

**Townsend Harris Alumni Association, Inc.**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors (as approved on September 27, 2011)**

**June 7, 2011**

**Location: Control Solutions International, New York City**

The following directors were present and constituted a quorum: Kenneth Bonamo, Sydney Butts (by phone), Susan Getting, Gerald P. Halpern, David Herszenhorn (by phone), Selina Lee (by phone), Tanya M. Odom, Craig Slutzkin, Dr. Malcolm Largmann, Jordan Leeds, Karen Wu, and Vincent Yuen.

Karen Wu acted as Secretary of the meeting.

- I. Craig Slutzkin called the meeting to order at 7:20pm and welcomed the directors. Mr. Slutzkin thanked Vincent Yuen for hosting the meeting at his office.
- II. **Approval of Board Meeting Minutes.**
  - a. Mr. Slutzkin asked the Board for any questions or comments regarding the March 8, 2011 board meeting minutes. Gerald Halpern moved to accept the March 8th board meeting minutes; Kenneth Bonamo seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the minutes.
- III. **Treasurer's Report.**
  - a. Craig Slutzkin reported on changes in the organization's assets, amounts collected in membership dues, and recent expenditures.
  - b. Mr. Slutzkin provided a history of the organization's investment strategy, and explained that our current fund, Alpine Dynamic, is not tailored to the interests of a foundation like ours.
  - c. Mr. Slutzkin invited Mr. Scott Israel of TIAA-CREF to share about the investment services that TIAA-CREF provides to nonprofit organizations such as THAA.
  - d. Following Mr. Israel's presentation, David Herszenhorn suggested we solicit proposals from similar financial services firms. A discussion was held about the cashflow requirements of our organization, and investment risk tolerance.
  - e. A resolution was proposed by Mr. Halpern to establish an interim finance committee to review options and make a recommendation to the full board, seconded by Karen Wu, and approved unanimously.
- IV. **Executive Committee Report.** The Executive Committee highlighted a few topics of interest to the Board.
  - a. **School Relations.** Tanya Odom described THAA's involvement in various student activities.

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- b. THHS Video Documentary Project. Ms. Odom provided an update on the documentary project to record the history of Townsend Harris. Ms. Odom thanked alumnus Jesse Ash as well as Susan Getting for helping with the videotaping at the Homecoming event at the school. Additional interviews will be recorded in the near future.
  - c. Year End Events. Ms. Odom reported on THAA representation at the Baccalaureate Ceremony and the Commencement Ceremony. Sydney Butts represented THAA at the Baccalaureate and Mr. Slutzkin at the Commencement Ceremony.
  - d. School Retirements. Various long-time teachers and staff are retiring this year, including Assistant Principal Janet Solomon and Athletic Director/Dean Wanda Nix. A retirement party will be held on June 27, 2011.
  - e. Website. There has been increased use and viewing of the website, including increased donations being made online.
  - f. Florida chapter. Ms. Odom reported that the Florida chapter of THAA has about \$7,000 - \$8,000, which they plan to slowly transfer to THAA. The board discussed possible uses of the funds in a way that would honor the Florida chapter, such as to purchase an awards case, including a plaque recognizing that the awards case was provided by the Florida chapter of THAA.
- V. **Events Committee Report**. Selina Lee and Vincent Yuen reported on a number of different events that recently took place or that are coming up soon.
- a. Family Event. Selina Lee reported that the March 19, 2011 family event went well. About 15 families attended, and many student volunteers came out to help.
  - b. Healthapalooza. The Healthapalooza event was held on May 21, 2011. There was a good turnout, and many students volunteered to help with the event. Athletics teacher Mr. Hanson attended the health fair, and board member Sidney Butts helped with a sound pollution booth. Raffle tickets were sold, and approximately \$500 was raised through this event.
  - c. Homecoming. A 70 year anniversary homecoming event was held on May 7<sup>th</sup>. Most of the attendees were men from the original school. Many brought their yearbooks and reminisced about the old days.
  - d. Wine Tasting. Vincent Yuen led a Wine and Tapas Tasting event at Buceo 95 on April 18, 2011. About 15 people participated, and we received positive feedback about the event. The sommelier suggested other types of tastings that we could do for future events.

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- e. Reunions. Vincent Yuen reported on the various reunion events going on this year, including for the classes of '91, '96, '01, and '06.
- f. Baseball Game. Vincent Yuen reported that a group of tickets has been reserved for Townsend Harris alums on August 6<sup>th</sup> for the Staten Island Yankees vs. the Brooklyn Cyclones at the Cyclones stadium in Coney Island.
- g. Lawyers Event. The issue of holding a lawyers event was raised. Karen Wu mentioned that she and Donna Manion had begun discussions about putting together such an event at Skadden Arps, when the news of Joe Flom's passing came. Tanya Odom mentioned that Bentley Kassel is still counsel at Skadden and may be able to assist us in procuring use of their space.

**VI. School Report.** Principal Bonamo reported on various recent events.

- a. Mr. Bonamo reported that AP exams are over, and that many students had taken the National Latin Exam. He also reported that there will no longer be any foreign language State Regents exams, and instead similar exams will be developed at the district-level. He also reported that there would no longer be any January Regents days.
- b. Mr. Bonamo reported that the school budgets have not yet come out, but that he anticipated further cuts. Mr. Bonamo noted that there is a 30-student increase in the freshman class size, and a reduction in the number of electives that would be available. He noted that most other schools have eight class periods per day, but Townsend Harris still has nine. In discussing the potential reductions in course offerings, comments were raised about the importance of maintaining the elements that make Townsend Harris truly unique, such as its Latin and writing classes. An idea was raised about holding a forum for alumni, and parents, and other members of the Townsend Harris community to come together to discuss the critical issues facing the school, including the budget constraints and choices in the school's educational direction.
- c. Mr. Bonamo noted that the Queens College contract has been approved by the Chancellor, but is awaiting other approvals.
- d. Mr. Bonamo reported that Ms. Solomon's replacement as Assistant Principal will be Veronica York, who is currently LaGuardia High School's college advisor.
- e. A suggestion was raised as to whether the alumni association could use its funds more aggressively during this period of budget cuts. Mr. Bonamo noted that, as a technical matter, THAA can only fund electives, such as Latin, art, and music, and cannot fund core classes.

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Concerns were raised that even providing direct funding for non-core classes could create an expectation on the part of the Board of Education that THAA will continue to fund those classes going forward, even when budget constraints are not at issue.

**VII. PTA Report.**

- a. Jordan Leeds reported that the PTA election went smoothly this year, and that Karen Kofflers is the sole President now.
- b. Jordan Leeds thanked Karen Wu for her assistance in guiding Karen Kofflers in the PTA's correspondence with the IRS regarding their late financial report filings, and getting monetary penalties waived.
- c. There was a brief discussion about getting parents to encourage their kids who are seniors to join THAA. It was noted that the senior dues include the first year of membership in the alumni association.
- d. Next year, Naomi Horowitz will serve as the PTA's co-representative at THAA meetings.

VIII. The board meeting was adjourned at 9:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Wu