

**John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy Charter School
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**

Date: July 20, 2023

Time: 10:00 AM

Place: 17 Battery Pl., 1st Floor, New York, NY 10004

Members Present:

In-Person: Ronald Tabano

Virtual: Harvey Newman, Lawrence Ng, Richard Levine, and Dana Jackson

Members Absent: Evgenia Soldatos, Michael Russo

Call to Order: Mr. Newman called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM on July 20, 2023.

Report of the Chairperson

The Board accepts the absence of Evgenia Soldatos and Michael Russo.

The minutes summarizing the June 15, 2023 board meeting were disseminated prior to the meeting. There are no questions.

Motion: Mr. Levine makes the motion to accept the June 15, 2023 minutes.

Second: Ms. Jackson seconded the motion.

Vote: Unanimous.

Report of the CEO and Principal

Graduation Recap – Mr. Tabano reported that we had another successful graduation that went extremely well. He commended the venue and mentioned that we had a really good turnout as well as the speeches of the guest speaker Cheryl Payne and the students. By the end of August 2023, we will have about 85 graduates for the year which we are immensely proud of.

Regents Test Results for 2022-2023 – Mr. Tabano then discussed the numbers for the regents test result scores. He mentioned that in some cases there weren't many tests given because a lot of students had waivers. In ELA for the English regents, 43 out of 44 students passed the test which turns to be 97%. In Algebra, all 13 students passed the test. For science, 2 out of 3 students

passed. For global history, all 14 students who participated in the test, passed and, for US history all 4 students passed. Mr. Tabano concluded that our regent scores were really commendable and that not only did the students pass, but they passed with at least a score of 65 or better. He reported that this is proficient and will result in students qualifying for a regent diploma. Mr. Tabano also mentioned that we will be reporting these results to the city in our interim assessment for the year, which will be sent over to the City in coming days.

Update on Summer Program – Mr. Tabano reported that the summer programs are going well and that our senior students who need credits to graduate this summer, are attending all classes. For our location in the Bronx, we have a supplemented summer program which is known as Summer Boost.

Summer Boost – This is the summer program which is supported by Bloomberg for all schools that are open in the summer. Our Bronx location is part of this program, which started last year where they are allowing our ninth graders to attend summer school though it was originally intended only for grade K-8. Mr. Tabano reported that approximately 20 students enrolled in the program and that we have to make sure we get at least 16 students to follow through the entire summer with a decent attendance. He then went in to detail regarding the student internships, which our students have to be either attending summer classes or participating in an internship this summer. Mr. Tabano ended this topic by saying he is very happy with the state of our current summer programs.

State Allocation – Mr. Tabano reported that we will be getting some money back from the State. There will be some calls made by Renaissance with more details on how to receive the money. This money is regarding the state allocation for last year. Mr. Tabano then mentioned that we did get a new allocation for this year and that if the process in retrieving that allocation is going to be anything like last year's, it will be a nightmare to go through again. We are currently still waiting for the last steps in this process as the issue is not on our end. Mr. Tabano assured that he will have Renaissance reach out to us and update us going forward with the next steps.

New Teachers – Mr. Tabano shared that we hired 2 new teachers. One for the Bronx location, Seth, who will be teaching English. For the NY campus, that will be Greg, who will be teaching Global. Looking ahead to our September reopening, this will free up teachers to support the other teachers who have particularly high numbers of special education students. This will eventually result in more flexibility so that every high needs class will have 2 teachers available. Mr. Tabano ended this topic by sharing that this is part of the September reopening plan and to make sure that we are allocating additional teachers for the right core classes.

August Regents – Mr. Tabano reported that we have some students who will participate in the August regents. The numbers probably won't be high but we have ordered the regents to take place on August 16th and 17th. This will conclude all students who still need credits for graduation to be completed.

Reopening Plans for September – Mr. Tabano shared the first day of school which will be on September 7th. He mentioned that we plan to have a field day which will include the students and staff of both campuses. Mr. Tabano is hopeful to receive a permit of the field located across the street from the Bronx campus where we plan to have activities and a barbecue. He mentioned that this event hasn't taken place since the pandemic and he looks forward to going back to that as it will bring more unity among both campuses. Mr. Tabano then reported that we are expanding our after school programs. He will go into details in the next board meeting which will be held in August, where he'll discuss the goals for the reopening and the new school year and any other agenda items that might be essential for the school.

