



RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

One Corliss Park

Providence, RI 02908

MEETING MINUTES – General Meeting

Date: March 3, 2015

Time: Minutes recorded by: Helen Edwards

Minutes approved on: June 2, 2015

Interpreters: Maureen McEntee, Mary Ellen Baxter Breen

CART: Shelly Deming

Call to Order:

a. Board Chairperson Amanda Montgomery called the meeting of the RI School for the Deaf Board of Trustees to order at 6:07 pm in the Cafeteria of the School for the Deaf.

- **Roll Call of Board of Trustees**

b. In Attendance: Amanda Montgomery, Jodi Merryman, Jane Newkirk, Heather Niedbala, Danielle Loughlin Joseph Fischgrund, Nora Meah, Lindsey Medeiros

c. **Excused:** Jonathan Henner

Chairperson Montgomery introduced the Boys Basketball Team to the Board. Director Maguire Heath introduced the boys by name to the Board and stated that this is the best basketball team she has ever seen. They worked hard under pressure and did better and better each game. Jairee Hill, one of the captains of the team told everyone about their experience playing in the tournament and the long drive home during the snowstorm. Director Maguire Heath also told the boys and coaches that a dinner would be held for them next month. Everyone congratulated the boys on a job well done.

- **Public Comment:**

Joseph Batiano, a counselor at the school and also one of the senior advisors, spoke about the dance that was held at the school on February 27, 2015. There were a total of 86 students who attended. They were from other schools for the deaf. It was a fundraiser for the senior, a first time event, and was a successful event. Many people have suggested to do it again next year. The staff from other schools came and helped and also sent e-mails saying what a wonderful time everyone had. Director Maguire Heath stated that the lighting design for the evening was done by Joseph, falling snowflakes were projected on the wall and it was quite beautiful. All the students were socializing with each other and having fun. We are hoping to do this on an annual basis.

- **Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes:**

We will get the minutes from the February 26, 2015 meeting at the April 7, 2015 meeting. The minutes are not complete as we just met less than a week ago.

- **Reports:**
 - Report of the Board of Trustees Chair:
 - Chairperson Montgomery reported that she had one person whom she had contacted regarding being a Board member, but had not heard back yet. If anyone can think of someone who would be a great fit for the Board please let her know. The next seat can be deaf, hard of hearing or hearing. Chairperson Montgomery asked the Board members to think about what experience that person should have, perhaps someone with an education background, policy background, political or legislative background. Director Maguire Heath suggested someone with a finance background would be helpful. We only have one person on the finance committee and another one would be helpful.
 - Chairperson Montgomery announced that there was cake in honor of Jodi Merryman, a long time member, who is leaving the Board after this meeting. Ms. Merryman stated that it had been a pleasure being on the Board for the last five years and working with such dedicated hard-working people. She feels comfortable that the school is on the right track. Joseph Fischgrund thanked Ms. Merryman for being on the Policy Committee.
 - Board Training
 - Chairperson Montgomery stated that the goal was to have Maureen Cotter, trainer, come in the end of March or the beginning of April for training. The consensus was to have the training on Saturdays.
 - Planning: Upcoming Director Review & Evaluation
 - Chairperson Montgomery stated that they were going to start preparing for the Director's review & evaluation. We are also going to have to prepare for Director Maguire Heath's contract renewal, which comes up in June and decide whether to offer her a new contract and give her time to review and make any changes. We need to wrap this up before her contract actually expires. The personnel committee consists of Chairperson Montgomery, Nora Meah, and Jane Newkirk. Director Maguire Heath did comment that RIDE had asked when her review would be, because her certification is due to be renewed and should not technically be renewed without a third evaluation.
 - Chairperson Montgomery announced that the first Tuesday of every month is reserved for the Board meeting. The third Tuesday of the month in general could be for committee work sessions. The Personnel Committee consists of Chairperson Montgomery, Nora Meah and Jane Newkirk. The By-Laws Committee is Jane Newkirk, The Health and Wellness Committee consists of Lindsey Medeiros and Danielle Loughlin. The Policy Committee is Danielle Loughlin , Jonathan Henner and Chairperson Montgomery. The Finance Committee is Joseph Fischgrund.
 - Logistics for Interpreter Coverage, including Committees
 - Chairperson Montgomery mentioned that there are interpreters scheduled for the remainder of the year. Last week's glitch occurred because the meeting was scheduled quickly (2 ½ weeks ahead) due to urgent agenda items. Interpreters typically need more time for scheduling.

