

**River Valley Charter School
Board of Directors Meeting
Meeting # 239
December 11, 2017 7:00 pm**

In Attendance: Officers: Chair: Mark Belanger, Vice Chair: John Siegfried, Treasurer Mason Mitchell-Daniels, Secretary: Katherine Brown **Trustees:** Josh Porter, Alfred Link, Nina Keery, Nat Coughlin, Pamela Brockmeier Armstrong, Peter Zetlan

Director: Andy Willemsen

Jonnie Lyn Evans, Deb McCrevan, Colin Vandenburg

Foundation Member- Scott McDonald

Call to Order: 7:03

Acceptance of Previous Minutes:

Vote: Mark Belanger called for a Motion “To Accept Previous Minutes”

Motion by Nat Coughlin, 2nd Nina Keery. Board of Directors vote to accept was unanimous.

Public Comment: none

Working Groups Update-

Trustee Group- John Siegfried reported that the group has created a calendar and reviewed feedback from the Board. The group has recruited new members from the Board and will become the Committee on Trustees.

HR Group- Nat Coughlin reported that feedback from the Board was both thoughtful and helpful but that there seemed to be a lack of consensus. Nat commented on some overlap relating to the Board not having a finger on the pulse of teacher retention. Suggestions included internal benchmarks to monitor recruitment and retention each year and exit interviews with Board members. Nat Coughlin then shared a chart of operating expenses, change in personnel and related expenses. Discussion continued in regard to RVCS running costs, reserve funds and district spending at which point Mark Belanger suggested the Board move forward in the meeting.

Accountability Committee Update-

Pam Brockmeier Armstrong spoke for Ben Scherz (not present).

Pam reported that Laura Hunt presented an inventory of teacher generated assessments going on in the classrooms. The Committee discussed formative vs. summative assessments and how they travel through the grades and into high school.

The committee also reviewed the rubric on the progress reports and how it might take away from the potential comments/ narrative portion of the report.

Development Committee Update-

Mark Belanger spoke for Jennifer McCormick (not present)

Mark acknowledged and thanked Jonnie Lyn for creating the year of gratitude flyers, which went out to all parents and donors from last year. Mark reminded the Board of the request of 100% board participation this year. There are two upcoming alumni events on January 3 at the Newburyport Brewing Co. and January 23 at RVCS with current 9th and 10th graders.

Finance Committee Update-

Mason Mitchell-Daniels reported that Deb McCrevan provided details for all cash balance reports with the group. Deb reviewed additional documents with the committee to provide some context for changing tuition rates over the years and to explain the two tuition rates “foundation rate” and “above foundation rate”. December is the time when tuition changes.

Director’s Report: Andy Willemsen

Solar Power Purchase Agreement-

Andy Willemsen reported that the solar panel contract passed and was signed however Deb McCrevan reminded him that Citizens Bank was never contacted. Andy Willemsen stated he contacted Citizens today (December 11, 2017) and will have a conversation with them tomorrow.

Enrollment Policy -

Andy reported that the Enrollment Policy has been passed by the commissioner. Jonnie Lyn Evans has been reaching out to families to inform them of the new policy and she is happy to report that feedback has not been negative.

Mass Charter Public School Association Guidance-

Andy Willemsen told the Board of his recent meeting at the MCPSA and how he was updated on the political landscape regarding charter schools nationally and particularly in Massachusetts. Andy reported the following points from the meeting:

- Nationally, support for charter schools has dropped 12% in the last year.
- In Massachusetts, public charter support has fallen by almost 20% pre-Question 2 to today.
- MCPSA analysis shows that 75% of newspaper articles about MA charters from July to October were negative.
- Public charter opponents in the state legislature are seeking to make support for charters a partisan issue.

Andy asked the Board to get involved and make efforts to influence the public dialogue regarding charter schools, with a particular focus on fostering relationships with our local elected officials.

Re-Financing Efforts-

Andy reported on a December 7 meeting at Citizens Bank with Stu Steinberg and Deb McCrevan to discuss the possibility of refinancing the Foundation’s loan. Andy stated that due to the likelihood of a continued increase in borrowing costs, they are exploring options to extend the fixed rate structure of the loan. The pending federal legislation could impact the availability of tax-exempt bonding, which in turn impacts our potential borrowing rate.

Vote: Mark Belanger called for a Motion “To Adjourn”

Motion by Nat Coughlin, 2nd John Siegfried. Board of Directors vote to accept was unanimous.

Adjourned: