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**MINUTES of the ASPIRA Board of Directors Regular Meeting**  
**Wednesday, November 13, 2024**

**Directors Present:**

Debra Cruz, Director  
Yolanda Frontany, V.C. Personnel  
Rosemary Lugo-Gross, V.C. Development  
Astrid Miranda, High School Rep  
Marco Morales, Treasurer  
David Rodriguez, Chairman  
Cynthia Yuqui, Parent Rep/Secretary

**Directors Excused:**

Luis Diaz-Perez, Director  
Gabriela Gonzalez, College Rep  
Luis Martinez, Director

**Staff Present:**

Edgar Lopez, President & CEO  
Jose Reyes, COO  
Elizabeth Roth. CADC  
Sonia Sanchez, Board Liaison

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order by Chairman David Rodriguez at 6:57 pm.

2. Roll Call

Secretary Yuqui called out the roll and a quorum was determined to be present.

3. Approval of the Agenda

**M. Morales made a motion to approve the agenda. Seconded by Y. Frontany.  
Motion prevailed unanimously.**

4. Public Comment

Hilda Frontany, a member of the community, made an announcement inviting the board and staff of ASPIRA to a Christmas ornament sale, benefiting Modesto Classen, a local artist who had passed away on November 1, 2024. Proceeds of the sale will be used to offset the cost of his cremation and laying his ashes in a memorial forest.

5. Approval of the Minutes of September 11, 2024 regular meeting and October 7, 2024 special meeting

**R. Lugo-Gross made a motion to approve the minutes of September 11, 2024 regular meeting and October 7, 2024 special meeting. C. Yuqui seconded the motion. Motion prevailed unanimously.**

6. Chairperson's Report – Chairman Rodriguez

David Rodriguez thanked the board for entrusting him with the chairmanship of the board.

The motion to reschedule the January 8, 2025 regular board meeting is rescinded. A conflict on the chairman's schedule that would have required him to change the meeting date has been resolved.

Chairman Rodriguez has been working with the CEO, Board Members, and ASPIRA staff to execute a Seven-Point Plan for 2024-2026. Highlights of the plan include:

- Capital Development: Develop a comprehensive capital plan, focusing on collaboration with private and public partners to secure funding.
- Bylaw Review and Organizational Restructuring: Review current bylaws and make structural adjustments to ensure efficient and effective governance.
- Financial Systems: Explore necessary updates to our financial and accounting systems.
- Communications Strategy: Develop a comprehensive communications strategy to revamp our social media, website, and overall communication efforts.
- Asset Management: Align our assets with organizational goals
- Financial Strategy: improve relationships with financial institutions.
- Community and Market Expansion: Explore opportunities to expand beyond Chicago and Illinois, forming new partnerships to extend ASPIRA's reach and impact.

7. CEO Report – Edgar Lopez, President and CEO

E. Lopez presented his report to the board. Highlights include:

- Met with Oracle Netsuite, which provides financial software that can significantly improve record keeping and make sharing of finance information with stakeholders easier.
- The organization has received almost 25% of projected revenue as of September 30<sup>th</sup>, end of first quarter. Expenses have been kept to 20% of the budget for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter.
- The annual audit which was due on November 1<sup>st</sup> has been delayed due to the mishandling of last year's audit by the prior auditors, causing the organization to

be considered a “high risk” for the next two years. As a result, the new auditors must do a more intensive audit than normally required.

- We have secured a short-term renewal on the mortgage for one year, through June 30, 2025.
- We have a very active and dedicated Bilingual Advisory Committee. They provide regular feedback to the leadership and collaborate with the community.
- Enrollment efforts at Haugan Middle School resulted in a lower number of new students than expected. This is partly attributed to the lack of feeder schools in the area and high competition for middle school students. Due to the low enrollment, the cost of operating the school far exceed the revenue received from CPS. An option to find another location for the school is being explored.
- Deep dissatisfaction of the school leadership at ABF was the main cause of freshmen students transferring out. Students and parents reported not feeling safe. The new school leadership has work tirelessly to make improvements in this area.

Mr. Lopez presented the financial statements for the period ending September 30, 2024, including the statement of revenue and expenses, balance sheet, and income/expense report.

- Teacher salaries are our biggest expense.
- Substitute teachers are another major expense. Teachers are entitled to PTO as per their contract allowing them to take days off during the school year.

## 8. Education Report – Elizabeth Roth, Chief of Accountability, Compliance & Data

### A. ISBE Annual Summative Designations (State Report Card)

- All Aspira schools, except our alternative high school, which is under Youth Connection Charter Schools, received the second highest designation of Commendable.
- This is important because this determination rolls in to our charter renewal process. CPS uses this report to determine if we are meeting academic expectations.
- Haugan Middle School Overall Index Score was 59.49 (Commendable)
- Business & Finance H.S. Overall Index Score was 46.78 (Commendable)
- Early College Overall Index Score was 55.80 (Commendable)
- Antonia Pantoja High School Overall Index Score was 6.35 (Intensive). This score is typical for alternative high schools. This student population is different from our other schools. A lot of our students had started at different high schools and

come to us already academically behind to recover credits and get back on track.

- The full report is posted on the ISBE website.

#### B. Charter School Renewal Update

- All components of the renewal application have been completed except for ELL program review. A final site visit from the Office of Multilingual-Multicultural Education is scheduled for Friday, November 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Next step is for CPS to make a recommendation for renewal to Chicago Board of Education. This won't happen anytime soon, because the new board of education is still being comprised.
- Carlos Rivas, newly elected school board member is scheduled for a visit on November 19<sup>th</sup>. Another new member, Jennifer Custer, is scheduled for the following week.

### 9. Standing Committee Reports

#### A. Parent Affairs Committee: Cynthia Yuqui, Chairperson

- Cynthia Yuqui was elected President of the AEC Bilingual Committee
- The Committee held a Day of the Dead event last week
- Planning a parent workshop for December. The topic hasn't been decided yet
- Other activities include Cafecitos with the President

### 10. New Business / Announcements

- Y. Frontany recommended that the committees start meeting starting the 1<sup>st</sup> week of December. Chairman Rodriguez will be reaching out to committee chairs to begin the process of assigning committee members so the committees can start meeting.
- Chairman Rodriguez reminded the members to complete the Annual Conflict of Interest Statement. be completed
- CEO Lopez introduced the school principals in attendance: Matilda Medina, AEC Leon Hart, Haugan Middle School, James Edward, ABF
- Chairman Rodriguez formally introduced the new high school student representative member, Astrid Miranda, a senior student from ABF

### 11. Adjournment

**Motion to adjourn made by C. Yuqui. Seconded by D. Cruz. Motion prevailed.**

*Prepared by Sonia Sanchez, Board Liaison / Approved on 1-8-2025 by unanimous vote*