

**River Valley Charter School  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Meeting # 230  
February 15, 2017 7:00 pm**

**In Attendance: Officers:** Chair: Nat Coughlin, Vice Chair: John Siegfried, Treasurer: Mark Belanger, Secretary: Katherine Brown **Trustees:** Jennifer McCormick, Conall Ryan, Joshua Porter, Mason Mitchell Daniels, Ellen Oliver, Peter Zetlan, Jonnie Lyn Evans, Deb McCrevan.  
**Director:** Andy Willemsen

**Call to Order: 7:06**

**Acceptance of Previous Minutes:**

**Vote: Nat Coughlin called for a Motion "To Accept Minutes of November 15"**  
Motion by John Siegfried, 2nd Pete Zetlan. Board vote to accept was unanimous.

**Montessori Minute: None**

**Middle School Update**

Andy Willemsen presented the Architects plans for the Middle School project. The Middle School renovations, presented at the Board's December meeting, were reviewed.

River Valley Charter School Board of Trustees Proposed Middle School Renovation Vote items:

- 1) The Board of Trustees authorizes the school director to proceed with the Middle School renovation project based on the plans and descriptions provided to the Board. This authorization includes finalizing plans, specifications, and other contract documents, as well as advertising the project to bidders with the intention of entering a construction contract with the qualified low bidder. The work will be designed to meet building code and regulatory requirements as well as prevailing wage and other applicable procurement requirements.
- 2) The project budget for construction is \$350,000, plus \$17,500 for construction contingency (5%). This is in addition to the previously approved architect fees. The full cost of this project will be paid for by the school from the capital improvement budget and other cash accounts, less any fundraising or Foundation fiscal support. Fundraising efforts are underway to generate funds to offset the potential cost of the project, but the Director's authorization to proceed is not subject to any fundraising targets.
- 3) If the lowest responsible bid for construction of the project (excluding contingency) is less than \$350,000, and is reasonably expected to fulfill the project requirements and stay within the construction and contingency combined budget, then the Director is authorized to issue a contract to the General Contractor without need for any additional vote of the Board of Trustees.  
If the bids are higher than the budget, or if the Director feels that there is any change between now and the award of contract that would merit Board review or approval, the Board will

convene a meeting (regular or emergency as the schedule dictates) to issue an additional vote on the topic.

**Vote: Nat Coughlin called for a Motion “To Accept Project Budget for Construction”**

Motion by John Siegfried, 2nd Conall Ryan. Board vote to accept was unanimous.

**Public Comment:**

5 members of the Foundation were present. Members of the Foundation asked about amounts requested and how banks were responding. The Board discussed the idea of a “Wall of Gratitude” in order to be modest/cautious in a small community.

**Parents Alliance Update:**

Andy Willemsen reviewed the Parents Alliance history. He shared conversations he had with others and the general consensus to let the Parents Alliance dissolve. If the Parents Alliance dissolves as a separate entity, then the Board of Trustees will support. This could unfold into a closer relationship with the parent groups.

Jennifer McCormick spoke to the idea of the Development Committee absorbing the Parents Alliance/parent community and how that could simplify the parent’s understanding of engaging and getting involved. Nat Coughlin stated he felt this would be a good long term solution for the Parents Alliance. The Foundation is requesting time to review before committing to supporting the Parents Alliance.

**Director’s Report/Goals: Andy Willemsen**

Andy Willemsen stated that he will send an amended Directors Report to include Parents Alliance news.

Review of the lottery shows 68 applicants for Kinderhaus and 246 total applicants to RVCS for the 2017/2018 school year. Reverend Doctor Elizabeth Jordan oversaw the selection and read all numbers. A computer will be used next year. The Board discussed potential ways to spread the word in regard to recruitment. Andy Willemsen would like to see a 2 to 1 ratio.

**Crosswalk-**

Andy Willemsen had a successful meeting with the City Council. RVCS will purchase and pay for the installation of the rapid flashing lights as a gift to the City of Newburyport. This would require a re appropriation of the existing budget NOT additional funds.

RVCS would still have a crossing guard in addition to the rapid flashers.

**Vote: Nat Coughlin called for a Motion “To Accept Crosswalk update”**

Motion by Mark Belanger, 2nd Katherine Brown. Board vote to accept was unanimous.

**Substance Use Policy-**

The Board discussed the policy and Mark Belanger requested a change made to include “verbal” to the “Substance Use and Abuse Screening” paragraph. The Substance Use Policy is included in the 7th grade health curriculum.

Mark Belanger also suggested sharing a link to the screening tool in order for parents to have a better understanding. Jennifer McCormick mentioned some minor typos.

**Nat Coughlin called for a Motion “To Accept Student Substance Use Policy with changes noted”.**

Motion by Mark Belanger, 2nd Josh Porter. Board vote to accept was unanimous

**Finance Committee Update:**

Mark Belanger reported the review of the second quarter financials; no surprises were found. He also stated that Deb McCraven maintains a conservative budget until numbers are clear.

Vote item:

FC is recommending continuing with the same auditor we have used in the past.

AAFCPAs with no price increase but 3% increase in following years.

**Nat Coughlin called for a Motion “To Accept continuing with AAF CPAs”.**

Motion by Mark Belanger, 2nd John Siegfried. Board vote to accept was unanimous.

**Development Committee Update:**

The Development Committee will begin to meet 1 week prior to the Board meetings.

Jennifer McCormick reported on the upcoming Founders Event in March and a Major Donor Event on March 31. Nat Coughlin asked about a Phonathon event.

**Accountability Committee Update:**

Conall Ryan stated the committee reviewed the Parents Survey with the goal of not altering it too significantly. There was discussion of the high percentage of neutral responses in regard to curriculum questions. How do we read these neutral responses? Will be adding more discussion opportunities in the next survey. The plan is to finalize the survey in March. Survey should go out after April break.

John Siegfried spoke about the Board Survey in regard to effectiveness: Are we doing our job? Are we making progress? Are we being heard? This will be presented at the next Board meeting.

Nat Coughlin spoke to the evolving group of the Board Of Trustees. He will be stepping down as Director this year and needs a successor. Nat Coughlin stated that he would also like to begin recruitment for new members.

**Adjourned 8:32**