



MEETING MINUTES – Work Session

Date: August 23, 2011

Time: 6:00PM

Minutes recorded by: Nancy Sousa

Minutes approved on:

Interpreters: Carol Fay, Jon Henry

Cart: Shelley Deming

RIDE:

Attorney: Gary Flanagan for Sara Rapport

Call to Order

- a. Chairperson Travis Zellner called the meeting of the RI School for the Deaf Board of Trustees to order at 6:14 p.m. in the Cafeteria of the RI School for the Deaf.

Chair – Announced the resignation of Iraida Williams – (information included in packet) - now have 7 trustees – quorum = 4; in response to Member’s question of meeting schedule – regular meetings will be held the first Tuesday of every month and work sessions will be held on the third Tuesday of every month – the September 6 meeting is postponed to the 13th, but will keep to the schedule after that.

Roll Call of Board of Trustees

- a. **In Attendance:** Marie Lynch, Jodi Merryman, Westley Resendes, Angelo Garcia (had to leave for a personal emergency at 8:00 p.m.)
- b. **Excused:** Amy Donnelly-Roche, Harvey Corson

Adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a) (2) – Litigation - CBA

- a. **MOVED Angelo Garcia AND SECONDED Westley Resendes:** That the Board would adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a)(1) and (2) at 6:18 p.m..
Approved unanimously.
- b. **MOVED Jodi Merryman AND SECONDED Westley Resendes:** That the Board would return to Open Session at 7:01 p.m.. Approved unanimously.

- c. **MOVED Jodi Merryman AND SECONDED Westley Resendes:** That the Board would seal the minutes of Executive Session. Approved unanimously.

Motions from Executive Session: None

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

Reports:

- **Chairperson:** Noted that August was a hectic month; working on writing letters to staff, parents, etc. – want to keep all informed, regarding “who’s in charge”, the Letter of Intent (LOI), etc.
 - **Association of RI School Committees** – Board will join – information is in packets – the website has lots of info – looking forward to using their resources.
- **Interim Administration/Transformation Team:** Jennifer Smith has been away; she has been interviewing people for her staff who can come and help us; have not heard about postponement of deadline for reform plan – it may be due in December. Regarding LOI – RIDE will identify applicant; board will have one member on selection team, per our request.
- **Chair:** thanked Sheila Ressiger for her 28 years of commitment to the school and Ms. Pendergast noted that she is retired, but still here to be involved with the school.
- **Summer School Progress – 2011/2012 School Year Preparations – Mary Pendergast** reported that students had a rich work experience this summer, learning appropriate behavior in the workplace and how to access information. Next week, staff will meet on Monday and Tuesday, and students will start on Wednesday; in orientation, we will start with roles and responsibilities – who is doing what – standard protocol, CPI training. The schedules are completed and staff have them; Ms. Pendergast has met and talked with each staff member at least once. We have a vacant English teacher position; new Social Studies teacher starting next week – she seems very enthusiastic; we also have a new Speech/Language Pathologist. We are going to start ASL training; we expect teachers to be very flexible; expect that there will be about 70 students enrolled. The regular start-up package was mailed to homes last week. We have a rough draft of a letter (passed out draft to members) to be sent to teachers, parents, districts and the community.
 - **Members** had questions answered by Ms. Pendergast and Chair regarding the information included in the letter and how it should be composed and sent. They want to be assured that it clearly emphasizes the importance of having a Deaf Educator, and includes an explanation of what Transformation is and the roles of administration; be very clear that this school is for the deaf and hard of hearing.

- **Members** expressed concern that the letter to teachers and staff includes a commitment to be considerate of their work – so that they feel they are a “part of” the transformation rather than having the process forced upon them. We want to emphasize that this situation of uncertainty is temporary; we are working hard to remedy this situation as soon as possible; want to make sure the teachers, parents, community and school districts get the message of what we provide.
 - **Chair and Ms. Pendergast** assured members that letters would get out very soon.
- **Discussion** ensued regarding teachers going out of the building to do evaluations on site and what kind of compensation – Ms. Pendergast noted that there is a list of retirees and subs that would be happy to go out to respond to requests from districts; we need to get the basic info out quickly. The School Secretary will have a schedule for rotating staff for coverage so that it will be fair and equitable.
- **Chair** noted that he and other members would like to be invited to orientation or a meet and greet – so that they will get to know staff; Ms. Pendergast will poll staff for an available day/time.

Old/Work Session Business:

- Letter of Intent
 - **Chair** asked Ms. Pendergast to distribute the LOI to all teachers so that they would understand what we are looking for.
- RFP / Transformation Team Consultant
 - Update from RIDE – No one from RIDE in attendance
 - Selection process
- Transformation Team
 - RISD Director job description
 - **Sharon Salisbury** explained that Ms. Smith had asked for a compilation of Director job descriptions; Ms. Salisbury put them together with all the important info – focusing on deaf education and deaf culture; RIDE’s draft description was more general – told Ms. Smith that focus should be on deaf and hard of hearing educator; Ms. Salisbury and Ms. Pendergast will meet with Ms. Smith to discuss the difference in what RIDE is looking for; ultimately the recommendation is made by the BOT to the Commissioner; possibility that there is a push/pull dynamic for a deaf educator and someone successful with transformation – we may need two people – not one.

- The Board agreed to tentatively approve the Student Handbook to be used as guide for school opening. Ms. Pendergast would compose a cover sheet for the handbook to confirm the “tentative” approval. Will be formally voted on September 13, 2011.

Work Session Agenda Items

- Schedule of future meetings
 - Regular meetings -1st Tuesday of month, Work sessions – 3rd Tuesday of month. September regular meeting will be postponed to 9/13 and 9/20 work session will stay as scheduled. Chair will email members to confirm dates.
- Ocean State Network for Children and Families – “Network for Care”
 - Moved to next meeting
- Student Performance
 - Ongoing – Ms. Pendergast will have report on NWEA in September; planning to help define how we assess students systematically.

Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.