



Thursday, December 16, 2021 @6:02 p.m.  
Board Meeting via Zoom

Meeting ID: 843 0366 9838  
Passcode: ab0E#q

### AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Adoption of November minutes
3. CEO Report
  - a) Lavinia Group Questions
  - b) Harlem School of the Arts contract approval
  - c) Lincoln Barretta contract approval
4. Key Metrics
5. School Report
6. Board Committee Reports
7. Public Comment
8. Adjournment

## Trustees Present

Richard Bayles
Gretchen Pusch
Justin Tolliver
Noel Acey
Peter Low
Amanda Low
Tanya Hoffler-Moore
Reby Gulcan
Susan Reid
Jonathan Stearns

### Storefront Academy Staff:

Dr. Nicole Campbell, CEO  
Mr. Stuart Wolf, Director of Finance  
Ms. Natalia Perez, Director of Communications  
Ms. Carol Singletary, South Bronx Principal  
Ms. Taleema Chesney, Harlem Principal  
Ms. Amia Fisher, Dean of Harlem  
Ms. Maria Ruiz, CEO Executive Assistant  
Ms. Yoselyn Fernandez, South Bronx Assistant Principal

## **1. Call to Order**

- Mr. Bayles called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

## **2. Adoption of November Minutes**

- Mr. Bayles called for a motion to adopt the minutes from the November board meeting. The board discussed the minutes and whether the discussions of the previous meeting caused a confusion of what the start date for the terms for the board members (voted upon at that meeting). The understanding is that the terms for the board members all begin at the date of the annual meeting.

- A motion to adopt the minutes was made. Mr. Bayles proposed to adopt the minutes as they were, but if there was any information regarding the issue with the board terms after consultation with SUNY, they could be further amended.

- A minor correction to the minutes was proposed and accepted, wherein Mr. Bayles spoke on behalf of Ms. Susan Reid, not Tanya Hoffler-Moore, when discussing board members' willingness to remain on the board.

- With no further discussion or objections, the minutes were accepted.

## **3. CEO Report**

- There were 8 new students since the last meeting.
- There are currently 285 students enrolled in the South Bronx Campus.
- There are currently 76 students enrolled in the Harlem Campus.
- There had been 8 more new students enrolled.
- The general student attendance was of 87-88%. An attendance committee was formed and will meet weekly to address school COVID closures. One Second Grade and one Fifth Grade were closed by the Health Department due to positive COVID cases therein. Previously, all COVID positive cases had been adults; now, some students have also contracted COVID.
- When a student has been sent home mandatorily, some parents choose to also keep their other children home who are attending the Academy. Although they may engage in virtual learning for their grades, these additional students may be marked absent because the parents did not specifically notify the specific campus that their child (other than those sent home mandatorily) would

attend virtual instruction.

- Some schools in the area are already engaging virtual classes due to COVID, and some already plan to not have students return in person the first week of January. The Academy leaders were in discussions whether to mandate all-student mandatory testing before students return in person, after at least one week of virtual school when reopening in January.

- Mr. Bayles called for a motion to renew the contract with Talbott Consulting, which was made and seconded. The board discussed whether the renewal had been allocated in the current budget; there were consulting fees in the budget, but not specifically to this contract or company. The current consulting budget was \$150K over budget due to the engagement with Lavinia Group, but the investment was deemed beneficial to the Academy, and there was a working relationship from previous contracts with the company. Some of the costs in this contract stemmed from the renewal of such contract, which would not be an annual expenditure. Further, the budget would be balanced when federal grants and aids are received, which would offset some of the cost of the Lavinia Group contract. The board discussed whether it was possible to find the funds for this contract elsewhere in the budget instead of going over budget in this area.

- The motion was amended to include approval of the Talbott Consulting contract, providing that the administration would look for savings to pay for it. There being no further discussion, nor any opposition or abstentions, the contract was approved.

- Mr. Bayles called for a motion to establish a contract with The Harlem School of the Arts, its cost to be covered by Mr. Stearns in its first iteration, which was made and seconded. The terms of the contract were clarified and remain as previously discussed as stated.

- Without further discussion, nor any opposition or abstentions, the contract was approved.

- Mr. Bayles called for a motion to approve the contract with Lincoln Baretta for the first quarter of 2021-2022, which was made and seconded.

- The board discussed that this contract can be covered under the CSP Grant.

- The board discussed whether the contract underwent bids. This contract did not undergo bids because their specific qualifications and ability to

accomplish the Academy's goal made it a single-source entity.

- Without further discussion, nor any opposition or abstentions, the contract was approved.

- Mr. Bayles called for a motion to approve a contract expansion with Lavinia Group, which was made and seconded.

- The board discussed whether to add a math curriculum contract with Lavinia Group, given that improving math education is paramount and that was a subject in which students needed improvement and the Academy needed assistance with.

- The total upfront cost of the math curriculum would not reflect in further years; the cost could be reduced after the initial investment given that seats for cadre's professional development and training were a one-time expense.

- Another idea to reduce costs was discussed and involved sending one teacher per grade to the professional development instead of sending every teacher, making those who attend trainers for the rest of the staff. This would greatly reduce the one-time, initial cost of the contract expansion that would include a math curriculum.

- The board discussed whether to place other bids with other companies that offer similar services. Despite a potential cost reduction, it might not be beneficial to utilize different companies and programs because the instructional programming would be uneven, and Lavinia Group includes hands-on consultants who actively participate in the classroom and provide invaluable advice and monitoring. Further, some of the skills already implemented for the ELA curriculum, with which the teachers were already familiar, would transfer to any new curriculum added to their portfolio.

#### **4. Key Metrics**

- Already covered in CEO report.

## 5. School Report

- Already contained in the CEO report.

## 6. Committee Reports

### **Academic Committee**

- Already contained in the CEO report.

### **Development Committee**

- The Committee needs more people in order to work in/with the two campuses.
  - The board discussed events in person versus virtual, given the current state of COVID contagion.
  - Bowling, luncheon, and other fundraising ideas have been discussed, but they are all constrained and pending due to COVID concerns.
  - There will be more communication between the board and the campus leadership teams to coordinate events and support.

### **Governance Committee**

- Three seats remained open, and this would be a focus next year.

### **Finance Committee**

- There would be approximately \$772K cash-on-hand estimated by the end of the year, which would include some funds derived from CSP.
- The Academy credit card is currently under and linked with the Children's Storefront entity, who has asked the Academy that this be rectified.
  - Mr. Bayles asked for a motion to allow the Finance Committee to contact Chase Bank and made this change or update to its credit card and account. The motion was made, seconded, there was no further discussion, and the motion was granted with no opposition or abstentions.
- There had been a misunderstanding because of a previous debt from

2004, totaling \$250K, with another organization. Said organization is holding the Academy accountable due to the Academy sharing its EIN with Children's Storefront. This might result in some monies being withheld until the issue is cleared. The issue was being addressed with the Children's Storefront's executive director and should be resolved.

- Mr. Bayles called for a motion to approve hiring a firm for the Audit Committee, at their request, in order to analyze the Academy's internal controls and financial policies. This was based on an email proposal sent by Mr. Bayles to the board on 2 December 2021. There was a motion, which was seconded, there was no further discussion nor abstentions or objections, and the motion was approved.

### **Real Estate Committee**

- Lease renewal conversations with the Children's Storefront were still ongoing, and a more complete report should be available by the next meeting.
- The audit committee was still ongoing.

### **7. Public Comments**

- There were no public comments.

### **8. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.