

The Charter Institute at Erskine
Board Meeting Minutes
February 12, 2020

The Board meeting of the Charter Institute at Erskine was held on February 12, 2020, at 11:00 AM at Erskine College, Chestnut Room, 2 Washington Street, Due West, SC 29639. Dr. Gustafson called the meeting to order and gave the invocation. Board members in attendance were Dr. Robert Gustafson, Mrs. Marjorie (Beth) Gustafson, Dr. Tom Hellams, Rev. Tony Foster, and Mr. Stu Rodman. Mr. Martin O'Connor joined the meeting at 11:13 AM. Attendees from the Charter Institute at Erskine included Mr. Cameron Runyan, Mr. Vamshi Rudrapati, Mr. Johnley Li, Mr. Allen Ray, Mrs. Kristen Stolpa, Mr. Derek Phillips, and Mrs. Paula Gray.

The roll was taken by Mrs. Gray and a quorum was present.

Dr. Hellams called for a motion to amend the agenda to move the Public Comment section to prior to the Executive Session, approve the amended agenda for the February 12, 2020, meeting, and adopt the minutes of the January 8, 2020, meeting as presented. Rev. Foster seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Public Comments:

Dr. Cherry Daniel, Head of School, SC Virtual Charter School, introduced Courtney Suber, Michelle Patterson, Anita Maness, and Anita Latham. Dr. Daniel thanked the Institute staff and the Board for their assistance and stated that this has been a very productive school year. She announced that SC Virtual Charter School will soon have a new facility with meeting space that may be used free of charge.

Executive Session:

Rev. Foster moved to go into Executive Session for discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements. The motion was seconded by Dr. Hellams and carried. The Board went into Executive Session at 11:14 AM and returned to Open Session at 11:51 AM.

No actions were taken during the Executive Session.

Action Items:

a) Request for an Extension of the Opening Date of Berkeley Preparatory Academy

Dr. Stewart Weinberg presented this item on behalf of the Berkeley Preparatory Academy Board and requested a one-year extension. Mr. Rudrapati reported that the Institute staff recommends granting the extensions for both Berkeley Preparatory Academy and Rock Hill Preparatory Academy.

Dr. Hellams moved to approve the one-year extension for opening Berkeley Preparatory Academy. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Gustafson. The motion carried unanimously.

b) Request for an Extension of the Opening Date of Rock Hill Preparatory Academy

Dr. Stewart Weinberg presented this item on behalf of the Rock Hill Preparatory Academy Board and requested a one-year extension.

Dr. Hellams moved to approve the one-year extension for opening Berkeley Preparatory Academy. The motion was seconded by Rev. Foster. The motion carried unanimously.

c) Brashier Middle College Renewal Request

Mr. Mike Sinclair, Principal; Ms. Trina Freeman, Assistant Principal; and Mr. Keith McNeel, Board Vice-Chair, presented their request for a renewal of their charter through the Charter Institute at Erskine and answered questions. Mrs. Stolpa presented a data report and stated that the staff enthusiastically recommends that the Board approve the renewal of Brashier Middle College Charter High School and the transfer of the school to the Charter Institute at Erskine for a term of 10 years.

Dr. Hellams called for the question. The renewal and transfer of the Brashier Middle College charter was unanimously approved.

d) Horse Creek Charter School Request for Amendment

Dr. Ann Marie Taylor, Principal; Ms. Sarah Morris, Upper Level Principal; and Mr. Kevin Murray, Board President, presented the request for an amendment to the charter of Horse Creek Charter School by adding grades 9 through 12 and answered questions. Mr. Rudrapati reported that the Institute staff recommends approval of the amendment and Mr. Li added that the school is financially sound.

Mr. O'Connor moved to approve the amendment to allow Horse Creek Charter School to add grades 9-12 to their charter. Dr. Hellams seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

e) Royal Live Oaks Academy Change of Location

Mr. Rudrapati reported that Royal Live Oaks Academy has moved into their new building and the change of location needs to be amended in their charter.

