

**River Valley Charter School
Board of Directors Meeting
Meeting # 256 June 18,
2019 6:00 pm**

In Attendance: Officers: Chair: Mark Belanger, Vice Chair: Mason Mitchell-Daniels, Treasurer: Pamela Brockmeier Armstrong, Secretary: Katherine Brown Trustees: Nat Coughlin, Todd Atanasoff, Karina Moltz, Catherine Martin, Nina Keery, Mark Bishop, John Siegfried, Josh Porter Director: Andy Willemssen Public: Deb McCrevan, Jonnie Lyn Evans, Dan Bouchard

Call to Order: 6:05

Public Comment: none

Acceptance of Previous Minutes: **Vote: Mark Belanger called for a Motion “To Accept Previous Minutes”** Motion by Nat Coughlin, 2nd Pamela Brockmeier Armstrong. Board of Directors vote to accept was unanimous with the exception of 1 abstention from John Siegfried.

Director’s Report- (See Appendix A) Andy Willemssen acknowledged Deb McCrevan and thanked her for her diligent work in helping to prepare the Fiscal Year 2020 budget. Andy Willemssen reported that Ali Fields, EII Teacher, has volunteered to serve as the faculty representa- tive to the Board for the 2019-2020 school year and reviewed the slate of Lead Teachers for the upcoming school year.

Enrollment-Andy Willemssen discussed the 19 students departing - 9 are moving out of the district, 3 are transitioning to private schools, and one will be home schooled. The remaining six will be transferring to district schools. Jonnie Lyn Evans has researched for patterns and RVCS will be fully enrolled for the 2019/2020 school year. Staff Survey- Andy Willemssen reported overwhelmingly positive remarks with a few critical comments. Summer Facility Work- These projects will be fully funded through the school’s Capital Reserve funds, with no financial support required from the Foundation.

1. Replacement of the Windows in the Lobby and Solarium 2. Gym Storage Expansion 3. Installation of a Storage Shed Camp Invention- RVCS will be hosting the 4th annual Camp Invention the week of June 24th. This program is staffed by RVCS teachers and serves 60 students

Finance Committee- (See Appendix B)

Pamela Brockmeier Armstrong introduced the first vote. **Vote: Pamela Brockmeier Armstrong Made a Motion “To Approve a Transfer \$40,000. from Unrestricted Cash Reserves to the Restricted Capital Reserve Funds for Future Capital Improvements.”**

Motion by Nat Coughlin, 2nd Mason Mitchell Daniels. Board of Directors vote to accept was unanimous.

Vote: Pamela Brockmeier Armstrong Made a Motion “To Approve the Operating Budget for Fiscal year 2019-2020.” Motion by Pamela Brockmeier Armstrong, 2nd Nat Coughlin. Board of Directors vote to accept was unanimous.

Committee on Trustees-(See Appendix C)

Mark Belanger introduced the new slate of officers and faculty representative up for vote. Nat Coughlin made a suggestion to vote in all new officers at once. **Vote: Nat Coughlin called for a Motion “To Accept Pamela Brockmeier Armstrong as Chair, Amber Hewett as Vice Chair, and Karina Moltz as Secretary”** Motion by Nat Coughlin, 2nd Nina Keery. Board of Directors vote to accept was unanimous.

Vote: Mark Belanger Made a Motion “To Accept Ali Fields as the Faculty Representative for the 2019-2020 School Year” Motion by Nat Coughlin, 2nd Nina Keery. Board of Directors vote to accept was unanimous.

Mason Mitchell Daniels introduced the updated By-laws after edits from the Board as well as DESE. **Vote: MMD Made a Motion to “Approve the June 18, 2019 Revised Version of the Board of Trustees By-laws”** Motion by Mason Mitchell Daniels, 2nd Nat Coughlin. Board of Directors vote to accept was unanimous.

Mark Belanger shared with the Board that Peter Zetlan had written a letter of resignation.

Andy Willemsen left the meeting prior to the Director feedback discussion. Nat Coughlin introduced the new format for the Director Review and stated that it would be close to a 360 review allowing a variety of knowledgeable feedback.

Vote: Nat Coughlin called for a Motion “To Accept the May 2019 Version of the Directors Review” Motion by Nat Coughlin, 2nd Mark Belanger. Board of Directors vote to accept was unanimous.

Vote: Mark Belanger called for a Motion “To Enter Executive Session Under Massachusetts Open Meeting Law #2, to Conduct Strategy Sessions in Preparation for Negotiations with Non Union Personnel. The Topic is Executive Director Compensation for Andy Willemsen.

Vote: Mark Belanger called for a Motion “To Adjourn” Motion by Mason Mitchell Daniels, 2nd Josh Porter. Board of Directors vote to accept was unanimous.

Adjourn: 7:15

Appendix A.

Director's Report to the River Valley Charter School Board of Trustees June 17, 2019

Fiscal Year 2019 School Budget Accolades to Deb McCrevan for her diligent work in helping to prepare the FY 2020 budget. We have reviewed the details of the proposed budget with the Finance Committee, and will be asking the full Board to review and vote on the budget at the June meeting. Projected revenue is up approximately 3%, and the budgeted salary increase is approximately 3.5%. We continue to prioritize staff compensation, professional development, Montessori training and support for student programs such as music, engineering and technology. The proposed budget is part of this month's Board Packet.

Faculty Representative to the Board of Trustees Ali Fields, RVCS EII Teacher, has volunteered to serve as the faculty representative to the Board for the 2019-2020 school year.

Staffing Update As we wrap up the school year, we are pleased to announce that we have hired a terrific slate of Lead Teachers for the upcoming school year. Eli Rosen will serve as our new Middle School Humanities Teacher. Eli has spent the last six years working in the middle school of the Freie Montessori School in Berlin, Germany. He served in a variety of roles, including three years as their Middle School Humanities Teacher, as well as Interim Principal and Middle School Environmental Science Teacher. Eli is a graduate of Dartmouth College, with a B.A. in Earth Science and a minor in German Studies. The Middle School team had a very positive response to Eli's interview and experience and is excited to have him join the team. We are pleased to announce that we have hired Laura Hunt to serve as our Middle School English Language Arts Teacher. Laura has a long tenure at the school as both an Elementary 2 Lead Teacher and as our Academic Program Coordinator. Laura has distinguished herself as an outstanding educator and collaborator. She graduated Magna Cum Laude with a degree in English and Theater from Wheaton College, and is Montessori Certified. When Laura moves to the middle school, Dave Draper will take over as the lead teacher in the E2 classroom where he and Laura Hunt were co-teaching. Dave's background includes ten years teaching all ages of students from pre-K through high school. He has a Master's in Theater Education from Emerson College and a Bachelors' in Theatre Arts from Gordon College. Dave has been at River Valley since 2015, having begun as an Assistant Teacher. He is a MA licensed educator and is Montessori trained. Betsy Howgate, who is currently serving as our Literacy Specialist, will be moving downstairs to join the middle school team as the Middle School Special Education Teacher. Betsy has established herself this year as an effective and enthusiastic educator, able to form strong and

trusting connections with students. Betsy holds three Massachusetts Teaching Licenses, including PreK-8 Special Education. She also holds a Master of Education Degree from Framingham State College and an Education degree from Keene State College. Joining Betsy in the move to the middle school will be Joanne Lightfoot. Joanne has done excellent work supporting individual students in E2 for the last two years and will continue in this role at the middle school level next year. Joanne has nearly twenty years of experience in education, from Kindergarten through high school. She holds a Special Education degree from Johns Hopkins University and graduated Cum Laude with a degree in Social Work from the University of New Hampshire. With Betsy Howgate moving to the middle school, we have hired Christina Carico to work with our E2 special education students. Christina has fifteen years of experience in the education field, including five years as a Special Education Teacher. She holds dual Massachusetts teaching licenses in elementary Education and Special Education, as well as a Master of Education from Lesley University, and a Master of Arts from Framingham State College. At the E1 Level, we are pleased to announce that Emily Douglass, who has done a terrific job as an E1 Assistant Teacher for the past six years, will be stepping up as a Co-Lead next year. Emily holds an International Montessori Training Diploma at the E1 Level and is in the midst of gaining the same degree at the Primary (ages 3-6) level. Emily graduated from Salem State University with a degree in Elementary Education. Joining Emily as the other Co-Lead Teacher will be Rebecca Hamel. Rebecca served as an Assistant E1 Teacher at River Valley from 2009 through 2011, and has fifteen years of teaching experience, many of them in Montessori schools. Rebecca is a Certified American Montessori Society Teacher in both E1 and E2, is Orton-Gillingham certified, and holds an elementary Education degree from Alverno College. Emily and Rebecca have already started planning curriculum for next year.

Enrollment We had six student withdrawals during the 2018-2019 school year, and we have received an additional nineteen withdrawal notifications for the upcoming year. Nine of the summer withdrawals are due to families moving out of district, three are transitioning to private schools, and one will be home schooled. The remaining six will be transferring to district schools. Through the diligence and Montessori marketing expertise of Jonnie Lyn Evans, River Valley is currently fully enrolled for the opening of school.

Staff Survey We have completed the internal Staff Survey for the 2018-2019 school year. We asked all staff members to provide written feedback to each administrator on the following question: *Please comment on the effectiveness of the (job title here) in upholding the mission of the school and supporting the work and needs of the staff and students.* (Some administrators customized this question to better fit their roles). Responses for all administrators were strongly positive, with only a few critical comments. We also asked the staff to respond to several specific questions, and the results indicated consensus that the school is moving in a positive direction, that RVCS has a collaborative & professional climate, and that all stakeholders (staff, students, families, Board of Trustees) are working together toward a common vision.

Summer Facility Work We have several smaller projects slated for the summer break. All of these will require formal approval from the RVCS Foundation, which I will seek at their meeting

on June 17th. These projects will be fully funded through the school's Capital Reserve funds, with no financial support required from the Founda- tion.

1. Replacement of the Windows in the Lobby and Solarium

The weather seals have failed on nearly all of the double-paned window panels, resulting in condensation between the panes, and threatening water damage if not replaced. The contractor will complete the project prior to the end of June 2019. The Foundation has already voted to approve this work through email due to the June scheduling.

2. Gym Storage Expansion We plan to incorporate a portion of the lobby by the gym entrance into the gym office/storage room. With the expansion of the PE and project group programs, the space has become over- crowded. The Newburyport Building inspector has approved this work. We also plan to move the chairs used for large gatherings into the new storage shed (see below). This work will be completed during July 2019.

3. Installation of a Storage Shed The Newburyport Building Code allows for installation of free-standing sheds under 200 square feet without a building permit. I have confirmed with the Building Inspector that RVCS falls with- in this code. We have received a proposal from Eastern Shed Company to build a 10 foot by 14 foot storage shed on the grass area at the middle school end of the building. This structure will be used to store materials such as the chairs used for large gatherings in the gym, materials for the engineering and project groups, and supplies that will not be impacted by temperature ex- tremes.

Camp Invention We will be hosting the 4th annual Camp Invention the week of June 24th. This program is staffed by RVCS teachers and serves 60 students, including many campers from outside of the RVCS community, provid- ing the opportunity for us to integrate with our sending district.

Appendix
B.

**River Valley Charter School
Finance Committee – June 11,
2019**

Attendee
s:

Pam Armstrong
Mark Bishop

Mark Belanger
Jonnie Lyn
Evans Deb
McCrevan Stu
Steinberg Andy
Willemsen

**Meeting Notes &
Highlights:**

1. Reviewed Cash Balances as of May 31, 2019. All in good order.

2. Reviewed the Capital Expenditure Needs Projection Summary. Next week window

replacements and storage shed will be started/complete. Planning for next year: HVAC replacement on rolling basis. The vote to move \$40K from Cash Reserves to Capital Reserves is good business practice to keep Capital Reserves well funded for coming capital expenditures.

a. VOTE: The Board votes to transfer \$40K from Cash Reserves to Capital Reserve s.

3. Reviewed proposed budget. (This has been e-mailed to the Board and should be reviewed before vote on Tuesday.) Overall budget is in good order. Salary line item is up in part for inclusion of new support position. Health care costs *did not change*. Note EBSB interest line item up because it will be on the books for full year now. Note in General Revenue that we record loss of Bldg to RVCS Foundation – this is recorded as gain for Foundation. 4. The Finance Committee is confident that the proposed budget is anchored in solid fiscal

planning. Overall, the Business manager, in partnership with Director, has taken a conservative approach to the “moving target” nature of tuition and state funding

a. VOTE: The Board votes to approve the 2019-2020 Budget.

5. A final but important note: THANK YOU, once again, to Deb McCrevan for her

consistent commitment to the smooth running of RVCS and its finances.

Appendix

C.

Committee on Trustees Meeting Summary

6.11.1

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Attendees: Mason Mitchell-Daniels, Nat Coughlin, Josh Porter (remote), Nina Keery (remote)

Note

s:

1. Retreat Planning—group refined plan for retreat discussion. Desire is to come out of meeting with concrete steps that can be implemented next year. 2.

Director Review—group discussed next step to be sending draft document to board members for review in advance of next meeting. Discussed process of review and determined that in general the discussion of document is to be done in public meeting. Need to determine how this will be implemented in years to come.

3. Board Buddy—Mason to send out solicitation for volunteers to be board buddies to new members.

4. Board Self-Reflection—Andy had shared a board self-reflection document that another board is doing. Mason amended this document for RVCS BOT purposes. Discussed potential to use this for folks to reflect on before board retreat. Group decided to make reflection simple but to possibly use this self-reflection in concert / combined / or instead of standing board survey. 5. Board Policies and

Procedures—Mason drafted an outline for COT next year to build upon. This draft was shared with COT and will be passed along to vice chair next year.