APPROVED



RIVER VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL
montessori made public

River Valley Charter School

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time
Wednesday March 20, 2024 at 7:00 PM

Location
River Valley Charter School, 2 Perry Way, Newburyport. 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 (remote), C. Whitford, D. Herrera, E. Bradley, E. Rankin, E. Simone, M. Connerton, T. Murdy

Trustees Absent
A. Fields, E. Seaton, N. Durkee

Trustees who left before the meeting adjourned
C. Whitford

Guests Present

Christian Dunbar, Fionn Dunbar (E2 student), Jonnie Lyn Evans, Kristin Donahue, Mary Carpenter, Owen Donahue (E2 student)

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 Mar 20, 2024 at 7:05 PM.

B. Record Attendance

C. Board Expectations

Reviewed, laminated and available to board members on tables in front of us

D. Public Comment

None

E. Approve Last Board Meeting Minutes

E. Bradley made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 02-28-24.
C. Whitford seconded the motion.
Add Jonnie Lyn Evans to present in 2/24 BOT meeting
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Montessori Minute

A. Montessori Minute

Mary Carpenter- Overview of structure of the outdoor classroom.
There is project curriculum map with different activities levels 1 - 4 with a required level 1 in a given area. Areas included geo cache, witling, cooking
Daily workshop period-- lots of choices/follow the child based
Read outload period followed by 5 minutes of mindfulness
Daily notice-- reflective part of the day where each child shares something they have noticed
Owen Donahue and Fionn Dunbar field Q and A from the board

III. Prior Board Business

A. Committee Roles & Responsibilities

Accountability Committee had content changes from last vote so review of the document completed in real time and passed

IV. Director Report

A. Director's Report

Discussed new trend where we Amesbury is the highest enrolled sending district. Unclear is the applications from NBPT dipped or just chance enrollment.

Chronic absenteeism- discussed and while it requires monitoring we don't need to focus or be reactive too. Unclear where we compare when looking at our sending district.

Tuition reimbursement came in lower than anticipated.
Came in around $75,000 lower than initially anticipated "We are being advised to plan for FY25 to be lean in comparison to the past few years."
The Board, Development and Foundation all need to work together in order to be strategic and allow us to fundraise to the needs of the school
CG-- Reminder that the money is in the Foundation is there because of the previous 25 years of fundraising

B. Board Business

C. School Calendar Start Date- VOTE

Start date 8/27--
JLE and BOT members agree the idea of easing students into the year has historically served our students well and is very consistent with the Montessori philosophy
Allows for a slow transitions for new Kinderhaus students
An earlier start date also takes into consideration that the spring term at RVCS is heavily focused on MCAS prep and outings, overnights and real community engagement.
C. Whitford made a motion to Motion to approve the following-- Start date for the 204-2025 school year as August 27, 2024. The last day of school, barring snow days, would be June 13, 2025 with five days reserved for snow makeup days, as is legislatively required, making the last possible day June 23, 2025. Extended Winter break will be from 12/21/24-1/5/25. Six half days, with a noon dismissal.
D. Herrera seconded the motion.
See above
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

M. Connerton	Aye
E. Seaton	Absent
N. Durkee	Absent
A. Fields	Absent
E. Rankin	Aye
A. Ting	Aye
E. Simone	Aye

Roll Call

D. Herrera	Aye
C. Whitford	Aye
E. Bradley	Aye
C. Getz	Aye
T. Murdy	Aye
C. Martin	Aye

D. Grounds Project- Update

See attached https://app2.boardontrack.com/org/9o7BzX/media/viewer/314551?scope=

3 companies looked at in final details with proposals

E. Landscape Architect- Vote

C. Whitford made a motion to Motion to engage Copley Wolfe as landscape architecture at the proposed amount of $78,000.
C. Getz seconded the motion.
AT-- Spoke as the BOT member engaged in a lot of the discussions with protentional landscape architecture and this company was excited about the idea of working with a Montessori school and creating a space that develops and improves over time.
Clarification schematics will be done by 6/30
Hancock will still be the company pond dredging
Still looking into how things get settled with Diane's Fine Pastry and their potential impact on our ponds.

