

**River Valley Charter School
Board of Directors Meeting
Meeting # 247
September 18 2018 7:00 pm**

In Attendance: Officers: Chair: Mark Belanger, Secretary: Katherine Brown **Trustees:** Nina Keery, Jennifer McCormick, Nat Coughlin, John Siegfried, Catherine Martin, Todd Rasmussen, Pamela Brockmeier Armstrong, Karina Moltz, Josh Porter

Director: Andy Willemsen

Public: Deb McCrevan, Jonnie Lyn Evans

Faculty Representative- Jane Patterson

Call to Order: 7:06

Montessori Minute

Students from Ali and Lee's E2 classroom presented the Habits of Learning Puzzle.

Public Comment: none

Acceptance of Previous Minutes:

Vote: Mark Belanger called for a Motion "To Accept Previous Minutes"

Motion by Nat Coughlin, 2nd John Siegfried. Board of Directors vote to accept was unanimous.

Director's Report: Andy Willemsen

Andy Willemsen updated the Board with his monthly Director's Report (see Appendix A).

Renewal Site Visit- RVCS is preparing for the visit on September 20. Andy Willemsen thanked Nat Coughlin, Mark Belanger, Pamela Brockmeier Armstrong and Todd Rasmussen for volunteering their time to attend the discussion panel.

Refinance- Andy updated the Board with details from the closing and thanked John Gregorio and Scott MacDonald from the Foundation as well as members of the Board's Finance Committee.

Exit interviews- Andy Willemsen shared data sheets, with details from his exit interviews, for the Board to review.

Andy Willemsen reported positive meetings with new Superintendents Jared Fulgoni of Amesbury and Sean Gallagher of Newburyport.

Vote: Mark Belanger called for a Motion "To Accept Pamela Brockmeier Armstrong as Treasurer"

Motion by Katherine Brown, 2nd Nina Keery. Board of Directors vote to accept was unanimous.

Committee engagement-

Mark Belanger reviewed the roles of each committee for the Board and asked that all members consider volunteering for a committee.

See below for a list of meeting times, chairs and members for each committee.

Finance Committee-

Meets the Tuesday before the Board of Trustees meeting. Chair- Pamela Brockmeier Armstrong Members- Mark Belanger, Nat Coughlin, Dana Lowell, Stu Steinberg, Deb McCrevan, Andy Willemsen.

Accountability Committee-

Meets the Wednesday before the Board of Trustees meeting. Open Chair position. members- Nina Keery, Alfred Link, Karina Moltz, Nancy Durkee, Erin Seaton, Sarah Houghton, Dimitra M. Development Committee-

Meets the Wednesday before the Board of Trustees meeting. Chair- Jennifer McCormick. Members- Todd Rasmussen, Katherine Brown, Amber Hewett, Jen Fischer, John Ellis, Susanne Cameron.

Committee on Trustees

Meets the Tuesday of the Board of Trustee meeting. Chair- Mason Mitchell-Daniels. Members- Pam Brockmeier Armstrong, Nat Coughlin, Nina Keery, John Siegfried, Josh Porter.

Committee Updates-

Accountability Committee- Nina Keery reported four returning members, two new members and no current Committee Chair at the first meeting. Dissemination might be a possible topic of discussion. The Accountability Committee will focus on MCAS scores, outreach, data and will potentially work with the Development Committee regarding alumni connections.

Committee on Trustees-

John Siegfried spoke for Mason Mitchell- Daniels. John reminded the Board to read through the bylaws, to complete Conflict of Interest training and to sign Financial Disclosure. Orientation for new Board members will be October 16.

Development Committee- Jennifer McCormick presented updates on the Development Committee report. She stated the annual appeal will go out in November. Jennifer reported that 250 were at the ice cream social. Upcoming events include the Parent Mixer at the Newburyport Brewery on September 25 at 7pm and the first Major Donor event on November 15. The first Development Committee meeting will be October 3.

Finance Committee- Pamela Brockmeier Armstrong reported on the refinance savings and thanked all involved for helping to make it happen. Pamela introduced the opening of 4 new accounts.

Vote: Mark Belanger called for a Motion "To Approve opening of 4 new bank accounts at East Boston Savings Bank all with \$0 balance receive and file" letter."

Motion by Nat Coughlin, 2nd Nina Keery. Board of Directors vote to accept was unanimous.

Pamela Brockmeier Armstrong shared tuition projections as well as information on an anonymous major donor gift. (See Appendix B)

Vote: Mark Belanger called for a Motion “To Enter Executive Session under the MA Open Meeting law Purpose for Executive Session #2: To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel.”

Motion by Nat Coughlin, 2nd John Siegfried. Board of Directors vote to accept was unanimous.

