

**River Valley Charter School
Board of Trustees Meeting
Meeting # 291
April 12, 2022 7:00 pm**

In accordance with the Executive Order applying to MA Open Meeting Law, this meeting will be held virtually on Zoom ID: 83474300440 at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm.

In attendance:

Pam Armstrong
Mark Bishop
Nancy Durkee
Alfred Link
Catherine Martin
Karen Popken
Erin Seaton
Albert Ting
Anna Wetmore

Absent:

Amber Hewitt
Erin Irose (joined mid-Executive Session)
Nina Keery

Also Present:

Jonnie Lyn Evans, Director
Dan Bouchard, Assistant Director
Deb McCrevan
ERic Simone
Jared Hubbard
Lucas Ting
Lucinda Catchcart
Maliha Jain
Beth MacQuade
Tanya Murdy

RVCS Revelation

Lucinda Cathcart and Beth MacQuade, Lucas Ting and Maliha Jain to describe the Middle School Visual Arts Project Group. Maliha described the Visual Arts Project Group and some of their projects. She presented photos of the creative Barrier Paintings around the school. The group also created ornaments from a donation from the Custom House Museum. Other activities included a visit from local artist Alan Bull along with other projects such as bottle lights, etching glass bottles and the design and production of coloring books using the screen printing

technique. Lucas demonstrated the many-step process used to develop the screen prints for the coloring book project. The coloring books will be sold and the profits donated to St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital and Last Chance Animal Rescue.

Gratitude to Lucinda, Beth, Lucas and Maliha for such a wonderful presentation.

Vote: Accept March BOT Minutes and March committee minutes.

Motion: Anna Wetmore

2nd: Mark Bishop

Yes:

Pam Armstrong

Mark Bishop

Nancy Durkee

Alfred Link

Catherine Martin

Karen Popken

Erin Seaton

Albert Ting

Anna Wetmore

No:

None

Abstain:

None

Director's Report: Jonnie Lyn Evans presented report

School Updates:

The school is doing great with wonderful things happening in classrooms. JL highlighted the project groups mentioned in the Middle School Monthly and the PBE maple syrup making experience.

Caroline Whitmore is back working with E2 children.

Erosion near the playground on Low Street has caused issues with retaining wall blocks (no danger). The city is taking charge of the replacement at no charge to RVCS. There is no available timeline yet. Dan will update as the project progresses.

Montessori Audit:

Initial oral report back was positive. Collaboration among staff and the culture of the school

were highlighted as strengths. The auditors expected something different coming off of Covid, but were surprised by the energized staff. The auditors examined fidelity to Montessori and sustainability of the organization.

Covid Updates:

Pooled testing continues and has come back all negative this week. There have been a couple of cases recently. Two staff members are out now; one has been out for multiple weeks. There have been a few student cases here and there. There hasn't been any known in-school spread.

2022-2023 Calendar:

School calendar was presented with the first day of school being August 29th and the final day being June 14th, without compensating for snow days.

Vote: Motion to approve the 2022-2023 school calendar as presented on April 12, 2022.

Motion: Pam Armstrong
2nd: Catherine Martin

Yes:

Pam Armstrong
Mark Bishop
Nancy Durkee
Alfred Link
Catherine Martin
Karen Popken
Erin Seaton
Albert Ting
Anna Wetmore

No:

None

Abstain:

None

Field Trip Policy:

The Field Trip Policy has been reviewed by the attorney multiple times. All trips are approved by the director and require parent consent and anything that discourages going out is not beneficial. The board does not need to weigh in on advance notice of trips.

Erin thanks JLE for the work to make this an inclusive policy.

Vote: Motion to approve the Field Trip Policy as presented at this meeting with the removal of the two highlighted bullets that refer to Board Approval of overnight and late night trips.

Motion: Pam Armstrong

2nd: Alfred Link

Yes:

Pam Armstrong

Mark Bishop

Nancy Durkee

Alfred Link

Catherine Martin

Karen Popken

Erin Seaton

Albert Ting

Anna Wetmore

No:

None

Abstain:

None

Policy management questions: Where do we want to store all of these policies?

Should there be a naming convention?

Should it be accessible to all board members at all times?

Where does the word version live; where does the pdf version live?

Perhaps Accountability or the Executive Committee could take on this work.

Committee Updates

Committee on Trustees

There are four potential trustees: Denise Herrera (Finance Committee and Foundation), Chris Whitford (Finance Committee with an audit background), Tim Letson (Accountability Committee) and Jared Hubbard (legal background). No one with specific background in education. DEI training could fit well for the board as a whole. Jared Hubbard and Eric Simone (interested in board membership) spoke to their connection with DEI.

Perhaps we'd like to add a question on the questionnaire in this area and in the board self-evaluation?

Pam notes that we may have more people who are interested in joining the board than we are ready to take on, but perhaps the interest could help fill in some of the committees. The COT

could take up this conversation at their next meeting.

Retreat: June 2 is showing up as the most popular date, but not all survey responses are in. This year, the retreat feels essential. We could discuss our operations and efficiencies as a board.

