

**River Valley Charter School  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Meeting # 276  
December 8, 2020 5:00 pm**

In accordance with the Executive Order applying to MA Open Meeting Law, this meeting will be held virtually on Zoom ID: at 5:00 p.m.

Meeting was called to order at 5:07 pm

*In attendance*

Pam Armstrong  
Mark Bishop  
Nancy Durkee  
Amber Hewett  
Erin Bradley Irose  
Nina Keery  
Alfred Link  
Catherine Martin  
Karina Moltz  
Greg Noyes  
Rebecca Schwer  
Erin Seaton  
Albert Ting  
Anna Wetmore

**RVCS Revelation: Dave Draper, E2 teacher**

Presented math materials and explained approach – cube rooting.

**Vote: motion to approve November 2020 minutes**

*Motion:* Erin Bradley Irose

2nd: Nina Keery

*Vote*

Yes: all in attendance (Mark Bishop and Nancy Durkee had not yet joined the meeting)

No:

Abstain:

**Public comment:**

Nat Coughlin – parent of alum and current E2 student. Wanted to share how excited and willing his son is to go to school. Nat has been very impressed with how the process has unfolded, and at how the school has looked at its approach and adapted to the circumstances. Appreciates how hard this year must be for the teachers, the director, the nurse, etc. Feels that the school has done

something really special and wants to make sure that the teachers and admin know how much their work is seen and appreciated.

### **Director's Report**

Jonnie Lyn reviewed the points made in the Director's Report (in BOT folder for this meeting).

School is fully enrolled.

New cohort has been created – E2 staff children. A cohort of E1 staff children already existed, but change in programming requires a similar cohort for E2.

After families were asked to decide about programming, 3 students in E2 are joining in-person school, 3 middle-schoolers are moving to FSR (Family Selected Remote)

Temporary wall erected in MS space to make it more usable for groups to work simultaneously. Desks also put into place to help students keep more physical distance from each other. Older students have a harder time with enforcement of rules and distance than the younger students do.

Outdoor component is coming to MS program. Location will be at a residence adjacent to Maudslay State Park. One resident works at Waring School and the family is willing to host RVCS students on their spacious property. Rebecca Schwer described program plan – focus on science and team building in the mornings, afternoon will be more exploration, journaling, making use of Maudslay, etc.

FSR E2 program was led by a person who has announced that she is not returning after winter break. 5-8 students have been attending weekly. School is looking for a replacement. Also looking for someone to cover the new E2 staff cohort. Also looking for a new K/1 teacher to take over the K/1 FSR program so that the teacher currently covering that program can move into the classroom.

Accountability plan was approved and put into place last year, but the goals were very hard to measure or didn't make sense once the time came to do the annual report. The situation will be the same this year.

Waiting on federal or state decision about MCAS. Tests could be cancelled or remote or happen as planned.

- Question – what is “last minute” timeframe for decision about MCAS? Might not know until late winter/early spring. RVCS doesn't teach to the test, though prep does usually happen.
- Comment was made that MCAS could be very important in gauging what has been lost in terms of progress relative to other years

Student surveys are being considered and constructed for E1 and E2. Hesitation around giving MS students a blank slate for commenting on their teachers, and decision may be made to survey the students in a different manner or not at all.

- Suggestion made to give MS students a set question and ask them to write a paragraph.

CDC reduced quarantine required from 14-7 days. 14 day quarantine is still endorsed, but is not typically observed, so the guidelines have shifted. Allowing for greater risk in the interest of higher compliance rates.

JLE and Kimberly want to be on the side of caution. Brought together a number of people who have useful perspective – school physician, an ER physician’s assistant, a teacher representative (Colin Vanderburgh), Kimberly Putney, among others. All along, RVCS has followed CDC recommendations but now the school wants to be more conservative/cautious in approach. New protocols have been shared with families. The 14 day quarantine is still endorsed, but in certain circumstances, where it makes sense, a 10 day return from quarantine will be allowed as long as there is a negative PCR test after the 8<sup>th</sup> day of quarantine. School recommends that a PCR test is done even after 14 days of quarantine.

RVCS asked for access to a site (Maven?) that is used for contact tracing. Access was denied, though district schools do have access, but school has potentially figured out a way to get access to the information.

Erin Bradley-Irose stated appreciation for the thoughtful approach that JLE and Kimberly Putney have used in making decisions about the school.

Greg Noyes – feels that we should vote on policies. If it’s written down and we vote on it then the issue is resolved.

Joe Repczynski (member of the public invite to speak) – shared his family’s experience with a delayed positive test, toward the end of the 14 day quarantine a child tested positive.

