



## **MEETING MINUTES – General Meeting**

**Date:** September 13, 2011

**Time:** 6:00PM

**Minutes recorded by:** Nancy Sousa

**Minutes approved on:**

**Interpreters:** Carol Fay, Jon Henry and Maureen McEntee

Cart: Shelley Deming

RIDE: Jennifer Smith

Attorney: Sara Rapport

### **Call to Order**

- a. Vice-Chairperson Marie Lynch called the meeting of the RI School for the Deaf Board of Trustees to order at 6:05 p.m. in the Cafeteria of the RI School for the Deaf.

### **Roll Call of Board of Trustees**

- a. **In Attendance:** Marie Lynch, Amy Donnelly-Roche, Jodi Merryman, Westley Resendes, Harvey Corson, Angelo Garcia.
- b. **Excused:** Travis Zellner

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

- a. **MOVED Harvey Corson AND SECONDED Westley Resendes:** That the Board would adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a)(1) and (2) at 6:06 p.m.. Approved unanimously.
- b. **MOVED Angelo Garcia AND SECONDED Jodi Merryman:** That the Board would return to Open Session at 7:05 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**

## Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes

August 2, 2011 - tabled

August 23, 2011- tabled

## PUBLIC COMMENT:

**Michele Florio** – noted that Communication Policy is absent from policies to be reviewed and approved.

- **Member:** Would you rather see something now or wait until we have a new Director?
- **Ms. Florio:** When will the new Director be hired? We have been patient; can make do for now; hoping it is a top priority when new Director arrives.
- **Member:** we will look through our records; identify proposal and review for next meeting.

## Reports:

- **Chairperson: absent**
- **Interim Administration/Transformation Team – Mary Pendergast** reported that the school's start was delayed 1 day due to Tropical Storm Irene; grateful for the flexibility of staff. She referred to her report in the packet for the current number of students, NWEA and NECAP testing; current vacancies for a speech and language therapist, secondary English teacher, and guidance counselor; Open House will be held 10/5/11 and all were invited.
  - **Members:** discussed NWEA, and other ways to prepare for NECAP; member suggested we send communication home to insure parents get the message to have kids ready and well-rested for testing.

## Old/Work Session Business

- Letter of Intent
  - **Jennifer Smith** reported that the response period for the LOI was between August 5 and September 9 – received one response.
- RFP / Transformation Team Consultant
  - **Ms. Smith** noted that there are 3 main areas that this Transformation person will be assigned to:
    - Director search
    - Reform plan
    - School Improvement Grant plan
  - **Members** expressed hope that the single candidate is qualified and asked about the timeline. Ms. Smith responded that the process will be expedited, especially since there

is only one to review; if person meets minimum requirements, we will push it through; expecting that the person will start sometime in October (depending on procurement procedure timeliness). If the candidate does not meet requirements, we will have to repost and start process again.

- Transformation Team
  - RISD Director job description – Admin team supplied copies to members for review
    - **Members** commented on the need for a person with broad experience in Pre-K through 12 with experience in language support, deaf education, ASL, deaf issues, operational matters, physical plant and personnel. Members noted that since we are not hiring a curriculum person for Director, perhaps another curriculum person would be needed.
    - **Ms. Smith** thanked all for their feedback; she and leadership team combined a number of descriptions to have a comprehensive, well-rounded description; person must have rich education background, broad knowledge base; will use interview process to get the best match (will incorporate all legitimate concerns). Want to have a final draft by 9/16; will report to Board of Regents; publish and post by end of September.
    - **Vice-Chair** commented that it will be difficult to find one person who can do this job – wonder if we should be considering more than one person; it’s multi-faceted and we need to think about supplementary support.
    - **Members** agreed that all concerns should be included in job description, especially experience in working with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
  - Reform plan timeline
    - **Ms. Smith** reported that they are waiting for US Dept of Education – hoping for a response as soon as possible.
- Groden Center
  - **Corsino Delgado** reported that the deal is on hold because of the Transformation process; we are now using some of the space marked for Groden (moved staff and students to classroom); they are looking at other options. We would be looking for a strategic partner to be mutually beneficial.
- RISD Policies to be approved:
  - Bullying Policy
  - Dating Violence-Sexual Violence Policy
  - Code of Conduct Policy
  - Fire and Safety Drill Policy

- Dress and Grooming Code Policy
- RISD Policies approved, pending review:
  - Disciplinary Procedures for Students with Disabilities Policy
  - Internet Safety
  - Visitor's Policy
  - Family Involvement and Student Discipline Code
    - Much discussion ensued regarding the above Policies: **Ms. Pendergast** emphasized that policies should be organized as follows
      - 1) those previously approved
      - 2) request for language (Code of Conduct)
      - 3) those needing parental input
    - **Members** expressed concerns: policies vs. procedures; approved vs. not approved, (but in student handbook); having something in place, esp. regarding Bullying, since school has already started.
    - **Ms. Pendergast** assured members that the draft policies were developed from those of the RI Association of School Boards' website; following where it made sense for us; extremely aligned to RIASB and other districts; suggested getting approval on content and work on format to give teachers something to go by.
    - **Members** could not come to a consensus on whether or not the policies before them should be tentatively approved for distribution to staff and students. They concluded that a more thorough review of all the policies should be made in sub-committee. A Policy sub-committee was previously formed with Amy Donnelly Roche, Angelo Garcia and Jodi Merryman. The three will meet on 9/20/11 to review all policies on agenda (excluding Bullying and Dating Violence, both will be scrapped and completely redone). The sub-committee will bring the reviewed draft policies to the Board's Special Meeting on 9/20/11 (after work session) for the Board's approval.
    - **Attorney Rapport** noted that policies can always be changed and modified at any time; they are not hard to amend; since there is some over-lap in the Bullying and Dating Violence policies, should wait on those two for a more thorough review and revision.
    - **In conclusion**, it was decided that Ms. Donnelly-Roche, Mr. Garcia and Ms. Merryman (asking admin team members, staff, parents, and any interested parties to join them) would meet for two hours to review the policies and then present the results to a quorum for approval in a one-hour Special Meeting immediately following the sub-committee Work Session.

- Board of Trustee Vacancy (Deaf Seat and Hearing seats)
  - **Vice Chair** asked members to look over the nominating application (copy in packet) for new members and share with others they think may be interested and would be a good fit for the Board.

### **New Business**

- Future Agenda Items – tabled

### **Adjournment**

- a. Meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.