



NEO Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 14, 2024

The August meeting of the NEO Board of Directors commenced at 9:05AM at the NEO Center following the NEO Board – Staff Annual Breakfast.

Present: Samantha Burgett, Dexter Harris, Amelia Hessling, Mark Lutze, Richard Severe, Scott Williams

Absent: Wynton Jones, Lupe Valtierra, Frances Vega

Also Present: Rebecca Reiner, Theresa Jacobs

1. **Mission Moment:** Rebecca shared the story of NEO's new adult education aide who started her journey as one of New Vistas first class of graduates in 2012 after years of trying to complete her graduation work. She said New Vistas was a game-changer for her.
2. **Introduction:** Rebecca introduced Theresa Jacobs to the Board. Mrs. Jacobs is New Vistas High School's new Assistant Principal. Mrs. Jacobs shared her extensive background in educational settings and her focus on curriculum and instruction.
3. **Consent Agenda:** The Board reviewed the Consent Agenda for the items listed here. Scott moved to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.
 - a. May 15, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes
 - b. June and 2024 Year End financials
Scott, NEO's Treasurer, noted that he had reviewed the credit card and bank statements and found no irregularities.
4. **Updates:**
 - a. **Finances:** Rebecca informed Board of unexpected financial concerns including insurance costs that have risen significantly, unexpected IRS bill from 2018, and need for high school enrollment. She updated the board on the Rising Up Campaign.
 - b. **Governance:** Amelia reported on behalf of the Governance committee that the Executive Director Search Committee wants established protocol in place to use with internal and external candidates. Mark and Richard, both members of the search committee, expressed surprise that this information had not been shared with them yet. Amelia relayed that Frances plans to convene the Search Committee within a few weeks.
5. **Student Policies:** The Board received and reviewed the updated Student Policies. Mark moved to approve the updated policies as presented; the motion was seconded and approved unanimously.
6. **Conflict of Interest:** Board members in attendance signed that they had received and reviewed the Conflict-of-Interest Policy.
7. **New Vistas Charter Renewal:** Rebecca updated the Board on the Charter Renewal process and timeline for Neighbors' New Vistas High School. Mark moved that the Board approve renewing the charter with Ball State University. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

8. **Hammond and Lake Station Referendum discussion:** Rebecca discussed the new Indiana legislation being piloted in four counties, including Lake County, which allows charter schools to receive a share of local property tax revenue. Two schools, Hammond and Lake Station, have referendums on the ballot for the upcoming November election. Rebecca asked for the Board's approval for New Vistas to participate in these referendums, despite the minimal financial gain. She shared that she had met with NEO legal counsel about this who did not see any concerns. She emphasized the importance of solidifying the position of charter schools as public schools and the potential negative message that non-participation could send to the state legislature. Mark moved that NEO, sign the resolution to do so. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.
9. **Training Academy Development & Financing:** Rebecca and Scott discussed the plans for renovating space in the Training Academy (aka "the Cavern") and a projected cost of \$550,000. Two tenants are interested in and being considered for this space: Urban Efficiencies, an energy efficiency training business (Wynton is an employee) and Craftsman Community K=Maker Labs of Indiana, Inc. a new 501 (c)(3) organization (Scott is a member). Rebecca presented the board with preliminary information about a construction loan to cover the costs; the loan payments would be covered by tenant rent. She has worked with Belinda Shuster, a commercial relator and member of NEO's Facility Advisory group to assess base rent and CAM (Common Area Maintenance/utility) rates. Both tenants will provide training and work experience to NEO's high school and adult education students. Rebecca asked for and Richard made the motion that Rebecca move forward with exploring a construction loan; the motion was seconded and approved unanimously.
10. **Board Development:** Amelia led the board in a debriefing of the morning conversations Board members had with NEO Staff at the breakfast where Board asked staff for input on questions pertaining to impact of NEO, Areas of Improvement, Communications with Board,
11. **Board Spotlight:** Amelia shared information about her current work with Burlington English, her and her career journey with NEO including as NEO Adult Education ESL teacher, program coordinator and co-director, and now Board Vice-President, emphasizing her passion for adult education.

Adjournment: The Board adjourned at 11:50 AM.

Respectfully Submitted by Rebecca Reiner

Approved by Mark Lutze, *Secretary*:



