

RISING TIDE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

February 22, 2021

Virtual Meeting due to Governor Baker's stay at home advisory.

Narrative Mission Statement:

What is the purpose of the school?

"...The Rising Tide Charter School provides students with community-based education each day, using the Town of Plymouth as a local yet dynamic textbook which will provide fertile ground for the development of higher-order thinking skills."

Leadership and Governance:

"In accordance with MA Charter School Law, the Board of Trustees is ultimately accountable for the school's educational mission, performance and adherence to its Charter."

Call to Order

Chairman, Chris Schelleng, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. In attendance were Chris Schelleng, Norm DeCoste, Sean Kelly, Sandy Kozlowsky, and Amy Norris. Also in attendance were Michael O'Keefe, Head of School, and Eric Mello, Business Manager.

Guests

None

New Business

Attachments/Handouts: RTCPS 2021-2022 School Year Calendar DRAFT

Michael shared and reviewed in detail the proposed 2021-2022 school calendar. We are operating under the assumption that it will be more like a regular school year.

Sandy made a motion to accept the 2021-2022 school calendar as presented. Amy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Old Business

Michael shared recently updated CDC guidance to safely return to in-person school instruction depending on community transmission levels. The CDC uses the total number of new COVID cases over the past 7 days to determine community risk level, which differs from the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) method which uses the daily average over 14 days to determine risk level.

Before February break, DESE provided schools with updated transportation guidance which eased distance guidelines on buses. This may help us to add students to more days of in-person learning sooner.

Vaccination of staff is not going to happen as quickly as we hoped.

Michael shared the “Weekly COVID-19 Report with Rising Tide Towns/Cities” and reviewed internal data from last summer through present day. Since the peak around January 21, we have had a steady decline in rates. The weighted positivity rate has come down to 4.33%.

Later this week, Michael will provide a more detailed overview to the school community on where we stand now and the on-going challenges towards getting more kids into school more often. He will also ask for feedback from students, staff, and families.

Sean made a motion to continue Hybrid learning through next Thursday. Norm seconded the motion. The motion did not carry.

Sean made a motion to continue Hybrid learning until further notice and to not have a meeting to discuss data unless school administration needs to discuss. Sandy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Michael clarified that if guidance changed either negatively or positively, he will ask for an Emergency Board Meeting.

Charter Schools are reviewed every 5 years by DESE to make sure schools are faithful to their charter. Our site visit in May 2020 was cancelled because of the pandemic. We will now have a virtual visit on March 18-19, 2021. There will be meetings to talk with staff, parents, and Board members. Meeting times will be shared once they are provided by DESE.

The Massachusetts Charter Public School Association (MCPSA) will hold a Virtual Advocacy Day. There is a kick-off event on March 2 from 9-10:30. We are waiting on information for virtual meeting days/times with State senators/ reps.

Meeting Minutes

Attachments/Handouts: January 25, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes; Special Meeting Minutes for February 4, 2021; Special Meeting Minutes for February 11, 2021

Sean made a motion to approve the January 25, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes. Sandy seconded the motion. All voted in favor to approve.

Sean made a motion to approve the February 4, 2021 Special Meeting Minutes. Sandy seconded the motion. All voted in favor to approve.

Sean made a motion to approve the February 11, 2021 Special Meeting Minutes. Amy seconded the motion. Sandy abstained and all others voted in favor to approve.

Financials

Attachments/Handouts: RTCPS Financial Reports for the period ending January 31, 2021

We are 7 months into FY21. Eric continues to budget 660 students and tuition at \$14,811/student. DESE is currently projecting per pupil tuition of \$15,353, but that has not been finalized. We are also projecting total student enrollment to be more than budgeted. Next month's report will reflect actual increases.

We have overspent on Health and Safety however Grant money has covered these expenses.

Our year-to-date Net Income is \$81,177 over budget.

We have received an additional \$150,000 from the State that can be spread out as needed through September 2023.

Eric and Michael have begun the budgeting process for next year and plan to have a preliminary budget for the Board's approval at the April meeting.

At the Finance & Audit Subcommittee meeting, they decided to renew our line of credit with Webster Bank for 2 more years.

We are waiting to hear about reimbursement for bus transportation. Eric budgeted conservatively (50%) and doesn't think it will be less than that. In years past, reimbursement has been funded at about 70%. We will budget conservatively next year too.

Amy made a motion to accept the January financials. Sandy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Board Subcommittees

Nominating and Governance – A survey from the MCPSA was sent to all Board members, but only 3 filled it out. Looking to see if it can be reopened so all can respond. If not, they will share data received next month. Several topics were addressed in the survey, so the Subcommittee will tackle one section/month. Answers that were received show the need for clarity in some areas.

Finance and Audit – Nothing to add.

Communications and Advocacy – Did not meet.

School Report

Current enrollment is under 670, which wasn't as high as we hoped, but better than we budgeted for. The lottery was held and we have a full 5th grade class and strong waiting list. We didn't add any 6-8th graders, but some spots should open up in the next few months. We had higher than usual applications for those grade levels. All Upper School grade applicants were accepted. This Wednesday will be our first Accepted Students Day for new students and their families to tour the school and speak with current students and staff. We will likely open another enrollment period in mid-March.

Students' responses to prompted questions have been posted throughout the school to show Rising Tide pride.

We are hoping to have some social events outside as the weather gets warmer. Brainstorming ideas about an outdoor fancy gathering for a prom – hope to have that solidified in the next few weeks. James Simons has reached out to families about a Saturday graduation with only graduates and their families in lieu of the traditional Friday graduation with the entire school – hoping to confirm in the next couple of weeks.

We will again offer summer enrichment programs and the Jill Crafts Summer Scholars Program working with the Pine Barrens Alliance.

We are hoping to kick off the virtual Rising Tide alumni tutoring program in mid-March. Leadership is working on training alumni and pairing them with students who might need remedial support. This is another initiative to help support students through the last few months of the school year.

We are exploring the pros and cons of purchasing or leasing a multi-purpose van.

Adjourn

Sean made a motion to Adjourn. Norm seconded the motion. All voted in favor to Adjourn.