**ACADEMY OF HOPE BOARD MEETING**

**January 30, 2025**

**4:00 pm – 6:00 pm**

**Present**

\*\*Board Members:\*\*

Dr. Patrina Clark (Chair), Larry Condelli (Secretary), LuAnn Sinclair, Nora Abramson, Deborah Ringel, Jason Ufland, Brett Allen, Susan Leigh, Laura Hendricks, Ronald Henson

**\*\*Staff:\*\***

Lecester Johnson (CEO), Michael Durant, Joy Bentley Phillips, Tiffany Godbout, HollyAnn Fresco Moore

**Summary and Key Highlights:**

The January 2025 Board Meeting was called to order by Board Chair Dr. Patrina M. Clark, who noted that the meeting was governed by the Open Meetings Act and reminded all attendees of the executive session to follow the public meeting. This closed session would focus on the CEO's performance review, requiring the exclusion of the CEO from that portion of the meeting.

**Quorum Confirmation and Roll Call:** Acting Secretary Tiffany Godbout confirmed that a quorum was present. A roll call was conducted, and board attendance was confirmed.

**Approval of Minutes:**

**Motion:** Board member Nora Abramson moved to approve the minutes from the November 16, 2024 meeting, with a second by Luanne Sinclair.
**Vote:** Motion carried unanimously, with all present voting in favor.
**Action Item:** The approved minutes will be filed accordingly.

**CEO Report:**

CEO Lecester Johnson provided a comprehensive update, including:

* The onboarding of Dr. HollyAnn Freso Moore as the new Chief of Staff, brought in to enhance senior team capacity.
* Enrollment exceeded the ceiling of 1,000 learners, with a certified enrollment of 1,006.
* Significant academic performance gains were noted, particularly in math, attributed to intentional curriculum work and data-driven instruction.
* A workforce adjunct transition project was highlighted, with adjunct instructors successfully converted to W-2 employees.
* Strategic planning is advancing with a narrowed pool of consultants, and work is continuing toward Middle States reaccreditation.
* The school will need board approval for two school-specific goals as part of the new Aspire Performance Management Framework, with this expected in March.
* A third facilities site is actively being pursued to address capacity issues at both existing locations.
* Generative AI adoption is being formally embedded across instructional and operational areas, supported by a newly engaged external consultant.

**Advancement and Fundraising:**

Chief Strategy and Growth Officer Joy Bentley Phillips confirmed that the strategic planning process is moving forward, with 17 consultant proposals received and a selection to be announced shortly. The process is on a fast track, with the goal to present draft strategic goals to the board by May and approval targeted for the July retreat.

**Action Item:** One to two more board members are sought to join the Strategic Planning Committee.

**Finance and Facilities Update:**

**Financial Health:**

* The school is projecting a **16% margin** for the year with a net income of $3.25M and a strong cash position at $8.2M.
* Revenue is exceeding budget due to higher enrollment, grants, and unfilled positions.
* Current projected **days of cash on hand**: 185, well above the minimum 60 days required.

**Facilities Update:**

* AoH is advancing in its search for a **third facility**, with the Facilities Committee recommending due diligence on a site at 1201 Sycamore Drive, located within the St. Elizabeth’s East campus.
* The site offers proximity to public transit, synergy with Whitman-Walker, and potential for strategic partnerships.

**Contract Approvals:**

The following contracts were **reviewed and approved** by the Board following a motion from Eric Jones and a second by Deborah Ringel:

* **FGH Consulting** (Advocacy contract renewal)
* **PMM Cleaning Services** (Janitorial services renewal)
* **DocuSign** (Electronic signature services renewal)
* **Optimanova AI** (New consultant for AI integration and implementation)
* **Fletcher Consulting** (Project management for facilities projects)
* **Community IT** (IT and cybersecurity contract renewal to address audit findings)

**Vote:** Motion carried unanimously.

**Action Item:** Approved contracts will be executed.

**Board Recruitment and Governance:**

Board Chair Dr. Patrina Clark encouraged board members to **submit recommendations** for potential new members, noting there are a few open seats. The goal is to onboard candidates in time for participation in the **July strategic planning retreat**.

**Shared Services Agreement:**

The Board was reminded to review the draft **Shared Services Agreement** with the Academy of Hope Foundation. Feedback or questions should be submitted to the Board Chair and CEO in the coming days.

**Action Items Recap:**

* Staff should continue due diligence on the Sycamore Drive facility, with Finance Committee to meet on March 11 for deeper review.
* Identified need for additional Strategic Planning Committee members.
* Board members to submit prospective candidates for board vacancies.
* Review and provide feedback on the Shared Services Agreement.

**Vote, Adjournment and Transition to Executive Session:** The public meeting adjourned to allow the Board to move into a closed **Executive Session** focused on the CEO performance review, with only designated staff remaining.