

RISING TIDE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

January 23, 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 7:03 PM.

Attachment/Handout: Board Agenda

In attendance were Chris Schelleng, Norm DeCoste, Sean Kelly, 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. Sandy Kozlowski was not present.

GUESTS

None.

MEETING MINUTES

Attachments/Handouts: December 19, 2022, Board Meeting Minutes

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

SCHOOL REPORT

Update from Head of School

Michael shared the sad news of the recent, tragic loss of a 2022 graduate, Lily Taylor, in a traffic accident in North Carolina. Lily has a brother, Brenton, an 11th grader. Several staff members and students attended the weekend visitation in Bourne. Michael noted that losing 3 students in 3 years has been tough on our community.

He continued by stating that the Saturday Enrollment Open House with many in attendance.

Over the weekend, the administrative team received information that a student was communicating a threat of harm to the school.

Michael noted with appreciation the community members who promptly notified the school leaders of this issue. He also credited the quick action of the Crisis Response Team which assembled virtually early on Sunday morning, gathered information from law enforcement, and issued clear and concise communications to the school community.

This week marks the end of the second term/first semester and staff have been working with students on the importance of closing the term on a strong note. Our new leaders have been very strong in this regard.

There is now more structured, targeted support on the MS side given the analysis of our MCAS data. On the US side, they will be starting targeted skills work toward better assessment outcomes. The school has been looking hard at how data informs what we are, or should be, doing for our students.

A new video, produced late last year, is now posted on the website and through our social media channels. We are hopeful it will help with enrollment. On that topic, Michael noted the school is just shy of 300 applications for 2023-2024. There are now 90 applications for 5th grade and 50 for 9th grade, the two key entry years. This is on target with previous years. It is likely the school will open additional enrollment periods in the spring to the US to ensure it meets its desired yield.

There was a successful Winter Arts Show on the 18th - good energy and good turnout with lots of art, music, dance, and theater. The Theater performance of "She Kills Monsters" will take place in early February.

Winter sports are in the middle of their season. Boys' basketball may make it to the tournament. Girls' basketball is in a rebuilding year with a great coach.

There will be internship presentations on Thursday, Jan. 26, from 1:32-2:57 in rooms 220 and 222.

Michael reported that the school is in the final stages of preparations for dual enrollment and is considering a collaboration with Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU). A core group of our teachers will teach a RT course with RT students. These RT teachers would be considered adjunct faculty of SNHU and the syllabus would be aligned with SNHU. The courses would be offered to RT students and, for a \$100 fee, they would receive credit from SNHU. The team is in the final stages of reviewing this option. Teachers would receive training in the summer from SNHU but they would be paid by RT. There is no online component - it is strictly an in-person class at RT. We will need at least 6 students to enroll in such a class. Full details will be announced shortly and, hopefully, this will help with our enrollment.

Chris Schelleng asked Michael about the Sunday activation of the Crisis Response Team. Michael noted it was similar to an incident about 5 years ago. In this past weekend's case, the team was able to follow the established protocol.

Eric noted that the recent ALICE drills have been a good training for the Team and for the staff, at large. It helped all prepare for the opening of school on Monday morning.

Chris Schelleng noted his appreciation - as a parent - for the communications that were sent. He was glad that they came out quickly and were reassuring and clear.

FINANCIALS

December 2022 Financial Report

Attachments/Handouts: RTCPS Financial Reports for the period ending December 31, 2022

Eric presented the December financial report, which is for the first 6 months of the Fiscal Year. He noted that the state has shared an updated projection of the per student tuition reimbursement amount of \$17,534 versus the \$17,381 we budgeted for. This is an increase of \$153 per student.

Our approved budget was based on 640 students; as of 1/18/23, we are at 626. Total income to date is under budget by (\$75,201). Expenses year-to-date are under budget by (\$15,123). Our Net Income is (\$60,078) year-to-date. Our balance sheet continues to be favorable at \$1,969,825, representing about 60 days of funds for operating cash flow and capital facility related expenditures. He reminded the Board that we planned on an operating deficit this year and advised it will be larger than anticipated. This year's operating deficit of \$416K will likely grow to about \$500K.

Sean Kelly reported the Finance Committee will firm up projections for the remainder of the year and will report at next month's meeting.

Amy made a motion to accept the December financials. Chris seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Nominating and Governance - May have information next month on a potential new Board member.

Finance and Audit - As reported.

Communications and Advocacy - Met to primarily consider the Charter School's Advocacy Week of March 13-17, 2023. Michael shared a slide deck that he received from the MA Charter School Assn. With a new legislature and governor in place, they wanted to emphasize what is good for public education in general, and what is unique about Charters in particular. There will be a strong emphasis on equity issues. They are looking to do small bits through the entire week ("5 minutes x 5 Days"): Email, Find 5 Friends, Tell Your Story, Send a Postcard, Post to Social Media.

The committee also considered RT's 25th anniversary which is in September. They are looking to do some things in the fall when there is the enthusiasm for back-to-school. There will likely be a family event at the school and perhaps a gala for adults off-campus. They will be reviewing these ideas in their February meeting.

Strategic Planning - Nothing to report.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

OTHER BUSINESS

None

ADJOURN

Sean made a motion to Adjourn. Amy seconded the motion. All voted in favor to Adjourn at 7:42 p.m.