

**RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MEETING MINUTES**

**December 18, 2008**

**Location: Cohen Room. Rhode Island School for the Deaf**

**Trustees attending: Mary Bird, Richard Dickson, Suzanne Goldenberg, Neil Leahey, Travis Zellner**

**Excused: Mary Wamback, Kathleen Ellis**

**Staff attending: Lori Dunsmore, Director, Wayne Hannon, Assistant Director**

**Public attending:**

**Communications accommodations: sign language interpreters Carol Fay, Jon Henry, and Maureen McEntee**

**The meeting was called to order by chair Travis Zellner at 6:12 pm.**

**Minutes:**

**The minutes of October 14 and November 6 were reviewed. Richard Dickson moved to accept the minutes pending review of typing errors. Suzanne Goldenberg seconded the motion. It was agreed that**

**Suzanne, as secretary, would make corrections to those minutes before they are posted. Suzanne will also review future minutes before they are posted.**

**Reports:**

**Chair:**

**Chair Travis Zellner reported that he has been working closely with RIDE on the process for developing a strategic plan for the board and for school improvements.**

**Director:**

**Director Lori Dunsmore reported that she had mailed out binders to the Trustees to communicate goals and ad hoc committee reports from 1999-2001 outlining work the teachers had done in several areas of school improvement.**

**Lori plans to continue working with the teachers to form a school improvement team and will schedule meetings during school hours.**

**The Board of Regents has visited the school and Lori thinks they have a better understanding of the challenges the school faces. One challenge is the union contract with the teachers that has to deal with a \$900,000 budget cut.**

**Lori presented the 2008 school report and her plans to develop a crisis intervention team.**

## **Building Committee:**

**Carol Dorros has resigned from the Board of Trustees. Wayne reported on the groundbreaking and handed out copies of the press release. The expectation is that site work will begin within the next month and that the new road will be constructed in the spring. The foundation should be laid by fall 2009, with the building to follow. Communication will be ongoing with staff and parents as to changes in the road, doorways, access to the building, etc.**

## **Policy Committee:**

**Mary Wambach requested (in her absence) that the emergency protocol be approved with the understanding that it is a work in progress. Richard Dickson objected to approving the policy until certain parts, specifically Pages 3 and 29. After discussion, it was agreed to table the policy approval until January. In the meantime, teachers and staff should be referring to the procedures as they now stand until further adjustments have been made.**

## **Strategic Planning Committee:**

**Rick Richards (RIDE) reported that the department of education**

wants to see the new building full and functioning as a center for deaf and hard of hearing children and their families. The strategic planning committee needs to set a vision for a comprehensive set of service. The committee will meet the first Tuesday of every month, Use of a facilitator was recommended.

#### **Budget and Finance Committee:**

Richard Dickson suggested that the biggest issue currently is to provide ongoing training and development to the staff and wants to build it in to the 2010 budget. He agreed to be chair of the committee.

#### **Executive Session:**

The chair called for a motion to go into executive session to address issues of collective bargaining, personnel matters and litigation. Richard Dickson made the motion to adjourn to executive session, and Neal Leahey seconded. The motion passes and the Board adjourned at 8:00pm. No votes were taken during executive session.

Mary Bird made a motion to return to Open Session at 8:27 pm. Suzanne Goldenberg seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Neal Lahey made a motion that the minutes of the executive session be sealed, Richard Dickson seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

**No votes were taken during the executive session.**

**Evaluation of Executive Director Committee:**

**Travis Zellner will be Chair of the evaluation committee. Travis noted that the board will provide a display board for the school to be displayed in the current front lobby and to be moved to the new school.**

**Mary Bird made a motion to adjourn, and Neal Lahey seconded it. The meeting was adjourned at 8:41.**