

RISING TIDE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

May 19, 2024

In person meeting at Rising Tide Charter Public School

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."

Meeting, CALL TO ORDER: Chris Schelleng called the meeting to order at 7pm. In attendance were: Chris Schelleng, Laura Stearns Flynn, Michael O'Keefe, Sean Kelley, Erin Koh, Eric Mello, Amy Norris, John Polvere, and Chris Telamo remotely.

Introduction/Welcome to guests - no guests

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes - spelling error noted on previous minutes on Chris Schelleng's name. Apologies to Chris from Erin. Laura made a motion to approve the minutes from April 28th, Sean seconded the motion. The vote to approve the minutes was unanimous

PUBLIC COMMENT - none

SCHOOL REPORT

On graduation Plans - all Board members received an invitation to the 2025 Rising Tide Charter Public School Graduation for the class of 2025. All grades, 5-11 will be dismissed at 12pm on Friday, June 6th. This will be the second year at Plymouth Memorial Hall. Michael reports that the move from a tent in the field at the school to Memorial hall was an improvement. The staff at the Hall were easy to work with and an indoor site allows for more comfortable temperature control (the hall can be heated; there is no wind from a windy or rainy day). The hall allows for a more intimate gathering for seniors to get together and also encourages another connection to the town of Plymouth. And rental of the Hall is less work for the Rising Tide staff and is much less expensive than the tent rental.

Amy asked about how many other students were in attendance last year? A downside of moving the graduation away from the school field is that the whole school doesn't necessarily attend. There was some discussion of how to get them involved.

The graduating class of 2025 will have their last day on June 4th ending with a picnic on the field. There is an awards night June 5th the night before graduation.

There will be a grade 8 Celebration at Rising Tide on June 16th. The celebration offers an opportunity for closure for students and their families.

The Rising Tide parent group will hold a peripheral event to welcome new RT families. On Friday, June 13th - 4:30-6:30 all new middle school students and their families along with current students and families are welcome for an event with a trunk or treat by region to establish a connection with the school.

The same group that produced the current video for the Rising Tide website was scheduled to be present in the school in order to produce a new video. Filming was to occur on each side of the building with five interviews with students and staff and one Rising Tide alumnus. Laura will be one of those interviewed. This will allow for fresh marketing for the school.

Michael summarized an update on challenges to all Charter Public Schools at the Federal and State Levels. Funding for title one and special education is not going away for the foreseeable future, however for FY 2027, there is still a lot of uncertainty. There is currently a significant case in front of the Supreme court concerning a charter school in Oklahoma. A local church applied to become a charter school; the state approved. However the Oklahoma Attorney General objected - on the grounds of separation of church and state. Amy Coney Barret has recused herself from the case allowing for a tie vote. If there is a tie - the state court ruling that funding the religious charter is unconstitutional will hold. There is some concern that if the Supreme court overrules the Oklahoma State Court, it could change the view of the charter school system across the nation. Amy asks if the Charter School Association is out in front of the issue. The Charter School Association is monitoring news both statewide and nationally. A ruling is anticipated for sometime in June.

At the state level, it seems the charter schools always have to play defense at Beacon Hill. There is a bill that is an attempt to reclassify the cap for spending per pupil. Currently and for a while - per pupil spending cannot exceed 9% of spending for the district.. Most of the towns Rising Tide draws from are under 7%. The new cap proposal is 7%. The bill also asks to reduce an 18% cap in poor performing schools back down to 9%. Erin asked why they should limit the caps? It appears that the current governor doesn't seem to be as friendly to charter schools as the previous governor. Rising Tide maintains a "wait and see" approach with attempts to be as proactive as we can.

NEW BUSINESS

Nomination and Election of FY26 Officers: the nomination and governance committee previously met to recommend the following new officers for FY 2026: Laura Stearns Flynn as chair, Chris Telamo as vice chair, Erin Koh as clerk and John Polvere as treasurer. New roles will start with the July meeting. Sean made a motion to approve the nominations, Laura seconded the motion. The nominations were approved unanimously.

There was some discussion about the need for new board members for FY26. A few of the current board members will be retiring and there is still a need for parent members, anyone with health care, legal and HR backgrounds would be ideal. Laura has two possible candidates: a social worker who used to coach at Rising Tide and a parent of Rising Tide middle school students. Michael made an appeal for current board members to recommend one other name for consideration.

OLD BUSINESS

none

FINANCIALS - There was a review of April 2025 Financials: Eric reports that auditors will be here in July and August and that it has generally been a good year. The per pupil rate may come in higher from the State, but the number of students attending may be lower. The

projected income for tuition income from the state for 614 students @ \$19,072 per student = \$11,710,208. Total income as of April 30, 2025 is over budget by \$81,112. Cost savings are primarily from lower administrative salary expenses, staffing adjustments, PFML, Special education transportation, food services and health insurance costs. The cash balance is above benchmark. There were no unexpected expenses - for a positive end of year.

The total cash balance available for operations of \$2,845,874 - includes the sequestered \$300,000 for future capital that was voted in favor at the last meeting.

Amy made a motion to accept the budget, John seconds and the vote to approve is unanimous.

BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Nominating and Governance - met and discussed nominations and need for new board members

Communications and Advocacy - no new news

Finance and Audit - nothing new

ADJOURN

Sean made a motion to adjourn. Laura seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of adjournment.