

RISING TIDE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

October 19, 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 7:00 PM. In attendance were Chris Schelleng, Norm DeCoste, Sean Kelly, Sandy Kozlowsky, and Amy Norris. Also in attendance were Michael O'Keefe, Head of School, and Eric Mello, Business Manager.

Guests

Colleen D'Alfonso, Daniel Dennis & Company LLP

New Business

Attachments/Handouts: FY20 Audit Summary Presentation; Acceptance of the Board of Trustees signature page

Colleen D'Alfonso presented the school's annual financial audit for the year ended June 30, 2020. We received an Unmodified Opinion which is the best you can receive. There were no material weaknesses over financial reporting or reportable issues of non-compliance. No exceptions were noted on the Agreed Upon Procedures Report required by DESE. On the Financial Ratio Profile that DESE uses to monitor charter schools, we fell in the Low Risk category for all key ratios and most ratios were better than the statewide average. She also went over items to monitor in the current FY and due dates for filing reports.

Colleen shared the "Acceptance of the Board of Trustees" signature page for Board members to review.

Sandy made a motion to accept the Auditors' Report. Amy seconded the motion. All voted in favor to accept the Auditors' Report. Signature page to be signed and sent to Colleen.

At 7:29 PM, Colleen left the meeting and Shawna Weekly, Rising Tide Wellness Director, and Lisa Hughes, Rising Tide Lead Nurse and COVID Response Leader, joined the meeting.

Old Business

Attachments/Handouts: Weekly COVID-19 Report with Rising Tide Towns/Cities

Shawna provided an overview of the Health and Safety Measures in place at school. Since many students and staff have been diligent in bringing their own masks to school, masks that the school purchased prior to opening should last the rest of the year. She went over hand washing and sanitizing measures and reviewed how the school is keeping students 6' apart in classrooms, hallways, tents, and during carpool and bus arrival/departure. The school has been reminding students and families about COVID symptoms and to stay home when feeling ill. Overall, there has been good communication with families/students reaching out directly to our health staff with specific questions.

Lisa reviewed the spreadsheet "Weekly COVID-19 Report with Rising Tide Towns/Cities" that she put together from the most recent State report that was available to the public last Wednesday. Plymouth and Kingston entered the Red category a couple weeks ago. Several other towns in our region are now in the Yellow category. Our school has had one student test positive, but they were not in school during the infectious period.

Lisa spoke with an epidemiologist and Karen Keane, Plymouth's Public Health Director, who both said being in the Red should not be the only factor to consider when discussing school staying open; whether or not there is transmission in school is also important. Michael spoke with DESE Commissioner Riley today who echoed that thought. If there is no spread in school, we should be able to remain in Hybrid model. Even if a student/staff member were infectious, because of our 6' spacing procedures, they could potentially have no close contacts based on Department of Public Health's definition.

The Board will meet Wednesday, October 21, at 8 PM to review the latest data to come out from the State that evening and discuss any potential change to teaching and learning model.

At 8 PM, Shawna and Lisa left the meeting.

Meeting Minutes

Attachments/Handouts: September 21, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Sean made a motion to approve the September 21, 2020 Meeting Minutes. Norm seconded the motion. All voted in favor to approve.

Financials

Attachments/Handouts: Memo from Eric Mello regarding September 2020 Financial Statements; preliminary financial statements for the month of September 2020; COVID-19 Grants and Spending spreadsheet

We just completed the first quarter of the year and are still projecting enrollment of 660 students and tuition at \$14,811/student. We are close to budget with total revenue under budget by (\$9,480). The latest tuition numbers from DESE are higher than budgeted, so we should be in good shape.

Budget expenses are holding to what we expected, with the exception of COVID expenses. Total expenses to date are over budget by \$112,410.

Balance sheet is strong with cash balances at \$2,220,980.

Eric reviewed his COVID-19 Grants and Spending spreadsheet with the Board. To date, we have received \$195,598 in grant funds. We are still waiting to hear about \$157,500 reimbursement from the Plymouth County Cares grant. These grants total \$353,098. Actual and anticipated expenses amount to \$498,331, but we are hopeful for additional grant money to cover the \$145,233 difference. At an earlier Board meeting, the Board voted to allot \$250,000 for COVID-related expenses.

Amy made a motion to accept the September financials. Sandy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Board Subcommittees

Nominating and Governance – Met last week and discussed a couple of potential new Board members and will be reaching out to them to set up meetings. They have started the Annual Review process for the Head of School. Need one additional Board member in addition to Subcommittee members to conduct Review. Norm agreed to participate. Will share Review results with entire Board at next Board meeting.

Finance and Audit – Covered already.

Communications and Advocacy – Met October 8th. Martha has been sharing ideas with the Communications Team at Mass. Charter Public School Association. Discussed ideas for enrollment recruitment for next school year, as well as virtual Open Houses.

School Report

Current enrollment is 673 with a couple of seats open in Middle School, which Melissa Jackson, Student Data Administrator, is working to fill. Fall enrollment closes this week with a few new students. Middle School wait lists remain strong. November 2nd will start the enrollment period for next school year. Instead of traditional Open Houses, the school is planning virtual Q&A sessions with panels of school leaders. Looking to recruit some parents to participate as well. Brian Malloy (parent/photographer) came in today to take photographs of current life at Rising Tide to be used in publicity. A postcard mailer will be sent to every eligible student in our region.

Kids and staff are getting more comfortable at school. Progress reports went out last Friday. For students who may be falling behind, leadership is looking at ways to help support students/families. There have been some technology walk-throughs already provided for parents. The State will be moving forward with MCAS testing this year. An email blast to Upper School students was sent out with details.

Trying to move ahead in the next week or so with the Diversity, Belonging, Inclusion, and Equity Work Group that met a couple of times this summer. Looking to have a subgroup of parents, one for staff, and another for students that promote dialog and self-reflection to encourage honesty, trust, respect, responsibility, and a sense of belonging for all students.

Adjourn

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