



RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

One Corliss Park

Providence, RI 02908

MEETING MINUTES – General Meeting

Date: October 15, 2013

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Minutes recorded by: Nancy Sousa

Minutes approved on: 11/5/13

Interpreters: Carol Fay, Maureen McEntee

Cart: Tammi Burnham

RIDE:

Attorney:

Call to Order

- a. Chairperson Marie Lynch called the meeting of the RI School for the Deaf Board of Trustees to order at 6:06 p.m. in the Cafeteria of the RI School for the Deaf.

Roll Call of Board of Trustees

- b. **In Attendance:** Jodi Merryman, Westley Resendes, Joseph Fischgrund, Lindsey Medeiros, Heather Niedbala
- c. **Excused:** Travis Zellner, Amy Donnelly Roche, Amanda Montgomery

- **Public Comment:** None

- **Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes:**

September 24, 2013 – General Meeting: **approved by consensus**

- **Reports / Action Items:** (6:25 - 7:45pm)

- Report of the Board of Trustees Chair, **Marie Lynch:**

- Need of Nominees: BOT Training - need to find one and possibly two deaf and/or hard of hearing members; committed individuals to be on the Board.
Westley Resendes noted that he is looking for employment and may not be living in the area; will have to resign from the Board if he moves for employment;
Travis Zellner and **Amy Donnelly Roche** will be leaving in December.
Members discussed the possibility of recruiting Special Ed Directors or representatives from LEAs that already have a positive relationship with the school; there may be a

conflict of interest with employees of school districts who have students at RISD; more thought and discussion is needed – while there are negatives (conflicts), there are also benefits with LEAs having the expertise in common school-based areas.

- 2013-2014 Board of Trustees calendar; timeframe
It was decided that 6:00 p.m. would be the best start time for meetings.
- Responsiveness to community members
Marie Lynch asked members to refer issues to her, the Chair, as a typical response: “I will bring the issue to the Chair or Board, thank you”, and encourage them to attend a meeting.
Members noted that interested parties can submit a comment on our new website and that there should be an automatic response thanking them for their comment and noting that the issue will be forwarded to the appropriate person on the Board.
- Election of officers; Committee work
Secretary, Vice-Chair positions will need to be filled; send email to Chair with interest in either position. Chair will send emails to all with information re committees.
Committees: Jodi Merryman: Chair Policy Committee
Marie Lynch: Chair Personnel Committee
Travis Zellner is winding down as Chair of By-Laws Committee
Finance/Budget Committee Chair = open.
Need representative for RISD Health and Wellness Committee
- Discussion of renewal of legal contract with - expires 1/31/14
Whelan, Kinder & Siket LLP
Sara A. Rapport, Partner
30 Kennedy Plaza, Suite 402
Providence, RI 02903
Chair discussed the current legal counsel’s (Sara Rapport) position with a new law firm and the issue of going out to bid for a new contract in January – not a good time for us with negotiations. Her expertise has served us ably with various contractual agreements, and OMA decision-making; we do not want to lose her.
Maureen Wu noted that a new Request for Legal Counsel would have to be processed before February 1st; asked for content from the Board for scope of services and requirements, especially experience in Labor Law.
Chair will ask Ms. Rapport about an extension of the present contract to June 2014.
- Reports of the Director and Assistant Director of Finance, **Nancy Maguire Heath:** handed out census and statistics.
 - Updates on the first month of school – 2 new students possible; 1 moved unexpectedly.
 - Open House – successful, positive and pleasant; not as many attended as last year.
 - NECAP testing – students working very hard; looking for improvement; will need to develop annual benchmarks that RIDE will need to access our progress on Reform Plan. We will be moving away from NWEA; going to Star Math and Reading; students have extra tutoring help.
 - Member proposed discussion re Mission Statement – feels it is critical and negative to the deaf and hard of hearing – more discussion will follow on this topic at a later date.
 - Discussed Project Close-Up; noted that there are funds in the Friends account to fund one student for a trip to D.C.; looking for fund-raising ideas to allow more students to attend – it’s a great program for deaf and hard of hearing students to experience this – outside of

the RISD. Members feel that the Board and Friends should collaborate to find a broader plan to fund these types of things; find members with skills in this area.

- Director showed the new Year Book to members and noted that Travis Zellner was acknowledged in this year's book. Congrats to Travis Zellner.
 - The Director also noted that staff has volunteered to help her with representing RISD at community events – great help to her.

 - **Maureen Wu:** Rentals – showed income received for gym and field rentals with an estimated revenue for 12-month period; noted that we will work on renting space to an EI group next school year.
 - Clarification on Budget discussion – handed out a report of FTEs to clarify for the Board positions and categories.
- Report of the Board of Trustees Policy Committee - **Jodi Merryman:**
 - Action Item: Policy 2nd reading: Harassment, Bullying, Dating Violence **Amendment - sentence will be added for approval at next meeting.**
 - Physical Restraint/Crisis Intervention Policy – **Approved by consensus**

 - Report of the Board of Trustees Personnel Committee:
 - Action Item: N/A

 - Report of the Board of Trustees ByLaws Committee:
 - Action Item: N/A

Adjournment: (7:36 p.m.)