

RISING TIDE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

February 27, 2023

Virtual Meeting

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; Eric Mello, Business Manager; and Maureen Herrmann, Assistant to Head of School.

GUESTS

None

MEETING MINUTES

Attachments/Handouts: January 23, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes

Maureen shared the January Board Meeting Minutes onscreen.

Amy made a motion to approve the January Board Meeting Minutes with a change of the meeting date year from 2022 to 2023. Sean seconded the motion. Sandy abstained; all others voted in favor to approve.

SCHOOL REPORT

Annual Lottery / Enrollment Update

Michael stated we had a successful lottery on February 15. State Representative Kathy LaNatra drew names. Before the lottery, Michael was able to give Kathy a tour of the school. We admitted a full 5th grade cohort. Due to full wait lists, no students were admitted to grades 6-8. The number of applicants were down a little for 5th grade this year. The cohort of siblings was also lower.

We will host our 3rd Accepted Students Day the afternoon of March 8th. Newly admitted students, as well as current 8th graders, and their families are invited. We are hoping that the piloting of the dual enrollment with SNHU might attract students.

Kelsey Kincade, Athletic Director, and Isabella Trauttmansdorff, College and Future Planning Counselor, are putting together an evening later in March for families to think about college and athletics in college.

CCRA+ Results

Michael reviewed results from the College & Career Readiness Assessment testing last Fall of 7th, 9th and 11th graders. This test was adopted early at the onset of the High School and is part of our accountability plan. There were changes in the testing approach this year, which did not allow us to compare students' progress from previous years. This was disappointing since we were not informed of the changes prior to testing. We only found out when trying to resolve why scores seemed lower than previous years. While the concept of the test is good, there is concern about reliability. Ultimately, we are trying to determine how we can better help students individually. We may look into STAR Diagnostic testing to see if they have something comparable. We will decide how we will proceed before the end of the school year.

Other School News

Out of 19 Massachusetts charter schools up for charter renewal, Rising Tide was one of 13 to have theirs renewed unconditionally, which is the highest possible outcome.

The Boys' Varsity basketball team made the MIAA State Tournament and will play tomorrow night in Lynn.

NEW BUSINESS

Academic Calendar for 2023-24

Attachments/Handouts: DRAFT Academic Calendar for 2023-2024 School Year

Maureen shared the draft of the Academic Calendar for next year onscreen. It is similar to this year's except the first full Professional Day was pushed from the 3rd week of September to mid-October. Michael noted that the Plymouth Public Schools would have the same start date as Rising Tide, but their final day would be 2 days earlier than us due to fewer Professional Days.

Amy made a motion to accept the school calendar for 2023-24 as presented. Sandy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

FINANCIALS

January 2023 Financial Report

Attachments/Handouts: RTCPS Financial Reports for the period ending January 31, 2023; Year End Financial Budget Projection FY23

Eric presented the January financial report, which is 7 months into the Fiscal Year. He reviewed that the Preliminary Budget started with 663 students when approved last May. An updated Budget with 640 students was approved in October. Per pupil rates remained similar for each budget. Because enrollment is much lower, we will end the year with a deficit. Grants and other income remain stable and expenses are in line with the budget.

Our year-to-date Net Income compared to budget is (\$79,016) and our Cash Balance is \$1,914,143.

Looking at the Summary of Profit & Loss, under Income the State Tuition is under budget. The other categories are close to what was originally budgeted. Our Expenses are pretty close to what was budgeted. Our Expense savings are (\$39,531).

Eric doesn't anticipate any change in the tuition at this point, even if we lose any students, since we've finished our reporting to the state for the year.

Eric gave a side-by-side comparison of the Preliminary Budget (approved 5/16/22), the Updated Budget (approved 10/17/22), and the projected actual Year End amounts. He is projecting a deficit of (\$610,339). He and Michael are looking at any place they can freeze expenses or not spend for rest of year to hopefully get that projected deficient down to the \$500s.

Eric and Michael will be more conservative on enrollment numbers when putting together next year's budget, with a goal of meeting all of our bank covenants for FY24.

Eric confirmed that all remaining ESSER III Grant money was pulled into this year to help lower the deficit.

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

BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Nominating and Governance – Need to meet to discuss potential new board members.

Finance and Audit – Nothing to add.

Communications and Advocacy – Met February 14 and discussed enrollment updates and plans for Rising Tide's 25th anniversary. Charter School Advocacy week is coming up. Details will be shared with the school community for ways to support advocacy efforts.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

OTHER BUSINESS

Lina Musayev from the Charter School Association reached out to Michael to encourage Board members to participate in a 15-20 minute board effectiveness diagnostic survey to see how our Board is doing against industry standards. He will email a link to the survey to Board members after the meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Amy made a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss a complaint about a staff member. Sean seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

After returning from Executive Session there was no other business.

ADJOURN

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