

RISING TIDE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

April 24, 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

Kelsey Kincade, Athletic Director

MEETING MINUTES

Attachments/Handouts: March 20, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes; April 10 Special Board Meeting Minutes

Maureen shared the March 20 Board Meeting Minutes and the April 10 Special Board Meeting Minutes on screen.

Sean made a motion to approve the March 20 Board Meeting Minutes and April 10 Special Board Meeting Minutes. Norm seconded the motion. All voted in favor to approve.

NEW BUSINESS

By-laws Approval Update

Attachments/Handouts: By-laws RTCPS Approved April 6, 2023; Bylaws Compare 2016 to 2023

Michael relayed that the Commissioner of Education approved the updated RTCPS Bylaws on April 6th. Michael reviewed the changes that we approved a while ago, which were mainly

technical updates in terms of standards in the charter school landscape, as well as some changes specific to Rising Tide.

Foundation Board Update

Before vacation, the Foundation Board convened and revived the RTCPS Foundation Corporation, which is the not for profit that was established as a 501(c)(3) early at the start of the school to support the mission and goals of the school. The Group of Directors for the Foundation are Jill Crafts, Arthur Perry and Chrissy Gurney. They hope to meet several times through the Spring to re-establish priorities.

OLD BUSINESS

Discipline Data

Attachments/Handouts: Discipline Report for Board

Michael reviewed the 2021-22 discipline data that Maureen gathered on Plymouth and other towns in our district, comparing discipline actions across student groups in Rising Tide vs. the other towns as well as the state average. Percentages were similar to the other towns and the state. We have done better this year with suspensions compared to last year. Our goal is to support all kids, including special needs students, and we have put more resources into staffing for higher needs students.

SCHOOL REPORT

Athletics Update

Kelsey made a presentation on the athletics program, including current sports offered at Rising Tide, information on the Cape & Islands League, and recent achievements by Rising Tide teams and coaches. She reviewed how the athletic budget is broken down, covering league, district and registration fees; transportation; facilities fees; equipment and uniforms; and coaches' stipends.

Lastly, she went over Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) regulations regarding cooperative teams and their definition of School of Choice. She spoke about the COOP teams we've had in the past, as well as our current COOP with Samuel Fuller School for soccer, which is our first time as the host school. Kelsey provided the Pros and Cons of COOPs. She is always seeing what she can do to grow the athletic program at Rising Tide. Kelsey left the meeting.

Enrollment Update

Our current enrollment number is around 620, but the carrying number with the state should be in the mid 620s. Michael presented the updated 2023-24 enrollment spreadsheet, reviewing roll-overs, new students, and potential and definite summer withdrawals by grade level. The middle school grade seats were expanded slightly (3-4 seats/grade), and the total

projected student enrollment is 651. The preliminary budget for FY24 will be based on 635 students.

Leadership decided to do a 3rd postcard mailer (which just hit mailboxes) for the current enrollment period. We've received over 30 new applications; roughly half are for the 5th grade waiting list pool in the event we exhaust the current waiting list. Since we do not currently have waiting lists for the Upper School, we will likely accept all applicants for those grades.

We anticipate a summer enrollment period as well to capture those just learning about us as well as any students that withdrew and decided to come back.

Graduation Plans

Graduation is Friday, June 2nd at 1 PM under the tent at the school. The senior team is finalizing the student speakers. The Upper School Awards Night will be Thursday, June 1st.

5K Run and Health Fair

Kelsey Kincade and Shawna Weekley, along with many parent volunteers, have done a great job coordinating the 5K Run and Health Fair which will be held May 20th. There are over 40 participating vendors in this community-wide event.

FINANCIALS

March 2023 Financial Report

Attachments/Handouts: RTCPS Financial Reports for the period ending March 31, 2023

Eric stated the total revenue is under budget by (\$151,868) primarily due to lower than budgeted enrollment numbers. On the expense side, we've been able to save (\$70,944) year-to-date, so the Net Income compared to budget is (\$80,924) year-to-date. The balance sheet cash reserves held at \$1,785,149.

We anticipate the Reimbursement of State Transportation will be at 90% as budgeted. We are projecting to end the year with 624 student FTEs at a rate of \$17,534/student, which is (\$137,008) less than budgeted. There were savings on snow removal as well as health insurance. We budgeted a deficit for this year of (\$416,037) but project it to be around (\$550,000) by the end of the year.

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

Preliminary Budget for 2023-24

Attachments/Handouts: Preliminary Budget FY24

Eric presented the FY24 preliminary budget. We are projecting a surplus of \$49,677 and a cash flow balance of about \$106,000 with this budget. On the Income side, we are projecting 90%

State Transportation Reimbursement. The goal was to be conservative with estimated enrollment and percentage increase in per pupil tuition. Allowing more middle school students should help our enrollment numbers for the year. We are forecasting 635 students and tuition of \$18,400/pupil, which is a 5% increase from FY23. We did not use DESE's estimated number since their preliminary numbers have been higher than their actuals. Total tuition would be \$11,684,127. Grants were reduced since we took all of the ESSER funds this year. Total revenue is budgeted at \$12,739,409; an increase of \$348,113 over last year.

On the Expense side, we planned on a 3% Cost of Living increase. For the current year, we made a 6% across the board increase and additional salary adjustments for faculty that have been with the school for a while. We budgeted a reduction of 5 FTEs to our staff. Therefore, salary budget numbers are lower than this year. Michael and Eric went line by line to reduce expenses where possible. Once this preliminary budget is approved, contracts will go out.

Eric went through the Cash Flow projection. This budget would keep cash flow healthy for the year and meet our bank loan covenant.

Sandy made a motion to approve the preliminary budget for the next FY. Amy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Nominating and Governance – Meeting tomorrow about a potential new Board member. There is one other person they are hopeful about becoming a Board member and continue to try and find other people.

Finance and Audit – Nothing to add.

Communications and Advocacy – Met April 3rd and discussed open enrollment. They finalized that the 25th Anniversary celebration will be Thursday, September 28th at the Jones River Trading Post from 6-9 PM. They will be looking for parent volunteers to work on the gala.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

OTHER BUSINESS

None

ADJOURN

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