was held.

President

- There being no report, the meeting continued.

ITEMS FOR BOARD ACTION

By notice of the President, the following action items suggest a roll call vote. You will be recorded as voting in the affirmative for the motion unless you say “nay” or “I abstain”. Board Members are further advised that they must publicly announce and disclose the nature of any conflict of interest before the vote on the matter is taken.

A. A. CONSENT CALENDAR

1. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

- Approve the minutes from the November 15, 2021 Board of Trustees Meeting.

2. FISCAL ITEMS

- To approve the line of credit with Citizens Bank in the amount of \$100,000.00 at the fixed Simple SOFR rate.
- Approval of check numbers 2169 - 2188 and the listed ACH transactions for the month of November 2021.

3. PERSONNEL

- To accept the resignation of Tiara Hall effective December 2, 2021.
- To approve the hiring of Nickshon Wiggins, Building Aide, effective December 6, 2021, non-exempt employee status in the amount of \$25,500.

AGREEMENTS/CONTRACTS/POLICIES

- To approve the BEHAVIORAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES AGREEMENT, between Specialized Education of Pennsylvania, Inc., a Pennsylvania corporation (“SESI PA”), and Sylvan Heights Science Charter School (the “District”). SESI PA and the District for the 2021-2022 school year.

Approval of Consent Calendar

May I have a motion to approve the consent calendar as recommended?

Motion: Mrs. Margaret Burton Conners

Second: Mr. Chad Hotsko

Discussion: None

Vote: 7-0

Result: Motion passed

Old Business

- Renewal of Mrs. Susan Roth’s contract as Principal from 7-1-2021 through 6-30-2022 rate \$89,223.75 a 5% increase; all other terms of the contract remain the same.

Motion: Mrs. Merita Marek

Second: Mrs. Margaret Burton Conners

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote is as follows

Ed Jaroch: Yes

Margaret Burton Conners: Yes

Merita Marek: Yes

Chad Hotsko: Yes

Lyndsay Bryce: Yes

Amechie Walker: no response

Debra Simpson-Buchanan: Yes

Nicole Marshall: Absent

Erica Monroe: Yes

Vote: 7-0

Results: Motion Passed

New Business

1. Motion to authorize Stock and Leader to initiate and assist the Board and Administration in a Request for Proposal process to secure property management services.

Motion: Mr Ed Jaroch

Second: Mrs. Merita Marek

Discussion: None

Vote: 8 - 0

Results: Motion Passed

2. Motion to authorize Stock and Leader to initiate and assist the Board and Administration in a Request for Proposal process to secure financial advising services.

Motion: Mr. Ed Jaroch

Second: Mrs. Margaret Burton Conners

Discussion

- Mrs Merita Merick asked if Stock and Leader was needed for non legal work in financial services. Stating that the cost would be more for a lawyer firm than it would to hire someone who is not legal. The question was raised due to the cost of legal firms vs non-legal firms. The cost of legal work is a lot more than non-legal.
- Dr. Leigh Dalton, Stock and Leader, stated that even though they are a legal firm the school does get a reduced rate but their rate is always the same whether they are working on legal or non-legal issues.
- Mrs. Merita Marek asked if it was necessary to engage the services of our Solicitor in the facilitation of the RFP process. There was discussion regarding the role of the Solicitor in the RFP process for the financial advising services and property management services and the costs associated with the drafting and review of the RFP documentation.
- Dr. Leigh Dalton, Stock and Leader, responded that, while the RFP does not need to be drafted by a legal firm, there are certain legal requirements that must be met within the documents. As such, the documents should and with the recommendation of legal review. The role of Stock and Leader would be to facilitate the process; rates for services would be at the general rate for services.

Vote: 8-0

Results: Motion Passed

3. Motion to authorize Stock and Leader to work with Administration to secure a temporary Administrator to serve from January to June of 2022 at a rate not to exceed \$600 per day.

Motion: Mr. Ed Jaroch

Second: Mrs. Merita Marek

Discussion:

- The intent is to provide additional administrative support in recognition of the amount of program planning and implementation to be done prior to the summer.
- Mrs. Debra Simpson-Buchanan voiced concern that the \$600 a day for an administrator is quite expensive and asked if a service such as STS be utilized in this process. Dr. Leigh Dalton stated that the current rate for administrators is \$300-\$600 a day. Discussion included the role of the Solicitor's firm in facilitating the search process, to include inquiry to various professional educational associations and temporary employment agencies.

Roll Call Vote

Mr. Ed Jaroch: Yes
Mrs. Margaret Burton Conners: Yes
Mrs. Marita Marek: Yes
Mr. Chad Hotsko: Yes
Mrs. Lindsey Bryce: Yes
Mr. Amechie Walker: No answer
Mrs. Debra Simpson-Buchanan: Yes
Mrs. Erica Monroe: Yes

Results: Motion passed with a vote of 7-0

4. Motion to update the Health and Safety Plan to state, "Masks are required for all Sylvan Heights Science Charter School students, staff, and visitors."

Motion: Mr. Ed Jaroch

Second: Mrs. Margaret Burton Conners

Discussion:

- Mrs. Margaret Burton Conner asked if the Health and Safety plan of wearing masks included when students are on the bus. Mrs. Roth clarified that all students must continue to wear masks while on a bus as the Federal mask mandate for public transportation remains in effect.

Vote: 8-0

Results: Motion Passed

5. Motion to provide salary adjustments for actively certified Sylvan Heights Science Charter School teachers in the amount of \$1,000 for masters degrees; \$750 for the completion of 24 college credits; and \$500 for certified bachelor's degrees, to be added to their base salaries and to commence during the second pay period in January 2022.

Motion: Mr. Ed Jaroch
Second: Mr. Chad Hotsko

Discussion:

- Mrs. Merita Marek inquired about the logistics of the salary adjustment to the base salary. Mr. Ed Jaroch stated that the increase will be paid between now and when the fiscal year ends in June with payments to be included the paychecks, not as a lump sum.

Roll Call Vote

Mr. Ed Jaroch: Yes
Mrs. Margaret Burton Conners: Yes
Mrs. Marita Marek: Yes
Mr. Chad Hotsko: Yes
Mrs. Lindsey Bryce: Yes
Mr. Amechie Walker: Yes
Mrs. Debra Simpson-Buchanan: Yes
Ms. Erica Monroe: Yes

Results: Motion passed with a vote of 8-0.

- The Board agreed to permit an individual to make a public comment after the public comment period. As the matter regarded an individual student, the individual was referred to the School's administration.

Adjournment

The next meeting will be held on Monday January 24, 2022. The meeting was adjourned at 6:31 pm.