- Mr. Fischgrund had a question regarding the Health and Wellness Committee. He would like everyone to get the latest copy of the By-Laws, so that everyone has the same version to review.
 - Chairperson Montgomery pointed out that previously the Director would present a policy and then there would be discussion. A better process would be for the Policy Committee to first review the policy and then present it to the Board for the first reading. Feedback would begin at that point, and thus create a more efficient process.
 - Director Maguire Heath informed the Board that previously the 1st Tuesday was for formal meetings and the third Tuesday for possible committee meetings. Emergency meetings could also be held on the third Tuesday of the month. Committee meetings must also be posted because of the open meeting law; even subcommittee meetings must be posted. Ms. Edwards will arrange for the posting and interpreters as needed.
- Reports of the Director and Assistant Director of Finance:
- Director Maguire Heath informed everyone about the invitation in his or her packet for the Kick Off of our birthday year. The Kick-off celebration will be held on April 29, 2015 at 5:30 pm at the State House. The actual birthday event will be held next year on Friday, April 29, 2016. It will be held at a hotel or ballroom. Anne Marie Clarkson has been chairing the committee it. FRIENDS of RI School for the Deaf received a gracious gift to support the celebration, a check for \$10,000 from the Providence Journal Charitable Legacy Foundation. Peter Blackwell, former Director for many years, will be doing a historical overview of the school's relationship to the Legislature. He will talk about the milestones in the School's history. It will also start with a picture of the original school which was on the East Side and will end with a picture of the current school. Director Maguire Heath will do a short talk about the school and its current students and programs. There will be refreshments after the celebration and there will be historical items for everyone to view. This will be the first event in a series of events celebrating the School's 125th year.
 - Director Maguire Heath also spoke about the RIDE quarterly monitoring report which members received. She did a quick walk through of this report addressing gains and compliance with the transformation plan. She stated that she must meet with the Director of Transformation and defend what is happening at the school every 3 months. It was stated that we currently have four clear goal areas:
 1. ASL Proficiency of the teaching staff
 2. Student Attendance
 3. Reading Gains
 4. Math Gains

Director Maguire Heath stated that the overall goal is to raise reading levels by a grade a half by June 30, 2015. Data packets were available to correspond with the presentation. The math charts that were presented to the Board were very promising. Reading gains continue to be slow. Many of the teachers are confident with the new math program. Fidelity to the new ASL literacy strategies are less visible. RIDE reviews the data and will meet with the Director and her leadership team to discuss what changes we could make to improve performance. Director Maguire Heath then meets with Steve Osborn, the Transformation Director, to develop an action plan for continued improvement.

- Assistant Director Wu passed out a detailed financial report to the Board. The report is broken down in two different ways. One chart shows the budget and expenditures by general revenue sources, which is what is appropriated to the school every year by the legislature. Federal revenue is our federal grants, which includes IDEA money, Title 1, Title 2, Race to the Top funds this year. Restricted money is money from fee for service billing to the districts, and also includes rental income from rental of field, gym and Mariposa. RIDE also allotted \$59,000 to the school for this year to continue the work of the Transformation Plan. The second chart shows the same dollars but is broken down by expenditure category, which includes salary, benefits, and consultants. Assistant Director Wu also stated that we have about \$55,000 outstanding in purchase orders. The cost of snow plowing has also increased as well as building maintenance for equipment which has failed and needed repair. Utilities are also climbing.
- Assistant Director Wu mentioned that we were approved a grant for a wireless classroom initiative. This is to bring classrooms up to par with other students, using iPad or their phones or laptops and being able to access the Internet. We have been allocated \$75,000 for this and the lowest bidder was Custom Computer. We are hoping they can start work in April during vacation and complete it over the summer.
- Report of the Policy Committee
 - ***Medication “Self Carry and Self-Administer” Policy for Off-Site School Sponsored Activities and Overnight Trips, Including Sports.***
Director Maguire Heath stated that this is the third reading and hopefully the final reading of the self-carry and self-administer policy. We have made it as clear as possible for parents to read it more easily. She explained we need to have something in place to protect students and the school when students go on an overnight tournament or field trip. The policy was approved by consensus.

Adjournment: 8:05 pm