

RIISING TIDE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

March 23, 2020

Virtual Meeting due to Governor Baker's March 15, 2020 order to close schools for three weeks and prohibit gatherings of 25 people or more.

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, Sandy Kozlowsky, and Kevin Hennessey. Also in attendance were Michael O'Keefe, Head of School, and Eric Mello, Business Manager.

Guests

None

New Business

Michael updated the Board on the school's response to COVID-19.

An outside vendor has been deep cleaning the school during the extended closure, including shampooing the carpets and disinfecting fabric.

Michael sent an email to families providing them with locations where meals are being provided throughout Massachusetts.

Chris Dematos reconfigured some school Chromebooks to enable them to be used off-site. He set up faculty with Zoom accounts as another option for teachers to connect with kids. Teachers are familiarizing themselves with this before rolling out use with students. This past week teachers used Google Hangouts to connect with students; it is part of the Google Suite that they are currently using and familiar with.

Commissioner of Education's office said there wouldn't be an interruption in tuition payment and that employees should continue to be paid through this stretch as if school were still in session. Last day of school continues to be June 25. Michael reviewed expectations of staff members while working from home.

Kevin demonstrated Slack for Instant Messaging to the Board as a possible additional tool to support staff.

Discussed any cost-saving measures the school could take if needed.

April 7th is current back to school date and all staff members continue to work in some capacity from home.

Michael said per DESE, the school should not push forward with graded assignments, but should provide families with resources for continued learning. He's hoping to have authority from DESE sometime soon to move forward with more in-depth teaching.

Wellness team has put stuff together for students/families for mental health in regards to isolation and distancing. Laws around special education are difficult for schools to fully implement every child's plans as if they were in the building, so staff is doing as much as they can.

Board brainstormed other ways the school can support parents with remote learning including pairing up parents to help students with assignments, Doodle App (scheduling calendar), and exploring availability of hot spots for families that need WiFi access.

Michael stressed the school will do everything they can as far as milestones for the kids once they return to school, even if it is a slightly different way. No decision has been made from the State about MCAS testing dates. The students' current Term 3 grades will be rolled into end of semester grades.

Kevin made a motion to establish a system to identify and quantify who has conductivity issues and who doesn't. Amy seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion, except Sean who voted against.

Old Business

None

Minutes

Sean made a motion to approve the February meeting minutes. Amy seconded the motion. All voted in favor to approve the February meeting minutes, except Kevin who abstained.

Financials

Eric updated the Board on the February financials, which was a typical month.

Expenses lower than budget. Balance sheet is stable. Our cash balances are \$2,562,193, which are reserved for future capital expenditures and operating reserves.

Still holding back money on shades. The contractor is supposed to come back over April vacation.

June is end of fiscal year – there might be a slight adjustment to tuition.

Have spent about \$8,500 to date on cleaning contract and there may be an additional \$1,000 to finish deep cleaning.

Kevin made a motion to approve the February Financials. Norm seconded the motion. All voted in favor to approve the February Financials.

Board Subcommittees

Nominating and Governance – Reviewed bonus compensation for Head of School. Looked at benchmark guidelines from State and how they matched up to what we have. Michael is putting together an outline for this year and will bring to the Board for future vote.

Finance and Audit – Did not meet.

Communications and Advocacy – Martha continues to work with Meghan Foster on articles for website. Congressman Keating presented a citation to each of the students who won the Congressional App Challenge at the Plymouth 400 office. Student John Schelleng did a PSA at PACTV about Rising Tide that will run on their station. Discussed possible student video clips around the topic of “Why is Rising Tide the right fit for me?” to be posted on website. Middle School science teachers to talk to classes about summer enrichment courses and the Jill Crafts summer Scholars programs.

Board discussed possible ways for students to connect with each other while school is closed, such as 8th graders doing welcome videos to new students, social media to show what they are doing at home, or Tik Tok videos demonstrating learning-based activities.

School Report

Because of school closure, Meghan Foster is planning to do some type of remote meeting with parents of Juniors regarding future planning.

School is holding admission spots even if all materials are not in since deadline was after school closure. There will be communication to accepted families this week.

Shadow visits have been delayed. May try to have hosts put together videos instead.

There is an ample supply of hand sanitizer in every room at the school and hand washings signs are posted throughout the building.

Adjourn

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