

**River Valley Charter School
Board of Trustees Meeting
Meeting # 291
February 14, 2023 7:00 pm**

Meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm.

In attendance:

Pam Armstrong
Erin Bradley
Nancy Durkee (via telecomm, left 8:28)
Denise Herrera
Lainie Ives
Ken Jackman
Nina Keery
Tim Letson
Catherine Martin
Tanya Murdy (via telecomm)
Erin Seaton (arrived 7:16, left 8:56)
Albert Ting
Anna Wetmore
Chris Whitford
Jonnie Lyn Evans, Director

Absent:

Amber Hewett
Alfred Link
Eric Simone

Public:

None

RVCS Revelation:

Jane Noyes presented highlights of the rich E1 math curriculum. Students are expected to gather their work supplies, do their work and put it away. This offers executive functioning practice and allows for students to work on their choice. She presented many of the materials used in math work.

Jane highlighted the importance of mastering the concrete before moving on to the abstract in teaching math in Montessori style. She is happy to be seeing the children excited to touch and work with the materials again after the necessary hiatus due to Covid 19. The multisensory aspect is very gratifying for the children and the process takes time, asking them to slow down and absorb the lesson.

Vote: To approve minutes from the January Board of Trustees meeting and submitted January and February committee meeting minutes.

Motion: Anna Wetmore
2nd: Nina Keery

Yes:

Pam Armstrong
Denise Herrera
Lainie Ives
Ken Jackman
Nina Keery
Tim Letson
Catherine Martin
Tanya Murdy
Albert Ting
Anna Wetmore
Chris Whitford

No:

None

Abstain:

Erin Bradley
Erin Seaton

Absent:

Amber Hewett
Alfred Link
Eric Simone

Director's Report: Jonnie Lyn Evans presented report

The Director's Report appears in the packet. Time was allowed for questions and comments.

Additional things:

E2 classrooms have overnight field trips coming up.

Lottery is Thursday, Reverend Rebecca Bradley will be overseeing it. It will be performed via a random number generator at a Zoom meeting. RVCS has about 200 applicants, which is pretty good.

Correction to report: Survey on Wetlands: the Foundation wasn't asked to fund it.

ATing: Were there any non-resident applications? JLE - Yes. ATing - Clarify, the towns that we corrected? JLE - Yes, quite a number. The structure of hierarchy is siblings, resident, non-resident.

Central Source's Suzanne Graham is essentially the new business manager. She is

experienced in working with charter schools. Her plan is to stick with systems as they are and then slowly convert them to more efficient processes in time. Sean Pina at Central Source is doing the background work much like Jill Eichorst did.

Deb did a masterful job of making the finances of the school work. Her last day was last Friday.

Local “Swatting” activity (active shooter hoax): While there wasn’t an event at RVCS we are fortunate to have a community that shares what is going on in a timely manner. Response was to go first to Katy Field and Colin Vandenburg to let them know what is happening and what might be coming up for the kids. The second action was to notify teachers who have children at Amesbury HS. The resource officer was relatively confident that it was a hoax from the beginning. .

KJ - Have we had professionals come in to help make a plan? JLE - Talks to the police each year to go over the school’s plan and takes training herself. KJackman - Can offer a resource that he’s connected with.

TLetson - Is it possible to have someone come in and train the staff on a day that children aren’t in school? JLE - The hard part is that every incident could be different. Staff talks about it and sends the plan multiple times for the administration and staff to review.

EBradley - Falls on the staff to be the instant response team, highlights the importance of keeping the children out of the training. She commends JLE to hear that there is a clear second in command.

ESeaton - Appreciates the thoughtful response to this. Both the email and the preparedness approach.

KJackman - Brings up the subject of succession planning and who will be the person who knows how the pieces move together. JLE - Still in the research phase of making sure her thought process is solid. She is meeting with a charter school group to run through her plan. She is thinking that any one of the three people could potentially move into a leadership role. Finding someone who understands the Montessori component and can also deal with the administrative work is difficult. KJackman - Suggests looking from the beginning for someone who fits the position. DHerrera - Not all vice presidents are suitable to be president. Perhaps one of these three people will learn the different silos and become the new director. CWhitford - Someone will come out of the silo and naturally learn. Cathy - When will these people be in place? JLE - Hopes to put out a job posting in March and close to completion by the end of March.

Strategic Plan Update - A few board members recommend sending a reminder email the day before the next listening session.

Board feedback session will be its own meeting dedicated to the plan. Right now the best day appears to be Tuesday, February 28, 2023, 6-7. We also have the opportunity to talk directly to JLE.

Accountability Committee

The main focus of the meeting was the Parent Survey and putting it in context; why it fits in and why we do it. It is part of the accountability plan. JLE presented a useful, big picture of the different areas of accountability.

Development Committee

The committee has had consistently perfect attendance. The first event brought in approx 1/3 of the families, but did not raise as much as had hoped. The current gives are not enough to do anything of significance. A key to success is reengagement of families. With the parent/caregiver survey coming up, would it be an option to ask families what they would like to contribute to. Would a development survey be more appropriate?

JLE - Might not be the best place to have it in the accountability survey.

ESeaton - Asks to consider the inequality of asking donors of where the money should go.

DHerrera - Where does PA fall into this? Who is holding the small events that used to happen? Is there a way to share the great things happening at the school? JLE - PA is pretty much gone.

TMurdy - There is a Kinderhaus parent trying to get things moving, but doesn't have a good grip on what needs to be done. The PE needs parents to step up and a bigger budget.

KJackman - Perhaps it behooves the school to have someone inside the school to plan events.

ATing - Have we just gotten out of the habit of giving? KJackman - When we have a plan of moving forward, no one shows up. Perhaps this is a hangover effect from Covid. Lives - could this be part of one of the new positions in administration? DHerrera - A person in the school would also know more about the makeup of the school and the school needs.

Finance Committee

Deb's last day was last Friday.

Central Source is working closely with JLE.

We are tracking under budget on most items, while grants are a little low and there has been a change with the regular giver. Expenses are in line with, if not below, the budget. Next year's budget planning is starting soon.

HVAC items are going in next week.

Committee on Trustees

This month's main task was to find a balanced approach to the ask of the grievance committee on how and where it makes sense to have board expectations. The presented document feels to be

the best balance. Trustees are trying to be here for RVCS and make meaningful decisions, while being the best that we can be. A lot of this appears in the job description. This document can also be a basis for a retreat discussion. Every new and existing board member would be provided with this each year with display at each meeting.

We each got a survey from the MCPSA. Please fill it out. We could get a free speaker at a future retreat.

Midyear review was last Friday. CoT will report on it next month. The meeting went over goals and reviewed rubric from last year and the general outlook for the school. A lot of excitement about the outlook, however, rebuilding trust within all facets of the school community is important. How do we begin to bring everyone back together?

Note from the Chair:

Please keep your eyes open for information about Advocacy Week. If you are available, please participate.

Public Comment:

None.

Vote: To adjourn.

Motion: Pam Armstrong
2nd: Erin Bradley

Yes:

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Denise Herrera
Lainie Ives
Ken Jackman
Nina Keery
Tim Letson
Catherine Martin
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Albert Ting
Anna Wetmore
Chris Whitford

No:

None

Abstain:

None

Absent:

Nancy Durkee (left meeting at 8:28)

Amber Hewett

Alfred Link

Erin Seaton (left meeting at 8:56)

Eric Simone

9:10 pm Board adjourns.