

AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter School Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 17, 2009, 6:00 pm
Riverside Campus – 680 I Street SW, Washington, DC 20024

Trustees present: Bridget Bradley Gray, Melinda Gray, Elizabeth Keys, Celia Martin, Jack McCarthy, Sara Mead.

Management present: Mary Anne Lesiak, Russ Williams, and Anne Zummo.

Call to order. After establishing that a quorum was present, Mr. McCarthy called the meeting to order at 6:15 pm.

Consent calendar. Ms. Martin moved to approve the minutes from the January meeting and Ms. Bradley Gray seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Director's report. Mr. Williams updated the Board on current legal matters. The school has been asked for paperwork relative to a custody dispute between a student's parents. Mr. Williams has sought and received pro bono help from Gibson, Dunn to ensure the school is protecting itself. The school has also received a letter regarding a special education lawsuit. Mr. Williams has also contacted Gibson, Dunn in this matter. He has also contacted the relevant District of Columbia office.

Mr. Williams also reported on his discussions with an e-procurement vendor that would help AELPCS and AppleTree Institute manage ordering across the various campuses. The vendor could be especially helpful in managing expenses associated with setting up new classrooms or other large-scale projects. Mr. Williams will determine the potential return on investment and will check references before proceeding.

Principals' reports. Ms. Zummo reported that the Columbia Heights received a letter from DCPCSB regarding attendance as attendance had been trending lower. Ms. Zummo told the Board that she is carefully monitoring but believes the dip to be an aberration based on inclement weather and illness. The Columbia Heights campus has received around 70 applications to date and 10-12 parents attended the most recent open house. Ms. Zummo and staff have distributed reenrollment forms to the three-year-olds and have received most of those back. Copies of the principals' reports, including updated enrollment information, follow these minutes.

Finance Committee's report. One of the IRS Form 990 requirements is a compensation review. Mr. Williams reported that he had received comparable salary information from DCPCSB so the executive director and principal salaries can be reviewed. The Finance Committee will put together a policy regarding review for the financial handbook or bylaws.

The committee is also reviewing vendor contracts. Top Spanish, the current food services vendor, has a one-year contract; other services are provided on a month-by-month basis. The committee is reviewing all vendors, even those with short-term contracts.

The committee presented a draft travel policy. The board discussed thoroughly and made several suggestions. The committee will update and will circulate the revised document for the next meeting.

Copies of the most recent financial statements follow these minutes.

New business. Mr. McCarthy provided the Trustees with updated information on ATI's Columbia Heights purchase and the progress at the Douglas Knoll site.

Closing on the Columbia Heights property is scheduled for Friday, February 20. An advantage to the delay is that interest rates have continued to decline, reducing the cost of financing. Gibson, Dunn's New York office has helped in the purchase, as has Mintz Levin's Washington office. The purchase sets the stage for expansion by reducing operating costs (by eliminating the escalating lease) and allowing the property to be accounted for as an appreciating asset.

PNC Bank is interested in financing the Douglas Knoll project. ATI has received some pricing and has asked the construction managers for 2-3 estimates. Pre-fabricated building options are also being examined especially given the accelerated timeline allowed with pre-fab. ATI believes they can obtain the necessary permitting in time to finish by August 1. The increase in numbers of students approved, but the school has not asked for site approval and will not ask until there is more clarity on whether or not the building will be ready by August 1.

Old business. The orientation for new Trustees, and for current Trustees seeking additional information, follows these minutes.

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm.

Elizabeth Keys
Secretary

The next meeting of the AELPCS Board of Trustees is Tuesday, March 17, 2009.
The 2008-2009 Board calendar follows these minutes.