

**GREEN Charter School Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday January 13 2022 6:00 pm**  
**Interim Chair: Vince Atkinson**  
**Location: Virtual**

Attendance Summary

Board Members	Present / Absent
Vincent Atkinson	Present via Zoom
Imtiaz Haque	Absent
Mandy Townes	Present via Zoom
Laurel Wiles	Present via Zoom
Trishka Hornbeck	Present via Zoom
Katherine Ponder	Present via Zoom
Keelah Truesdale	Absent

Executive Director

Tom Cronin	Present via Zoom
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**AGENDA**

1. Welcome / Opening Remarks - Meeting began at 6:04pm. Mr. Atkinson welcomes everyone to the meeting and states the purpose of meeting. Acknowledged that these are difficult times. Reminds that decisions are being made for the safety of students, continuity of education and the social/emotional wellbeing of students. Right now, it may feel like we are working harder and being less effective but that is not the case. We are working harder but appreciate grace to understand that teachers, administrators and front office staff are working responsibly and tirelessly to move GREEN forward as responsibly and safely as we can.
2. Public Comments - Reminder that in personnel matters, the only persons who can speak to this are the personnel involved. 3 min max
  - o Ms. Avis made a public comment about being a health professional during the covid pandemic and requests masking in GREEN schools.
  - o Ms. Ellis made a public comment about a student incident that occurred at Midlands campus and Mr Cronin's response.
  - o Mr. Atkinson thanks the public for comments.

3. Approval of Agenda

- Motion: Townes
- Second: Hornbeck
- Vote was 5-0 (**PASSES**)

4. Approval of minutes from December 16th 2021 meeting

- Motion to approve minutes: Townes
- Second: Ponder
- Vote was 5-0 (**PASSES**)

5. Executive Director Update

Mr. Atkinson states that he views this as a standing item going forward and is excited for this item as part of our go forward strategy.

- A) Introduce Executive Team Members: Mr. Cronin thanks Mr. Atkinson for his thoughtful opening remarks and important to recognize hard work that goes on. Privilege to be here. States that in October meeting asked for a organizational flow chart and since October have been creating job descriptions and interviewing candidates for the executive team. Still have Director of Human Resources and hope to have that finalized in next week or 2. Able to secure 2 internal directors and 2 external directors.
  - Introduced Miyah Lewis, GREEN Director of Special Services. Ms. Lewis was an internal candidate who has been with GREEN since Jan and has 16 years of experience working with Exception Education Students. She is tenacious with data needed to track all processes in Special Ed and has worked hard to address a letter from the district about Special Ed. Ms. Lewis spoke about her background and how much she enjoys being at GREEN and how she looks forward to growing with the GREEN family.
  - Introduced Gretchen Taylor, GREEN Director of Finance. Started 8 days ago. Ms. Taylor spent last 7 years as director of Finance at Legacy Early College. She's a certified school business official and has rolled up her sleeves quickly. Ms. Taylor stated that it has been great to meet everyone in an exciting 8 days and will get things straightened out.
  - Introduced Bobby Rollins, GREEN Director of Teaching and Learning. Mr. Lewis was another internal candidate who has been with GREEN since May or June. Mr. Rollins has 18 years in education and experience as a school leader as well as in the private sector. Mr. Rollins brings the ability to see the teaching and learning process and how to incorporate social/emotional wellbeing of children. Mr. Lewis stated that he is excited to be a part of the team and excited about what the future holds.
  - Introduced Melanie Hammack, GREEN Director of Operations. Ms. Hammack is on her 4th day with GREEN and hit the ground running. Before coming to GREEN, Ms. Hammack was the Associate Executive Director of Administrative Services and Professional Training at Clemson University Youth Learning Institute. Ms. Hammack brings a wealth of experience and connections all across the state. Ms. Hammack stated that she is so excited to be with GREEN, met with Mr. Cronin several times before joining and is excited about Mr. Cronin's vision for what the

school can be. Excited to work with the board, parents and educators to make GREEN the best charter school in the state. Mr. Cronin states that is our goal, to make GREEN the best charter school system in the state.

