



MEETING MINUTES – General Meeting

Date: December 3, 2013

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Minutes recorded by: Nancy Sousa

Minutes approved on: 2-4-14

Interpreters: Carol Fay, Maureen McEntee

Cart: Shelley Deming

RIDE:

Attorney:

Call to Order

- a. Chair Marie Lynch 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:** Travis Zellner, Amy Donnelly Roche, Jodi Merryman, Joseph Fischgrund, Lindsey Medeiros, Heather Niedbala
 - c. **Excused:** Amanda Montgomery
- **Public Comment: Cheryl Hollingworth – Transition Coordinator:** acknowledged Travis Zellner – thanking him for his work with the Board, for the school; also acknowledged Amy Donnelly Roche for her service to the school.....sentiments shared by all per Marie Lynch and Nancy Maguire Heath.

Farewell to Travis Zellner & Amy Donnelly-Roche:

Since it was last meeting for Travis Zellner and Amy Donnelly Roche, cake was shared by all.

- **Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes:**

- November 5, 2013 - General Meeting – approved by consensus (with edits)

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- **Reports / Action Items:**

- **Report of the Board of Trustees Chair:**

- Need for BOT nominees & future training: Marie Lynch noted that we need nominees, especially Deaf and hard of hearing – with Travis and Amy leaving – we must have at least 5 Deaf and hard of hearing members; We must have at least one more member by

March 1st because of possible lay-offs (must have at least 7 trustees at those meetings); the one deaf candidate that we had (Brett) declined the opportunity at this time, but may reconsider at a later date. The Board was informed that Heather Niedbala received an award as a Deaf Leader from RICDHH and Hamilton Relay– she has connections with lots of groups and is going to New Jersey for deaf self-advocacy training; she will be able to give back even more to the Board...congratulations Heather.

- **Consideration of ways to share info with larger community:** Need to identify who would be interested in helping the school; consider varied fund-raising efforts inclusive of Friends efforts; provide all of us (trustees and staff) with correct information about the school to use as we interact with the community. It was suggested that varied staff come to monthly meetings to tell us what they do. There is a great need for bussing for after-school programs/events for students and the current budget cannot accommodate. This possibly impacts students' needs/goals.

Member Lindsey Medeiros (assigned to Gala) noted that the Gala is a huge event that she will need help with organizing; Joseph Fischgrund agreed to help with the Gala and facilitating getting interested parties involved – he is willing to offer his expertise, but hoped that it would not be planned for this Spring – he feels that timing is everything, and much time and effort is involved in a successful event; the Director noted that Ann Marie Clarkson is very interested in helping with the Gala who has experience with this type of event

- Committees Roles/Functions – Chair noted that election of officers will need to help determine committee work.
- Update on renewal of legal contract with
Whelan, Kinder & Siket LLP
Sara A. Rapport, Partner
30 Kennedy Plaza, Suite 402
Providence, RI 02903-231

Maureen Wu: reported that she had a productive meeting with Sara Rapport regarding the issues with the contract ending January 31st. They are looking to adjust the hourly rate to market value; said State is negotiating a new contract with her firm; we would like to extend the current contract through the end of summer or June 30th – will follow-up and update Board at next meeting.

- Report of the Board of Trustees ByLaws Committee:
 - Action Item: 3rd Reading /Approval

Travis Zellner reported that no changes or modifications came to him; presenting the same draft copy that we can approve and modify later, if needed. Members and the Director noted small changes/corrections in wording that they would like to see, but agreed that it could be modified at a later date.

It was agreed by consensus that the Board of Trustees By-Laws be accepted (*with minor edits*).

- Report of the Board of Trustees Policy Committee:
 - Action Item: First Reading: Research Policy – **Director, Nancy Maguire Heath**, noted that we are getting numerous requests for research – this policy is an attempt to protect students and families' rights; we need a process to allow researchers to come into our

school/classrooms. She asked that members read the draft carefully and make suggestions to her for the 2nd reading.

- Reports of the Director and Assistant Director of Finance:

The Director noted that we have a new student in PK, and another student returning; Report cards have been issued – teachers are making students accountable with increasing rigor; they must produce to receive a grade. Four students will go to the Academic Bowl in Rochester. Completed NWEA for the last time as we are adopting Star Math and Star Reading – which is aligned with Common Core; After-school tutoring is on-going; Three students are committed to attending Close-Up in Washington DC. There will be a Tip-off Tournament the 2nd week in December.

At the RIHAP Conference, May 9th, Joseph Fischgrund and the Director will present.

PK has transitioned to a bi-lingual model; we are doing an event at Rochambeau – ASL Story Time – it is a regular, on-going monthly event

A team from RI went to the Transition Summit in Chicago (Cheryl Hollingworth, Michelle, Paula and someone from West Bay Collaborative). It was fully paid for by PEPNET – plans for kids and team to go out again in January and every year after that – it is a national effort that is productive for our students. The Director and Finance Administrator agreed to be sure to communicate all events at the school to Board members and the Deaf community.

The new school logo has not yet been determined.

- Report of the Board of Trustees Personnel Committee:
 - Action Item: Reviewing Director Goals – will review at next meeting.

Maureen Wu: reported that there was no word from Budget re the FY15 reduction; currently we are on target; spending is where she thought it would be; Mariposa is still interested in facility for PK – this rental would be something good for our kids and show the legislature that we are moving forward; our gym is rented every night through June; we are putting that income back into refinishing the floor and have maintained the soccer field to encourage teams to continue to rent the facility. The student-designed logo for the floor is the same that is on our athletic hats; discussion ensued re the old logo and the history; also discussed getting new banners for the walls. The purchase order for the garage is done and construction should be complete by July 31st.

- **Adjournment:** 8:19 p.m.

Chair: Final thank you to Travis Zellner and Amy Donnelly Roche for their years of service to our Board and School.