



MEETING MINUTES – GENERAL MEETING

Date: August 7, 2012

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Minutes recorded by: Nancy Sousa

Minutes approved on: September 4, 2012

Interpreters: Carol Fay and Maureen McEntee

Cart: Shelley Deming

RIDE:

Attorney:

Call to Order

- a. Chairperson Travis Zellner called the meeting of the RI School for the Deaf Board of Trustees to order at 6:03 p.m. in the Cafeteria of the RI School for the Deaf.

Roll Call of Board of Trustees

- b. **In Attendance:** Marie Lynch, Amy D Roche, Jodi Merryman, Angelo Garcia.
- c. **Excused:** Westley Resendes, Harvey Corson

Public Comment - None

Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes:

- o **May 8, 2012 – Special – Tabled for missing info**
- o **May 15, 2012 – Special – Tabled for missing info**
- o **June 5, 2012 – General Meeting – approved as corrected (pg. 4)**

Reports:

- o Chairperson – Welcomed Nancy Maguire Heath as new Director – officially accepted on July 8, 2012 – so far things are going well. There were no meetings in July (wanted to give NMH change to settle in). Have not received communication from BOR; Jennifer Smith left for D.C. and we have Tonda Dunbar as her replacement; Andrea is still with

us; there should be no impact to us re Jennifer Smith's leaving. We want to focus on ourselves as a Board – figure out what our true roles are as trustees; we received letter from BOR re our intentions of staying on the Board; we must strengthen and increase recruitment; NMH would like agendas to be kept simple and focus on us. We will discuss meeting schedules, perhaps consolidating some with varied agendas.

- Director – Unpacked and all moved in – met with about 70% of staff – very positive, re priorities, goals, vision; reviewing every position; discussed sign language use at school; will try to bring ASL classes to school; teachers will be trained on how to teach with ASL – e.g. math, algebra; there are a number of staff with very basic skills; needs to be a shared responsibility to do better. Have been busy planning Summer Institute (part of PLA); we opened up the training to Special Ed Director and had a great response – we accepted 10 out of 30 applicants. Working on personnel issues – hired 5: an English teacher, two counselors, a Social Worker and a PE teacher – all have ASL proficiency. We have agreed with RIDE to share Sharon Salisbury; starting in September, she will work 3 days here and 2 days at RIDE. We have given teachers their assignments for fall; emphasizing new concept – ASL or auditory access all day – sign by groupings – mixing at elementary level, math teams; will take advantage of best signers. Have completed 4-day training in educator evaluation system – new implementation; revised and updated job descriptions; one student handbook is done; making connections with the commissioner and Friends; went to RIASP for 2 days and felt like a politician; all had something to contribute – great networking. I met with East Providence Director of Career & Technical and RIHAP; they have a seat on the Board of Directors for me; can continue representing RI students – the staff was very welcoming, asking what they can do for us. I'm learning how RI operations work (leaving MA behind).

Travis Zellner: We will expect to get reports from you in advance in future; we need to change our role from school and support the Director so that she can meet her expectations; improve our communications; we need info in advance to make decisions – it's a priority so that input can be given.

Members: asked if new hires are part of the consent agenda – **NMH** checked the by-laws – it has never been the Board's legal obligation to approve new hires.

Director: shared an article in Harvard Education with the board– so all on same page; impact on classrooms – especially deaf classrooms – exciting for deaf education.

Members: encouraged by NMH report and her leadership; especially appreciate that 5 people hired all have ASL skills; want to hear about student achievement/work; want all the info to come from Director; it's all about the students (some policy and budget stuff); want to hear more specifics about

instruction and assessments – tweaks to the Plan – what additional pieces are there; challenges for students re NECAP. Student achievement is our concern.

Director: It has been my experience to frequently invite teachers to address the Board; don't have the Plan with me but there will be some PD changes – not enough foundational stuff; have contacted PA School for the Deaf – they will come here for 2-3 days to work with teachers; funding for PD is a problem we're working on it, will be meeting with Tondra to go over line items one by one. There will be two weeks of school, then NWEA – then NECAP starts October 1st; we won't be able to make a dent in scores so soon; these tests are not an end-all – put more attention on PLA and informed instruction; no miracles that fast. This will be a year of a lot of firsts; urging staff to understand that we're all in this together; appreciate that we have a lot of expertise on the Board to help us.

- **Assistant Director** – Corsino Delgado reported that he has reached a resolution/payment plan with National Grid who waived interest and late fees; construction fund will pay part and we will pay from last year's budget; received budget instructions for revised FY13 and FY14; have not received funds yet. FY14 will have 2 budgets – a normal budget and a constrained budget – may have to reduce spending by 10%; no deadline from RIDE when budget is due; will report when I know. Last year, Harvey Corson spent time with me on the budget; next time we meet will be in September. We have ordered signs for the school – so you know where you are and where you're going. Maintenance crew has been working had to spruce up the grounds; we purchased a lawn mower so that we can do it all here.

Travis Zellner: have we contacted parents and sent letters?

Director: introduced myself and put Open House on calendar for October; keeping energy moving; met with two parents so far; met a few more parents when kids came back from camp.

Break at 7:05 pm

Old Business:

- **Reform/SIG Plan:**
 - Update from Director – Already mentioned – revisions will be in Fall – will keep Board informed.

- **New Business: Travis Zellner:** The Board is really shaky with so few members, if one doesn't show, we do not have a quorum, Our primary focus should be on us; we all need to be ready to move forward. With the new Director, we can focus on what we should be doing as a Board.
 - **Board of Trustees 2012-13 SY meeting schedule** – After discussion, **it was decided that meetings will be held the first Tuesday of every month – until June of 2013 – except for January 2013 – when the meeting will be held on the 2nd Tuesday – January 8, 2013.** Arrangements will be made for special circumstances, e.g. special sessions and work sessions-must have 48-hour notice. Will check By-Laws to see if we must have at least one general meeting per month. Director feels that there should be an opportunity for Public Comment at every monthly meeting.
 - **Board of Trustees Officers: Travis Zellner:** there is no formal process for the selection of officers.
Marie Lynch is still interested in being Vice Chair– **approved by all**
 - **Vice Chairman and Secretary – Travis:** we need to look at expansion of roles: identify members interested in specific committees/roles by next month; who does what? What is our role with the Director and Personnel, Policies and Budget? Will notify the Board of Regents and the Chair that it is taking too long to fill the vacancies on the Board – one recruit has already dropped out; ask Andrea to contact them again.
 - **Board of Trustees Bylaws**
 - **Term Limits – Travis:** We have a lot of work to do, and we can't all leave at once; some of us are way over our limit; need a staggered system; most of us do not want to abandon the Board; we need standing committees for policy and budget – who will meet with Corsino on Budget? Members had questions about the requirement of a Wellness Committee; any response from BOR or RIDE re new members.

- **Director:** noted that the Personnel Committee, specifically, should be evaluating her – what tool would be used? Noted further that Andrea asked if she should come to BOT meetings; told her no, unless we need her; expressed her concern that new members come on Board – she works for Board; make-up of the Board is up to BOT. She will send her report and presentations to the Board before the day of the meeting so that they will have time to read and decide what the issues are.
- **Board of Trustees recruitment** – see above.
- Future Agenda Items
 - BOT short-term goals for SY2012-13
 - RISD Strategic Plan
 - BOT Standing Committees
 - Policy, Budget and Personnel
 - Director’s goals for SY12-13
 - RISD Student Achievement

Adjournment at 7:45 p.m.