

# RISING TIDE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

## Minutes

### Board of Trustees Meeting

September 19, 2022

### *Virtual Meeting*

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#### **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.”*

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#### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Chris Schelleng called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

In attendance were Chris Schelleng, Amy Norris, Norm DeCoste, and Sean Kelly. Also in attendance were Michael O’Keefe, Head of School, Eric Mello, Business Manager, and Maureen Herrmann, Assistant to Head of School. Sandy Kozlowsky was not present. Guests were Beth Choiniere, Upper School Principal, and Mary Ellen Janeiro, Middle School Principal.

#### **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

**Attachment/Handouts:** August 2022 Board Meeting Minutes

Maureen shared the August meeting minutes with the Board.

Sean made a motion to approve the August 2022 Board Meeting Minutes. Norm seconded the motion. All voted in favor to approve the minutes.

#### **SCHOOL REPORT**

Dr. Janeiro reported that the Middle School is off to a good start. Though at full enrollment, this is a little more room for some additional students. Open House on the 14<sup>th</sup> went well with normal rates of attendance for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade families and slightly higher than usual attendance from 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade families. There is marked teacher satisfaction with the opening of school. Basketball hoops were added for recess and they will be painting the blacktop for hopscotch and four-square for added games when the field can’t be used. There is a dance planned for late October for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders and they are looking for special social activities for the younger grades. She was happy the school filled all teaching positions with a combination of veteran and newly-minted teachers.

Ms. Choniere also reported that the high school was off to a good start. The presentation by Ed Gerety to the faculty was well-received and he has made some connections with our teachers. There are lots of new teachers getting settled in the Upper School and she noted her team has done some quality work on bringing the community together. In terms of enrollment, she noted they are lagging a bit, particularly in Grade 11. The Boat Dance on the 16<sup>th</sup> was a hit and everything went off smoothly. The volleyball team had their first and second wins ever. She is looking to increase communications to families. Morning Meeting is now held on Wednesday mornings in addition to Mondays and Fridays. They are focusing on the reconstituted math department to get all teachers up to speed. Overall, teachers are excited to come to work.

Michael O'Keefe announced the school is off to a great start and that they are reinforcing the standards of behavior.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Designation of October Holiday.**

The discussion centered on changing the designation of Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day. Michael O'Keefe noted that states and municipalities free to designate the holiday as they see fit. The indigenous peoples are connected to our region in a significant way and this would be a way to honor them. Also, this would be one step toward modeling greater diversity, equity, and belonging as we have committed to through our strategic planning efforts.

Amy Norris moved to change the designation of the holiday to Indigenous Peoples' Day. Chris Schelleng seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

### **Review of Updated Policies**

**Attachments/Handouts:** Non-Discrimination and Harassment; Bullying Prevention and Intervention; Title IX Sexual Harassment and Grievance; Civil Rights Grievance Procedure; Concussion Policy

Michael O'Keefe shared the Non-Discrimination and Harassment Policy noting that timely updates were made, as is necessary, to the overall language and notation of protective classes.

Sean moved to approve the policy as written. Amy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Michael also shared the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, noting the Board had approved it in the spring, but then it needed to be shared for public comment. This comment period did not produce any suggested modifications so it was put to the Board for final vote at this meeting.

Sean moved to approve the plan as written. Amy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

The Civil Rights Grievance procedure was just that and not a policy requiring a vote by the board. It had been updated the school's legal team.

The Title IX grievance procedure was originally written prior to 2020. It has been updated as it is now a legally much more complicated procedure.

The Concussion Policy featured slight tweaks added by Athletic Director Kelsey Kincade. Sean moved to approve the policy as written. Norm seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Michael O’Keefe reminded the Board members that our Site Visit for the charter renewal is scheduled for Monday, October 24. Once confirmed, we’ll share the parameters of the visit and will attempt to schedule the Board focus group for either early or late in the day. More details will be shared as they are available.

### **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

#### **Attachments/Handouts:** August Financial Report

Eric Mello shared the August 2022 Financial Report and highlighted the fact that while we budgeted for FY 22-23 at 663 students, we currently are at 640 students, representing a projected decrease of \$400K in state tuition revenue. This is where the greatest variance is. Grants will catch up, and we are very close on our expenses. Eric mentioned he worked with the Finance and Audit Subcommittee prior to the Board meeting, and they are confident they will have a budget to share for next month’s meeting.

Michael O’Keefe contributed that a decision was made to enroll a few additional students in the Middle School to help with the reduced enrollment numbers. Historically, it has been very hard to add high school students once the school year commences.

Sean Kelly emphasized that there are two big unknowns when developing our budget - enrollment and what we will get from the state. He concurred with Eric that they will have something to share next month.

Eric continued by announcing that the Auditor’s draft will be shared with the charter schools’ office by November 1<sup>st</sup>.

He cautioned that if we don’t hit covenance, we’ll need to get a loan covenant waiver from Webster Bank - we have a ten-year fixed loan. He noted that we keep paying down principal and we have healthy cash reserves.

Amy moved to approved the August 2022 Financial Statements. Norm seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

### **BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

**STRATEGIC PLANNING:** Sean announced he had to leave the meeting early, so discussion of the tactics and measures being advanced by the SPC to the full Board will be delayed to next month’s meeting.

**NOMINATING AND GOVERNANCE:** Nothing to report

**FINANCE AND AUDIT:** Included in the Financial Report just presented.

**COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY:** Nothing to report

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment though 3 attendees were connected to the videoconference.

**OTHER BUSINESS NOT ANTICIPATED BY THE CHAIR 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE**

There was no other business noted.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:01 p.m., Norm made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Amy seconded the motion. All voted in favor to adjourn.