



## **Cleveland Transformation Alliance**

### **Minutes of the Board of Directors**

December 7, 2020 | 5:30 PM

Via Zoom

#### **In Attendance**

Baumgartner, Mark  
Bingham, Anne  
Downing, Diane  
Friedman, Lee  
Gibson, Richard  
Gordon, Eric  
King, Brooke

Klupinski, Stephanie  
Marbury, Shana  
Mullin, Ann  
Patterson, Jeffrey  
Payton, Kevin  
Price, Monyka  
Randel, Erin

Reyes, Jose  
Rosskamm, Alan  
Ruiz, Victor  
Tenney, Turkessa  
Williams, Helen  
Zachariah, Sajit

#### **Absent**

Heard, Robert  
Jackson, Mayor Frank  
Napoli, August

Jordan, Sharon Sobol

#### **Other Attendees**

Bouder, Scarlett  
Margolis, Jen  
McClung, Lori

O'Donnell, Patrick  
Patterson, Teela  
Ricchiuto, Jack

Smith, Brandy  
Tahan, Colleen

#### **Cleveland Transformation Alliance Staff**

Marnecheck, Meghann  
Stacy, Eli

#### **Welcome and Approval of Minutes**

Dr. Monyka Price called the meeting to order at 5:33 PM. Dr. Price gave an opening welcome and gave an overview of the agenda.

Dr. Price opened the floor for discussion to approve the minutes from the October 26, 2020 Board Meeting. Ms. Shana Marbury highlighted a typo on page 3 of the minutes, referencing "a plain" instead of "a plan." Ms. Meghann Marnecheck and Dr. Price stated they would adjust the

minutes. At 5:35 PM, hearing no discussion of the minutes, Dr. Price asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Eric Gordon made the motion to accept the minutes. Ms. Turkessa Tenney seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the minutes.

### **2021 Operating Budget**

At 5:36 PM, Dr. Price introduced Ms. Marnecheck and Dr. Sajit Zachariah to update the 2021 Operating Budget. Dr. Price advised the Board they would need to vote on a resolution regarding the 2021 Operating Budget.

Ms. Marnecheck shared her screen and went over line items on the 2021 Operating Budget. Ms. Marnecheck highlighted that the 2021 Operating Budget had columns breaking down the proposed 2021 Budget, the 2020 Projection, Variances, and the 2021 Contingency Operating Budget.

Starting, Ms. Marnecheck went over the Revenue section. In Unrestricted Donations, Ms. Marnecheck spoke of anticipating \$351,000 in revenue. She said that CTA obtained operating grant funds from the Cleveland Foundation and the Gund Foundation of \$350,000 and thanked the organizations for their support. Additionally, she thanked the Gund Foundation for approving a 2-year grant of \$175,000 for the 2021 Operating Budget and \$175,000 for the 2022 Operating Budget totaling \$350,000. Furthermore, CTA anticipated receiving \$1,000 from various other donors.

In Restricted Donations, Ms. Marnecheck spoke of anticipating \$100,000 in revenue. She said CTA received restricted program grant funds from the Cleveland Foundation for family engagement work in 2021. Additionally, CTA was expecting to receive \$75,000 from multiple other grant opportunities.

In Donated Services, Ms. Marnecheck looked for CTA to receive \$33,000 from the Greater Cleveland Partnership. In Total Income, Ms. Marnecheck advised the Board that CTA anticipates revenue of \$484,000. This amount is an increase of \$1,618 from the 2020 Projection.

Continuing, Ms. Marnecheck went over the Expense section. In Personnel Expenses, Ms. Marnecheck anticipates spending \$253,150 in the 2021 Operating Budget. The 2020 Projection was \$174,671. The difference between the 2021 Operating Budget and the 2020 Projection is \$78,479 because of changes in the subcategories. First, the Governance Committee approved a 3% pay increase for the Executive Director. Second, Ms. Marnecheck recommended a job reclassification and pay increase for the Program Coordinator position, contingent on gaining additional funding.

