SIDE BY SIDE
CHARTER SCHOOL

BOD Meeting:
APPROVED MINUTES- August 26, 2025

Date: August 26, 2025
Time: Meeting called to order at 5:17 PM
Format: Virtual via Zoom

Present: Nell Conroy, Larry Cafero, Matt Nittoly, Deb Whalen, Nicle Shagoury, James Martinez, Kevin Forget, Amanda Magnusson, Stephanie Cecio, Adam Norris, Kim Grimm, Paul Viscontini, Anne Dichele
Absent: NONE

May and June 2025 DRAFT Minutes will be distributed and approved at the September 24, 2025 meeting

I. Director Update (Matt Nittoly)

TENTATIVE BOD Schedule for 2025-26

Tuesday, 8/26: REMOTE
Wednesday, 9/24: IN-PERSON
Tuesday, 10/28: REMOTE
NOVEMBER-NO MEETING
Tuesday, 12/2: IN PERSON
Tuesday, 1/27: REMOTE
Tuesday, 2/24: IN PERSON
Tuesday, 3/24: REMOTE
Tuesday, 4/28: IN PERSON
Tuesday, 5/26: REMOTE
JUNE: TBD- IN PERSON

- School started; students back for second full day.
- All certified staff returned this year, a notable first in 26 years; one teaching assistant vacancy filled today.
- Enrollment at opening day was 236, matching target and Charter maximum, with typical minor adjustments expected.
- Staffing includes partnership with Quinnipiac University for resident interns and an NYU social work intern.
- Special recognition to Sally and Esther for their critical support roles; both are former teachers and founders.
- School construction on Chestnut Street ongoing; communicated with city to limit disruptions during drop-off/pick-up times.
- Urgent need to replace approximately 45 middle school lockers due to damage and wear; cost estimate approx. $20,000. Discussed possibility of fundraising linked to this project.

- Middle school math program is evolving:
    - Introduction of an honors Algebra 1 stream for advanced students alongside regular Algebra 1, no tracking within regular classes.
    - Special software (Edmentum) will be used to push out a pilot of Honors Algebra I and for student electives in our Upper School.
- Upcoming presentations planned regarding curriculum updates.

Teaching & Learning UPDATE:
Staff and students are excited to be back for the 2025-26 school year. A couple of highlights so far

• Upper school teachers participated in professional development with the Maritime on August 26th, as they work to implement our middle school interdisciplinary STEAM units. Activities included a water quality cruise, where they collected data samples from the Sound and learned analytical skills to share with their students.

•We are implementing an Honors Algebra 1 course for 8th grade students this year showing advanced abilities in quantitative reasoning and mathematical ability. This will better leverage them for high school magnet programs

II. Faculty and Parent Feedback on School Start (Teacher and Parent Members)

- **Faculty Comments:**
    - Nicole: Positive start; new project-based learning classes well received.
    - Stephanie: Praise for pre-K program's impact on kindergarten readiness.
    - Amanda: Smooth start; emphasis on establishing routines with full five-day weeks beneficial.
- **Parent Comments:**
    - Paul (3rd and Kindergarten): Smooth transition; pleased overall.
    - Kevin (Pre-K 4): Positive feedback; daughter excited and smooth transitions reported.

III. Finance Report (Adam Norris)

- Summer financials aligned with budget; no issues reported.
- Future reports will include monthly activity, P&L, and balance sheets.
- Noted typo in board schedule (date 10/25 should be 10/28) and missing November date; Matthew committed to correcting and redistributing schedule.

IV. Fundraising (Deb Whalen)

- Discussion of fundraising event "SPACECAT" held last November, which raised nearly $10,000.

- Plans to hold a similar event on either November 14th or 21st (Friday night).
- Call for new ideas and help from board members for sponsorships and auction items.
- Consensus to set a fundraising goal of $20,000 to cover locker replacements and other needs.
- Long-term planning mentioned for future anniversary gala event.

V. Misc. discussion (all members)

Mascot Discussion

- Staff interest in establishing a school mascot emerged recently; various suggestions (stingray, wolf, wall) considered.
- Board emphasized need for formal process including broad community input from students, parents, and staff before adopting any mascot.
- Previous logo changes involved extensive work with marketing professionals to align with school mission.
- Suggestion to engage students in voting and study symbolic relevance to Long Island Sound.
- Board agreed to explore mascot concept further, ensuring transparent and inclusive decision-making.

Other Notes

- No public comments during the public session.
- Recognition of the first day of school being shorter and virtual meeting format for this occasion.
- Appreciation extended to all members for participation and input.

Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned by motion from Adam Norris, seconded by Amanda Magnusson.
- Next scheduled meeting September 24th, 2024, in person with officer elections.

Meeting adjourned at 5:57pm