



# GREER MIDDLE COLLEGE

## CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

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### HOME OF THE BLAZERS

#### **Board of Directors Minutes** **September 25, 2023**

Members Present: John Short, Pauline Nichol, Lori Larsen, Tony Kouskolekas, Jennifer Jones, Zach Salvato, Darin Scheidly

Administration Present: Jimmy Armstrong, Anne Goff, David Gantt

Members Absent: Donna Smith, Pamela Adams, Elliot Figueroa

1. The meeting was called to order by John Short, Vice-Chairman, at 5:35 pm.
2. There were no public speakers who desired to address the board.
3. Reading of the GMC Mission Statement: Pauline Nichol.
4. Blazer Brag - Jimmy Armstrong recognized the school's three National Merit Semi-Finalists: Kyle Gafner, Kate Illingworth, and Megan Morris.
5. The board reviewed the proposed agenda for the meeting. Pauline Nichol made a motion to approve the agenda. Tony Kouskolekas seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
6. The board reviewed the meeting minutes from the August 28, 2023, regular board meeting. Zach Salvato made a motion to approve the minutes. Tony Kouskolekas seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
7. The board reviewed the meeting minutes from the August 31, 2023, special board meeting. Pauline Nichol made a motion to approve the minutes. Lori Larsen seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
8. The board reviewed the meeting minutes from the September 5, 2023, special board meeting. Pauline Nichol made a motion to approve the minutes. Tony Kouskolekas seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
9. Administrative and Committee Reports:
  - a) Administration Report – Jimmy Armstrong presented the report:
    - i. U.S. News World Report has ranked Greer Middle College as one of the top high schools in the state and one of the top charter schools in the country. The ranking is based upon graduation rates, AP scores and standardized test scores.
    - ii. The administration team is doing a school podcast. If the podcasts are well received, then the team will consider a weekly podcast and add additional content. Students are also going to begin to create their own podcasts utilizing this equipment.
    - iii. Freshmen Enrollment opens on November 2nd, and we have published a digital brochure.
    - iv. Josten talked to juniors and seniors.
    - v. The Guidance Department held a college application day where several colleges attended.
    - vi. School Digger has rated GMC as one of the top five high schools in SC.
    - vii. Regarding Development, Mr. Frans received a Greater Greer grant of \$1,500 for classroom calculators.
    - viii. The local granite quarry is donating two large rocks to use as paintable message boards.
    - ix. Kelly Bailey and Heather Timanus have been working with the SC Public Relations conference and attended its fall conference. The conference is helping with school promotion. The Blazer Picnic fundraiser is October 6th.
    - x.

- xi. Current Enrollment is between 527 and 530.
  - xii. We have been communicating with PowerSchool regarding their enrollment and onboarding platform and are looking at migrating to its platform.
  - xiii. The school is exploring leasing a billboard to promote enrollment. We are also looking at a Trunk of Treat event at the end of October.
  - xiv. Zach Salvato asked whether we would consider adding more students from the wait list. Mr. Armstrong stated that we will revisit the waiting list in December/January because we can add students to semester classes at the beginning of the next semester. Darin Scheidly asked if we were losing upperclassmen. Mr. Armstrong said that the withdrawals were primarily above sophomore class.
- b) Executive Committee Report- No report was presented.
- c) Finance Committee- Tony Kouskolekas presented the report:
- i. Mr. Kouskolekas gave a synopsis of the school's end-of-month financial condition as of August 2023:
    - i. The July and August financials were in alignment with the budget.
    - ii. The 2023 fiscal external audit is being drafted now and should be presented at the next board meeting.
    - iii. Mr. Kouskolekas stated that the state district has requested that the board review and approve our monthly and year-to-date financial statements. The board reviewed the August balance sheet and income statement. Mr. Kouskolekas asked if there any questions regarding the balance sheet and income statement. Hearing none, Mr. Kouskolekas made a motion to approve the August balance sheet and income statements. The Motion passed unanimously.
  - ii. The current state investment pool interest rate is at 5.5%.
  - iii. The school has an opportunity to pursue some additional funding through the federal Employee Retention Tax Credit from the federal COVID funds. The potential recovery is \$ 200 thousand, but there is a filing fee of around \$20 thousand.
  - iv. The ESSER funds that the school will receive will be spread over the course of the year, but the total is about \$50 thousand.
  - v. Regarding the property for the new community school, GMC will lease the land from the a limited liability company that was created to purchase the property. Jennifer Jones asked about the structure of the LLC that purchased the property. Anne Goff stated that it was a single member LLC with GMC being the member and the board members being the governing body.
  - vi. Truist still pleased with our debt and our covenants. The school will have to be diligent in controlling spending until we have additional information regarding annual per-pupil funding from the state district.
  - vii. The school's external auditors are still making end-of-year audit adjustments to our financial data.
  - viii. Tony Kouskolekas moved to accept the report. The report unanimously.
- d) Facilities Committee- John Short.
- i. The school published the design-build Request for Qualifications. The only company that responded to the RFQ was Harper Corporation, which is one of the largest construction companies in the state.
  - ii. Roebuck Builders and Saussman, two corporations who had shown previous interest in the project, chose not to reply to the RFQ.

