

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of
The Equity Project (TEP) Charter School Board of Trustees
August 21st, 2023**

The **170th** regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of The Equity Project Charter School was held on **August 21st** at The Equity Project Charter School **via Zoom due to COVID-19** pursuant to due notice to Trustees via electronic mail sent on 8/17/23. Public notice was posted on TEP's website at www.tepcharter.org.

The following Trustees were present:

Sean Juan, Jen Mulhern, Laura Tavormina, Brooks Clark, and Andrew Buher joined via videoconference.

The following staff members were present:

Casey Ash, Aaron Villela, Shelly Gupta, Jenoa Jerome, and Xzavier Jackson.

Meeting called to order at 5:30 pm.

Meeting Agenda and Notes:

1. 153 Sherman – Finance Update

Shelly Gupta, CFO, shared that the unwind of the New Markets Tax Credits portion of the deal was successfully completed on August 8, 2023. Additionally, the refinancing of the senior loan from Deutsche Bank is on a good timeline to close by the due date of November 4, 2023. The school has chosen a lender to provide a loan utilizing the tax exempt bonds instrument. The lender has been finalized and the process of floating the tax exempt bonds via BuildNYC has commenced.

2. New BOT Candidate

Casey Ash, Principal, introduced the prospect of adding a new member to the Board of Trustees: Anyeli Matos. Ms. Matos has significant charter schools and NYC Department of Education (DOE) experience and knowledge, as well as valuable connections. She has held positions at various charter networks, and served as the Senior Director of the NYC Charter Schools Office at the DOE. Additionally, Ms. Matos is of Dominican descent, and from the Washington Heights/Inwood neighborhood.

Sean Juan (Board Chair) has connected with Ms. Matos regarding her candidacy. He shared that Ms. Matos is enthusiastic about TEP and its mission. Her time at the DOE as well as her familiarity with the neighborhood make her an exceptional candidate for the Board. Andrew Buher (Trustee) is acquainted with Ms. Matos from their time together working at the DOE and shared that she was well respected and deeply committed to her work and students. Mr. Buher recognizes that Ms. Matos wants to serve on the Board and agrees that Ms. Matos will be an asset because of her connection to the community.

Ms. Gupta recalled her initial connection with Ms. Matos when TEP was first founded, sharing that she remained a resource when Ms. Gupta needed support and guidance.

Trustees Brooks Clark, Jen Mulhern, and Laura Tavormina expressed excitement about the possibility of welcoming a new member, and the team agreed to vote on Ms. Matos's candidacy during the upcoming board meeting.

Board members were directed to connect directly with Sean or Casey if they would like to meet with Ms. Matos or if they need any additional information prior to the September meeting and vote.

3. Staffing Update

Mr. Ash shared that TEP's academic team is fully staffed. In the last meeting, he mentioned that the school had some vacancies, but the school succeeded in filling those roles within the month. The school is delighted with the staff and feels lucky to have had a great hiring season.

No questions from the BOT on this agenda item.

4. Enrollment Update

Aaron Villela, CEO, took over for this agenda item sharing that enrollment remains a challenge at TEP and across NYC. Enrollment is a primary focus, and the school continues to enroll as spaces become available in all cohorts with Kindergarten enrollment as a particular focus.

The school continues to push with several enrollment initiatives, particularly word of mouth and referrals.

5. Student Spotlight

Xzavier Jackson, Assistant Director at the Early Childhood Campus, introduced the Board of Trustees to two TEP students: TJ and HJ.

TJ is a Middle School student who loves to make bracelets, eating Takis, and playing Subway Surfers. TJ is also growing their math skills. HJ is an Early Childhood student who loves family board games, slime lickers, and is a great reader. HJ often gets nervous about their reading skills, and is continuing to practice and develop their comprehension.

Trustees were delighted to learn about these students, and look forward to future Student Spotlights.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:11PM.

Minutes recorded by Jen Mulhern.