Board Comments

Mr. Newman questioned the leadership roles in the Bronx location which currently belong to Ms. Mitchell. Mr. Tabano answered that Ms. Mitchell will stay in this role till the end of the summer program, which is August 18th. Ms. Larosa will be taking over for Ms. Mitchell as the new assistant principal. Mr. Tabano mentioned that Ms. Larosa has already assumed some responsibilities but she will continue to work closely with Special Education along with her other duties as she is very good at that. Furthermore, Mr. Tabano reported that Michael Timar, who has been part of JVL Wildcat for quite some time now, will be promoted as well. He is currently an English teacher, but he will become the new support for Ms. Larosa. Mr. Tabano reported that the transition between Ms. Mitchell and Ms. Larosa is going well as both staff have been working together for quite some time and Ms. Larosa will be sure to bring in some new perspectives. Mr. Tabano would like Ms. Larosa to update Ms. Sakosky and himself every month and then gradually every other month to discuss her plans as the new assistant principal.

Mr. Newman wanted an update regarding the open house enrollment for September recruitment, which was mentioned in the last board meeting. He questioned if there will be any activities regarding this during this summer. Mr. Tabano responded by saying that we do have some people starting to stream in during the month of July. In August, he mentioned it will pick up gradually. Mr. Tabano reported that the Bronx campus recently had an open house where they welcomed about 12 families. He mentioned that the person who has been going to different sites, visiting homes and schools has been doing the recruitment process. This person is in charge of filtering in students and referring them to our school. Mr. Tabano mentioned that in the months of August and September, there will be a lot more referrals so we will most likely see an

influx of students happening then. He shared that even though the month of July is slow, we have been recruiting one or two students per week.

Report of the CFOO

Fiscal Update – Ms. Sakosky reported that we are still in the process of closing our books and preparing for the year end audit. However, she did share a preliminary financial statement to the board that is a draft version. In that that, it shows that we have a small increase to our fund balance of approximately \$240,000. Ms. Sakosky emphasized that this is not finalized yet, however, this is aligning with what she had projected for the year even though we have not recorded our June revenues yet. Ms. Sakosky shared that we are still in the process of finalizing the all expenditures. Ms. Sakosky will meet with the auditors after she receives all approvals in terms of accruing the ratification bonus for the UFT contract. She did include the 3% increase that is retroactive to September, but is not sure whether or not we would be accruing the additional \$51,000 signing bonus.

Ms. Sakosky reported on the 21st Century after school program stating that this has started in July, however we are still waiting for the official award notification. Ms. Sakosky has been in correspondence regarding attending mandatory meetings which are necessary for the contract administration. Furthermore, Ms. Sakosky has proceeded with interviewing candidates for the Program Director position for the 21st Century Grant. She shared that we will also be working with C.E.I., with whom we are partnered with under this grant. They will onboard two part-time positions; a site coordinator as well as an assistant basketball coach. Ms. Sakosky shared that for the after school programs will include an audio engineering and cosmetology as new exciting offerings. Ms. Sakosky mentioned that both these areas and fields are interesting career paths for our students based on the feedback we received from them, and is hopeful that everything will go well.

For the DOE invoice, Ms. Sakosky, reported that the reconciliation invoice is still open at the moment and will be submitted later this month. Currently, our general education FTE's picked up from when she submitted the invoice in May 2023. We are currently looking at 346 FTE's, which is about 10 FTE's higher than she originally closed with. She reported that this is a potential adjustment that she will need to be included for the year end. In monetary terms, this will be a little bit more than \$170,000.

Old Business

Mr. Newman proceeded to open the discussion regarding the investment which were discussed in the last finance committee meeting. Ms. Sakosky reported that the next finance committee

meeting will be held on July 27th at 11:00AM, where we will explore and discuss our options for how we want to proceed with the investment allocations, and to discuss where we stand with Morgan Stanley and their partnership with monitoring our portfolio. She shared that Mr. Russo will be taking the lead on this and that he shared a brief analysis in which he thoroughly went into details regarding our investments.

