

**River Valley Charter School
Board of Trustees Meeting
Meeting # 290
March 8, 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: 89022465757 at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting was called to order at 7:06 pm.

In attendance:

Pam Armstrong
Mark Bishop
Nancy Durkee
Amber Hewett
Erin Bradley Irose
Nina Keery
Alfred Link
Catherine Martin
Karen Popken
Erin Seaton
Albert Ting
Anna Wetmore

Also Present:

Jonnie Lyn Evans, Director
Dan Bouchard, Assistant Director
Deb McCrevan
Kimberly Putney
Giovana Lippi, Public
Karina Moltz, Public
Elizabeth Rankin, Public
Chris Whitford
Tanya Murdy, PA
Lydia Pollard, PA
Karina Moltz
Josiah Lilly
Jennifer Tramontana, Foundation
Brian Hromadka
Danny Paquette
Katelyn Rejniak

Note from Chair

We will continue to meet fully remote due to the Governor Baker's extension of Open Meeting

Law Covid provisions.

RVCS Revelation

Karen Popken presented a slide show highlighting Earth Science work in an E1 classroom. Projects included a clay earth built from the inside out, clay volcanoes and a book of volcano nomenclature. After Eruption Day, students studied rock identification including a fun experiment using Starburst candies. Some activities are not specifically Montessori lessons; Karen integrates activities from her previous work as a middle school teacher. To “go out,” the class visited a kettlehole that was formed by a glacier at Bartlett Mall.

She then presented a summary of the Great Lesson: the timeline of life. The lesson teaches the earth’s history and how the earth changes over time. It covers plate tectonics, water and land forms. All of this leads to continent studies, beginning in Africa as that is where humans originated.

Gratitude to Karen for such a wonderful presentation.

Public Comment

Giovana Lippi complimented Karen’s lesson as Karen is her daughter’s teacher. She read a prepared statement. Written copy appears in the board packet.

Elizabeth Rankin expressed thanks to the leadership of the RVCS community for how they navigated the last two years. She’s appreciative of the ability to make decisions that take into consideration many perspectives.

Karina Moltz also thanks for holding space and grace for each other as we enter this new part of the pandemic response.

Vote: Accept February BOT Minutes and February committee minutes.

Motion: Erin Bradley-Irose

2nd: Pam Armstrong

Yes:

Pam Armstrong

Mark Bishop

Nancy Durkee

Amber Hewett

Erin Bradley Irose

Nina Keery

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:

Colin Vandenburg has begun middle school orientation.

There were roughly 180 lottery applicants this year. Newburyport has started full-day kindergarten. Kindergarten offers have been made. There are two vacancies, but will be back-filled according to the rules. Offers have been made to siblings of current siblings.

Overnight trip to Mt. Washington was a success. The first day was mountaineering training. Thanks go to the families who were able to go along.

FYI: Survey going out to staff soon about benefits preferences.

Field Trip Policy:

There is a new draft in the board drive. Attorney states the board does not need to approve overnight field trips. We can decide if it's valuable for us to approve each late night or overnight trip.

Discussion: From a liability standpoint, it would be a good idea to do it. Things to consider include changes to meeting scheduling and lead time. Another way for the board to keep abreast of what is happening in school. Medical piece depends on what is available at the sites visited.

We can readdress the vote on the policy at the next meeting.

Covid Updates:

JLE made a communication today, which was forwarded to board, outlining the new masking and covid response plan. Recent pool testing supports the new policies. The mask requirement will drop tomorrow and the school will become "mask-friendly."

Concerns: how do we protect the confidentiality of students returning to school after being covid positive?

Discussion: Pam commends the respect for confidentiality and appreciates the incredible hard work that has gone into this.

There will be a highlight on communication so that parents can make quick decisions about masking.

Is there a plan for kids who are immunocompromised? Continue pool testing (early warning system), offering safe spaces for those kids to eat, encouraging those community members to wear N95 masks. The school can provide N95s for older kids and can order some pediatric sized masks.

What will be available for students who feel anxious about the masks coming off? Katy, Jen, Kimberly and teachers will be there to help normalize any type of feeling kids might be having.

Committee Updates

Accountability Committee

Parent/Caregiver survey will happen in April. Please remind people to fill it out.

Screening update - Refer to Accountability Committee meeting minutes for data.

Focus groups will be held during the Montessori Audit. JLE has a list of names for Alfred and committee members will reach out to families.

Committee on Trustees

It is recruitment season. The committee is looking for new trustees and committee members. Submissions for consideration must be made by April 1. The board will have a month to review and then will vote at the May meeting.

The committee intends to have a board retreat in June. Amber Hewitt held a poll regarding timing and comfort level of meeting in person.

Matt Renninger has resigned due to work travel requirements.

Complaint Committee

Erin Bradley Irose held the first meeting and the committee drafted a problem resolution form. It is close to approval, it just needs to be reviewed by legal. It will be available on the website.

Development Committee

No update.

Finance Committee

Went through cash balances (refer to Finance Committee minutes), favorable above foundation rate.

There has been no update on the state budgeting process.

The committee reviewed spreadsheets to start budgeting for next year. They also reviewed historic numbers. Those discussions will continue in the next meeting.

Will go through the budget process in June.

Public Comment:

Brian Hromdka: There has been a lot of discussion around fear, encourages the board to consider courage. It's not always able to accommodate every situation. As a community, it's important to hear and consider all viewpoints.

Vote: To adjourn meeting.

Motion: Alfred Link
2nd: Nancy Durkee

Yes:

Pam Armstrong
Mark Bishop
Nancy Durkee
Amber Hewett
Erin Bradley Irose
Alfred Link
Catherine Martin
Karen Popken
Albert Ting
Anna Wetmore

No:

None

Absent:

Erin Seaton

Abstain:

None

9:01 pm Board adjourns