

Board of Trustees

Gabrielle Apollon (Vice President)
Ankur Dalal (President)
Katie Embree
Maureen Higgins (Treasurer)
Mirlande Joachim
Kristopher John
Salone Kapur (Secretary)
Lindsey Moschet
Jennifer Ng
Elizabeth Pernick



St HOPE Leadership Academy Board of Trustees Board Meeting

MINUTES

December 14, 2023 from 6:30-8:00 pm
Meeting Conducted In-Person and Virtually

- **Welcome**

Call to Order

Ankur Dalal	Absent (Excused)
Katie Embree	Absent (Excused)
Gabrielle Apollon	Present (Virtual – address posted)
Maureen Higgins	Present (Virtual – address posted)
Mirlande Joachim	Present
Kristopher John	Present (Virtual – address posted)
Salone Kapur	Absent (Excused)
Jennifer Ng	Present
Lindsey Moschet	Present (Virtual – address posted)
Elizabeth Pernick	Present (Virtual – address posted)

Also present at the meeting: Meghann Persenaire, Principal. The meeting took place at SHLA and via videoconference.

- **Public Comment**

No requests for public comment were received.

- **Consent Agenda**

Minutes from the November 17, 2023 Board meeting were unanimously approved by the Board.

- **Nominating Committee**

- Ms. Persenaire reported that Ms. Kapur is currently on maternity leave and would be out until March. As Ms. Kapur is the Secretary, Ms. Persenaire asked for a volunteer to take Ms. Kapur's place. Any interested Board member was asked to contact Ms. Persenaire if interested.
- *Prospective Board Candidate:* Ms. Persenaire referenced the minutes of the Board retreat, noting a discussion around the possibility of an alumni representative to the Board. She shared that the Leadership Team identified a potential candidate. Prior to reaching out to the potential candidate and requesting their resume, Ms. Persenaire will share a more detailed summary of Leadership Team's discussion and process for identifying this prospective Board candidate at the next meeting.
- *Enrollment Committee:* Ms. Persenaire referenced the minutes of the Board retreat, noting a discussion around potentially launching an Enrollment Committee to further address the current enrollment challenges. The Board confirmed this is the desired next step and that the committee will meet two times between the December and February Board meetings and report back to the Board at the February meeting. **A motion to establish an Enrollment Committee with Kristopher John, Jennifer Reynoso Ng, Lindsey Moschet,**

and Maureen Higgins as members and Mirlande Joachim as chair was unanimously approved by the Board.

- **Finance Committee**

- *Review of Retreat Minutes:* The Board reviewed the minutes of the Board retreat held on November 18, 2023.
- *Scholarship Account and Operating Budget:* As a follow-up to a discussion during the retreat around how the school might better utilize its scholarship investment to address the fiscal challenges created by low enrollment, Ms. Persenaire stated that she met with Dr. Constance Bond and CSBM to discuss possible options. CSBM shared that, given the enrollment challenges faced by most charter schools in NYC, it is now common for schools to operate in the red and utilize their cash on hand, including past surplus. It continues to create reporting issues as the DOE budget templates are not designed to account for operating budgets that use surplus in this way, but it is no longer considered questionable practice. She also noted that the school's investment policy as written gives the Board broad discretion on how to direct these funds. CSBM recommended that, if the Board moves in the direction of using the funds in the investment account for more than scholarships, the Board should specifically earmark items in the budget. They recommended that the school decide how much to draw down and for what purpose. The Board agreed to continue this discussion at the January meeting.
- *Current Surplus in Operating Account:* Ms. Persenaire shared that there is currently \$248,000 of surplus cash from 21-11 and 22-23 in the operating account (\$144K from 21-22 and \$104K from 22-23) that has not been moved to the scholarship account. In the same meeting with CSBM referenced in the previous agenda item, CSBM recommended that we keep the cash on hand and potentially spend down some of the surplus to fund student programming that had been cut due to enrollment issues. Ms. Persenaire recommended that the Board approve \$148,000 of the \$248,000 combined surplus to be utilized this fiscal year, with \$90K being earmarked to reinstate field trips, including college trips, and \$25K being earmarked for student events. The Board had additional questions around the potential impact of operating in the red on charter renewal. Ms. Persenaire will meet with CSBM to address this question and report to the Board at the January meeting.

- **Accountability Committee**

- *Additional Dashboard Analysis:* Ms. Persenaire shared the primary reason for low attendance in November was illness, including a rise in COVID, RSV, and the flu. In addition, she described a new buddy system the school launched to address post-COVID chronic absenteeism.
- *November Dashboard:* Ms. Persenaire reviewed the remaining items on the November Dashboard.

- **Principal Update**

- Ms. Persenaire shared a summary of a recent impactful restorative conversation between a scholar and a teacher that stemmed from the current political situation in the Middle East.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

I, Lindsey Moschet, do hereby certify that I am the duly qualified and filling in for the acting Secretary of St HOPE Leadership Academy, a New York education corporation and that the above is a true and complete copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of the said corporation held on December 14, 2023 at which quorum was present throughout. (December 14, 2023)