- Mr. Cronin stated that having these 4 executive team members on board has been wonderful. Going to move forward with beginning strategic planning session. Reminds board that part this effort was to make sure build capacity; Needed to build infrastructure behind the great schools to ensure that we have the ability to ensure that brand promise from campus to campus and for future growth.
- Mr. Cronin introduced Haley Brunson, GREEN Executive Assistant and Board Clerk. Ms. Brunson has made herself invaluable in the time she has been here. Ms. Brunson stated that is excited to be a part of GREEN and available to support anyone who needs her.
- Mr. Cronin states that this is 4 out of the 5 of Executive Team and they have a wealth of experience. Mr. Cronin feels fortunate to have the context of South Carolina charter schools surrounding him as we go forward. Mr. Atkinson formally welcomes them on behalf of the board and thanks Mr. Cronin for putting this team together.
- Ms. Townes asks Mr. Cronin to restate the names and titles for the minutes. Mr. Cronin restates them:
  - Miyah Lewis, GREEN Director of Special Services
  - Gretchen Taylor, GREEN Director of Finance
  - Bobby Rollins, GREEN Director of Teaching and Learning
  - Melanie Hammack, GREEN Director of Operations
  - Haley Brunson, GREEN Executive Assistant and Board Clerk.
- B) Draft Strategic Planning Goals: Mr. Cronin states that he is sharing for information purposes. Mr. Cronin describes the concept overview for each goal [Customers, Quality, Capacity and Fiscally Sound] and discussed how these will be used to create a strategic plan for GREEN going forward.
- C) Update on GREEN Upstate Five Forks. Mr. Cronin introduces Chase Willingham, the project director and founding principal of the Upstate High School. Mr. Willingham was the founder of LEAD Academy and has brought insight to our team and is going to bring families together under his leadership.
  - Mr. Willingham states it is a pleasure to be a part of GREEN. Had a great time over past 2 months, feels like he's been here a few years not a few months. Gives a few updates:
    - Construction: Tight construction to get the building done by next school year but have an incredible team with Harper construction. 100% focused on getting this completed, managed to stay on track, no major setbacks. Completed all demolition before winter break, most unground plumbing has been completed. Interior walls are going up currently and should be complete in next week or two. One big project had to undertake that was an addition to the budget we have been able to offset, with some changes, was

we had to do some additional bracing in roof and joists to provide additional support in the ceiling - that is going on now and should be completed soon. Completed most of the HVAC low pressure ducts, starting medium pressure now and should be completed in next week or two which should allow to start closing in walls and electrical. We are currently fast break towards allowances completed for exterior signage, exterior improvements. Most of you are aware of the supply chain issues and want to make sure we have procured everything we need to open the school. It's a different timeline of a project than a few years ago. We are on top of it and getting it done. Hayley should have shared a completed gantt chart and pictures of project. Pushing towards first overhead OSF inspection in early May, on track to do that. With projected temporary CO in mid-July and final CO in late July. Harper along with Don Nickle, one of our project managers has been pushing to keep everything on track. Going according to plan so far.

- Enrollment: Moving high school over will need to boost enrollment to grow out and offer more complete high school experience/wide range of high school offerings. Currently in the 150s for students committed to come next year. Have a ways to go but links have only been out a few weeks and have done no major marketing. Next week begin to meet with 8th grade families, as well as reaching out to K-8 schools and a local high school that is closing its doors. Feel confident about where we are, will keep pressing and moving forward.
- Transportation has been a big concern with families as we move out to the Five Forks area. For past few weeks spent the time during morning and afternoon driving the routes between schools to figure out how much time it takes to get an efficient route to connect the campuses. Will be sending out tomorrow a transportation survey for parents and in next few weeks be able to release a preliminary plan for campuses and will impact start and end times. Mr. Cronin states that he's doing this so we can stagger the start and end times between campuses. Mr. Atkinson asks which campuses will get the transportation survey. Mr. Willingham states Spartanburg and Greenville campuses. Anyone who would be potentially interested in the new high school campus or siblings. Want to make sure routes are efficient and get kids to school on time which is why it's been important to actually drive these routes to get this information. We are trying to get the best solution out there for our families. Ms. Ponder asks about logistics about kids being shuttled between lower and high school. Mr. Willingham states that they are trying to formulate a shuttle route that connects all the campuses. Ms. Townes stated that the have

been times where the shuttle has been completely full and this survey will be important for that information. Mr. Willingham states that finding a solution for 100% will be really hard but wants to make sure that everyone understands we are putting in the hours it takes to solve this problem.

- Staffing at HS: Mr. Willingham stated that he has been working with Mr. Ozer and Ms. Hernandez on staffing and transferring kids over, thanks them. Sent surveys to current middle school and high school kids asking them what kind of new classes they want to see offered. Want new campus to be student focused, students needs to drive what the high experience looks likes and value that feedback. Continue to push registration and enrollment. Fortunate to have solid core staff in place at both campuses but will be posting some new positions. Have had a lot of interest from high quality teachers in the area. Have a lot of balls in the air but have a great team working on it and we are going to be in great shape come August, doing what it takes to to do it right.
- Mr. Cronin thanks Mr. Willingham for the updates and reiterates the message of voice and choice, giving students agency to decide what their education can look like. This will be a big part of our vision going forward and Chase has experience in this. Board did get gantt chart and will send out photos taken a few days ago.