Rev. Foster moved to approve the amendment for the change in location in the charter of Royal Live Oaks Academy. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Gustafson. The motion carried unanimously.

f) Thornwell Charter School Request for Amendment

Mr. Hugh Wilson, Principal, presented this item requesting an amendment to add the 8th grade to their charter for the 2020-2021 school year and answered questions.

Mr. Rudrapati reported that after a site visit, the staff recommends the amendment. Mr. Li stated that there are no financial concerns.

Dr. Hellams moved to approve the amendment to allow the Thornwell Charter School to add 8th grade for the 2020-2021 school year. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Gustafson. The motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Gustafson made a motion to move the Charter Institute at Erskine Audit from an Informational Item to an item for Approval as an emergency procedure, in order to meet the State Department of Education requirements. Rev. Foster seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

g) Charter Institute at Erskine Audit

Ms. Gabrielle Davis, Partner, McGregor and Company, presented the audit and findings to the Board and answered questions. Ms. Davis stated that all findings have been resolved with one exception and that exception is in the process of being resolved. Mr. Li was recognized for his hard work and expertise throughout this process.

Mr. O'Connor moved to approve the audit as presented. The motion was seconded by Rev. Foster. The motion carried unanimously.

h) The Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) Compliance Policy

Mr. Allen Ray presented this item and explained the policy.

Mr. O’Connor moved to approve the policy as part of the Institute’s policies. The motion was seconded by Dr. Hellams. The motion carried unanimously.

i) Amendment to Superintendent’s Contract

Mr. Runyan presented this item and explained that the amendment to the life insurance policy was necessary due to requirements of the current insurance carrier.

Dr. Hellams moved to amend the Superintendent’s contract to reflect two times the annual salary. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rodman. The motion carried unanimously.

Presentation by SC Virtual Charter School for Proposal of AEC

Dr. Cherry Daniel, Head of School, and Ms. Anita Latham, Assistant Executive Director and High School Principal, presented this item and explained the request for designation as an Alternative Education Campus.

Mr. Rudrapati reported that the presentation is for information at this time and a request for approval will be brought to the Board at a later date.

Informational Items:

a) Updates for Clear Dot Charter School and Mevers School of Excellence

Mr. Rudrapati presented information regarding Clear Dot Charter School and Mevers School of Excellence and reported on improvements being made at both schools.

b) Racial Composition Reports for Midlands STEM Institute and Virtus Academy of South Carolina

Mr. Rudrapati presented this item and stated that the Institute is working with both schools very diligently to close the racial gaps.

c) Finance Update

Mr. Li presented this item, reviewed the budget, and answered questions.

d) Enrollment Update

Mr. Li presented the enrollment as of February 3, 2020, for information.

Superintendent Updates:

Mr. Runyan reported that he has been attending budget hearings and the Institute has a significant increase in the budget due to the new schools coming onboard. Mr. Runyan reviewed the State Report Card results and the differences in 2018 and 2019. He reported that site visits are being made to every school with data presentations and honest assessments. He stated that department budgets are in and an Institute budget will be ready for approval in April. Drafts of the Student Success Profile (SSP) will be given to the schools by March and copies will be sent to the Board. Mr. Runyan announced that the annual banquet will be held Thursday, May 21, 2020, at the Columbia Convention Center and all Board members and their guests are invited. He reported that Royal Live Oaks Academy has earned the first College Board AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award.

Mr. Rudrapati thanked the Board for their support and stated that going on site visits is an amazing feeling. The success has been felt statewide and it could not have happened without the support of the Board. Dr. Gustafson thanked the Institute, as a whole, and stated that the combination of connectiveness and high standards is wonderful.

Adjournment

As there was no further business, a motion was made to adjourn by Dr. Hellams at 2:59 P.M. to adjourn. The meeting was unanimously adjourned.