

The Chicago High School for the Arts  
Board of Directors Meeting  
**Wm. Blair and Company, 222 W. Adams St., Chicago, IL**

**Minutes for November 25, 2013**

**Present:** Duffie Adelson, James Alexander, Sarah Bader, Joo Boe, Jackie Bratland, Marge Collens, Elissa Efroymsen, Sondra Berman Epstein, Michelle Esfahani, Ron Grais, Mirja Haffner, Francina Harrington, John Hart, Betsy Holden, Julie Hurvis, James Mabie, Charles Slamar, Neal Zucker; and Pam Strobel via telephone.

**Absent:** Jay Franke, Sandra Guthman, Ramsey Lewis, Kay Mabie, Terry Mazany, Susan McKeever, Zarin Mehta, Sylvia Neil, Ralph Rydholm, Steve Solomon

**Others Present:** Daniel Abdalla, Margaret Nielsen, José Ochoa, Robert Okabe, Kirti Patel, Jessica Ramirez, Doug Ray, Cheryl Watkins

**Quorum:** Yes

This meeting of the Board of Directors of The Chicago High School for the Arts (“ChiArts”) was held pursuant to Call & Notice served on all Directors, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. Board Chair, Marge Collens (“Marge”), called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. She conducted the meeting in accordance with the agenda, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

José Ochoa (“José”) introduced new staff members from ChiArts: Daniel Abdalla, Executive Assistant; Doug Ray, Director of Finance and Procurement; Cheryl Watkins (“Cheryl”), Interim Principal; and Kirti Patel, President of the Parent Support Organization.

**Approval of the September 30 minutes**

James Mabie (“Jim M”) moved to approve the September 30, 2013 board meeting minutes.

James Alexander (“Jim A”) noted that page 2, line 7 should read, “Jim A reminded the board to be sensitive to diversity and continue to assure that the board reflects the overall diversity of the school.” He then moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Charles Slamar (“Charlie”) seconded. The board unanimously approved.

**Finance Committee Report**

Joo Boe (“Joo”) presented three separate Projected Financial Statements (attached) that she described as hybrids of an operating budget and cash flow statement. Since the timeframe on the receipt of funds from Chicago Public Schools (“CPS”) is not always predictable, this format will help us determine the amount of funds ChiArts has on a monthly basis rather than how much it expects to have.

The first statement, for the period July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013, reflects a net deficit of \$346,000. This was expected and was covered by a withdrawal from The Elizabeth Morse Genius Working Capital Fund of \$400,000. It has since been paid back.

The second statement, for the period July 1, 2013 to July 31, 2013, reflects a net surplus of \$737,741 and the Genius Working Capital Fund fully restored. This is due to the early receipt of the CPS base allocation for the first quarter.

The third statement, for the period July 1, 2013 to August 31, 2013, reflects a net surplus of \$519,000 continuing the effect of the early CPS payment. However \$300,000 from the Genius Working Capital Fund was withdrawn.

Joo projected that for the period ending September 30, 2013, the surplus will flatten out. She also reminded the board that the budget reflected a “fiscal diet.”

### **Open Meetings Act Overview**

Charlie summarized the requirements of the Open Meetings Act (attached) and noted that it applies to all public bodies, including charter/contract schools. He reminded the Board that they are required to complete the electronic training available on the Illinois Attorney General’s website and submit their certificate of completion to the Director of Finance and Procurement.

### **Other Committee Reports**

- **Program Excellence:** Attached
- **Development**

Jessica Ramirez (“Jessi”) shared the FY 14 Development Dashboard, as of 11/18/13 (attached), and noted that ChiArts was at 72% of their fundraising goal.

Jim Mabie (“Jim M”) reminded the board that five members of the Chairman’s Fund expire this year. He underscored that the fund has been the “lifeblood” of the organization and encouraged the board to think of new Chairman’s Fund prospects.

- **Stewardship and Cultivation:** Attached
- **Kerfuffle**

Mirja Haffner (“Mirja”) reported that the committee is currently working on branding the event, as well as sending out a corporate ask letter before year-end. The “Arts Partner All Stars” this year are Ravinia, the Art Institute of Chicago, Joffrey Ballet, and Steppenwolf. A “Save the Date” notice will be sent out in February, and an invitation will follow.

- **Facilities**

No public announcement has been made regarding the move to a new building. Nevertheless, José reiterated the need for an auditorium that meets the unique needs of ChiArts. Because the current ChiArts campus does not have an appropriate auditorium for large performances, ChiArts incurs \$50,000 a year to transport students between the current ChiArts campus and the Benito Juarez Community Academy. In order to avoid this costly practice, it’s important that the new building has an adequate performance space.

Francia Harrington (“Francee”) reminded the board of the importance of building community relationships. She suggested that the board start planning such outreach now so when CPS the move is official, the board will already have a plan in place. She suggested a small working group be established. Jim A expressed his endorsement.

- **Board Affairs:** Attached

### **Principal’s Report**

Cheryl reviewed her report (attached). She explained that although she came to ChiArts with knowledge of the program, she also brought “fresh eyes” and found her experience enlightening. Cheryl outlined the site visits that she encouraged ChiArts science and social science teachers to attend at Lindbloom

High School, Kenwood Academy, and Westinghouse College Prep. The purpose of these visits is to encourage teachers to make important connections with other Chicago teachers.

#### **Executive Director's Report**

José provided updates about the new principal search. The search committee is in the process of finalizing the job description and making edits to the posting. Applications will be accepted in January.

José has started a communications initiative at ChiArts. Administration has been circulating reports and questionnaires on a variety of factors affecting staff. Additionally, there are now three newsletters and plans for open lunches with specific faculty groups.

José thanked the board for attending the ChiArts production of *The Drowsy Chaperone*.

#### **Public Comments**

Robert Okabe, parent of a ChiArts student, reminded the board that just over half the students qualify for free or reduced lunch and that they will have to bear an increased burden of transportation if ChiArts relocates to Lafayette, as anticipated. He reviewed the relative lack of bus service around this site, as well the distance between it and train stations. Mr. Okabe encouraged the board to consider how the current students will have to add time to their commute. He further noted how students congregate around the current ChiArts campus because of the number of local businesses. He is distressed that these types of establishments do not exist near the Lafayette site. Mr. Okabe concluded by pledging \$3,000 to support a transportation study.

Marge thanked Mr. Okabe for his comments and his pledge. She assured him the Board would be sensitive to the concerns he expressed.

There being no further business, Francee motioned for adjournment, Ron Grais seconded and the board unanimously approved. Marge adjourned the meeting at 4:38PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Charles Slamar  
Secretary