



MEETING MINUTES

Date: August 24, 2010

Time: 6:00PM

Minutes recorded by: Nancy Sousa

Interpreters: Carol Fay, Jon Henry, and Maureen McEntee

Cart: Shelly Deming – arrived late (7:15)

Call to Order

- a. Chairperson Travis Zellner called the meeting of the RI School for the Deaf Board of Trustees to order at 6:24 p.m. the Dept of Administration, Conference Room B. Apologized for the delay – will be jumping around the agenda tonight. (There was discussion about whether a quorum was present with the members available. Because the BOT only has 7 active members, 4 BOT present make up a quorum for this meeting.)

Roll Call of Board of Trustees:

In Attendance: Travis Zellner, Marie Lynch, Jodi Merriman, Mary Wambach

Excused: Iraida Williams, Harvey Corson, Amy Roche

Public Comment: speakers limited to two minutes each.

Sheila Ressler: (Teacher at RISD since 1985) - Read a letter re the resignation of Asst. Director Mary Smith; listed many accolades for Ms Smith who worked with the school at most challenging, difficult juncture.

Lena Greene: (Former graduate of RISD and current teacher) – Read a letter from the negotiating team, executive board and teachers, advocates for employees – wanted to express concerns during executive session; want BOT to hear both sides; concerned about direction school is heading; their opinion – results directly from legal counsel and Director. Proposed contract offers teachers little protection and seeks to remove protections from arbitrary decisions; group feels that legal team and Director are seeking to eliminate their protection; concerned with how lay-offs are determined; language arbitrary. Evaluations rely on new Basic Education Plan; no support for attorney's

interpretation, re: years of service; decision of who works based on available data; Special Ed director has announced that the baseline will not be raised for two years; value-added measures as key part of evaluation warrants a look conducted by those who have expertise. The process is slow, proposals not thought out-compared w/counterpart; attorney acknowledged language is defective. Group feels that we have lost our identity as School for the Deaf; respect deteriorated; apprehension about the future; adrift; asked to meet with BOT without legal representation on both sides; assured the BOT that we are dedicated teachers of the deaf want to move forward.

Chair: Thank you to the spokesperson; the Board is always cognizant of both sides – every area will be fully covered.

Board Member: Can you elaborate on what you mean by protection?

Lena Greene: Indicated that she could not comment without the attorney present.

Travis: we will have to get together to get some answers.

Mary Wambach: Before receiving this letter, we suggested that the BOT would send one or two members who would be available for union discussions.

Travis: The board is aware and there will be board involvement; administration has requested board members on the negotiating team as well.

Lori Dunsmore requested that negotiating team stay for executive session.

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

- b. **MOVED Mary Wambach AND SECONDED Jodi Merriman:** That the Board would adjourn to 1st Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a)(1) and (2) at 6:45. Approved unanimously.

Director Dunsmore asked negotiating team stay in 1st Executive Session

- c. **MOVED Mary Wambach AND SECONDED Marie Lynch:** That the Board would return to Open Session at 7:41. Approved unanimously.
- d. **MOVED Mary Wambach AND SECONDED Jodi Merriman:** That the Board would seal the minutes of 1st Executive Session. Approved unanimously.
- e. **MOVED Mary Wambach AND SECONDED Jodi Merriman:** That the Board would adjourn to 2nd Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a)(1) and (2) at 7:45. Approved unanimously.

f. **MOVED Jodi Merriman AND SECONDED Mary Wambach:** That the Board would seal the minutes of 2nd Executive Session. Approved unanimously.

Motions from 1st Executive Session: No motions made or votes taken

Motions from 2nd Executive Session: The RISD Board of Trustees fully supports the request to proceed with litigation with 7 school districts, re Fee for Service.

Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes

June 29, 2010 – accepted in consensus

July 20, 2010 - accepted in consensus

Reports:

Chairperson: Andrea Castaneda, Chief, Division of Accelerating School Performance will be here from RIDE for our next meeting in September and we will have two new members.

Announce no vote or results from 1st Executive Session.

Director: Ms Dunsmore gave a brief summary of her written report; noted that we have been very busy with the move to new school. P.E. teacher resigned; Bruce Bucci resigned; Suzanne Ferreira will be long-term aide; Gail Gustafson will head behavioral classroom; Sean Gill has been hired for Executive Assistant-Outreach/Mainstream. Professional Development schedule has been established for 30 and 31st of August; we will have something for Deaf Awareness Week; RIAD will have a movie night. RIDE has meetings on education model – teachers are invited to these meetings. Ribbon cutting for new school has been moved to 10/27.

Assistant Director – Corsino Delgado: Update on furniture: coming in dribs and drabs; paving is being finished; we will start school next week with still some work going on; still waiting for Library furniture; administration is moved in.

Finance: Some LEAs contesting FFS fees; we are setting up a hearing date to settle that dispute.

Budget: \$104M in Medicaid money; we are required to come up with a revised budget; starting to work on 2012 budget; once board gets finance committee, will work with them; will need board approval for budget.

Sub-Committees:

Policy Committee: no members

Building Committee: no members

Old Business

Alignment of BOT Matrix/Calendar and Integrated Plan – Director provided attachment w/revised calendar and integrated plan/work plan drafts.

Chairman inquired about Integrated Plan; Director replied that yes, based on student need.

Student and Staff Handbooks – Much discussion ensued about approving a draft so that they could be handed out at the beginning of school. Board asked that they be distributed as drafts – they can review, make comments to Lori and approve at next meeting. Note that these are handbooks, not policies...Attorney asked to be sure comments via email are to Lori and not back and forth between board members.

Director Evaluation Tool/Data Collection – postponed to next session

New Business

Approval of Director's Recommendation for Asst Director – Academics
Director Dunsmore asked BOT to approve the interim appointment of Dinaz Adenwalla; the application period ends on 8/27; to date there were no other applicants; plenty of time to interview other candidates, if received, and submit for approval of permanent placement at next meeting. Discussion ensued re: qualifications of Interim Assistant Director; and permanent placement having the certification and qualifications to be appointed. Director asked BOT to trust that qualifications are appropriate at this time; and move things along for a vote.

Vote was taken to approve Dinaz Adenwalla as Interim Asst. Director of Academics.

Three members of board voted to approve as Interim, one member abstained.

Board welcomed Dinaz Adenwalla.

Dinaz Adenwalla: Stated that she is looking forward to working with the BOT, teachers and staff – especially in the new building.

Strategic Plan – Board Work Plan – Sally Arsenault from RIDE spoke: RIDE is prepared to help; sees a very abbreviated process – should be a one-day event with about 25 representatives of the school community; it will be a time to affirm which pieces you want to be part of your strategic plan; will work with another consultant from the deaf community – The one day session will probably have to be on a Saturday.

Building Info/Collaboration with Agencies; ie. Groden – postponed till next meeting.

Awareness and Updates on Student Achievement – postponed till next meeting – need more appropriate training on the new assessment.

Agenda Items and Next Meeting Date:

II. Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.