

MINUTES
Excel Academy Finance Committee Meeting
Thursday Sept 9, 2021 – 4:00 pm
Zoom

Committee Members in Attendance: Rob Lytle, Pam Klein, David Stolow, Ben Howe

Staff Attending: Owen Stearns, Andrew Solomon

1. Call to Order

Stolow called the meeting to order at 4:06 pm and presided over the meeting. Stearns kept the minutes of the meeting.

2. Approval of Minutes

The Committee reviewed the draft minutes from the June 11, 2021 meeting. Stolow motioned to approve the minutes. Klein seconded. All voted in favor.

3. Update on Team, Audit, and other Activities

Solomon provided an update to the Committee regarding the FY21 audit and the state of the team. There are currently no material audit issues. The team is in a good place overall, with lots of work to do but functioning well and supporting an increase in staffing at the schools. The Director of Accounting is going on maternity leave, and we have secured the support of an experienced financial consultant during the leave. The consultant is not doing audit-related work. The team is staffing up in anticipation of Rhode Island expansion and should benefit from greater efficiencies as we get fully up and running.

4. Updates to FY22 Budget

There has been significant movement since the June meeting, with both more revenue from above foundation tuition and some higher costs. We still anticipate positive cash flow for the year. We have also updated the 5-year model, with a marginally positive impact relative to prior versions. The model remains conservative, but less so than in June, given lower uncertainty. The Committee asked whether we are forgoing important investments due to being too conservative. Solomon and Stearns indicated that we do not believe that we are.

We have placeholders in the model for future increases in overall staff compensation. We are in the middle of determining what those increases should be.

Regarding the updated budget, Stolow moved to approve the updated budget. Klein seconded, and the Committee voted unanimously in favor. The Committee will affirm to the next overall Board meeting that the Committee supports the updated budget. We do not need another vote from the Board itself.

5. Compensation

There are at least two challenges to solve for: one is the need to be competitive in MA to attract and retain talent; another is for Excel Rhode Island to generate an appropriate compensation structure. We have longer-term processes on the horizon that will help us ensure that comp structure is aligned to our strategy and is affordable. Nina Keough will provide significant input.

6. New Members

Solomon underscored that racial and other forms of diversity are still a priority for the Committee. Stolow reiterated that having a finance background is not necessary. Our discussion should be higher level, and having non-finance people on the Committee will help provide alternative perspectives and keep us from getting too into the weeds. The Committee discussed whether any other existing members of the Board would be good members

of the Committee. Stolow indicated that he would elicit interest at the next Board meeting.

6. Adjourn

Stolow adjourned the meeting at or around 5:15 pm.

List of Documents Presented at the Meeting:

1. Minutes from the June 11, 2021 meeting for approval
2. Summary of the updated FY22 budget and model

Respectfully Submitted,

David Stolow, Treasurer