Additionally, the Program Coordinator line item in the 2021 Operating Budget calculated for a full year of work compared to the 2020 Projection calculated for seven months. Third, Ms. Marnecheck proposed to hire a Communications Coordinator on June 1, 2021, with a salary of



\$26,250, contingent on finding additional funding. Fourth, Meghann would hire three Interns with a total expense of \$9,000. Last, the Benefits/Payroll Taxes line item would increase to \$44,800, contingent on finding additional funding. The Benefits/Payroll Taxes line item included CTA's IRA contribution, Self Care Plan, payroll taxes, and health insurance for two staff members.

In Program Expenses, Ms. Marnecheck advised the Board that CTA planned to increase its Family Engagement work expenditure to build a community network of support for Cleveland families and obtain feedback on CMSD and Charter Schools. The initiative would allow CTA to understand the effectiveness of resources offered to parents and caregivers through our work and beyond. Furthermore, CTA anticipated printing less of the 2021 School Quality Guide, and these cost savings would reduce the budget impact of the increased spending for the Family Engagement work.

The outlays for the upcoming Cleveland Plan Progress Report and Outreach and Engagement through the Navigator program were included in the Program Expenses line item. CTA was looking to bring Navigators in twice during 2021. First, Navigators would be hired for the early enrollment process during January through March. Second, CTA would bring Navigators on during the standard enrollment period during the Summer.

Furthermore, in the Professional Services section, Ms. Marnecheck stated the total expenditure was \$247,100, which increased by \$123,678 over the 2020 Projection. The variance was due to the Cleveland Plan Refresh and Strategic Planning costs; CTA received a quote of \$120,000 from Advocacy and Communication Solutions (ACS). It was an all-encompassing cost for both processes. The Marketing subcategory increased to \$40,000 over the 2020 Projection of \$16,655, and \$10,000 was contingent upon finding additional grant funding. Additionally, the Sangfroid Strategies contract would be contingent upon finding additional funding.

Dr. Helen Williams asked Ms. Marnecheck why CTA was presenting the Cleveland Plan Refresh and Strategic Plan together. Dr. Williams said that the Cleveland Plan Refresh conversation was about taking the Cleveland Plan Refresh, assessing its effectiveness, and taking it to the next level. Strategic Planning was about CTA as an organization. Ms. Marnecheck explained the Cleveland Plan Refresh and Strategic Planning costs were listed together because CTA contracted with one vendor, who will subcontract with another firm. Dr. Williams asked if ACS had two separate budgets. Ms. Marnecheck stated there was one dollar amount provided, and ACS will explain it in January. As well, ACS would subcontract with Thrive at Work and avoid duplicative work. Dr. Williams asked if ACS was subcontracting the Strategic Planning work to Thrive at Work, and Ms. Marnecheck stated yes. Dr. Williams requested for CTA to separate the Cleveland Plan Refresh and Strategic Planning into two line items.

Ms. Lee Friedman added that CTA would spend the money at two different rates and that the Cleveland Plan Refresh and Strategic Planning budget be separated. Ms. Marnecheck agreed.

Dr. Price agreed and recommended adding the work scope for both the Cleveland Plan Refresh and the Strategic Planning line items. Ms. Marnecheck confirmed that it would be presented for the Board to consider during January, conditioned upon the Board's approval to continue in the process with ACS.

Mr. Victor Ruiz asked Ms. Marnecheck if she asked the Board to vote on the budget line item for the Cleveland Plan Refresh and Strategic Planning and then choose the single consultant firm in January. Ms. Marnecheck agreed and explained CTA wanted ACS, instead of other singular consultant shops, due to organizational capacity issues. However, if the Board did not feel comfortable with ACS's presentation or wanted other consultants considered, then Ms. Marnecheck could continue the search. Nevertheless, Ms. Marnecheck held complete confidence in ACS's work and capacity.

