

**FOLK ARTS-CULTURAL TREASURES CHARTER SCHOOL
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

1023 Callowhill Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123

Wednesday, November 16, 2022, 6:30 p.m.

Via Zoom Meeting (Zoom Invitation posted on website)

MINUTES

Board Present: :Pooja Agarwal, Leana Cabral, Selina Morales, Nancy Nguyen, Neeta Patel, Thierry Saintine, Allaire Wohlgemuth

Board Absent: Jeff Koung, Xu Lin, Alan Phan

Staff Present: David Brown, Pheng Lim, Ellen Somekawa

Public Present: Lily Cavanagh, Heather Green, Jen Lee, Sara Mrljak, Lucy Strother, Linda Wai, Shelly Wen, Rachel Ziebel, and 30 others.

I. Call to Order: Selina Morales

II. Public Comment

- Rachel Ziebel: Several of us have met with all of the staff over the past several weeks. We found that most staff members would like to form a union. We are hoping that you will voluntarily recognize our union. We will file for an election this week. Will retract filing for an election if they hear from us after tomorrow. Happy to set up a discussion through a point of contact. [Read letter: Rachel Ziebel, Lily Cavanagh, Jen Lee, Lucy Strother, Linda Wai, Heather Green, Sara Mrljak]
- Selina Morales: Often during public comment we don't respond because the board needs time to consider. I'm hearing there is a request for a decision from the Board and would like clarification about that. The Board won't meet again until mid-December.
- Lily Cavanagh: We're looking for a response as soon as possible.
- Ellen Somekawa: Would the staff be open to a conversation with hearing the different perspectives?
- Jen Lee: We would not want to wait until the Board meeting. We would want any forum to be as soon as possible. Could we file for the election and also have the conversation?
- Allaire Wohlgemuth: Is one of you a point of contact? Could it be the week after the holiday or does it mean in the next 48 hours? Once you file, when does an election happen?
- Rachel Ziebel: We will still file for the election and can retract it later.
- Leana Cabral: Would the election be held by the NLRB?
- Pheng Lim: Can you clarify who was included or not included?
- Rachel Ziebel: The only people not spoken to are people who supervise others.
- Lily Cavanagh: And also T. David who has access to sensitive financial information who could not be included in the union.
- Pheng Lim: Was T. Trish asked since she is not a supervisor? [no, but will be]
- Lisa Pankey: Is it required that Admin form their own separate union? I was part of the PFT when I was in the School District.

- Rachel Ziebel: Admin would be welcome to form their own union but would not be part of the staff union. No one would be required to join.
- Selina Morales: Can we set up points of contact who can set up the forum for discussion, find a date and let everybody know. Having a facilitator would be a good idea. We would have a chance in that moment to have a conversation about what is on people's minds. It sounds like the petition will be submitted to advance a vote, pending a decision from the board about voluntarily accepting the union. Let Ellen know who the point of contact will be.
- Allaire Wohlgemuth: I appreciate the way you brought this to us. And want you to know that we want to address your needs.
- Shelly Wen: I am employed by the AFT and have been working with the organizing committee. facts.asce@gmail.com

III. Presentation on the Teachers' Salary Scale

Comments by the Salary Scale Committee

Thierry Saintine

A little bit of history. The committee dates back to last May, and we have been meeting a couple of times per month since then. I know that I announced that we would have a proposal to share last month. We understood the urgency, but we realized that we needed more time to check our numbers and analysis and were not ready to present a proposal until today. We want to acknowledge and appreciate the hard work and commitment of the teachers.

Presentation

Ellen and David

Discussion:

- Allaire Wohlgemuth: Where do teachers like T. Jill and T. Janice fall ? [Full time curriculum coordinators are not on the salary scale]
- Nancy Nguyen: When was the last time the scale was revised? [2019]
- Nancy Nguyen: I understand the question of what level of risk and what are the factors that would go into a decision. What are the consequences that FACTS may have had to do when faced like something like this in the past? What are the consequences of overestimation of revenues? Another part of the Development work was talking about the ongoing idea and plan around expansion. Therefore all dollars would have to be raised; none of the funds from the reserve can be touched; is that correct?
 - We spend about \$600,000 per month. So \$2 million is not a lot of money to have in reserve. Also the monthly spending varies by season. At the start of the school year, we spend about \$800,000 per month. We want to have three months of operating income in an emergency reserve at any time.
 - A fund balance is not money in the bank. It is our current assets, money owed to us, minus liabilities.
 - There was a time in 2012-13, when there was a big reduction in per pupil allocation. FACTS had a somewhat healthy reserve that we spent down over the years. But we did have to freeze staff pay. We also had to lay people off and it was extremely painful. These were cuts during the Corbett years.

