

# **RISING TIDE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL**

## **Minutes**

### **Board of Trustees Annual Meeting**

**May 18, 2020**

*Virtual Meeting due to Governor Baker's stay at home advisory.*

#### **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**

While reviewing Board members' existing terms, the Nominating & Governance subcommittee examined the by-laws. They consulted with our attorney and Michael presented the suggested by-law changes to the Board, which included deleting term limits for the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, updating the school's address, simplifying the open meeting law references, and updating the indemnity clause.

Kevin made a motion to approve updating the language of the by-laws to have Board leadership remain for more than 2 years. Norm seconded the motion. There was a discussion about the need for more than a simple majority to continue Board leadership for more than 2 years.

Kevin motioned to modify his prior motion to allow for senior leadership of the Board to remain if there was a 60% or greater approval of the Board. Sandy seconded the motion. There was a discussion about percentages based on various scenarios of potential numbers of Board members at any given time.

Kevin made a motion to amend his previous motion so that senior leadership could stay more than 2 years if passed by 55% or greater approval of the Board. Sandy seconded the motion. All voted in favor, with Norm abstaining since his internet cut in and out and he was unable to participate in all discussions. There was a conversation about having the attorney amend the by-laws, and whether original language was sufficient.

Sean made a motion to retain the language of the updated by-laws as written by the attorney. Amy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Michael will submit to DESE and let the Board know if it is ok with them or if they have any changes.

Norm's term as a Board member is expiring, but he agreed to stay for another term. Sandy made a motion to extend Norm's term. Kevin seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Chris presented the Head of School goals for the 2019-2020 school year that the Nominating & Governance subcommittee compiled. They used the criteria that the school is evaluated on, as well as Superintendent Rubric Standards from DESE to compose goals.

Kevin made a motion to accept the goals for Head of School for School Year 2019-2020. Sandy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Chris wanted to put together a small, temporary subcommittee of Board members to create a staff survey, which is a component of the Head of the School goals. Kevin, Sandy, and Chris volunteered to work with Michael on the survey.

### **Old Business**

Michael updated the Board on the impact of the health crisis on end of year and next year. Want to make sure the 8<sup>th</sup> graders and seniors have some type of recognition and closure. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers are working on an 8<sup>th</sup> grade yearbook. There has been correspondence with seniors and their families to try and do several things before June 5<sup>th</sup> (original graduation date), with a tentative date in August for a smaller, but true graduation ceremony. The Governor did not provide too much detail today on what will be allowed and when. Michael will be talking with DESE Commissioner Riley tomorrow and hopes to get some more guidance.

Hoping to still be able to have our Summer enrichment and Jill Crafts Scholarship programs but will refund families if we cannot.

Michael has been having conceptual conversations with school leaders around screening and safety in the Fall. Hoping things will be closer to normal but will tweak if needed to keep in alignment with Federal guidance.

### **Minutes**

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

### **Financials**

Eric reminded Board members to submit their financial disclosure statements to DESE.

Eric updated the Board on the April financials. Carrying enrollment number of 650 until we get final number from the State, with a tuition rate of \$14,811 per pupil. Year to date, total revenue is under budget by (\$146,314).

On Expense side, we continue to save a large amount on utilities, athletic fees, and food services since the building is closed. Expenses are lower than budget by \$289,286.

Net income compared against budget is +142,972.

Cash balance remains solid and stable with a healthy cash surplus.

Still holding back money on shades until contractor can come back to fix.

Amy made a motion to approve the April Financials. Sandy seconded the motion. All voted in favor to approve the April Financials.

Eric presented the Board with the preliminary FY21 budget. Since the State is projecting large revenue losses for next year, Eric was very conservative in budgeting. He kept the same per pupil rate, used conservative enrollment number of 660 students, and went item by item to cut expenses. There will be no increase in staff salaries so that we can maintain program services at current level without having to let anyone go. When we have more information in September, the Board could evaluate adjusting budget.

Eric worked with health insurance broker to save money with new health insurance plan.

Finished payment to Webster Bank, saving \$30,000 for that fee. Eric will have meeting with bank to discuss other fees.

Eric will begin preparing employee contracts for next year.

Michael reviewed 2020-2021 enrollment projections, with a conservative estimate of 709 students. The Middle School is at capacity, with a sizeable waiting list of 80-85 pupils for 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Even though projections are very optimistic, we want to be conservative since it remains

unclear how the pandemic will impact next year. If pupil tuition numbers from DESE in December are solid, the Board could consider reissuing contracts to add back staff raises.

Eric went through Cash Flow projection. School needs some building and grounds updates, a new phone system, and more laptops.

We have applied for CARES Act grant for \$20,000 and are hoping for more Federal relief for schools, including monies for cleaning related expenses. Board discussed lowering student fees to help families.

Sandy made a motion to approve the preliminary FY21 budget with the addition of a 50% reduction in student fees. Amy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

### **Board Subcommittees**

Nominating and Governance – nothing more to add.

Finance and Audit – nothing more to add.

Communications and Advocacy – Met May 11. Michael attended annual delegate meeting. Advocacy pivoted to current situation, with a focus on facilities funding. The Student Opportunity Act funding may be pushed off a year, and there is no timeline as to when the State budget for FY21 will be approved. Martha has been sharing communication efforts and ideas with other charter schools around graduation plans. Enrollment closed today and there are 6 additional students in the Upper School. School leadership is looking at ways to engage incoming families via electronic means now and live events in the Fall.

### **School Report**

Covered under Old Business.

### **Adjourn**

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