

**MASTERY SCHOOLS OF CAMDEN
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

**September 23, 2014
7:00-8:30 p.m. Board Meeting**

Held at Mastery North Camden Elementary

Minutes

- 1. Roll Call: Meeting called to order by Chair, Judy Tschirgi at 7:07 p.m.**

**Board Members Present: Reuel Robinson, Judy Tschirgi, Graham Finney
Members Absent: Stacy Holland
*Quorum Achieved.***

**Staff and Guests: Bryan Morton, Scott Gordon, Thomas Johnston, Jim Leonard,
Yonca Agatan, Joe Ferguson, Courtney Collins-Shapiro, Irametta Thompson, Dan
Bell**

- 2. Approval of the Minutes from August 20, 2014 (as attached)**

Resolution #0914 – 01

Resolved, to approve the minutes from the meeting held on August 20, 2014 as presented.

Motion to approve: Graham Finney, Second, Reuel Robinson. Unanimous Approved.

- 3. Hiring Approvals (as attached)**

0914-02

Resolved, to approve Mastery Schools of Camden staff hired between August 12th and September 16, 2014 as presented.

- 4. Disbursement Approvals (as attached)**

0914-03

Resolved, that the Mastery Schools of Camden Board of Trustees approves payment of \$649,054.23 for school start-up, facilities improvement and operating expenses as detailed in the invoices listing (Board Document 092314-01).

0914-04

Resolved, that the Mastery Schools of Camden Board of Trustees ratifies the payroll in the amount of \$44,017 for August 15, 2014, \$135,113 for August 31, 2014 and \$125,885 for September 12, 2014.

Motion to approve Resolutions 02, 03, and 04: Graham Finney, Second Reuel Robinson. Unanimous.

5. Finance & Budget Presentation (Yonca Agatan, Scott Gordon)

- Presentation of the FY 15 budget for Mastery Schools of Camden

Yonca Agatan discussed the budget modeling for FY 15 based on UHA legislation pending and previously approved and projections from the Camden City School District.

Depending on what CCSD will pay, the blended rate per child will be between \$15k to \$18.5k. Urban Hope revisions were approved yesterday by the legislature so we assume that the District will wait for the Governor's signature and revise the budgets.

Discussion about enrollment projections: We are at 355 at this point, and we modified our assumptions to 350 students for the year. Showed what budget cuts were proposed based on lower enrollment and what the overall year one deficit would be. Team is not taking the deficit lightly and we are building the five year vision with the plan that this initial year will be much more expensive than planned. We also have many more high need special education students for the small size of the schools and we will need to increase services to meet those needs.

Once we see the final District budget we will revise with actual numbers.

Discussion from the Board: Questions about if there are any services we do/don't provide until full funding is provided.

Question from the public: Are there any opportunities for the community and families to advocate for fair funding?

Agatan discussed that the legislation is silent on the elements that make up the differences between charter and district funding. Scott Gordon commented that this is likely a regulatory issue and not a community advocacy issue.

- Discussion of Enrollment implications on Budget

Joe Ferguson discussed the enrollment situation. Eleven hundred (1100+) applications led to more than 500 enrollment packets. In our other schools enrollment packets were almost guaranteed to turn into enrollment. Lessons learned in Camden was that here families continue to shop, people are more willing to be mobile vs. committing to a decision long term. Even now 5-6 are moving in and out every week and that is uncommon in our other schools at this point in the year. Some other issues impacting

us were neighborhood options surrounding us (e.g. a K-8 community school down the street), other charters in the area, and transportation has been a factor. Distance for some families is just far enough that it's not close enough to walk but not far enough to get CCSD bussing. Ways we've addressed this: 1) Added a courtesy route on our budget for families in the 1.2-1.9 mile range, it has kept students more than adding a lot of students; 2) Gone door to door to talk with families via exit interviews and learning about what's impacting enrollment; and 3) we haven't stopped enrolling. We are focused on protecting the kids we currently serve.

Discussion from Board: Other than transportation, what were other reasons students were not choosing us?

At North Camden we did K-5, but other schools are K-8, so not having three extra grades meant families didn't move – even more impact at Cramer Hill. At Cramer Hill, the other options nearby are considered “good enough” as are the charters like “Camden Academy” where we weren't the obvious alternatives. For East Camden, there are new buildings, so they are passing brand new facilities on the way to our school and plays in for some parents. New construction will solve some of that, but it is an issue right now.

