

**MINUTES**  
**Excel Academy Massachusetts Board Meeting**  
**Friday, May 5, 2023 – 8:30 am**  
**Location: Zoom**

**Board Members in Attendance:** David Stolow, Matt Ottmer, Pam Klein, Nery Castro, Bernabe Rodriguez, Ben Howe

**Board Members Absent:** Steve Zrike, Rob Lytle, Devon Petersmeyer Johnson

**Staff Attending:** Owen Stearns, Andrew Solomon, Arthur Kaynor, Yinnette Sano, Aaron Stelson

**Members of the Public Attending:** David Sachs

**1. Call to Order**

Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 8:36 am and presided over the meeting. Kaynor kept the minutes.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

Stolow motioned to approve the minutes from the 3.24.23 meeting of the Board and Ottmer seconded.

All those in favor: David Stolow, Matt Ottmer, Pam Klein, Nery Castro, Bernabe Rodriguez

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

**3. Public Comment**

None

**4. Update on Board Recruitment**

Klein updated the Board on efforts to recruit new members and recruitment priorities for the Board. The Board is preparing for upcoming transitions as some members approach term limits. The Board is seeking prospective candidates with strong ties to the community as well as a background in education. Klein introduced a prospective new Board member, David Sachs. The Board asked questions and learned about Sachs's background in the community, business experience, and interest in joining the Board.

Klein motioned to approve adding Sachs to the Board, and Howe seconded.

All those in favor: David Stolow, Matt Ottmer, Pam Klein, Nery Castro, Bernabe Rodriguez, Ben Howe

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

**5. Update on the Schools**

Stearns provided updates on the state of school and a preview of topics for the June Board meeting, which will include a more detailed Academic Team update and discussion. The Board agreed to extend the length of the June Board meeting to ensure sufficient time for anticipated topics. The Governance Committee is seeking a volunteer to serve as Clerk as of July 1, as well as a volunteer to assist other governance related work in the coming year, including review of Board survey results and report back to the Board. Stearns also provided updates on staff recruitment and retention, as well as the successful renewal of the school's charter for the next five years and steps being taken in response to constructive feedback that came out of the renewal process.

**6. DEI Teambuilding & Promise54 Results**

Sano led the group in a team building discussion. Sano also presented the results of the Promise54 staff survey, and the Board discussed the successful outcomes of DEI, staff recruitment, and staff retention efforts as well as opportunities for continued improvement in this area.

## **7. Finance Update & Preliminary FY24 Budget**

Stelson provided an update on the Board's financial position and FY24 budget, as reviewed previously by the Finance Committee and as detailed in the FY24 Budget Memo. The Board asked clarifying questions about the budget, which Stelson answered.

## **8. CMO Agreement Update**

Kaynor updated the Board on efforts to streamline the budget process and other Committee work, in part by fostering more regular collaboration and transparency between Excel's three Boards, and especially with the Finance Committee's work, given the critical interdependencies between the three Boards and the organization's assets overall. Kaynor also updated the Board on anticipated votes and discussion items at the Board's June meeting, as well as the status and timeline of efforts to develop an updated CMO agreement for the next five-year charter term (FY24-28). The Board is still in the process of analyzing the proposed fee schedule and expects to vote on this topic at the June meeting.

## **9. Discussion of Chelsea Opportunity**

Howe and Stearns presented a summary memo about an opportunity to explore potential expansion to serve elementary grade students in Chelsea, MA. The Board discussed information and documentation that they would like to review before making a decision, including staff survey results, demonstrated family/community interest, a proposed program-financial model, and a draft amendment request.

## **10. Fundraising & Celebration of Excellence**

Stearns provided an update on fundraising efforts and plans for the Celebration of Excellence and 20-year anniversary event on June 1.

## **11. Adjourn**

Howe moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:36 am, seconded by Stolow, and the meeting was adjourned.

List of Documents Presented at the Meeting:

1. Agenda
2. Minutes from 3.24.23
3. Bio for prospective new member
4. Preliminary FY24 Budget Package
5. Chelsea Amendment Overview
6. Summary of Promise54 Survey Results