

RISING TIDE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

August 18, 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 Stearn Flynn. Called the meeting to order at 7:02

In attendance - Laura Stearns Flynn, Chris Schelleng, Chris Talamo, Amy Norris, Sean Kelly, John Polvere, Erin Koh, Michael O'Keefe, Eric Mello

**GUESTS** - no guests

**MEETING MINUTES**- Laura motions to accept the minutes from July, Amy seconds. The vote to approve the minutes was unanimous. Chris Talamo abstains from the vote as he was not present at the previous meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**- no comment

**SCHOOL REPORT**- Back to School Update - Michael O'Keefe and Zahra Williams anticipate a back to school meeting tomorrow with all staff attending - most of the leadership staff had been back to the building and setting up classrooms as of the last week of July. Rising Tide is fully staffed for general education but may need a long term substitute and a replacement for middle school social studies. This was a late departure, announced in August, which makes replacement more challenging. Michael and Zahra expressed enthusiasm about the team in place. Enrollment is as expected hovering around 610 students.

Zahra Williams added that new faculty orientation started last week with three days of onboarding and information. This summer, the department chairs returned to lead many of the sessions with the new faculty. Having the department chairs lead the training allowed the staff to hear different perspectives. Some new staff were in the

building on Friday even though they weren't required to be present. Tuesday starts all staff days. Students start officially next Tuesday, August 26th.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Nomination of New Board Members- The Nominating & Governance Committee met with two prospective board members: Ralph Andre' and Jane Moskowitz at the end of last week; they were enthusiastically approved by the committee. The Committee nominated them to the board. Both Ralph and Jane are current parents of students at the school. Chris Talamo motioned to approve the nominations, Chris Schelleng seconded the motion and the vote to approve was unanimous. Ralph and Jane were invited to attend the retreat scheduled for Friday and the committee hoped they would be able to join.

Preview of Board Retreat on August 22, 2025 - Michael and Laura met with Kate Scott who will lead the retreat. The retreat will focus on reviewing roles and responsibilities of the board as well as lend an opportunity for the board members to get to know each other outside of board meetings, and form connections for better communication. The retreat will allow for reflection on past self-evaluations and what may be the strategic goals for the board going forward.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Annual Succession Plan Update- The succession plan had been approved by the board in 2024. Part of the plan includes a section that each August, the current Head of School recommend a current staff member to be the Interim Head of School in the case of unexpected departure. Last August, Michael recommended Zahra Williams to be the Interim Head of School in such a case. Michel again recommended Zahra Williams to be the Interim Head of School if Michael should unexpectedly be unable to fulfill the role of Head of School. Sean motioned to approve the recommendation, John seconded the motion and the vote to approve the recommendation was unanimous

**FINANCIAL REPORT-** Review of July 2025 Financials. Eric Mello reported that the school was currently in the middle of the financial audit for the year to review the numbers for FY'25. The finance committee will join the Board at a future meeting to review the numbers. Eric reported that the staff recognized the improvement to the parking lot. He also reported that the middle school side of the building, the classrooms and hallways had a new coat of paint, and that the hope is to have the upper school side of the building painted next year. HVAC systems are running well now with proper maintenance from the current technician. There were also repairs

made to atrium glass. Eric reported that the building was ready for opening to the students

A final version of the FY26 budget will be recommended to the Board once the school year gets under way. For the preliminary FY26 budget for July, expenses are under budget due to temporary staffing adjustments. There is a need for two vehicles for special education transportation. There is no reimbursement from the state for this cost, but the expense is in the budget. The cash balance looks good to start the school year. Chris Schelleng asked if the audit time line was as expected and Eric reported that the school is on track for the scheduled audit.

Amy made a motion to approve the July budget, Chris seconded. There was no further discussion and the vote was unanimous to accept the financial report.

**SUBCOMITTEE REPORTS** - The Communications and Advocacy committee have not had a meeting for a few months. Michael met with communications coordinator Martha earlier that morning. The new video was close to being finalized. Michael showed a preview of the video - before the final cuts. There was an enthusiastic response from the board. Chris Schelleng asked about paid advertising. Michael responded that the new video would spark more opportunities for advertising through social media.

In addition to the review of the July budget and the mention of the audit, there was some discussion of the end to the boost to public education funding through the Student Opportunities Act that started in 2019. There is some concern that funding from the federal level remains uncertain.

**OTHER BUSINESS** - None

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