8:15 Executive Session

Vote: Mark Belanger called for a Motion “To Leave Executive Session”

Motion by Josh Porter, 2nd Nat Coughlin. Board of Directors vote to accept was unanimous.

Vote: Mark Belanger called for a Motion “To Adjourn”

Motion by John Siegfried, 2nd Karina Moltz. Board of Directors vote to accept was unanimous.

Appendix A.

Director’s Report to the River Valley Charter School Board of Trustees September 18, 2018

Annual Report

The OCCSSR informed us that the Annual Report has been accepted without any requested modifications. As their email stated: *We have read and reviewed your school’s annual report and found all the information asked for in the guidelines including the school’s recruitment and retention plan.* Many thanks to Deb McCrevan and Jonnie Lyn Evans for all of their efforts to help create the report. It has been shared with our sending districts and posted on the school’s website.

Renewal Site Visit

We are preparing for our visit from OCSSR on September 20th, and have provided multiple documents to the state team for preliminary review. Thanks to those Trustees who are able to attend the discussion panel. The site team will provide a preliminary report prior to the end of their visit, and will follow up with their final report within six weeks.

Refinancing

On September 11, John Gregorio, Scott MacDonald and I signed the closing documents and paid all closing costs at the offices of Davis Malm & D’Agostine in Boston. The documents were then filed for the official closing on September 12th. We have received final confirmation from East Boston Savings Bank that the 2012 Issue Bonds with Citizens Bank have been paid off, and we will transfer school funds from our Citizens accounts into our new EBSB accounts over the next month.

As you will hear in more detail from the Finance Committee, the new loan will result in considerable annual savings that will benefit the students and staff of the school over then next fifteen years.

I would like to thank all the members of the Refinancing Working Group, the Board's Finance Committee, and the Foundation Directors for their investment in and commitment to this process. A special thanks is due to John Gregorio and Scott MacDonald of the Foundation for the abundant time required to complete this effort.

Exit Interviews

I have conducted exit interviews with many of the families who withdrew their students over the summer. While there is no single driver for these decisions, some responses were common to three or more families. The main theme was the limited social options in our E2 and middle school programs. The small size of RVCS, while a benefit in many regards, can also become a concern as students reach the upper grades. We are currently in a situation where our upper grades have fewer boys than girls, and this influenced several families to seek other options. While this has caused some students and families to seek new opportunities, we are also finding that the students who enter RVCS in 6th and 7th grades are generally thriving by finding their own new opportunity.

Solar Panels

The solar array is complete and ready for connection to the grid. We have a few final procedural hurdles to clear, and then National Grid will connect the array to the grid. We have a display monitor installed in the front lobby that will show real-time production data, and students will be able to access this information in their classrooms as well. We are also preparing a press release for the local paper, and are developing curriculum to further engage students in the school's green energy efforts.

Cleaning Contractor

Our new cleaning contractor, SJ Services is in the process of implementing our new green cleaning program. Both the products and processes are designed to have a lower environmental impact as well as a more thorough cleaning approach. Our cleaning consultant, Heidi Wilcox of EVS Services, has been training the SJ team and will monitor both the program and the cleanliness of the school throughout the year.

Appendix B.

River Valley Charter School – Board of Trustees – Finance Committee Committee Meeting – September 11, 2018

Meeting Notes:

1. Letter to Finance Committee and Board will be submitted to inform of opening of 4 new bank accounts at East Boston Savings Bank all with \$0 balance. Nat noted that Board can "receive and file" letter. No Board action required.
2. Review of Cash Balances as of Aug 31, 2018 after pre-payment of lease

- a. Refer to board document *Cash Balances 08-31-2018 PDF.pdf*
 - b. Cash balance is at \$1.1 M
 - c. Note pre-payment of \$750K complete and receipt of \$893 per child for facilities
3. Discussion of Tuition Projections
 - a. Refer to board document *Projected Tuition Summary FY 2018-2019.pdf*
 - b. \$4,237,624 in tuition from state projected as of April 24, 18
 - c. RVCS applied 1% decrease on 'above foundation rate' to budget projection, resulting in adjusted projection of \$4,223,648
 - d. New projection of tuition from state on July 30, 2018 is \$4,191,258.
 - e. As a result, tuition comparison shows a decrease of \$32,390 - won't be updated by DESE again until December. This is okay, see 4c below.
4. Loan Payable Savings
 - a. Refer to board document *ESBS Loan Savings.xlsx*
 - b. Foundation covered \$87k in closing costs
 - c. 2018/19 Change in loan amount from refinancing results in \$55k above the approved budget (note that this offsets the state tuition funding shortfall from above.)
 - d. There is a \$74k annual savings between prior loan and the new loan.
5. Anonymous major donor gift received and deposited \$50k. This is the first of two gifts anticipated from this donor.
6. Administration is in audit mode. Audit night will be on October 16th at 6:30.

