

RISING TIDE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

July 21, 2025

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** - Chairperson, Laura Stearns Flynn. Called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. In attendance - Laura Stearns Flynn, Michael O'Keefe, Chris Schelleng, Amy Norris, Eric Mello, Sean Kelly, John Polvere, Erin Koh

**GUESTS** - no guests

**MEETING MINUTES**- Chris Schelleng motions to accept the minutes from June, Amy seconds and -the vote to approve the minutes was unanimous.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**- no comment

**SCHOOL REPORT**- Michael presented updates on enrollment and staffing. Real-time enrollment tracking has improved, with current projections ranging from 606 students (conservative) to 622 (best case). The school is budgeting for 610 students and still maintains a waitlist for 5th grade. There is an ongoing concern about the transition from middle to upper school, continuing the need for long-term planning.

There are eight staff openings—three in the upper school and five in the middle school. A new 7th-grade social studies teacher has been hired, and a former middle school math teacher is returning. The school continues to seek a part-time wellness counselor and a middle school learning specialist.

**Aviation Program Update** - The board was informed of changes to the aviation program offered in partnership with Cape Cod Community College. The program is no longer recognized by the FAA, and thus will not provide students with credit or certification opportunities as originally planned. Rising Tide is working with CCCC regarding the financial commitment families have already made to the program. Although rising

juniors may continue with the current arrangement, there is uncertainty about admitting a new cohort. Laura asked if there had been any feedback from families about the change - there had not been much response just yet. Sean asked if there was any formal response from the college to present to participating families; a letter from the college explaining the FAA's decision will be shared with participating families.

Physical Restraint Policy - The board reviewed and unanimously approved a new physical restraint policy following an Integrated Monitor Review, which found the prior version out of compliance. Chris asked what were the major changes to the policy. The former policy had outdated language referring to mechanical restraints. The revised policy removes references to mechanical restraints, enhances reporting and complaint procedures, and clarifies staff training protocols with a focus on de-escalation and prevention. The policy applies only to trained staff and will not appear in the student handbook. Chris Schelleng made the motion to approve, seconded by Sean Kelly.

**OLD BUSINESS** - none

**FINANCIAL REPORT**- Eric presented the financial overview, highlighting a strong fiscal year close. Tuition payments from DESE exceeded projections, with funding based on 613 students, close to the budgeted figure of 614. The per-pupil amount increased by 5.4% from the previous year, boosting overall revenue. The school saved a large amount due to the elimination of a planned administrative role. Unexpected income included a \$10,000 grant and a \$12,000 insurance rebate.

Some unanticipated expenses occurred, including \$60,000 in parking lot repairs and higher-than-budgeted costs for snow removal and HVAC maintenance. Despite these, the school ended the year with a surplus. The finance committee reviewed options for responsibly using the surplus. FY26 planning will remain conservative due to uncertainties in enrollment and potential state and federal funding shifts. Two major federal grants have been approved, while two smaller ones are still under review. The board is also considering purchasing one or two small vans for student trips and athletic events. John made a motion to approve the financials, seconded by Erin, and the board approved unanimously.

**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS** - The Nominating and Governance Committee met to discuss potential new board members, and Michael and Laura plan to meet with at least one prospective candidate (who introduced herself to the board in an email) ahead of the August meeting. There is potential for a few more members to join the board in August. The Communications and Advocacy Committee has not met recently. The Finance and Audit Committee has reviewed the financials and surplus management.

**OTHER BUSINESS** - The board discussed scheduling a retreat funded through a grant. The retreat will provide an opportunity for team building, clarifying board roles, and supporting new or transitioning members. A Doodle poll will be sent to determine availability.

**ADJOURN** - Sean made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Chris. All members voted in favor.