

**River Valley Charter School
Board of Trustees Meeting
Meeting # 295
August 23, 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: 83357045187 at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm.

In attendance:

Pam Armstrong
Erin Bradley
Denise Herrera
Ken Jackman
Nina Keery
Alfred Link
Catherine Martin
Tanya Murdy
Laine Ives
Erin Seaton, arrived 7:12
Eric Simone
Albert Ting
Anna Wetmore
Chris Whitford
Jonnie Lyn Evans, Director

Absent:

Mark Bishop
Nancy Durkee
Amber Hewitt
Tim Letson

Also Present:

Deb McCrevan
Jill Eichhorst

Public Comment:

None

Vote: Accept June BOT Minutes with addition of adjournment vote and June committee minutes.

Motion: Anna Wetmore
2nd: Pam Armstrong

Yes:

Pam Armstrong
Erin Bradley
Nina Keery
Catherine Martin
Karen Popken
Erin Seaton
Albert Ting
Anna Wetmore

No:

None

Abstain:

Denise Herrera
Laine Ives
Ken Jackman
Alfred Link
Tanya Murdy
Eric Simone
Chris Whitford

Absent:

Mark Bishop
Nancy Durkee
Amber Hewitt
Tim Letson
Alfred Link

Note from Chair

PArmstong welcomes the new Trustees and facilitates a round of introductions.

We are volunteers and special state employees. Our job is to ensure financial viability, that the charter is followed and that policies are inline with DESE requirements. We hire the Director to handle all of this. We all have a connection to the school in a variety of ways; we are all passionate about the success of this endeavor. We need to engage in deliberations with separations between our own interests and those of the whole institution. The last three years have been a little blurry as we figured out how to operate in crisis. It is now time to come out of that and find our lanes again.

Expectations of Trustees: Read the board packet. Be aware of when meetings are. All meeting dates are set except for June 2023. Committees are where the bulk of work is done; be productive in committees so work can be done efficiently in the Board meetings.

We are very different from a public school committee. We are a charter school Board of Trustees. When we communicate, it tends to be collegial, but when there are differing opinions, we use Montessori values in our discussions.

Director's Report presented by Jonnie Lyn Evans

The Director's Report can be viewed in the August Board Packet.

Time for questions and comments was allowed. No questions at the time.

Additions to the Report:

Two 15-passenger vans have been delivered. RVCS now has a total of three vans.

Annual report was sent back for a date change. It has since been corrected and approved. It will be shared widely very soon.

There has been a staffing change in an E2 classroom. The assistant teacher has left the school and the lead teacher is on bonding leave for six to seven weeks. One PBE teacher will be in the classroom daily. The teacher on bonding leave will be in for half days for the first four days of school. Phys Ed teacher recently notified the school they will not be returning. A replacement has been hired. An Assistant position remains open in the E2 classroom.

NKeery: Please clarify covid protocol.

Masks are optional. A covid positive student is for out five days with five days of masking following. There is no more contact tracing which is the same as the end of the school year. The school nurse will be masked. There is testing for symptomatic staff and students and the school has a large supply of masks and rapid tests on hand.

NKeery: Are you worried about coverage as the new year begins?

No, we have dedicated subs that we like.

EBradley: How is enrollment?

RVCS is fully enrolled today. 14 students withdrew; not concerned about the reasons behind the departures.

EBradley: Is that consistent with previous years? It could be a little higher than preCovid.

ALink: We are following up with families who opt out.

PArmstrong: How was participation in new family mentoring programs?

Went very well and gratitude goes to Jane Patterson who coordinated the program. There will be a popsicle party on the playground on Thursday. JLE is considering a follow-up survey.

Director's Goals: Draft and Feedback

For the past several years, been health, safety, security and staffing. We are coming out of the crisis and JLEvans with partnership with Executive Committee has great aspirations and sees great potential. The goals will list out three to four priorities to focus on this year. They give the board a way to see evidence of a successful year.

JLE has not yet received the 2021-22 review. It will be delivered, but she had to make these goals without the added input of knowing what the board's review said. We will discuss and give feedback and will revisit her list and return in September.

Ken:Priority 1 Metrics will be very helpful for measuring progress towards goals. For instance, tracking how many families signed up for the mentoring program or in person contact. (All were assigned, but not all may not have taken advantage of it. NOT one and done, meant to be a continuing relationship) JLE, there are opportunities for measuring this.

Priority 3 funding for this? JLE there is some duplication of efforts happening as the transition is being made.

CMartin: Excited to see putting emphasis on observation which is authentic to Montessori in the annual report. The flexible rotation for specials is very sound for the students and the preserved work period also fits the RVCS Montessori mission.