Discussed if we were doing everything we can to make sure we create “keep” strategies for families (e.g. courtesy bus), but is the question if there are “add” strategies that we need to add in order to increase enrollment.

Reuel Robinson commented that all the barriers to enrollment we mentioned are the ones he's hearing in the community. Bryan Morton discussed that the Catholic schools and a number of the charters who are competitors purchased their own buses and not only run the routes but use the buses for after school and other program transportation. Did note we are getting a quick reputation as quick to respond to families and this will help long term.

Dan Bell provided that 180 kids take the bus, with 150 of them at North Camden. Board is seeing some of these unanticipated costs as the cost of start up in Camden vs. Philadelphia.

Joe Ferguson noted that we owe the Board a strategy for how we intend to keep students and enroll new ones by addressing community concerns. Will need to present between meetings as we have an October 15 deadline for new enrollment.

0914-05

Resolved, that the Mastery Schools of Camden Board of Trustees approves revised FY15 budget.

Motion to Approve: Graham Finney, Second, Reuel Robinson. Unanimous.

6. Legal Presentation (Thomas Johnston)

- a. Roles and Responsibilities of the Board (as presented)

Discussed roles of the CMO and things that need to be either reported to, ratified by, or approved prior to action by the Board.

Recommending that any contracts must be at least ratified by the Board in a formal action.

Need to discuss how the Board wants to handle suspensions of more than 10 days in terms of consideration and actions on these cases. Staff will follow up w/ counsel to determine how this will work for expulsions.

- b. Appeal by SOS to Commissioner of NJDOE (see attached pp. 20-52) – moved to executive session. (Deferred to Executive Session)

7. Contracts and Policies

- a. Ratification of final Management Agreement with Mastery Charter High School (Courtney Collins-Shapiro & Thomas Johnston) – (pp. 53-66)

Explanation of the management agreement.

- b. Leases and Side Letters with Camden City School District - Pyne Poynt and Washington (Joe Ferguson) – as distributed
- c. Final Employee Handbook (Yonca Agatan) – as distributed

0914-06

Resolved, that the Board of Trustees of Mastery Schools of Camden hereby ratifies and authorizes for signature the final management agreement with Mastery Charter High School as revised effective July 1, 2014.

Motion to approve 06: Reuel Robinson, Second, Graham Finney. Unanimous.

0914-07

Resolved, that the Board of Trustees of Mastery Schools of Camden hereby ratifies the execution of leases with Camden City School District for use of facilities at Pyne Poynt Middle School and Washington Elementary effective July 1, 2014;

and

Further Resolved, that the Board authorizes the Board Secretary to sign the side letters to the leases with Camden City School District effective July 1, 2014.

Comments by Joe Ferguson on the leases we kept it at \$3/sf and the side letters are to detail services outside our existence in the building. Attorneys on both sides have been on vacation, so we are figuring out these services. For example, if CCSD is closed and we are open, how do we handle services provided by CCSD. Some examples of side letter pieces: At Pyne Poynt we are in a colocation and we will split the security costs with CCSD. Using building engineer services at both buildings will be paid by Mastery Schools of Camden.

Motion to approve 07: Graham Finney, Second, Reuel Robinson. Unanimous.

0914-08

Resolved, to ratify the final version of the 2014-15 Mastery Schools of Camden Employee Handbook effective July 1, 2014.

Updates to the final version include NJ tenure policies. Our teachers can be granted tenure after “5 years of effective service” which includes a combination of time plus meeting a defined threshold in the review process.

Comment from the Board that it is noted that a lot of work was put into the Handbook.

Motion to approve 08: Graham Finney, Second, Reuel Robinson. Unanimous.

8. Discussion of Open Public Meetings Act (Tom Johnston)

0914-08 Resolved, to adjourn to executive session to discuss pending litigation against the NJDOE and proposed real estate financing/structuring with the intent to return in 30 minutes.

Motion to approve 08: Graham Finney, Second, Reuel Robinson. Unanimous.

9. Adjourn to Executive Session at 9:01 p.m.

10. Meeting called back to order at 9:47 p.m.

0914-09 Resolved, to ratify the school’s application to intervene in an appeal before the Superior Court Appellate Division to operate per the Urban Hope Act.

Motion to approve 09: Reuel Robinson, Second, Graham Finney. Unanimous.

Motion to Adjourn at 9:50 p.m. Graham Finney, Second, Reuel Robinson. Unanimous.