Ms. Tenney asked if CTA sought additional estimates. Ms. Marnecheck stated that she spoke with other consultant firms, such as Kris Putnam-Walkerly. Ms. Marnecheck said that ACS updated her, and the line item's breakdown was \$72,000 of the \$120,000 would go to the Cleveland Plan Refresh, and \$48,000 would go to the Strategic Planning.

Ms. Ann Mullin stated she did not have any qualms about ACS's work quality because they worked with multiple other partner organizations. She also noted ACS is a female and minority-owned company. Ms. Mullin asked the Board if they remembered what they paid Kris Putnam-Walkerly for her consulting fees because Ms. Mullin remembered it being around the same amount.

Dr. Williams said that she had spent the last year hiring several consultants for other projects, and she believed their fees are average comparatively. Also, ACS knew Cleveland's educational environment, and they would keep moving the project forward. However, Dr. Williams would support the Board if they wanted to go through a more formal RFP process, but she believes they would end up at the same place. Mr. Gordon agreed with Dr. Williams and added that ACS is one of the only consulting companies to stick to their deliverables' price and not request additional funding.

Mr. Ruiz stated that he felt comfortable with ACS and everyone else's due diligence, but was concerned about his fiduciary responsibility in gaining the information. Ms. Marbury explained that the process starts with the Cleveland Plan 2.0 Committee, and they were comfortable with the ACS scope of work and Ms. Marnecheck's decision to choose that company. Ms. Friedman agreed with Ms. Marbury.

Dr. Williams asked Ms. Marnecheck if they would get to discuss the contract again in January, and Ms. Marnecheck agreed. Additionally, Dr. Williams asked Ms. Marnecheck if they didn't have to decide on the consultant that night, and Ms. Marnecheck agreed. Ms. Marnecheck reminded the Board they were voting on the 2021 Operating Budget line items.



Ms. Marbury inquired what work Sangfroid Strategy would be doing if CTA received the additional grant funding. Ms. Marnecheck said there are multiple projects that Sangfroid Strategy could assist CTA with, such as the star ratings on the website and the School Quality Guide. Also, Sangfroid Strategy could assist with generating a Parent Ambassador Network.

In the Business Expenses section, Ms. Marnecheck stated that the expenses increased from \$1,728 to \$7,750 in anticipation of increased business travel, meetings, and professional development in 2021. This line item was contingent, and CTA would reduce it to \$3,500 if CTA did not receive additional grant funding to cover the expense.

In the Office Equipment and Supplies section, Ms. Marnecheck highlighted an increase of \$3,111 because CTA would be providing employees with cell phones that include hotspot service, which will allow staff safety and continuity of service when a staff member leaves.

In the Rent and insurance section, Ms. Marnecheck stated there would be a \$600 variance as CTA anticipates an insurance increase at renewal.

In the Other Expenses section, Ms. Marnecheck stated an increase of \$2,163 to reflect a full year of dues and subscription fees compared to only a few months. Other smaller items included were bank fees, postage, delivery, and memorial gifts in this section.

CTA anticipated carrying over one month of operating expenses of \$31,000 in Total Net Assets, but this did not include the \$175,000 in committed 2022 operating support from the Gund Foundation. Ms. Marnecheck asked the Board for questions or comments.

Dr. Williams asked Ms. Marnecheck to clarify if CTA had enough funding now for the 2021 Operating Budget. Ms. Marnecheck said yes, minus the \$75,000 that CTA accounted for in the 2021 Contingency Budget.

Dr. Zachariah asked Ms. Marnecheck to go over the list of potential funders. Ms. Marnecheck went over the Cleveland Transformation Alliance 2020 Funding Summary. Ms. Marnecheck stated that there were \$57,500 left in outstanding grant proposals from possible funders. CTA was waiting to hear back from the O'Neill Brothers Foundation on a grant for the Ambassador Program; the Harry K. and Emma R. Fox Charitable Foundation, and the Andrew Fox Foundation on a grant for the Cleveland Family Cafés; the Rapid Response Fund on a grant for the Navigator Program; and the Howley Foundation on a grant for the Family Engagement Project. Additionally, Ms. Marnecheck foresaw reapplying for the O'Neill Foundation grant that would expire in April of 2021. She had a conversation with them soon. Ms. Marnecheck anticipated reapplying for grant funding with the St. Lukes Foundation and the Abington Foundation for continued program support. Lastly, the Small Business Administration (SBA) forgave the PPP Loan of \$16,700.