ESeaton: JLE has been a great leader through crisis. Was happy to see that last year, she thought about distributing responsibilities. The board would be very supportive of that and would be willing to help.

Please forward future thoughts to JLEvans.

Board Business

Discussion: In-Person, Hybrid, or Zoom for future meetings.

The Executive Committee decided that it was best for everyone to hear each other's perspectives and then have a vote. Committees can decide how they would like to meet. The Executive Committee has decided to meet via Zoom for the time being.

Should we begin meeting in person at the school or continue on Zoom?

Pros to meeting in person: camaraderie, communication.

KJackman: We are asking teachers to be in person. We should exhibit leadership by example.

CMartin: lives in Maine, will need to be remote for the most part. Can't guarantee attendance in person.

ESimone: His own company ended on a hybrid approach and would like to meet in person.

PArmstrong: By-laws allow for remote participation, as long as quorum is physically present.

ESeaton: Needs to wear a mask. Are we talking about masking? Her company has people mask if someone asks.

ATing: How does hybrid work? Has had difficult experiences with tech.

ESeaton and NKeery suggest using a moderator who is not running the meeting. CWhitford: In favor of in person meetings. Perhaps something as simple as a phone number that you can call into would be adequate.

Lives: As a grace and courtesy, we could mask if in person to make all comfortable. Glad to hear that there is an avenue for hybrid.

ATing: Echoes grace and courtesy. We'd mask if one on one, why not with a group? It is something that we can do to model for our kids.

Vote: To meet in person with grace and courtesy in regards to masking with a remote option.

Motion: Pam Armstrong

2nd: Denise Herrera

Yes:

Pam Armstrong

Erin Bradley

Denise Herrera

Laine Ives

Ken Jackman

Nina Keery

Alfred Link

Catherine Martin

Tanya Murdy

Erin Seaton

Eric Simone

Albert Ting

Anna Wetmore

Chris Whitford

No:

None

Abstain:

None

Absent:

Mark Bishop
Nancy Durkee
Amber Hewitt
Tim Letson

Committee Updates

Committee on Trustees

First meeting is in September but there are a few things to take care of.

Vote: To elect Alfred Link as Treasurer of the Board of Trustees for the 2022-2023 year.

ALink: Mark Bishop has been incredibly meticulous. Alfred was Treasure for two years in his earlier years with the board. Mark will stay on the committee as are others, which offers a lot of continuity on the committee, and plans to continue to monitor the committee.

Motion: Albert Ting

2nd: Nina Keery

Yes:

Pam Armstrong
Erin Bradley
Denise Herrera
Laine Ives
Ken Jackman
Nina Keery
Catherine Martin
Tanya Murdy
Eric Simone
Albert Ting
Anna Wetmore
Chris Whitford

No:

None

Abstain:

Alfred Link
Erin Seaton

Absent:

Mark Bishop
Nancy Durkee
Amber Hewitt
Tim Letson

ATing read the board roster with committee assignments to confirm committee assignments. ATing is working on getting his login for DESE to double check that we have filled out our forms. He urges all Trustees to respond if we're getting emails that we're incomplete.

Finance Committee

At the committee meeting, MBishop walked through cash balances and other statements. There was a delay in the tuition payment which showed a temporary negative. It has since been made up and it looks like tuition will be spot on.

The vans have arrived; by spending this capitol reserve, there is space to refill it. This is perhaps a conversation with development.

The committee will be working with the auditing firm in early fall.

Encourages attendance for all trustees at the annual audit (October 2022 Finance Meeting).

PARmstrong asks for a primer presentation for September, she will check in with ALink about that.

Development Committee

First meeting will be in September. Welcomes Tanya as the new Chair of the committee. She has been involved in the committee for the past few years and is ready to run with several new ideas. Thank you also to Ken for joining that group.

Accountability Committee

Revisited the discussion of Parent/Caregiver Survey. It is not going to be revised. Discussed how we can work with admin to improve the toolset integration of qualitative and quantitative information.

PARstong recommends focusing on the first 20 or so pages of the annual report. It serves to remind us of the grounding of Montessori.

Board Goals

The past few years have been to support JLE as much as possible as they have been incredibly draining.

Each committee should have a basic idea of goals for the year.

Public Comment:

None.

Vote: To adjourn the meeting.

Motion: Pam Armstrong

2nd: Alfred Link

Yes:

Pam Armstrong

Erin Bradley

Denise Herrera

Laine Ives

Ken Jackman

Nina Keery

Alfred Link

Catherine Martin

Tanya Murdy

Erin Seaton

Eric Simone

Albert Ting

Anna Wetmore

Chris Whitford

No:

None

Abstain:

None

Absent:

Mark Bishop

Nancy Durkee

Amber Hewitt

Tim Letson

9:18 pm Board adjourns.