

RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
One Corliss Park
Providence, Rhode Island 02908

MEETING MINUTES

Date: January 13, 2005

Time: 6:00 PM

Minutes recorded by: Jake Camara

Minutes Approved on: February 10, 2005

Interpreters: Jonathan Henry, Jennifer Maloney, Ann Marie Mancini

Minutes

I. Call to Order

The meeting of the RI School for the Deaf Board of Trustees was called to order by Trustee Florio at 6:01 PM in the RI School for the Deaf Cafeteria.

II. Roll Call of Board of Trustees

In Attendance: Bonnie Abols, Carol Dorros, Steve Florio, Tracy Karasinski, Phil Wheeler, Travis Zellner

Excused: Maureen McEntee

III. Election of Board Officers

- a. Trustee Zellner volunteered to be vice-chair. Approved unanimously.
- b. Discussion took place regarding the role of the secretary.
- c. Trustee Karasinski volunteered to be secretary. Approved unanimously.

IV. Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes

- a. December 2, 2004
 - i. Page 5, item e: Change "MJJ" to "Mary Jane Johnson". Change "DB" to "Diane Bertozzi".
 - ii. Page 8, item iv: Change "it appropriate" to "is appropriate".
 - iii. Page 1: Change page 1 "Camp Isola Bela" to "Camp Isola Bella".
 - iv. **Motion** was made by Trustee Dorros to accept the minutes of December 2, 2004 as amended as an accurate reflection of the meeting. Seconded by Trustee Florio. Approved unanimously.

V. Reports

- a. Interim Director
 - i. John Plante highlighted items from his Interim Director's report.
 1. Trustee Florio asked if the Vision Services program had officially left the School for the Deaf.

- a. John Plante informed the Board that the Vision Services program had officially left the school as of October, 2004.
 - b. Trustee Florio will follow up with Senator Issa about a Vision Services bill which was just introduced.
 - b. Coordinators
 - i. Helen Litterst informed the Board of Trustees that using funds from Title I, an after school tutoring program has been established. It is individual tutoring after school once or twice a week per student.
 - ii. Discussion took place regarding the special education teachers listed in the Transition coordinator's report.
 - 1. John Plante confirmed that New England schools for the Deaf are having great difficulty finding teachers.
 - iii. Trustee Wheeler commended all of the people involved in fundraising around the school listed in some of the coordinators' reports.
 - c. Finance Director
 - i. Wayne Hannon gave an update on the Audit Matrix.
 - ii. Trustee Florio asked for an update on the ASL proficiency audit item.
 - 1. The last update was that Gallaudet University is willing to do the evaluation but it would require sending staff to Gallaudet.
 - 2. Trustee Florio asked if this procedure could be put in writing.
 - iii. Discussion took place regarding the Board of Trustees Budget.
 - iv. Trustee Dorros thanked Wayne Hannon for all of his hard work in moving things forward especially during this busy season.
 - d. Sub-Committees
 - i. Finance/Budget: No report.
 - ii. Personnel: No report.
 - iii. Director Search
 - 1. Trustee Florio updated the Board of Trustees that there was a meeting on December 14 and it was discussed that this must be an effective and fair process.
 - 2. There was also another meeting this afternoon. Some issues that were discussed were:
 - a. Security relating to confidential material
 - b. What the role of the consultant will be
 - 3. It has been decided that the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month at 3:30 PM is when this committee will meet.
 - 4. There still needs to be more representation from different groups:
 - a. Parents

- b. Students
 - c. Teacher Assistants' Union
- 5. Mary Jane Johnson will share her list of interested parents with Trustee Florio.
- 6. Discussion took place regarding the development of a mission statement or revision of the current mission statement.
 - a. It was recommended by the National Search for a Director Committee that the Board of Trustees develop a mission statement for the school.
 - b. John Carty informed the Board that the current mission statement was developed as part of statewide strategic planning in which there were many stakeholders from the school and community; much effort was put into developing this mission statement.
- 7. **Motion** was made by Trustee Dorros accept this as the mission statement currently until it is reviewed during the strategic planning process. Seconded by Trustee Wheeler.
 - a. Trustee Florio didn't see the need for a motion since the mission statement was already in place.
 - b. Trustee Zellner disagreed with the motion. It might be beneficial to give this mission statement to the committees and get feedback from people at those meetings.
 - c. Trustee Karasinski said that a lot of work went into this mission statement and it provides effective guidance for the school.
 - d. Discussion took place regarding the current mission statement.
 - e. **Motion approved unanimously.**

