



Vertus Charter School

COURAGE, LEADERSHIP, RESPONSIBILITY

*Vertus Charter School prepares leaders of character
for the community and the workplace.*

Vertus Board Meeting Minutes

September 21, 2015

2 Austin St., Rochester, NY

Board members present: Bryan Hickman, Todd Oldham, Mike Mandina, Ty Kelly

Staff members present: Leigh McGuigan, Perry White, Josh Pincus

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Hickman at 5:15 p.m.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Oldham, the following resolution was unanimously approved:

Resolved, that the minutes from the meeting on August 13, 2015 are approved.

RCSD Per Pupil Reimbursement

Dr. McGuigan outlined a reimbursement request from RCSD for approximately \$130,000 in per-pupil payments from the 2014-15 school year. This is based on an interpretation by RCSD Senior Account Steven Nowak that the Vertus school year is actually July-June, and because Vertus was not in session July and August of 2014, the school should not receive any funding for that period. This runs counter to the determination of Susan DuFour, Finance Director for NYSED's Charter School Office, who defines the school year as September-June. Both interpretations are based on days of instruction wherein 180 days = "one year." If Vertus cannot persuade Mr. Nowak to reverse his decision, the board may be asked to approve a revised 2015-16 calendar that includes 180 days of instruction between September 8 and June 23. A charter revision may also be needed depending on the outcome of this conflict.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Oldham and seconded by Mr. Hickman, the following resolution was unanimously approved:

Resolved, that the school leadership is authorized to submit a revision to the School's charter to have a traditional school year of at least 180 days, which will begin in August or September and end in June, plus a mandatory summer intersession during July and/or August of at least 24 days, for a total of at least 204 days of instruction.



Vertus Charter School

COURAGE, LEADERSHIP, RESPONSIBILITY

Property Tax Issue

Dr. McGuigan also provided an update on the \$20,958 tax bill presented to Vertus by landlord Holy Apostles (Diocese of Rochester) several months ago. This bill is based on the removal of the property tax exemption on 2 Austin Street. After multiple attempts to get the City to reconsider the revocation, Holy Apostles recently delivered another bill for the tax accompanied by a legal opinion that the tax is properly owed. It appears that the church never took advantage of the opportunity to have the ruling reversed, even after Vertus spent considerable political capital to create the opportunity. Options for further actions were discussed but no plan created.

Performance Benchmarks

Dr. McGuigan then reviewed outcome goals as outlined in the school charter, and presented a high-level analysis based on 2014-15 performance. These include goals related to attendance/engagement, academic growth, and character education. She indicated which benchmarks were met and which ones were not. For those that were not met, Dr. McGuigan explained whether the measure should be revised and why. In some cases, the data was not adequate for evaluation, and other measurement methods should be considered. Dr. McGuigan will send written recommendations to the Board Chair for review.

Enrollment

Mr. White presented an enrollment report that included a final accounting of the 2014-15 school year, as well as initial data for the 2015-16 school year. Current enrollment stands at 136, with 69 new students and 67 returning students. He also presented an in-depth attrition analysis that revealed a wide range of reasons for student withdrawals. The most common category was “chronic serious discipline issues and/or chronic truancy,” followed by the desire for a full sports program. After withdrawing from Vertus, about half of our former students went to other schools within RCSD.

Facilities Update

Mr. Hickman and Dr. McGuigan discussed progress on acquisition of the Bull’s Head property. They acknowledged that it is difficult to get accurate information about the bank status. The initial \$1.4 million offer was rejected. The bank may offer consent foreclosure. A subsequent \$2.0 million offer was submitted, but we have not heard back yet. If the property goes into consent foreclosure, it will likely be auctioned off at a later date. If we do not hear back definitively this week on the latest offer, Vertus may be forced to re-open negotiations for the West End Business Center.



Vertus Charter School

COURAGE, LEADERSHIP, RESPONSIBILITY

Finance Report

Mr. Pincus presented the financials through July 2015. Financials are now presented as a “rolling” percentage based on full-year budget amounts. One month into the fiscal year, the expected percentage is 8.3%. Total revenues are at 11.6%, while total expenditures are at 6.1%.

Upon a motion by Mr. Mandina, seconded by Mr. Hickman, the following resolution was unanimously approved:

Resolved, that the meeting is adjourned.