- We need to have a bigger cushion to weather a storm that could come. The per pupil allocation is outside of our control. We now have a little bit of warning due to changes in policy that limit the School District's ability to claw back funding already granted.
- Also there are impacts on the program. What are the non-negotiables of the FACTS mission? If the structural deficit catches up with us, what are the programmatic cuts that we would be forced to make? There was a heartbreaking moment in the past when we had to cut the heritage Chinese program at FACTS. Just like any non-profit, there is so much we can't know about our funding picture. We are responsible about how we manage our funds. But we are also committed to increasing teacher compensation.
- Thierry Saintine: As a member of the Salary Scale Committee, I have been looking at these deficits longer than others. But we are not in panic time. It's why we took so long. We wanted to be as responsible as we could be while at the same time living up to our commitment to increase compensation to teachers. Structural deficit is growing at a somewhat responsible rate. At the end of our last salary scale meeting, we discussed that it's time to revisit our strategic planning process that was interrupted by the pandemic.
- David Brown: The task at hand here was the Teachers' Salary Scale. The budgeting process begins in January. It was not the task of the committee to revisit the compensation of all staff.
- Heather Green: It is a frequent thought and top of mind consideration that the Teacher Salary Scale discussion is not inclusive of all staff and that all staff were not included in the teacher bonuses. We support equity across the board for all people called teacher.

IV. Principal's Report

Pheng Lim

- Today was Honor our Elders Day. We had over 40 elders who came to visit
- Price Waterhouse Cooper's Coding Class for middle schoolers: the feedback from teachers is that the students have been enjoying it
- Algebra 1: is a criteria for eligibility to some high schools. We want to offer Algebra 1 in order to make FACTS more competitive. We are planning to add this option for the 2023-24 year.

Executive Director's Report

Ellen Somekawa

- Recruitment and enrollment
 - Theories: there are a lot of people who have been moving out of Philadelphia and to the suburbs or to southern states. Some people are stating that they no longer feel safe at FACTS due to the lack of yellow school buses for middle school students. Changes in the high school admissions process have also created stresses among parents.
 - Can the board help with outreach for enrollment?
- Staff would like updates on expansion. We will share updates when we have them. The Board will be working on Strategic Planning again. The

context of our plan has changed since the pandemic and with so many changes in the world.

V. Approval of the Minutes

1. BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves the Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes of October 19, 2022.

Moved: Neeta Patel

Seconded: Pooja Agarwal

Voted yes: Pooja Agarwal, Selina Morales, Neeta Patel, Thierry Saintine, Allaire Wohlgemuth

Abstained: Leana Cabral, Nancy Nguyen

VI. Finance Report

Finance Committee Report

Neeta Patel

A few patterns are emerging. We have more students than we had enrolled at this time last year, but our revenue is down because our per pupil allotment is down. It's down about \$90,000 this month and it will keep accumulating. We have a reserve. We are earning a little more interest on our savings. Expenses are up; inflation is hurting. We had some unplanned expenses including the play yard repairs and replacing some condensers in our HVAC. Legal expenses are also up. We are not proposing to revise the budget. We resumed the student activity fee that helps defray costs of activities such as Play Day, ritual events, and some field trips. Our rate of collections for the activity fee are down this year. We received a grant from the Neubauer Family Foundation that helps fund the curriculum based field trips.

2. BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves the financial statements of October 30, 2022.

Moved: Thierry Saintine

Seconded: Nancy Nguyen

Voted Yes: Pooja Agarwal, Leana Cabral, Selina Morales, Nancy Nguyen, Neeta Patel, Thierry Saintine, Allaire Wohlgemuth

VII. Acceptance of the Audit

The Board's role in audit review

David Brown

Presentation by the Audit Committee

Neeta Patel

Audit Committee included: Neeta Patel, Allaire Wohlgemuth and James Wang. The Audit is an independent review of our internal controls and any management issues. It includes a single audit of our federal funds and also a general audit. An independent auditor comes and reviews our books and our procedures. David is a one man shop of a multimillion dollar organization. We have enough checks and balances in our organization that no concerns were raised. There are changes in accounting standards so there are certain changes in how rents are recorded. It remains a challenge to show the liability for PSERS; every school has to show an exorbitant liability from PSERS. We have a clean audit. The audit

committee recommends the Board accept the audit so this public facing document can be posted.

3. BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School accepts the audited financial statements for the 2021-22 fiscal year.

Moved: Neeta Patel

Seconded: Allaire Wohlgemuth

Voted Yes: Pooja Agarwal, Leana Cabral, Selina Morales, Nancy Nguyen, Neeta Patel, Thierry Saintine, Allaire Wohlgemuth

VIII. Committee Reports

- Nominations Committee Selina
 - Request for recommendations of new board members or individual relationships to cultivate. Beginning the process to bring on two new board members to start the new fiscal year.
- Policy Committee Pooja
 - No report
- Development Committee Alan/Allaire
 - We have almost completed the handwritten thank you notes for sponsors for the 5K. There has been discussion about what fundraising needs to look like. The committee is intending to do more research on capital campaigns.

IX. Other Action Items

4. BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves contracting with the following employee for the 2022-23 school year:

Alondra Rosales, Teacher, annual salary of \$54,042

Moved: Neeta Patel

Seconded: Leana Cabral

Voted Yes: Pooja Agarwal, Leana Cabral, Selina Morales, Nancy Nguyen, Neeta Patel, Thierry Saintine, Allaire Wohlgemuth

X. Executive Session

Discussing a personnel matter

XI. Return to Public Session

XII. Adjournment

Moved: Allaire Wohlgemuth

Seconded: Pooja Agarwal

Voted Yes: Pooja Agarwal, Leana Cabral, Selina Morales, Nancy Nguyen, Neeta Patel, Thierry Saintine, Allaire Wohlgemuth