



MEETING MINUTES

Date: November 16, 2010

Time: 6:00PM

Minutes recorded by: Nancy Sousa

Minutes approved on:

Interpreters: Jon Henry, Maureen McEntee – Cart – Shelly Deming

ATTY: Sara Rapport

RIDE:

ADMIN: Mary Caporelli, Corsino Delgado, Wayne Hannon, Sharon Salisbury

Call to Order

- a. Chairperson Travis Zellner called the meeting of the RI School for the Deaf Board of Trustees to order at 6:10 p.m. in the Cafeteria of the RI School for the Deaf.

Roll Call of Board of Trustees

- b. **In Attendance:** Travis Zellner, Marie Lynch, Harvey Corson, Westley Resendes, Mary Wambach, Jodi Merryman, Angelo Garcia, Amy Roche
- c. **Excused:** Iraidia Williams

Public Comment: Group of teachers (and individually) spoke in support of Dinaz Adenwalla's appointment to Asst. Director, Academics. Member commented that the Board appreciates the interest, will consider the input in decision-making.

Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes

October 5, 2010 – Reviewed and accepted as corrected

October 26, 2010 – Accepted as corrected

Reports:

Chair – Discussed changing/alternating the meeting schedule – including a work session every other meeting; committees need to be formed and meetings scheduled for them also. Brief positive discussion about the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony; students made a DVD of the event; request was made that Board members receive a copy of the DVD. The Strategic Planning day on December 4th – Harvey Corson and Jodi Merryman volunteered to represent the Board – there will be 25 people – who will represent a broad spectrum of the community. Other Board members suggested that they may attend some/all of the day as observers.

Transformation Specialist: Mary Caporelli expressed her delight in working with people at RISD; students are taking NWEA, online test (MAP) – will compare for student growth; school is in the process of auditing seniors for PBGR requirements, looking at portfolios and projects; Outreach coordinator has gathered a team from families and school districts, to coordinate a list of services we provide. Members asked questions about NWEA results and how they can be interpreted for our students; how the ASL aspect translates; members asked for information on how to interpret the data they receive. More information should be available at the January Board meeting about student achievement.

Discussion ensued re RISDeaf website and who handles IT as some Public Comment indicated that there was no posting of Board Meeting dates. It was noted that most of the information people are looking for is on the Secretary of State's website.

Assistant Director(s): Corsino Delgado: – not much to report on the budget; \$280,000 in Education Jobs Fund appropriation – restricted to salaries, benefits, stipends; governor may reduce general revenue by that amount – runs out September 2012.

Interim Director of Academics: Dinaz Adenwalla: - noted that school has been very active with NWEA testing, finished NECAP, report cards will go out; basketball season in full swing – tournaments in February; senior graduation will be first week in June.

Discussion re report cards/student performance – Ms Adenwalla expressed that there is varied performance – different in each area of school; analysis is on-going; data will be available in Spring; outreach is going well- we have added a couple of students since the start of the year. Members requested information about the following:

- the details of who attends school here and what their needs are;
- current achievement information;

- curriculum being used; what they are learning
- number of students who enter the school and where they come from;
- English proficiency levels of students
- interpreter situation at East Providence high school

Break: 7:20 p.m. – five minute break

Old Business:

Strategic Plan – Although on the agenda – table tonight – Board hopes to receive a report of the December 4th Strategic Planning session on December 7th; anticipated vote on it in January.

Review of draft term lease – Groden – discussion ensued re the space being utilized by Groden, assured that the \$150,000 rent is not offset by consultation services; members want to be sure that Groden’s services are in line with current needs for early intervention and goals we want to achieve re strategic planning. Member noted that she wanted to still consider other appropriate tenants. Issues are all spelled out appropriately in agreement – 18 month lease – January 2011 through June 2012 and there is an “out” clause for both parties.

Motion was made by Harvey Corson to accept draft lease with clarifications discussed – Chair asked if all were in consensus to accept Groden draft lease with understanding that our concerns will be addressed.....all agreed except for one member – abstained because of new status on Board. Motion was made to accept the Groden draft lease agreement by Harvey Corson and Seconded by Mary Wambach – agreement reached with one abstention.

