

RISING TIDE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

February 24, 2020

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 PM. In attendance were Chris Schelleng, Norm DeCoste, Amy Norris, Sean Kelly, and Sandy Kozlowsky. Also in attendance were Michael O’Keefe, Head of School, and Eric Mello, Business Manager.

Guests

None

New Business

Michael presented a draft of the 2020-2021 academic calendar. Rising Tide follows core dates of Plymouth Public Schools and bases calendar on that. Once MCAS dates are provided by the State, if there are any conflicts with Early Release Wednesdays, Michael will let the Board know.

Sean made a motion to accept the draft of the calendar. Norm seconded the motion. All voted in favor to accept the draft of the calendar.

Old Business

Michael, Chris, Sandy, and Jennifer Gerrior (parent), attended the MA Charter Public School Association’s Advocacy Day at the State House on February 13th. They met with legislative aides and thanked them for the increase in per pupil funding in the state budget and asked for additional money in the next fiscal year budget. Michael invited legislators to visit Rising Tide and tour the school.

Minutes

Sean made a motion to approve the January meeting minutes. Sandy seconded the motion. All voted in favor to approve the January meeting minutes.

Financials

Eric updated the Board on the January financials. We are doing well again this month. It's been a good winter with snow removal.

Enrollment is still estimated at 650 students but will probably dip slightly lower for final number.

Expenses lower than budget. Cash balance very healthy. We're still holding money in escrow for non-functioning shades.

Eric is looking into a private plan for Paid Family Medical Leave. He wants to make sure the staff is getting the same benefits as the state plan. Should be significant savings with private plan.

Bus contract bids are in. Three companies were accepted; one was rejected for not being in on time. Company that won came to bid opening. Getting contract together and then will start planning bus routes. Bids were slightly higher than initial estimates. Historically the state should reimburse around 70% of costs – depends on pool of money and how many schools request reimbursement.

Expense savings are from lower legal costs and delayed hiring of IT Director and administrative positions. Also, savings for instructional services were due to part-time contract for Athletic Director and maternity leaves. Pupil services expenses should even out more at year end.

Operations and Maintenance expenses are higher due to water/sewer and electricity expenses typically being higher during first quarter of the fiscal year. Eric is looking into getting a well for watering athletic fields to help lower costs of water/sewer.

Our net income compared against budget is +236,456. We will probably set aside surplus for future capital later in the year.

Sandy made a motion to approve the January Financials. Norm seconded the motion. All voted in favor to approve the January Financials.

Board Subcommittees

Nominating and Governance – Did not meet.

Finance and Audit – Met prior to the Board Meeting. Sean said they are looking to consolidate some accounts that haven't been used in a while. Possibly transfer some money from checking accounts into savings accounts. Looking to be more efficient with cash management.

Communications and Advocacy – Did not meet.

School Report

Michael submitted the updated Enrollment Policy approved at the last Board meeting to the State. The Charter School Association helped get this quickly approved by the State by February 5th, which allowed us to promote before the lottery. There were 514 applications to the lottery – the most ever. Michael went over the breakdown of applications by grade level.

Packets are due this Friday for returning 8th graders. Historically 50-65 students carry over from 8th to 9th grade. We accepted 40 applicants to 9th grade. Putting more emphasis on shadow visits for 8th graders, as well as providing training for students identified as possible hosts for shadow visits.

Another enrollment was opened for grades 9-11. That will close March 11th with the lottery to be held March 13th.

Safety update – Chris Dematos worked with our vendor on the PA system, so announcements are much clearer. Looking to replace the phone system over the summer. Chris also worked with Plymouth police and our vendor so that the police now have complete access to our security cameras. Emergency buttons now go directly to the police department and our alarm people.

School vacation trips were successful. Group of 8th graders went to Italy and had a blast. A group of over 40 students went to France. The in-country local guide commented that it was one of the best high school groups they've ever had.

Spring sports will be up and running in March. They include baseball, softball, tennis and lacrosse club.

Summer course offerings applications are available. The Jill Crafts Summer Scholars Program is up and running this year. It will be run by Sarah Vendetti and Leane McCullough (7th and 8th grade science teachers) working with the Pine Barrens Association. Students will work on site at the Association and will make a presentation when students come back in the fall.

Adjourn

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