Director Review. Amber shared rubric with the Executive Committee for review. From what Pam understands, it should be conducted and presented on time this year. The appraisal instrument was originally developed by the audit agency currently working at RVCS. JLE is working on developing a similar appraisal system for staff. Gratitude to the front office on working on layout of the document.

Accountability Committee

The parent handbook is now available on the portal. There are some pronouns within the handbook that were modified to improve inclusivity.

Parent teacher conference surveys, as expected, indicate that most parents would like more time with their teachers, but were otherwise positive.

Bulk of the time was spent on screener reviews. Significant social and behavioral issues are affecting our student body. And there are some signs of math regression. The data is young and there is still some learning to do in regards of which screeners are most effective.

Finance Committee

Next month, there will be a budget salary line item vote and June will have the overall budget vote. Expect a lot of discussion and numbers over the next few months.

Every year we start the audit process about this time and in October we will do an audit review. JLE, Scott MacDonald (Treasurer of the Foundation) and Mark are working to get a renewal contract with AAF CPA, who has done our audit for the past 8-9 years, and then the audit will begin.

HR Knowledge, who has been doing our benefits work, is also taking on payroll for the next fiscal year. The committee is looking at Central Source to offload other work

Cash balance including Restricted Cash-Capital Reserves is 1.9 million, a little lower, but expected because of three payrolls. Our run rate is around \$380K and we like to have at least 3-4 months in cash for those expenses. Tuition has been received on time. Overall, this year there is a 3.94 percent increase on tuition from the original budget. Tuition accounts for about 95% of the revenue for the school.

The committee is also mindful of aging facilities. HVAC, 2 of 9 units were replaced in an emergency-like situation. The system has been reviewed and will continue discussions on replacement of the remaining units

The building assessment has been completed and we expect a report in June.

Fiscal Policies Section 700 updates reflect Federal and State procurement practice guidelines coming from DESE. The approval is required for the audit process.

Vote: Approve updates to Fiscal Policies Section 700 procurement revised.

Motion: Mark Bishop
2nd: Pam Armstrong

Yes:

Pam Armstrong
Mark Bishop
Nancy Durkee
Alfred Link
Catherine Martin
Karen Popken
Erin Seaton
Albert Ting
Anna Wetmore

No:

None

Abstain:

None

Credit Card Policy Updates:

Currently we have a process with a manual review of credit card. This will streamline the process and allow the ability to review expenses in real time at any time.

Vote: To approve updates to Fiscal Policies 209, Use of School Credit Card section.

Motion: Mark Bishop
2nd: Alfred Link

Yes:

Pam Armstrong
Mark Bishop
Nancy Durkee
Alfred Link
Catherine Martin
Karen Popken
Erin Seaton

Albert Ting
Anna Wetmore

No:
None

Abstain:
None

Opening New Credit Card Letter of Request:

Letter presented and signed by Mark, Deb and Jonnie Lyn. Pam read the letter aloud; the letter is in the board packet.

Vote: To authorize the business office to begin the application process for a new school credit card.

Motion: Pam Armstrong
2nd: Mark Bishop

Yes:
Pam Armstrong
Mark Bishop
Nancy Durkee
Alfred Link
Catherine Martin
Karen Popken
Erin Seaton
Albert Ting
Anna Wetmore

No:
None

Abstain:
None

Development Committee

The next meeting is April 27th.

The committee discussed:

A September Back to School get together.

PA/Dev events for community building and where an ask is expected.

Hosting a Spring event maybe next month (Riverwalk or similar) that could include parents of incoming KH or other accepted students as well as the larger community. This could be a good opportunity to mention openings in PA/committees/etc., and a nice way to welcome and generate interest/excitement in school. Maybe a few people could speak to make it feel a little more official like the previous welcome mixers at Custom House.

Pam emphasized attendance to the webinar she sent an email about.

Public Comment:

Jared thanks the board and welcomes any questions. Jared encourages the availability of support documents for the board discussions. This is something for the Executive Committee to discuss.

Vote: Executive Session

Motion “to enter Executive Session under the MA Open Meeting Law purpose for Executive Session #2: To conduct strategy sessions with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel.” The purpose of this session is to discuss Director compensation.

Motion: Pam Armstrong
2nd: Mark Bishop

Yes:

Pam Armstrong
Mark Bishop
Nancy Durkee
Alfred Link
Catherine Martin
Karen Popken
Erin Seaton
Albert Ting
Anna Wetmore

No:

None

Abstain:

None

* Erin Bradley Irose joined the meeting during the executive session. Erin Seaton and Nancy Durkee had to leave the meeting during the executive session.

Reentered Public Session at 9:40 pm.

Vote: To approve a correction to the Director's 2022-2025 contract starting salary to a 2% increase to the current salary.

Motion: Pam Armstrong

2nd: Anna Wetmore

Yes:

Pam Armstrong

Mark Bishop

Erin Bradley Irose

Alfred Link

Catherine Martin

Albert Ting

Anna Wetmore

No:

None

Abstain:

None

Vote: To adjourn meeting.

Motion: Pam Armstrong

2nd: Alfred Link

Yes:

Pam Armstrong

Mark Bishop

Erin Bradley Irose

Alfred Link

Catherine Martin

Albert Ting

Anna Wetmore

No:

None

Abstain:

None

9:45 pm Board adjourns.