

Shreveport Charter Schools, Inc.
Linwood Public Charter School
401 W. 70th Street ~ Shreveport, Louisiana 71106

Board of Trustees Meeting

October 2024 MEETING MINUTES

This meeting was held at 331 E. 71st Street and Zoom Meeting (ID: 267 635 4207) on October 21, at 4:00 p.m.

Board Members Present: *In-Person:* Gard Wayt, Travis Morehart, Lauren Marchive, Buck Magee, Dr. Bernard Kimble, Whitney Polley, Mildred Tolliver, Dr. Kerry Laster, Lori Graham, Sheryl Nix
Virtually: Cynthia Franklin

Leadership Team/Faculty: *In-Person:* Dr. Staughton Jennings, Shirley Pierson, Richard Hilliard, Wanda Austin-Lewis, Jennifer Hamilton-Myles, Tara Sealy, Marilyn Johnson-Preston, Camille Cruse, Cassandra Anderson

Contractors Present: Kevin Cox (*4th Sector Solutions*)

Call to Order: Mr. Wayt called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

Quorum Check: A quorum was present.

Approval/Amendment of Agenda:

- Mr. Morehart moved to amend the agenda as presented due to the report from the Finance Committee for Capital Improvements and the renewal of the line of credit with a c.d. at Home Federal Bank.
- Mr. Marchive seconded the motion.
- All voted in favor and the amendments to the agenda were approved.

Conflict of Interest Advisements: There were none.

Visitor Comments: There were none.

Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting:

- Ms. Nix moved to approve the September 2024 minutes as distributed.
- Dr. Laster seconded the motion.
- All voted in favor and the September 2024 minutes were approved.

Financial Report:

Mr. Wayt asked Mr. Kevin Cox from 4th Sector Solutions and Mrs. Wanda Austin-Lewis to present the Financial Report. Mr. Cox presented the September 2024 Finance Report, 1st quarter operations.

Approval of September 2024 Finance Report:

- Mr. Morehart moved to approve the September 2024 Finance Report as presented.
- Mr. Magee seconded the motion.
- All voted in favor of the motion off the September 2024 Financial Report was approved.

Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire (2024 Audit)

Mr. Morehart presented the Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire for the 2023/2024 Audit that was prepared by the finance staff to be approved by the board. It lists the compliance areas being tested during the audit.

Question, Answer, Comment:

- Q: Mr. Wayt: Mr. Cox, is this a routine report that you are familiar with?
- A: Mr. Cox: Yes, it is very standardized. Every Board receives the exact document to review and approve.
- C: Mr. Magee: The document states that we are a Type 5 Charter. Technically, we are not a Type 5 Charter, we have a contract. We were a Type 5 Charter in the past. I am assuming it will be corrected.
- A: Mr. Cox: That is correct.
- A: Mr. Morehart: We were. The auditors are aware of who we are.
- C: Mr. Wayt: For the newer members of the board, when we started, we were at Type 5 Charter, which is a Charter that is not approved by the local district. It went through the RSD. When we came up for our 2nd renewal, instead of renewing our charter they gave us a direct operating contract, which we’ve had for the last several years. Now we operate on a year-to-year basis. This happened because we showed that if Caddo took the Linwood students back, the students at Linwood would be going to schools that were graded worse than Linwood. So, the state allowed us to keep that operating contract on a year-to-year basis.

Approval of Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire (2024 Audit):

- Mr. Morehart presented a motion to approve the Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire as presented.
- Mr. Marchive seconded the motion.
- All voted in favor of the motion to approve Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire was approved.

LDOE Stipends

Dr. Jennings presented the recommendation for the dissemination of the LDOE Stipends for approval by the board.

Question, Answer, Comment:

- Q: Mr. Marchive: I assume we have received the funds already, correct?
- A: Dr. Jennings: Yes, we already have them.
- Q: Mr. Wayt: Do we have to have it disbursed by the end of the year?
- A: Dr. Jennings: By December 15, 2024.

Approval of the dissemination of the LDOE Stipends:

- Mr. Morehart moved to approve the distribution of the LDOE Stipends as presented.
- Mr. Magee seconded the motion.
- All voted in favor of the motion and the distribution of the LDOE Stipends was approved.

Executive Director’s Report:

Fundraising Initiatives – 24/25 Capital Campaign (Brick Project)

Cassandra Anderson & Camille Cruse presented the fundraising initiatives.

1. Brick Project Fundraiser for the Elementary School (Timeframe November – March)
 - Purpose of this fundraiser is to purchase the playground equipment for the Elementary School campus

2. Sponsor a Classroom Program
 - Purpose of this fundraiser is to provide classroom resources such as supplies, educational materials, and/or technology.
3. School Sponsorship Levels

Question, Answer, Comment:

- Q: Ms. Nix: Where are the bricks going once purchased?
- A: Mrs. Anderson: An area near the gym. We've already had someone come out and look at the area.
- Q: Ms. Nix: Who are you expecting to purchase them?
- A: Mrs. Anderson: Students, Parents, Anyone. It is open to the public.
- C: Dr. Jennings: This is the 1st year this location would be opened as a school. Parents would want to see their students name at the onset of a new location.
- C: Mr. Wayt: Board members, too.
- C: Dr. Jennings: Yes, board members and staff as well.
- Q: Mr. Wayt: What all can be placed on the brick? Your name, of course, and what else?
- A: Mrs. Anderson: According to the space, you can use up 26 characters, up to 3 lines.
- Q: Mr. Morehart: Is there a minimal amount needing to be sold to fill in the specific area?
- A: Mrs. Anderson: The way we have it is all bricks will be strategically placed to make sure it looks nice.
- A: Mrs. Cruse: Also, the vendor suggested that we also use what they call "filler bricks" that are blank. If we want to add something else, we can use the filler bricks. We won't have to purchase more bricks; we can just get the filler bricks already purchased engraved.

LA SB207 Law – Cell Phone Policy

Mrs. Pierson stated that there were changes made to the policy after it was amended by our attorney. Our attorney suggested that we not confiscate the cell phones. The policy was amended based on her suggestion as well as the suggestion from Mr. Magee referencing notifying parents with every consequence step. The final written policy must be approved by the board.

Question, Answer, Comment:

- Q: Mr. Wayt: What is the plan in place of confiscating the phone?
- A: Mrs. Pierson: We will confiscate the phone and the parent must pick it up the same day.
- Q: Mr. Morehart: Where will you put the phone until the parent comes?
- A: Mrs. Pierson: I have a locked cabinet in my office.
- Q: Mrs. Tolliver: In case of emergency, do you have anything in place?
- Q: Mr. Wayt: Do you mean if a parent needs to get in touch with a student?
- A: Mrs. Pierson: They can always call the school's front office. We can also make contact via radio phones on the buses. This is not written in our policy; it is understood as parents always call the office.
- Q: Mrs. Tolliver: I request that this is written in our policy as I am aware of a recent matter at school where there was an emergency and a phone was needed.
- A: Mrs. Pierson: We can add an addendum to this policy and include that statement.

Approval of the Cell Phone Policy with the addendum:

- Mr. Magee moved to approve the Cell Phone Policy with the addendum just discussed.
- Dr. Laster seconded the motion.
- All voted in favor of the motion and the Cell Phone Policy with the addendum was approved.

Consent Agenda Reports Received

Consent agenda reports were sent electronically for the board's review prior to today's meeting. The floor was open for questions. (*Reports included: Academics, Operations, Marketing/Recruitment, Human Resources*)

Dr. Jennings asked Mrs. Myles to discuss the results of the 2023 401K Audit. Mrs. Myles shared the report from the auditor that there were no findings.