- iii. Basically, the building companies were concerned about the cost cap of the project. The primary issue is the size of the septic field in the plan and the cost associated with a field that size.
- iv. Mr. Short stated that the budget window of \$22 million should work with the current design plan. Zach Salvato asked about other upstate builders that did not apply. Mr. Short said that he has spoken with several upstate builders and why they chose to decline to file an RFQ. He added that he is trying to gather that information and will provide it when available.
- v. The school is also waiting for information from the SCDOT regarding the traffic pattern for the school.
- vi. Jennifer Jones stated that she is surprised that more companies had not submitted applications. Mr. Short stated one builder did not believe that \$22 million was sufficient because of recent increases in construction costs. The RFQ was based upon several RFQs already published in the state and vetted by our corporate attorneys. The RFQ called for a guaranteed maximum price of \$22 million, which included the price of the property purchase. This approach worked well for the gym, which was delivered at the contractual price.
- vii. Mr. Armstrong stated the RFQ is non-binding and that it may be amended as needed. Mr. Short stated the school has a budget for the project and will have to stay within the budget and adjust the plan accordingly. Mr. Short requested that the members of the Construction Committee review Harper's RFQ and then schedule a meeting to discuss it.
- viii. Darin Scheidly asked whether it was appropriate to wait for sewer service to be available prior to moving forward with the project to save the cost of the septic field. John Short indicated that there is the potential of obtaining funding for the sewer extension through state funding. There are two septic service providers in the area, and the board has been in contact with both. There may be lapsed state funds that might be available for this type of project.
- ix. The Facilities Committee scheduled a meeting for Thursday afternoon to discuss the RFQ. Mr. Armstrong stated that we have a November 1st deadline with the state district to file a Letter of Intent for approving a charter for fall 2025 opening and initiating federal grant funding.
- e) Policy & Governance Committee- Darin Scheidly presented the report.
  - i. The committee needs to review and consider several board policies that Ms. Goff said the state district wanted the school to adopt. The committee will meet prior to the next board meeting to discuss the needed board policies.
  - f) Academic Excellence Committee – No report was presented.

#### 10. New Business

- a) John Short stated that the Facilities Committee will provide the board with additional information after its Thursday meeting. Jennifer Jones asked whether we should delay the RFQ until we have an answer regarding the sewer expansion. Mr. Short stated that we need to pursue both sewer expansion and the design with a septic field simultaneously. Mr. Short stated that the school has to determine whether the public authorities are controlling growth in the area by limiting sewer expansion and the timeline the utilities may have for expanding service near the property.

11. Darin Scheidly moved to adjourn the meeting. Tony Kouskolekas seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:38 p.m.

12. Next board meeting is tentatively scheduled for **October 30, 2023, at 5:30 pm.**

## Addendums



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