



SPECIAL MEETING - MINUTES

Date: September 28, 2010

Time: 6:00PM

Minutes recorded by: Nancy Sousa

Minutes approved on:

Interpreters: Carol Fay, Jon Henry, and Maureen McEntee

Cart: Shelley Deming (with trainees)

Call to Order

- a. Chairperson Travis Zellner called the meeting of the RI School for the Deaf Board of Trustees to order at 6:18 p.m. in the Cafeteria of RISD, One Corliss Park, Providence, RI

Roll Call of Board of Trustees

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

Chair noted that they had a quorum – 5 members and would proceed; noted time allotments on agenda.

Public Comment: **Arn Lisnoff** from the Dept of Administration, Capital Projects Office, spoke to the Board about his experience in working on the project to build the new school; noted that he learned a lot about deaf culture; seeing the kids on the opening day of school was one of the best days of his life. He spoke of his close working relationship with **Wayne Hannon** - since the start of the project almost 4 years ago when the new school was in the study stage. **Mr. Lisnoff** expressed the fact that “if not for Wayne Hannon, the new school would not be built”. He noted that Wayne’s name was not on the plaque that is going to be dedicated for the new building and suggested that to honor Wayne, perhaps the library could be named in his honor, or a special plaque (with a story about how the building was built) be made to acknowledge Wayne and all he has done for the school.

Teaching staff (2) and Hearing Center staff person: Echoed Mr. Lisnoff's recommendation to acknowledge Wayne Hannon – noting that Wayne always has the kids' best interests at heart; offers selfless support to the school – this would be a wonderful opportunity to acknowledge him.

Member: Carol Doros should also be recognized for her work with the building committee, and several others, too.

Chair: Thanked Mr. Lisnoff for his comments; noted that the Board would take his comments seriously and get back to him on an acknowledgment.

Discussion Items:

1. Review & Approval of Budgets for FY11-12

Chair: Received reports from Lori, Harvey & Corsino re the budget. Discussion ensued re budget cuts – statewide mandate to reduce budget by 15% - **Corsino** noted that we will have to reduce our budget by 1.33% = \$80,000 for FY11; FY12 more dire. Questions were asked about federal funding and how we would make the cuts.

Chair: Asked for and received Consensus on approving the FY11 budget.

Thanked Harvey and Corsino for their work and information.

2. Review & Approval of Collaboration with Groden Center

Chair: Not appropriate to vote on this now because of the FY12 budget.

Director: I feel that we have to decide on this; it's temporary; could bring in roughly \$100,000 per year – will directly affect budget & personnel here. We would depend on referrals for our behavioral classroom – we already have some students that need those services. Groden would provide training to our staff – rent would offset some of our budget cuts. It is not a permanent plan; we need to consider the budget impact.

Discussion ensued re the impact Groden would have on our school; what the Groden program will look like; how many of our students require behavioral supports; whether or not Wayne should bring it to the Properties Committee for approval. Board concerned that this school should be for the deaf and hard of hearing; don't want to jump ahead and commit to something when do not have the big picture/strategic plan in place.

Member: Note that the deaf population is different now, there are more deaf students with special needs; but reality is parents don't want kids to be labeled; staff training is a huge benefit; ask that Groden keep a low profile. See need for special ed programs – maintain image of being school for deaf, but most kids with hearing loss have behavioral problems.

Director: They will have a separate location/entrance; make clear that it's temporary – this is RI School for the Deaf – that is our focus.

Member: This is a complex matter; something for us to consider is that the deaf and hard of hearing come in all shapes and sizes; our lecturing and training budget has been cut; wouldn't agree with this just to help the budget, but do it if the children really need it. Would like to see a marketing plan for the school; make it attractive for parents – add a dance or drama center - make them feel good about sending their kids here.

Chair: If it's only for 18 months, I don't see a conflict – will give us time to set up a strategic plan to meet our goals.

Wayne: Can provide a draft of the lease so that the Board could see it in writing and have a better understanding of the program.

Chair: Board has consensus to support the Lease with the Groden Center.

Director: We will work out the lease and try to bring it to you for the next meeting.

3. Review and Approval of Student Policies:

a. Harrassment, Intimidation and Bullying

Director: for discussion only – required by law; policy adopted through community process. **Attorney:** Policy must have parental involvement and community members – make it very obvious that you are asking for their input.

Chair: Send policy to parents to review – will go over this in November's regular meeting.

b. Student Discipline Code

Discussion involved expectations of students' rights; that all have full access with communication throughout the school environment- language communication will be included; whether or not families have right to be provided with other resources and info to assist their child.

Director: Asked that member email questions that she will compile and put together.

Attorney: re possession of a weapon in Level 2 – depending on severity; avoid a clear punishment that is absolute and doesn't allow for discretion.

Member: Be sure to include that students who report anything will be protected at all times.

Director: Victim rights and student whistle-blower protection is included. We can modify this for the next meeting.

It was decided that Board members would send their input to Lori by Friday so that they could review and approve at the next meeting.

c. Internet Safety

Director: clarify to make sure info and supports are there to help teachers teach and students to learn. We have listed responsibilities for students to sign-off in agreement – we need to move ahead with this. Parents have to sign a permission form to allow students to access internet – Parents are responsible to enforce it.

Chair: We are in consensus to support this policy.....

Congratulations – document the date...

Executive Session:

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

- d. **MOVED Wesley Resendes AND SECONDED Jodi Merriman:** That the Board would adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a)(1) and (2) at 7:49 p.m. Approved unanimously.
- e. **MOVED Jodi Merriman AND SECONDED Wesley Resendes:** That the Board would return to Open Session at 8:33 p.m.. Approved unanimously.
- f. **MOVED Jodi Merriman AND SECONDED Amy Roche:** That the Board would seal the minutes of Executive Session. Approved unanimously.

Motions from Executive Session:

Board accepted Director's goals 1 and 3 with language modifications and #2 will have continued revisions.

II. Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