New Business

Mr. Tabano opened the discussion regarding the real estate plans for the NY Campus. Mr. Levine reported that the landlord for the NY Campus is pushing to see if we are interested in terms of needing a different, better and bigger space. Mr. Levine expressed that the latter option is an interesting deciding factor. He shared that we have 4 years left on our current lease agreement. Mr. Levine, Mr. Tabano and Ms. Sakosky did tour the floor above our current one where they believe that they could still maintain the entrance from the west side street for the student, which is an important part. Mr. Levine reported that the landlord is lending an architect to help us with figuring out how much space the campus needs and how the layout would work on the suggested floor. He had a meeting with the architect and a representative from the building property in which was discussed the current layout and a follow up meeting to go over available solutions with the landlord and Mr. Tabano. Mr. Levine has been having correspondence with the architect to better understand our needs so he can put together a plan. This will be discussed in person with Mr. Tabano and Ms. Sakosky once finalized. Mr. Newman wanted to know what the rationale was for this project and Mr. Tabano responded by saying that we would like to see if this is economically feasible as we have outgrown our current space. He shared that the classrooms are small and don't necessarily have the right configuration in terms of layout as some rooms are short and others long. Ms. Sakosky added that there is not much privacy for the case managers to work with students individually as they are currently seated in cubicles. Mr. Tabano shared that he would like every classroom to have a window to look out from as our current layout only shows the shaft of the building. He concluded that a reconfigured, better space would be helpful. Mr. Levine added that the current air conditioning that the campus has, is really outdated and has ongoing issues as well as the restrooms that could also benefit from a cleaner and more updated solution. He shared that we are being encouraged by the landlord and the architect to help us figure out what the next steps and costs could be if we were to proceed with this project. Mr. Levine does not want to rush into this project. Mr. Newman requested a review of what is currently happening in commercial properties, specifically our campuses. Mr. Levine responded and shared that the campus in the Bronx location seems to be fine and stable as it is relatively related to nonprofits and he is not worried with any sort of change in services. For the NY campus, Mr. Levine, reported that it is in a very good shape. The building, is essentially 2 to 3 buildings combined in which the older building is the original and the newer building, which could be seen from the shaft way from the conference room, has been converted to a residential area.

Mr. Levine is not sure if this is part of the same or different loan, but it seems to be productive. The south building where the NY campus is located, Mr. Levine shared that about 15-20 years ago, the building owners converted from floor 13 and up to residential property as well. Furthermore, Mr. Levine added that within the last year, 2 or 3 more floors were added as residential property which can be accessed to the west side lobby. He concluded that the building has some availability which Mr. Levine shared he is not sure if we have the appetite to take an entire floor in terms of budget but he is in correspondence with the minority owner, Jeff Gural, who is on board with the decision if we were to proceed with this project. Mr. Levine reported that the commercial office space market is pretty tough at the moment as these buildings can't be refinanced. He added that you could push your loans out where you don't have to pay it off right away, or lose the building where the bank takes it back. Mr. Tabano shared that the Bronx Campus is getting new lighting installed in the hallways. The new HVAC system is located in the basement and that the bathrooms are being worked on every night after the students leave. He mentioned that the work is starting to move along and as soon as he receives updates, he will report them to the board members. Mr. Tabano mentioned that we have sign installed which is the school logo.

Board Comments

Ms. Jackson wanted to congratulate everyone on doing a great job on the regents test scores. She shares she is extremely happy to be part of this because she knows that the population of the school is not easy to work with, but she wanted to make sure she congratulated all staff included. Mr. Levine shared this opinion and asked what the reason behind this success was. Mr. Tabano responded by saying that in some cases, we decide what regents class to assign to certain students who are to graduate in January, June or August. But, more importantly, he added that the staff is so good at understanding what is needed to pass these regents. He made a comparison to some of the other schools and how their scores did not even come close to ours as our staff has overtime developed a plan that works well for teaching students how to pass the regents. Mr. Tabano expressed how important the English regents is to him as he feels that writing is a very important, and necessary skill to have for our students. He shared that people tend to judge by how you speak and how you write, so he deems it important that we have a good English department. Ms. Jackson commended Mr. Tabano and encouraged to keep going on. Ms. Jackson shared a story in which she heard that ever since the pandemic happened, most children do not read at their own grade level. Mr. Tabano added that our third and eighth grade scores are not great as those students are well below their grade level. Mr. Newman shared that there is a NAET, National Assessment association where there is a sampling from around the country from the fifth and eighth grade level have shown declines in performance in both reading and math. Mr. Newman shared that he believes the reason this is happening is because of the transformation in our society that was given a real charge by COVID. As well as the media, in particular, cellular

devices, that have made teaching a greater challenge. He also added that there is a fragmentation out in our society which also does not help the institution of education. All these factors combined, are all challenges that we have to face. Mr. Newman also touched base on the Artificial Intelligence craze and how he thinks that this causes implications for education as well as how difficult it is to good teachers. Mr. Newman also commended the staff on reaching great scores on the regents.

Motion: Ms. Jackson makes the motion to adjourn the meeting.

Second: Mr. Levine seconded the motion.

Vote: Unanimous.

The meeting adjourned 10:40 a.m.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for August 17, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.