Question, Answer, Comment:

- Q: Mr. Wayt: Mr. Morehart, are you familiar with this document?
A: Mr. Morehart: Yes, this is a standard document. If there were any irregularities, they would be listed on this document.
Q: Mr. Wayt: So, it would be appropriate to accept this report?
A: Mr. Morehart: Yes.
C: Mr. Wayt: I want to mention that we have a very generous 401K plan. We have a 6% match with our plan.
C: Dr. Jennings: Also, there is no waiting period to participate.

Approval of the 2023 401K Audit Report:

- Mr. Morehart moved to accept the 2023 401K Audit Report as presented.
- Mrs. Tolliver seconded the motion.
- All voted in favor and the 2023 401K Audit Report was accepted.

Dr. Jennings discussed the matter of teacher retention in the area. He asked Mrs. Myles to share a document she prepared that compares the salary and benefits of employment at LPCS in relation to the most recent new charter school in the Shreveport area. This was done as a means to retain teachers who have considered moving to the new school for a higher salary.

Question, Answer, Comment:

- Q: Dr. Polley: Are salaries the only reason they are leaving?
A: Mrs. Myles: Yes, this is a standard document. They are offering \$75,000/year.
C: Dr. Jennings: From what we are told, they are offered higher salaries, but the salaries are performance based. So, they may decrease at any given time. There are a lot of unknowns. When we speak to those who are offered positions there, we share a lot of these same things with them, but they are promised a lot. Teachers are promised higher salaries, longevity because they are supposed to get more schools, and they are promised leadership positions.
Q: Mr. Marchive: Do you know if they are hiring uncertified teachers?
A: Mrs. Myles: Absolutely.
A: Dr. Jennings: Yes, they are.
C: Mr. Wayt: Looking at this document, there are 2 things that stand out to me: (1) this is about \$1.2 million cost item and (2) I don't see anything for ELA listed here. Is it different from Science?
A: Mrs. Myles: There is no difference in the two contents. Some of the teachers were open to having a conversation with us and some were not. Those that we spoke with were presented with this document, which is directed related to the content they are teaching. The ELA Teacher, unfortunately, was not open to speaking with us, therefore this Salary-at-a-Glance comparison was not done. One of the teachers whose salary with us ranged from \$50-\$60,000 was offered a salary of \$90,000 for a leadership position with no experience.
C: Mr. Wayt: Of course, we know these types of things do not last long.

C: Mr. Morehart: Right, I don't think this is something we can ignore but at the same time, this isn't something we should chase either.

C: Dr. Jennings: I don't think we can either, but we have to keep in mind, we are showing a steady increase, and this could be very disruptive to us.

Q: Mr. Morehart: Dr. Jennings, how do you think our teacher's salaries compete with normal/regular school districts?

A: Mr. Wayt: We are competing well with Caddo.

A: Dr. Jennings: We are very competitive.

C: Mr. Morehart: I think that's the most important thing. Remain competitive with normal districts.

Q: Mr. Magee: I have a 1 question on an item listed on the I.T. Consent Agenda that I need a little clarification on. It was under Annex Classroom Building. It says "currently evaluating missing classroom cameras, missing intercoms, and missing network needs." What is that in reference to?

A: Dr. Jennings: Instead of putting cameras in the classrooms, the contractors placed the cameras outside in the halls.

C: Mrs. Pierson: They were placed at the end of the halls instead of in the classrooms.

Q: Mr. Magee: Were they supposed to be in the classroom?

A: Mr. Hilliard: Yes, that is correct. They're supposed to be inside the classrooms. All of those things listed are missing items.

Q: Mr. Magee: Are these items we budgeted for or is that additional cost?

Q: Mr. Wayt: Are we going to have cameras in the classrooms?

A: Mr. Hilliard: Yes, we will, but we are going to have to pay for that ourselves.

C: Mrs. Lewis: Right. Right now, we have about \$25,000 budgeted for the camera equipment.

Q: Mr. Wayt: How did this happen? Did we not budget for cameras in every classroom with the project?

C: Mr. Hilliard: I don't know. We did not have a cross-functional meeting with the team when they set everything up.

C: Mr. Wayt: It has been a policy for years to have cameras in the classroom.

