

MINUTES

Board of Trustees Meeting

Monday, June 22, 2020 – 11:00 AM

Meeting conducted via Zoom

Participating Board Members were: Donald L. Hense, Chairman; Gregory Prince, Vice Chair; Darrin Glymph, Treasurer; Victor Long, Secretary; Patricia Brantley; Eric McKinley King, Tracy Gray, Deborah McGriff, Jeanette Mendes, Anise Walker and Chris White.

Staff Members in attendance were: Ken Cherry, Chief of Staff; Vielka Scott-Marcus, Chief Academic Officer; Catherine Sanwo, Comptroller; Candice Tolliver-Burns, Chief Communications Officer; James Waller, Chief of School Operations; Zachary Morford, Chief of Performance; and Monique Miller, Director of Performance Reporting and Evaluation.

Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 11:03 AM.

Approval of Minutes. On a motion by Gregory Prince and second by Anise Walker, the board voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the May 14, 2020 board meeting.

COVID-19 Response Update. Donald L. Hense opened the meeting with a statement about the state of the world in the midst of COVID-19 pandemic and the possibility that our schools may never be the same again. This is such an important change and the board must continue to provide guidance as needed based on their area of expertise. Mr. Hense then turned the meeting over to Patricia Brantley.

Ms. Brantley stated that the purpose of the meeting is to present the SY2020-21 budget, highlighting Friendship's response to COVID-19 while remaining fixed on our strategic outcomes (World Class Education, Mission Focused People, Inspirational Spaces) and meeting all financial and operational obligations and requirements. Ms. Brantley proceeded with explaining to the board the drivers of the budget, the goals and expectations of reopening Friendship PCS, and the guiding principles of the work of reopening.

Ms. Brantley stated the key drivers include providing multiple kinds of pathways for students, recognizing that most students will participate in a hybrid way; alternating online learning and in-person learning within a week. In addition, a subset of students will be online full-time. Ms. Brantley also explained that to provide these options for families, it is necessary to invest more in technology and online programs, strong professional development and possibly more educational staff. Moreover, the investments in Friendship's inspirational spaces, at a minimum, will meet every Department of Health, CDC regulation and guidance to ensure we are protecting the health and safety of our children and staff (e.g. physical distancing signage, clean hands, and elevator capacity). Finally, building projects continue with no reported impact on construction workers, to date.

Ms. Brantley transitioned to an overview of the goals for this school year. Ms. Brantley stated that our goals are maximizing learning for all students, minimizing disruptions to instruction, and

fully supporting staff as they endeavor to meet organizational goals and student needs while juggling their own personal responsibilities, health and well-being. Staff are leveraging best practices and lessons learned from experiences during distance learning in the spring, which included synchronous and asynchronous lessons in addition to supports for families such as webinars and student support services. Finally, Ms. Brantley stated that we are participating in groups across the city and getting information from around the country and world, and incorporating wide stakeholder input, so that stakeholders feel like they are part of our direction and feel ownership for the things we say we are going to do.

Ms. Brantley turned the presentation over to Vielka Scott-Marcus to review what worked well and lessons learned during distance learning in the spring, and to provide an overview of what is next.

Ms. Scott-Marcus stated that staff collected information and data through a variety of media (surveys, town hall meetings, and our We Care hotline and email) as well as stakeholder groups (Friendship staff, parents, and students). Results indicate that the continuity of platform use (Zoom and Google Classroom, breakout rooms to inform small group instruction), instruction, upholding high school credits and increased parent engagement were all things that stakeholders stated worked well.

Mrs. Scott-Marcus stated that areas of growth to inform planning for this school year include attendance accountability, parent orientation and parent accountability, special education monitoring, and meaningful writing instruction. Mrs. Scott-Marcus shared our approach to preparing for the new school year in which committees worked on a set of essential questions to guide the work in key areas of focus. While staff developed a plan, it was noted that the primary determining factor for how the school will proceed will be the District of Columbia's health metrics. School leadership and the planning committees worked from key assumptions and within certain parameters that included:

- Make significant investments in PPE, technology, and facilities to ensure the health and safety of all stakeholders.
- Make investments in staff to ensure stability, and maintain and continuously develop our brain trust (staff expertise) to drive innovations/program enhancements, and best serve students now and moving forward.
- A hybrid option and an online-only option for families
- 100% in-person option for a small subset of families with a focus on families including essential workers
- Individual classrooms limited to 12 people (students and adults). Deborah McGriff asked if the number was 15 or 12. Ms. Brantley confirmed that the number was 12 based on guidance provided by Mayor Bowser during her weekly COVID-19 update.
- Capacity calculations based on classroom space and communal spaces (i.e. gym, cafeteria, multi-purpose rooms).

