

APPROVED



**RIVER VALLEY
CHARTER SCHOOL**
montessori made public

River Valley Charter School

Minutes

November Board Meeting

Date and Time

Wednesday November 15, 2023 at 7:00 PM

Location

River Valley Charter School, 2 Perry Way, Newburyport, MA. Middle School Great Room

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the River Valley Charter School is to provide a rigorous academic program based on the Montessori philosophy and rooted in the history, culture and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley. Students will reach their full potential as scholars and become self-reliant, productive members of society. They will be adept at critical thinking and creative problem solving and will be fully prepared to succeed in future schools, careers and civic life.

Trustees Present

A. Ting, C. Getz, C. Martin, C. Whitford, D. Herrera, E. Bradley, K. Jackman, N. Durkee, T. Murdy

Trustees Absent

A. Fields, E. Rankin, E. Seaton, E. Simone, M. Connerton

I. Opening Items

A. Call the Meeting to Order

D. Herrera called a meeting of the board of trustees of River Valley Charter School to order on Wednesday Nov 15, 2023 at 7:05 PM.

B. Record Attendance

C. Public Comment

No public comment.

D. Approve Minutes

E. Bradley made a motion to approve the minutes from RVCS Board Meeting on 10-18-23.

C. Whitford seconded the motion.

No discussion

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

E. Approve Accountability Meeting Minutes

E. Bradley made a motion to approve the minutes from November AC Mtg on 10-30-23.

C. Whitford seconded the motion.

ND raised question as to something she believed was discussed about the accountability plan. TM clarified she also feels this needs to be discussed but it was not, as reflected in minutes.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

F. Approve Executive Committee Minutes

Questioned raised by KJ-- requesting clarification around language used

"... JLE will be on intermittent FMLA" change to

"... JLE has submitted application to be on intermittent FMLA."

E. Bradley made a motion to approve the minutes from Executive Committee meeting on 11-08-23.

C. Whitford seconded the motion.

see above

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

G. Approve Development minutes

E. Bradley made a motion to approve the minutes from Development Committee Meeting on 10-23-23.

C. Whitford seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Montessori Minute

A. Montessori Minute

Foldscopes: 6th grade engineering project

"inspiration"-- Youtube: How to save 51 billion lives for 68 cents with simple engineering--
6th grade introduction to microscope

Borrowed microscopes-- sharing and exchange of materials is embedded in Montessori culture here. Use of recycled material and recurrent use of materials also important parts of engineering projects. Process and solution variations are just as important as outcomes.

Compared their foldscopes to the commercial ones AND THEN students go to make their own slides from materials around the school. Finished the lesson with structured reflections.

III. Other Business

A. Board on Track Presentation

Overview of people and resources available us as BOT members from Board of Track. Nice overview from Yuna Shin- yuna@boardontrack.com- on the initial pull over of info to the new system.

Goal for board of track-- Accessibility for BOT members and Visibility for the RVCS community and beyond

B. Board Packet

IV. Board Business

A. Committee Descriptions

Board Goal Revisited by DH -- of cleaning up roles of the committees

Where do you find the current committee descriptions?

Most have not been updated since 2011/2012 so "this will be a first pass"-- having the committee heads look compare what we do in this committee v. what is stated we do.

This will be the description that carries over to board on track rather than uploading out of date or inconsistent descriptions.

Asking for the clean up of these descriptions to be available for early January review.

V. Director Report

A. Director's Report

EBI-- Question re: Fully staffed per Director's Report including special education staffing?

Third adult add to Special Ed group-- interventionalist

Lisa Kelley 4 to 8 Special Ed

Christina Curico K to 3 Special Ed

Special Ed 2 adults in middle school

1 staff member out of continuous PFML-- Coverage from the outside hired to fill this need

Software provider for IEPs and 504s may present a hiccup because new federal requirements.

Drop off has been going much smoother.

VI. Accountability Committee

A. Accountability Update

AC needs to discuss establishing goals for Mission and Key Design and other things likely to be reported out as elements raised in Montessori audit. They are looking for desegregated data.

Dashboard is for who... the board or RVCS constituents?