C: Mr. Morehart: We just agreed to do a large upgrade at the main campus. That maybe what you are thinking about. It was about \$68,000.

C: Mr. Hilliard: Yes, we have all new camera equipment at the new campus.

C: Mr. Morehart: At that time, we knew we had to have cameras in each room specifically.

Approval of Consent Agenda Items:

- Mr. Morehart moved to approve the Consent Agenda reports as presented.
- Mr. Marchive seconded the motion.
- All voted in favor and the Consent Agenda Reports were adopted.

Board Chairman's Report: *(provided by Mr. Wayt)*

Renovations of the 2nd Campus

Mr. Wayt called on Mr. Marchive for an update on the renovations of the 2nd campus.

Question, Answer, Comment:

C: Mr. Marchive: There are still a few outstanding minor punch list items that need to be taken care of. The contractor has provided a certificate from the court. The contractor has also provided his consent of surety from the bonding company regarding final payment. Based upon that information, we are still not at 100%. We may want to hold out a little bit, Mrs. Lewis, before we make the final payment.

A: Mrs. Lewis: Okay. Just let me know when to do it.
 C: Mr. Marchive: I will send you an amount to tell the design consultant we are holding out until those last items are done.
 Q: Mr. Wayt: Okay, what I'm hearing you say is that it's time for the final payment but there are some minor things that need to be cleared up first. So, let's hold off until they are.
 A: Mr. Marchive: That's correct. Our we can pay 99% of it and hold the rest until completion.
 C: Mr. Morehart: How about 60%?
 A: Mr. Marchive: Or whatever we decide. But typically, what the state does is come up with a value that includes everything, the whole component, and multiply that by 1.5 and that is the value of it.
 Q: Mr. Wayt: Would you work with Mrs. Lewis on that?
 A: Mr. Marchive: Yes, I will.
 Q: Mr. Marchive: Can we use that component now to deal with the amendments?
 A: Mr. Morehart: We can. Do we want to do all the additional cost in 1 motion, or should we do each one separately?
 A: Mr. Wayt: Whatever you think is best.
 C: Mr. Morehart: We will do 2.

Mr. Morehart presented recommendations discussed during Octobers Finance Committee Meeting for approval by the board.

Recommendation 1: The line of credit is up for renewal at Home Federal Bank.

Mr. Morehart reported that the Finance Committee recommend that the board renew the line of credit with Home Federal Bank. There is nothing drawn on it. It is a \$1,000,000 line of credit. The cost is approximately \$1300/year, and the C.D. is \$1,000,000, that is now worth \$1,026,000, is collateral for it. There is no money drawn on it.

Recommendation 2: The approval for the staff to proceed on 4 projects at the Elementary School.

Mr. Morehart reported that the Finance Committee recommend that the board approve the 4 projects needing completion at the Elementary School. Those projects are:

- (1) Complete the cover and enclosure on the lift and that is approximately \$28,500
- (2) The canopy that will run from the District Annex Auditorium to Elementary School. The cost is approximately \$16,000
- (3) Additional parking spots at the Elementary School. The cost is approximately \$50,000
- (4) Playground equipment, including the preparation of the grounds around it. The cost is approximately \$45,000

Question, Answer, Comment:

Q: Dr. Polley: Is there any particular order at which the projects must be completed?
 A: Mr. Wayt: They are all for immediate completion. They may go ahead and begin them all now.
 C: Mr. Morehart: They've received quotes and pricing for all of them.
 Q: Mrs. Tolliver: Are these projects in-budget or out-of-budget?
 A: Mrs. Lewis: Out-of-budget.
 Q: Mrs. Tolliver: So, we are going to add this to the budget?

- A: Mr. Morehart: Yes, and if we don't receive that much more, it will come out of our reserves. This was discussed during the Finance Committee meeting as well. There are other items that will we address at a much later date.
- C: Mr. Marchive: Yes, that is the kitchen and the additional classroom.