It was noted that the approved draft will be reviewed by State lawyers and brought to the Properties Committee meeting on December 7th. The lease is effective as of January 1, 2011.

New Business

Friends of RISD & Fund Raising - Tabled

Review and Approval of Policies –

Family Involvement – Member noted that RIDE requires schools to abide by national PTO standards, so that is a place to start – also that Parent Teacher Association can assist with the process; members asked Transformation Specialist to provide policy draft for Attorney review and present to Board at next meeting.

Visitor's Policy - Tabled

Chair: Board needs to discuss the Director's recommendation of Dinaz Adenwalla for Assistant Director, Academics...reminded members that their role is to approve or deny the Director's recommendation; opened the floor for discussion.

Members voiced many concerns about the candidate and the process – re the posting/advertising of the position, interviewees, interviewers, number of candidates; their curriculum experience. Member referred to a letter received from RI Association of the Deaf in which there were questions about the marketing of the position and an anonymous letter that voiced same concerns. Members noted that Ms Adenwalla has support from school community, but questions about the process still unanswered. Another member noted that the candidate is well-liked by faculty, staff and students but that the weight of negative history is not good. Chair noted that it was not fair to Dinaz to not make a decision.

Attorney noted that the Board's role is to approve or not approve the Director's recommendation and asked that the Personnel Specialist speak to the Board re the process.

Personnel Specialist: Noted that she was not prepared but would explain the process, and could not respond to an anonymous letter nor was she aware that RIAD had any part in our hiring process. She noted that the process was a fast, urgent one with the timing of the school year; we were fortunate that Dinaz applied because our need was urgent; the job was posted nationwide through Catalyst Hiring; the Director interviewed candidates on a Saturday because some candidates did not want their districts to know they applied; there was a total of three candidates; timing affected the decision. Because this is a state agency, there is a legal process we have to follow.

More discussion ensued re: the concern about the information the Board has/has not received re: number of applicants, names, experience, resumes, etc. along with accepting a recommendation by a Director who had vote of no confidence. The Personnel Specialist repeated that RISDeaf does not operate independently, and is accountable to RIDE and State Administration.

Board reiterated that we are not here to question integrity of the hiring process—yet Board needs to make informed decisions but there seems to be contradictory information from what the Director said in August (one candidate to interview) and what is being said now (three candidates). Board also has to approve, or deny approval of candidate—denial has to be on grounds that the hiring process was improper.

Chair: I am prepared and willing to vote for this recommendation and appointment.

MOVED Harvey Corson and SECOND Marie Lynch to approve the Director's recommendation to appoint Dinaz Adenwalla as Assistant Director, Academics.

MOTION passed with five votes. One member abstained and two opposed.

Congratulations to Dinaz Adenwalla

Attorney noted that the Board has not discussed Dinaz Adenwalla in closed session – always in open session, at her request.

Review and postpone Approval of Policies:

- Family Involvement
- Visitor's Policy

Actions Taken via Vote or Consensus:

- Groden Center Draft Lease
- Approved Appointment of Dinaz Adenwalla, Assistant Director
- Harvey Corson & Jodi Merryman to act as Board representatives for Strategic Planning Meeting on Dec 4, 2010

Actions/Discussions Postponed:

- Friends of RISD & Fund Raising

Adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a)(1) and (2)

- d. **MOVED Westley Resendes AND SECONDED Jodi Merriman:** That the Board would adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a)(1) and (2) at 8:45 p.m. Approved unanimously.
- e. **MOVED Westley Resendes AND SECONDED Marie Lynch:** That the Board would return to Open Session at 9:16 p.m. Approved unanimously.

- f. **MOVED Mary Wambach AND SECONDED Westley Resendes:** That the Board would seal the minutes of Executive Session. Approved unanimously.

Motions from Executive Session: None

Agenda Items and Next Meeting Date: Dec 7: Due to late hour, agenda ideas should be sent to Chair via email.

II. Adjournment at 9:17 p.m