iv. Policy

1. The policy committee will be continuing its work in regard to the handbooks.
2. Trustee Zellner informed the Board that there was a letter received from Earnest Okwara. He suggested that several of these issues be added to the Policy committee's next agenda.
3. Trustee Wheeler said that the handbook is a living document as it is continually reviewed and revised.
4. John Plante expressed his concern that the staff member who had a 45 minute period designated for special projects did not volunteer to be part of a committee to work on the handbook or offer suggestions regarding its content but went directly to the Board and Department of Education to voice his complaints and concerns. A committee will be

formed to work on the handbook and each faculty and staff member was informed of this when they received a handbook. See attached cover letter.

5. It was discussed that the Vice-Chair send a note to this person that his input is appreciated, but in the future please follow due process within the school before approaching the Board of Trustees.
6. Wayne Hannon suggested this information be sent out to all staff members so that everyone is on the same page.
7. Trustee Karasinski said that the policy committee is more than willing to take the suggestions into consideration as they are good suggestions. But there have been many times during these public meetings where it has been discussed that the proper way to bring issues to the board is through the chain of command at the school. The Board shouldn't have to send out a formal letter reiterating this process. Personally she sees that as John and Wayne's role to communicate this to the school.
8. Dinaz Adenwalla said that as a representative from teachers union she is proud that each teacher knows who to report to. Her strong recommendation is that a letter is sent directly to Earnest Okwara.
9. **Motion** was made by Trustee Dorros that the acting chairperson draft a letter to Earnest Okwara outlining that issues need to be brought through the proper chain of command at the school before being brought to the Board of Trustees. Seconded by Trustee Abols. Approved unanimously.

v. Building

1. Trustee Dorros updated the Board on the latest action from the Building Committee detailed in the Building Committee report.
2. The next building committee meeting is planned for January 24, 2005.
3. "Approval of the Letter of Interest for the programmatic study and site analysis" should be added to the February agenda.
4. Strategic Planning
 - a. There has not been much progress in regards to strategic planning.

vi. Legislative Update

1. Trustee Florio will contact Senator Issa regarding the Vision Services issue.
2. Capitol Television is now captioned for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

VI. Old Business

- a. Interview with Board of Trustees Nominee
 - i. John Plante had heard from the nominee; he is not coming tonight and he would prefer to wait until the next hearing seat is available.
 - ii. The website posting for the Board of Trustee opening will need to be changed from a Deaf and a Hearing seat to only a Hearing seat.
- b. Establish the Strategic Planning Committee
 - i. The Strategic Planning committee was established in November.
 - ii. **Motion** was made by Trustee Florio that Phil Wheeler would be the chair of the strategic planning committee. Seconded by Trustee Abols. Approved unanimously.
- c. Audit Status: Handbooks
 - i. This issue was discussed under the Policy Committee report.

VII. Adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42.46-5 (a)(1), (2) and (8).

- a. **Motion** made by Trustee Florio to move to closed session at 7:55 PM. Motion withdrawn.
- b. Trustee Wheeler suggested sending Bill Walker a letter recognizing his efforts and contribution thanking him for his years of service.
- c. **Motion** was made by Trustee Florio that a letter is sent to Bill Walker thanking him for his service on the Board of Trustees. Seconded by Trustee Wheeler. Approved unanimously.
- d. **Motion** was made by Trustee Florio to move to closed session at 7:58 PM. Seconded by Trustee Karasinski. Approved unanimously.

VIII. Return to Open Session

- a. **Motion** was made by Trustee Karasinski to seal the closed session minutes. Seconded by Trustee Wheeler. Approved unanimously. **Motion** was made by Trustee Dorros to move to open session at 8:33 PM. Seconded by Trustee Wheeler. Approved unanimously.

IX. Public Comment

X. Agenda Items and Next Meeting Date

- a. Letter of Interest
- b. Interview with the nominee
- c. Follow-up on Board member nominee
 - i. The Board of Regents will discuss the nomination of Neil Leahy at their next meeting on January 27.

VII. Adjournment

- i. **Motion** was made by Trustee Florio to adjourn the meeting at 8:38PM. Seconded by Trustee Wheeler. Approved unanimously.