Approval of the renewal of the Line of Credit with the C.D. as the collateral at Home Federal Bank:

- Mr. Morehart moved to approve the renewal of the Line of Credit as presented.
- Mr. Magee seconded the motion.
- All voted in favor and motion to renew the Line of Credit with the C.D. as the collateral at Home Federal Bank was approved.

Approval of the 4 projects at the Elementary School:

- Mr. Morehart moved to approve the 4 projects at the Elementary School as presented.
- Mr. Marchive seconded the motion.
- All voted in favor and motion to proceed with the 4 projects at the Elementary School was approved.

By-Laws Review

The by-laws review was completed, chaired by Attorney Lori Graham. All board members were provided with a copy of the modified by-laws with the revised sections indicated by highlights.

Question, Answer, Comment:

Q: Mrs. Tolliver: Is this the same one that we looked at before?

A: Mr. Wayt: Yes, it is the same one.

Q: Mrs. Tolliver: And the only changes are those that are highlighted?

A: Mr. Wayt: Yes. What we did was change the name from President to Chair, added a Vice-Chair position, alphabetized the names of the committees, made reference to the open meetings law, changed the word personal to personnel, and changed the spelling of the word judgement (used the American version).

Approval of the of the modified By-Laws:

- Mr. Magee moved to approve modified By-Laws as presented.
- Dr. Kimble seconded the motion.
- All voted in favor and motion to approve the modified By-Laws were approved.

CEO Evaluation Process

Mr. Wayt provided an update on the CEO Evaluation process. He reported that the committee has considered and incorporated parts from all three previous recommendations, 1) Morgan Ripski, 2) RSD, and 3) Ken Campbell.

The evaluation now has a version that has been recommended to the RSD for their approval. Once approved by the RSD, a meeting will be scheduled with Dr. Jennings for his feedback, followed by a discussion about the final version of the evaluation.

Question, Answer, Comment:

Q: Mr. Morehart: Just to be sure I am understanding, this has been submitted to the RSD because they require an outline on how the CEO should be evaluated?

A: Mr. Wayt: They gave us the outline. Afterwards, we went back to them and said we like some of the things recommended by both Morgan Ripski and Ken Campbell, and we would like to add those things to the RSD version. The RSD allowed the recommended revisions and asked us to send it to them for their review and approval.

LSUS Weightlifting Partnership

Mr. Wayt added this matter to the agenda due to receiving great feedback on how things are going. There are approximately 15 students attending weightlifting at LSU and LSU is giving our students rave reviews. Mr. Kendrick Farris, 3-time Olympian from Shreveport, is working with our students. They are very thrilled on how things are going.

Mr. Wayt asked Ms. Sealy to share additional information regarding the Weightlifting Partnership. Ms. Sealy reported that students are at LSUS from 4 – 6pm, twice a week. This Thursday they have a practice competition in preparation for the big competition. Ms. Sealy encouraged all to stop by and cheer our students on.

Question, Answer, Comment:

Q: Mr. Magee: When do go over to LSUS?

A: Mr. Wayt: They go on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 4 o'clock.

C: Mr. Morehart: There are scholarships available for students to attend college with Weightlifting.

C: Mr. Wayt: Yes, there are. It can help them go to college all over the U.S.

RSD Visit

Mr. Wayt mentioned that he previously reported about our visit from the Superintendent of RSD as well as Executive Director, Lindsey Reid, and the visit went very well. He also stated that RSD reported about Linwood at the last BESE meeting and Dr. Jennings sent him the information to listen to the meeting in its entirety.

Also, starting with our next Academic Committee meeting and every quarter thereafter, our RSD Representative will be in attendance.

Ms. Sealy added that Lindsey Redd, from RSD, attended her ILT Meeting today. She also stated that Linwood has been assigned a School-Support Representative from LDOE that currently attends her meetings and will continue her attendance quarterly.

Unfinished Business: There was none.

New Business: There was none.

Adjourn: Mr. Magee moved and Dr. Kimble seconded to adjourn the meeting at 5:50 p.m. All voted in favor.