Question - do we open ourselves up to legal action if we make decisions that are more conservative than CDC recommends?

JLE spoke with the attorney who said there is no precedence. Attorney suggests not a vote, but an expression of support.

Kimberly heard today that decisions about following CDC guidelines are school or community based decisions.

**Vote:** the Board supports the Administration in the changes to the covid response plan (as of 12/7/2020)

Motion: Pam Armstrong  
2<sup>nd</sup>: Nina Keery

*Yes:* all in attendance

*No:*

*Abstain:*

School has been given approval for use of rapid tests. Testing is most accurate on people who are symptomatic. Tests will only be used on staff members at this time. Cost is free – testing is from Dept of Ed.

**Vote:** to extend meeting to 7:30 pm if needed

Motion: Greg Noyes

2<sup>nd</sup>: Nina Keery

*Yes:*

Pam Armstrong , Mark Bishop, Nancy Durkee, Amber Hewett, Erin Bradley Irose, Nina Keery, Alfred Link, Catherine Martin, Karina Moltz, Greg Noyes, Rebecca Schwer, Albert Ting, Anna Wetmore

*No:*

*Abstain:* Erin Seaton is not able to attend extended part of the meeting

### **Committee on Trustees**

Nina Keery reviewed minutes of COT meeting, and discussed the idea of a January retreat that would be focused on DEI work. Erin Seaton shared several resources and they will be added to a google drive folder.

### **Finance Committee:**

Mark Bishop discussed documents that are in the Board folder. Described how conservative the budgeting was when initially done, due to uncertainty around the pandemic. Staff salary increases were not given. Increased need for money to cover substitute teaching, parental leave coverage, and programming costs. The Finance Committee recommends that the BOT approve the salary line increase of \$50,000.

**Vote:** To approve the request for a \$50,000 increase in the salary line item for the fiscal year 2020-2021 school budget.

Motion: Greg

2<sup>nd</sup>: Pam

*Yes:* Pam Armstrong, Mark Bishop, Nancy Durkee, Amber Hewett, Erin Bradley Irose, Nina Keery, Catherine Martin, Karina Moltz, Greg Noyes, Erin Seaton, Albert Ting, Anna Wetmore

*No:*

*Abstain:* Alfred Link, Rebecca Schwer

### **Accountability Committee**

Presentation of Title 9 policy. Committee recognizes that changes may have to be made to align the existing policy with this policy.

**Vote:** to accept the Title 9 policy dated Nov 2020 as presented

Motion: Alfred  
2<sup>nd</sup>: Nina

*Yes:* all in attendance

*No:*

*Abstain:*

### **Development**

Dan reported on progress made in Triple the Love campaign – almost to the goal of \$30,000. Greg Noyes expressed concern that there is not a strategic plan in place. Would like to start working on that initiative. Pam agrees that a plan is needed and says that a strategic plan would usually be done between the BOT and the Director, and that this year it's not possible. It is going to be on hold for right now.

Greg asked if there is a capital plan. Jonnie Lyn said that there is not a capital need right now.

### **Discussion of Director Review**

Amber Hewett described process for gathering information for review, and discussed process. Pam Armstrong and Nina Keery described importance of having a review process in place. Nina also pointed out the importance of COT needing to be able to have difficult conversations. Document is not yet public but BOT members have had access to it.

Conversation has been ongoing in COT about where the Director's review report responsibility should lie. Erin Bradley-Irose has stepped up to head an ad-hoc committee on Director's review process.

Pam was thinking of recognizing Jonnie Lyn mid-year. How could we do that? Nina thinks we should recognize JLE but also not lose sight of the 360 degree review that is important to maintain.

An expression of gratitude should be separate from the 360 review. It should also be delayed – doesn't need to be sent along with the Director Review document.

**Vote:** 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:* Erin Bradley Irose

*2nd:* Mark Bishop

*Yes:* All in attendance (Karina Moltz and Erin Seaton had left the meeting by this time)

**Vote:** to leave the executive session

*Motion:* Greg Noyes

*2nd:* Mark Bishop  
*Yes:* all in attendance

**Vote:** to authorize the Board of Trustees Chair and Treasurer to discuss a stipend for the Director with the RVCS Foundation in recognition for efforts displayed during the extraordinary circumstances of the past 8 months.

*Motion:* Greg Noyes

*2nd:* Nina Keery

*Yes:* All in attendance (everyone on BOT except for Karina Moltz and Erin Seaton).

**Vote:** to adjourn BOT meeting

*Motion:* Greg Noyes

*2nd:* Mark Bishop

*Yes:* all in attendance

**?? pm Board adjourns**