Ms. Friedman asked Ms. Marnecheck how she felt about the prospect of receiving outstanding grant funding. Ms. Marnecheck stated many of the outstanding grants were with new funders to CTA, and she believed CTA's work was compelling. The Rapid Response Fund request was in line with what they want to fund, yet many other organizations were going after the same funding. Ms. Marnecheck stated the O'Neill Brothers Foundation was challenging because there was no funding decision made since April of 2020. Ms. Friedman said she would like to see what happens with the Howley Foundation request because they tend to fund projects only for parochial schools. Ms. Marnecheck highlighted the Howley Foundation seems interested in school choice, so hopefully, that will help.

Dr. Williams stated that Ms. Mullin and Mr. Gordon should try to find funders through the Cleveland Browns Foundation and Haslam Foundation that would fund the Cleveland Plan Refresh conversation, and Ms. Mullin concurred. Ms. Friedman said that maybe the Jewish Federation of Cleveland would support some of the work, and Dr. Williams agreed. Ms. Marnecheck stated she was following Dr. Williams's recommendation to speak with the Jennings Foundation and scheduled to talk with them next week.

Ms. Marbury said that she was amazed by the amount of funding Ms. Marnecheck had garnered for CTA because they could not garner those amounts before. Ms. Marbury asked Ms. Marnecheck about the CMSD Contract line item that was blank. Ms. Marnecheck said she had preliminary conversations with Mr. Gordon about doing some family engagement work to support CMSD in the grant funding they received.

Dr. Price reiterated that Dr. Williams, Ms. Friedman, and Ms. Mullin would look into potential funders of the Cleveland Plan Refresh. The Cleveland Plan Refresh and Strategic Planning should be separate line items with a work scope given in January 2021. Dr. Price asked if there were any more questions or comments from the Board relative to the 2021 Operating Budget and the 2020 Funding Summary. At 6:19 PM, hearing no discussion, Dr. Price asked for a motion to approve the 2021 Operating Budget with the adjustments noted. Ms. Erin Randel made the motion to accept the minutes. Ms. Marbury seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the 2021 Operating Budget.

Dr. Zachariah thanked Ms. Colleen Tahan and Ms. Marnecheck for their work, and Ms. Marnecheck thanked the Finance Committee as well.

### **2021 Board Meeting Schedule & Committee Meeting Reminders**

At 6:21 PM, Ms. Marnecheck shared the 2021 Board Meeting Schedule and asked that the Board reach out to her if they had any conflicts with the dates. Ms. Marnecheck stated that she would be sending out invites to the Board, and she expected the meetings to remain virtual until the Mayor of Cleveland or the state of Ohio deemed otherwise. Dr. Williams asked for verification that Ms. Marnecheck would send out the dates via calendar invites, and Ms.

Marnecheck agreed. Furthermore, Ms. Marnecheck was working with the Committee Chairs to determine the Committee meeting dates. The Governance Committee scheduled their meeting for January 5, 2021, at 10:00 AM, to discuss the Executive Director's Performance Evaluation. Ms. Marnecheck asked the Board if they had any questions or comments, and there were none.

### **Presentation and Discussion: ACS and Thrive at Work**

At 6:23 PM, Ms. Marnecheck introduced ACS and Thrive at Work to present. Ms. Scarlett Boudier introduced herself to the Board as the Co-founder and President of ACS and introduced Ms. Lori McClung as the other Co-founder and CEO of ACS. Ms. Boudier stated that Ms. Jen Margolis and Mr. Jack Ricchiuto were with Thrive at Work and would present after ACS.