As it pertains to the accountability committee BOT is looking for a dashboard/snapshot of metrics of academics

Screening systems discussed--

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills

Acadience Math

DH asked JLE the process she uses to help staff access professional development
6 teachers on deck to complete Montessori certification at the E1 level now.

Outstanding Montessori training center local.

Internal Audit Montessori completed last year May-- later than usual--- Colin, Jane, JLE completed it. External Audit pulls a lot from audit.

VII. Development Committee

A. Development Update

DH standing in for ER to report update

All tasks on track for December.

Partnering w/ PA for Maple Crest Lantern walk-- Thursday, December 21

PA providing small snacks, there will be a walk and a fire.

25 year celebration, tied to the 8 C's monthly.

Holiday card to be sent to community/family in spirit of the holiday and saying thank you--- distribution to internal community, staff, vendors

\$14,000 total raised from this school year thus far

79% of people opened the 25th year letter ask

B. Leadership Giving

The ask is that BOT members donate in the spirit of service and support. In whatever amount they are comfortable with but being able to say we have 100 percent BOT donating would be the goal.

VIII. Finance Committee

A. Finance Update

CW-- Victory lapping. Still celebrating the completion of the audit. No updates, no meeting.

IX. Committee on Trustees

A. CoT Update

BoT Volunteer Event Discussed DATE: TBD ? After the holiday

Selection of volunteer tasks and assignment of task leads

Board and committee recruitment 3 - 4 members recruitment strategies and areas of expertise needed.

Recruitment procedure/policy Discuss 10 m

Review and update the BoT new trustee recruitment process.

X. Executive Committee

A. BOT member KJ ask the following questions--

Please have the minutes reflect that all my questions are directed to the Board Chair.

1. I had asked under the minutes discussion to clarify the wording in the minutes as to the current status if this is an application or if it has been approved. Following on that, what is our understanding of who approves the application?
2. In the application process, has an employer requested medical certification been requested and received?
3. Given that any similar board should have a succession plan as good organizational operating procedure to be prepared in the case or all sorts of eventualities, we know we don't have one. Now looking at the threshold for FMLA is to "take medical leave when the employee is unable to work because of a serious health condition", it is not unreasonable to consider that an approved serious medical condition could worsen and require more time off, it is even more important for the school organization to be prepared to support leadership staff that would need to fill in to keep things operational. As a fiduciary board member, I would suggest that if the application is approved, we should schedule a special board meeting to make sure we have a plan in place to support Jane, Dave and Colin with the responsibilities that would fall on them during this time.

4. Intermittent FMLA is the most complicated to manage, and to be in compliance, we need to have a system for tracking leave time taken to make sure it provides and accurate accounting - do we currently have a system capable of serving this purpose or is what our plan for implementing one?

Questions were answer to the best of the chair and other EC members ability but all agreed a dedicated December BOT meeting to address these questions and other loose ends would be best practice--

DH-- To the best of our understanding HR knowledge is the approval body as it pertains to JLE's leave. (response to question 1)

Since EC/BOT is not the "body approving" the PFML "we" did not receive the medical certification documents but all thought it was reasonable to expect that these documents be completed and received by HR knowledge; furthermore, any information that was relevant and within HR knowledge's scope to share would be expected. (response to question 2)

EC members- Yes, this was the focus of much of EC's discussion around the PFML-- what was the plan in place to support Jane, Dave and Colin and did they feel both enough supports and enough authority during the time that JLE will be out. (response to question 3)

Yes, there is a system in place that tracks the hours JLE is using PFMLA time. JLE offered Dave is the person in charge of monitoring those hours. (response to question 4)

AT-- Redirected conversation to ensure we as a BOT are not overstepping and possible unintentionally infringing on federal protected info afforded under the PFMLA.

Actionable next steps: DH to discuss further with HR knowledge in order to provide more clarity around our role and where the line is re: need to know information lies in order to best support Jane, Dave and Colin and protect RVCS community as a whole while still allowing JLE her privacy and approved time.

Consensus was a focused December BOT meeting would be beneficial.

XI. Closing Items

A. Public Comment

None

B. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 9:07 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
D. Herrera

Documents used during the meeting

- NOV Director's Report to the BOT_NOVEMBER 15 Meeting.pdf