#### 6. Board Resolution - GREEN Charter Bank Accounts

- Mr. Atkinson explains that this is a board resolution about signatory capabilities to move forward with financial decisions. Mr. Cronin stated that the most important part is the last section. What trying to do is to provide context within our current bylaws and responsibilities and Ms. Taylor in her new role of Director of Flnance will have that ability within that context. Resolution is what needs approval as others are in place already. As per the bylaws, the Director of Finance is under Executive Director responsibility and need Director of Finance to be act like a Director of Finance. This also aligns with our procurement policy. This allows us to move forward and have talked to the bank about signage rights.
- Mr. Atkinson asked if this within boundaries of policies in the bylaws as they stand right now. This is to re-ratify, correct? Mr. Cronin states yes, and to resolve that the Director of Finance will have those same abilities. The Director and ED have to work together to make purchases and currently they can only work to pay bills.
  - Motion that the board re-ratifies GREEN's existing procurement policy to read as was sent to the board via the board packet:  
Townes
  - Seconded: Wiles
  - Vote 5-0 (**PASSES**)

#### 7. Standing Committees

- Mr. Atkinson explained that there are 4 standing committees as part of our bylaws: Per by-laws (Governance, Audit, Financial Oversight, and Personnel) and that there are also other committees that have been formed on an ongoing basis. For instance there was a covid committee and facilities committee. These are of great importance because the board's job is to provide governance and give fiduciary responsibility. Board's job is not making decisions at the building level unless something is brought forward and then we have to address it. That's where strategic governance comes into play. Opens up to the board for committees and committee involvement we may need going forward in regards to our board and GREEN Charter Schools.
- Ms. Ponder asks if we need to give input on how we disperse? Mr. Atkinson says yes, specifically for additional committees. Ms. Ponder states that we need to be competitive in the workplace and asks if we will have the Executive Director and Director of HR work on benefits package or if that will have board oversight? Mr. Atkinson states that the Director of Finance would likely be involved as well. This is topic that has been discussed. Ms. Ponder stated perhaps the executive team may not want board help.
- Ms. Townes stated that over the last year this board has been really hands on at time because we have had to be really hands on and that the intention of charter school boards is to be less day to day and allow staff to handle those decisions. That is why Mr. Cronin was hired and this amazing staff and we are here for more of the big picture stuff, not the nitty gritty stuff. However there are decisions such as budgets which will be our responsibility and we will need some insight, which is why we will have something like the financial oversight committee. Also having the executive staff as part of our committees will help us with information and spreading the load. That's the way I see the bylaws working and the committees work.
- Mr. Atkinson states, what drives the culture, and when it comes to things like pay structure, I see the board being hands on. But in terms of other component that drives culture, that is something that will be driven by the executive director, directors, admin teams, central office staff and teachers. We can't enforce a culture. I would personally commission Mr. Cronin to give guidance to the definition of culture to drive retention. Mr. Atkinson asks Ms. Wiles for her thoughts and she states that all staff need to be made to feel welcome in the schools, even in little ways which do mean a lot. When I joined the board we talked about GREEN community and I feel that everyone needs to feel like they belong in the GREEN community. Mr. Atkinson agrees.
- Ms. Townes asks if we are still discussing additional committees and references the creation of the covid committee. That committee was a one time specific committee that came out of a specific need that was reactive. Other special committees are probably reactive, with the exception of possibly a facilities committee which may not be a separate committee. We are building a building but we have other buildings and will have maintenance etc.. that's all I can think of.

- Mr. Atkinson states that he has thought that we need a Vision committee to help us fulfill our vision and align with our charter of renewable energy. We have to align ourselves with captains of industry in the community to help us meet that charter. I would strongly recommend we create this as a standing committee to help us as align with our charter. This is for all stakeholders, not just the board. They have to be chaired by a board member but not limited to board members. Mr. Atkinson encourages stakeholders to reach out if they are aligned with the specific needs of the charter and again encourages the board to add a Vision or Visionary committee to the Standing committees. Ms. Townes states that each standing committee has to include at least 2 board members but don't see where it has to be chaired by a board member. It is only limited by participation. Ms. Hornbeck states that the Governance committee has specific board members because it is the officers of the board.
- Mr. Atkinson states that this is something that he wanted to bring up, we need to give thought to this as we focus on being strategic and fiduciarly sound in our direction and we will discuss at the next meeting.

8. Executive Session

- Mr. Atkinson explains that board is moving into ES to discuss the board officers
  - Motion to move to ES: Townes
  - Second: Atkinson
  - Vote (5-0) (**PASSES**)

(Into Executive Session at 7:21pm)

- Motion to leave Executive Session: Townes
- Second: Hornbeck
- Vote (5-0) (**PASSES**)

(Back in public session at 8:42pm)

9. Approval of items from ES

- Mr. Atkinson thanks stakeholders for being with us and states that there were no items to approve. Mr. Atkinson stated that the board discussed officers of the board, chair, vice chair and secretary. In addition we talked about a budget which commissioned Mr. Cronin to work with finance to see opportunities there.
- Mr. Atkinson thanks everyone again.

**Motion to adjourn:** Townes

**Vote (5-0) (PASSES)**

**Meeting adjourned at 8:44pm**

Signed and dated:

*Vincent B. Atkinson*

Board Chairperson

*Mandy Reeves Townes*

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Board Secretary