Ms. Boudier went over her presentation's objectives to introduce the organization, go over how they could work with CTA, their planning approach, the potential timeline of work, and open the floor for questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. McClung said that ACS would serve as the lead organization in the Cleveland Plan Refresh and Strategic Planning projects partnership. The partnership would work in tandem and hold internal meetings. Ms. McClung said they would use the research process to inform their work.

Ms. McClung shared the Cleveland Plan Refresh potential timeline. In this timeline, CTA would create an Advisory Group to gain insight from community stakeholders. Ms. McClung asked the Board to discuss how they would like the Advisory Board to be involved in the process. Moving on, Ms. McClung stated the process would start with review and generation of research, move to community engagement, and end with the Cleveland Plan Refreshed. ACS would factor in the work CTA already completed, and resources available to determine what level focus groups and surveying were necessary. During the Community Engagement phase, the Board had to determine to what level they wanted the Advisory Group to have authority in decision making and if they wished community members not connected to the district and charter school systems to have input. Furthermore, ACS would need to know if the Cleveland Plan Refresh would need to be approved by the state legislature or just the local community.

Ms. Margolis shared the Strategic Planning points. Thrive at work would work with a Core Team of eight to ten Community Stakeholders, Board Members, and CTA Staff.

Ms. McClung reiterated that ACS would base the work on existing research and data for both the Cleveland Plan Refresh and Strategic Plan. Then, Ms. McClung went over what the Strategic Plan and Cleveland Plan Refresh entailed. Ms. McClung asked if they should ask their questions first or have the Board speak. Ms. Marnecheck said the Board should ask their questions first.



Ms. Mullin stated the Cleveland Plan was born out of crisis to prevent the Cleveland school system's takeover. Ms. Mullin remembered Mr. Gordon said that the Cleveland Plan was silent on what Schools should look like around academics, social and emotional support, and others. Ms. Mullin was concerned that the Cleveland Plan Refresh not upset the Cleveland Plan's original intent and commitment to public education, academic excellence, and improving outcomes for students. Ms. McClung said that she hoped the Board would reaffirm the core values in January or February.

Dr. Williams was concerned about CTA starting from scratch and being more significant than the Cleveland Plan.

Dr. Price agreed with Dr. Williams and stated that she is glad that the Cleveland Plan Refresh and Strategic Planning conversations would be grounded in their prior work. Dr. Williams noted that the people speaking had a bias because they worked on the Cleveland Plan. Mr. Ricchiuto pointed out that addressing the Cleveland Plan Refresh and Strategic Plan at the same time will allow for the dialogues to carry-over fluidly. Ms. McClung reiterated that the Cleveland Plan came out of a crisis, so the Board needed to ask questions during this time. Ms. McClung stated they were not trying to ignore the Cleveland Plan's work, but they were attempting to refresh it.

Ms. Marbury said that she agreed with Ms. McClung and believed the Board needed to factor in additional stakeholder voices while keeping the Cleveland Plan's core foundations. Ms. Randel agreed with Ms. Marbury. Mr. Alan Roskamm said that he welcomed the opportunity to refresh the Cleveland Plan and dream again about Cleveland's public education. Mr. Roskamm asked if they were willing to dream bigger.

Dr. Price stated she believed everyone was on one accord, but she was concerned about CTA not remaining true to the Cleveland Plan. Ms. Marnecheck thanked the Board for the conversation. Mr. Gordon stated he understood the tension. Mr. Gordon would hope that CTA would stay directionally correct but would challenge the Board not to ignore the current crisis of the Pandemic. Also, Mr. Gordon acknowledged that the Cleveland Plan and CTA were circularly connected. The Cleveland Plan created CTA, but CTA monitors the Cleveland Plan. Ms. McClung said these are the questions they are attempting to answer.

### **Adjournment**

Dr. Price reminded the Board of the next Board Meeting on January 25, 2021, at 5:30 PM, and Dr. Price asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Friedman motioned to adjourn. Dr. Price adjourned the meeting at 7:13 PM.