Dr. McGriff asked if we are planning anything to mitigate challenges related to trauma and loneliness that students and staff may feel. Ms. Brantley stated that we held a town hall meeting with mental health staff and noted that we need to ramp up supports. This will be difficult because the city is not adding more money for this support, and the city actually cut the Department of Behavioral Health's budget. We have been doing advocacy around this issue in the hope that their budget is made whole. The Department of Health is funding some of the social workers that we have in place for our students. We also are hosting webinars and sessions with parents about recognizing when their students need help and when they need help, and providing ways that they can cope. We also know that we will need additional mental health professionals for parents. For staff, we are continuing our wellness days and mental health support through our We Care help line and mental health professionals.

Ms. Brantley transitioned the discussion to cover plans to address Facilities, Operations, and Technology. Ms. Brantley stated that for technology, students in PK3 – 1st grades will have tablets with data and headsets, and students in 2nd – 12th grades will have Chromebooks with data. Students in 6th - 8th will have tablets and Chromebooks, because of participation in the VILS program (tablets) as well as activities that require Chromebooks; this is a recommendation from school-based staff. The middle school students already have tablets, so that is not an expense but the Chromebooks are. Teachers will receive laptops with headsets (blue light glasses and screen protectors) and paraprofessionals will get laptops because of an expanded role during the pandemic. Some staff and families need Internet access, so Friendship will participate in a program that provides service at a discounted rate. These are the minimum requirements needed to operate our program.

James Waller added that the aforementioned investments are all from the recommendations of our committees to ensure students and staff are productive in the fall. The committee also recommended investing in The Clean Zone cart, which is new technology where within 20 minutes the Chromebooks are cleaned, when loaded into the cart.

Ms. Brantley shared the plan for daily health and safety measures, which include health screenings, temperature checks upon entry, wearing masks that cover the nose and mouth (or covering) required for staff and upper grades and recommended for some younger grades. Doctors must clear medically fragile people or those under doctor's care; otherwise, they are excluded from the in-person program. We must expand our entry and exit points, to get students in and out of buildings in a socially distanced way. There also is an isolation station that is separate from the nursing space and a modified cleaning protocol during the day and afterschool.

Mr. Waller reviewed a model of what a classroom looks like with physical distance, 10 students, and two adults with webcams placed in various areas so that students can experience live instruction virtually. Mr. Waller transitioned the presentation back to Ms. Brantley who closed the update on planning for next year.

Finance Update/Finance Committee Report. Ms. Brantley stated that one of the most important things that we have to focus on outside of our people and our mission, is making sure we have the flexibility to make investments as things change; the budget was built with those

things in mind. The approach has been to be very conservative when it comes to revenue, so that anything over the revenue can use to make additional investments. Ms. Brantley transitioned the discussion to Catherine Sanwo to give the Finance Update.

Catherine Sanwo provided an overview of the finance report that focuses on the FY 2021 proposed budget previously reviewed by members of the Finance Committee and included in board materials.

Ms. Sanwo then presented the budget for FY21 that projects sufficient revenues to cover all expenses, meet debt obligations, and fund all reserves. The proposed budget includes revenue of \$105,464,281 based on 98.5% of current year enrollment. An expense of \$104,545,842 is based on 2% cost of living increase and incorporating a COVID-19 reserve and cuts for added flexibility. A net income of \$718,439 is expected as well as an increase in the bond reserves at the end of the year. Ms. Sanwo shared that a first draft of the audit will be completed by October 12. Finally, Friendship received the Financial Audit Review results from the DC PCSB and the results were strong.

Mr. Hense asked that the board accept the Finance Report and approve the FY2021 budget: on a motion by Victor Long and a second by Anise Walker, the board unanimously voted to accept the report and approve the budget.

Dr. Prince asked the board to consider the creation of an emergency alumni fund based on discussions over the year, using an anonymous donation to assist Friendship alumni with expenses to ensure they are able to persistent through college. Dr. Prince moved that the anonymous donation be placed in a quasi-endowment fund to generate income to support the alumni emergency fund. With a second by Chris White, the board approved the motion.

Mr. Hense stated that the staff needs to come back to the board with a proposal for how it can be invested to yield a return within applicable rules. Ms. Brantley stated that staff would talk with different firms to get some options. Mr. Hense recommended speaking to Goldman Sachs.

Mr. Hense asked staff to prepare a letter to thank Friendship staff, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, for their work during this crisis. Chris White congratulated Pat and everyone who worked on presenting these multiple options to families for this school year.

Mr. Hense presented a resolution to the board to lift the cap on the Collegiate Online Academy program. On a motion by Dr. McGriff and a second by Ms. Walker, the board approved the resolution.

Adjournment. On a motion by Gregory Prince and a second by Eric McKinley King, the board voted to adjourn the meeting at approximately 12:27 p.m.