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

Roll Call

A. Ting	Aye
E. Seaton	Absent
C. Martin	Aye
A. Fields	Absent
E. Rankin	Aye
D. Herrera	Aye
C. Whitford	Aye
E. Simone	Aye
C. Getz	Aye
M. Connerton	Aye
T. Murdy	Aye
E. Bradley	Aye
N. Durkee	Absent

V. EC Committee Business

A.

Approve EC Minutes

D. Herrera made a motion to approve the minutes from Executive Committee meeting on 03-13-24.
E. Rankin seconded the motion.
ER-- Wanted to clarify PBE being referenced as 1/3 goals of JLE in her last few months.
DH and EB clarified this goal was listed to allow JLE to really make sure PBE has everything it needs to continue w/o issue after JLE has departed
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

VI. Accountability Committee

A. Approve Accountability Meeting Minutes

D. Herrera made a motion to approve the minutes from Accountability Committee Meeting on 03-04-24.
T. Murdy seconded the motion.
Minutes were difficult to follow
There will be another member recording minutes next meeting
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

C. Martin	Aye
E. Seaton	Absent
E. Simone	Aye
C. Whitford	Aye
D. Herrera	Aye
N. Durkee	Absent
T. Murdy	Aye
A. Ting	Aye
M. Connerton	Aye
A. Fields	Absent
E. Bradley	Abstain
C. Getz	Aye

B. Accountability Update

Survey goes out tomorrow.
This survey is in the 5th year cycle and next few months will focus on development of new survey.
C. Whitford left at 8:57 PM.

VII. Development Committee

A. Approve Development minutes

D. Herrera made a motion to approve the minutes from Development Committee Meeting on 02-26-24.

E. Bradley seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

C. Getz	Aye
E. Bradley	Aye
N. Durkee	Absent
A. Fields	Absent
C. Whitford	Absent
E. Seaton	Absent
D. Herrera	Aye
M. Connerton	Aye
E. Rankin	Aye
E. Simone	Aye
T. Murdy	Aye
A. Ting	Aye
C. Martin	Aye

B. Development Update

Launched our first ever Read-A-Thon, we invited students and families to commit to reading - listening to an audible, reading alone, together, or FaceTiming with a loved one.

141 RVCS students have dedicated 8,500+ minutes to reading, and garnered the support of family and friends who collectively generated over $10,000 in donations for River Valley!

Ice cream social next Wednesday.

There has been pros and cons but overall very positive.
Looking ahead- how do we engage people across the board? Has it felt good for families? Teachers? etc.

Circle backing to 8 C's next months

VIII. Finance Committee

A. Approve Minutes

D. Herrera made a motion to approve the minutes from Finance Committee Meeting on 03-13-24.
C. Getz seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

N. Durkee	Absent

Roll Call

A. Ting	Aye
E. Bradley	Aye
A. Fields	Absent
E. Seaton	Absent
E. Rankin	Aye
T. Murdy	Aye
M. Connerton	Aye
D. Herrera	Aye
C. Martin	Aye
E. Simone	Aye
C. Getz	Absent
C. Whitford	Absent

B. Finance Update

Chris W.-- Redirected group to On-Site, Insight

IX. Committee on Trustees

A. Approve Minutes

D. Herrera made a motion to approve the minutes from Committee on Trustees Meeting on 03-13-24.
T. Murdy seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

E. Seaton	Absent
A. Fields	Absent
T. Murdy	Aye
C. Whitford	Absent
M. Connerton	Aye
A. Ting	Aye
E. Bradley	Aye
N. Durkee	Absent
E. Simone	Aye
C. Getz	Aye
C. Martin	Aye
E. Rankin	Aye

B. CoT Update

Board Retreat May 18th.
Recruitment for BOT is underway, application ideally in 4/1
Membership will be 12 at end of the year, 4 members will hopefully brought on.
Posting in the Current--

River Valley Charter School is seeking new members for our Board of Trustees. We are looking for individuals who are passionate about education and who are committed to promoting Montessori values and principles. We welcome applications from current parents and caregivers, as well as encourage individuals who may not have children attending the school but who are committed to supporting public Montessori education to apply.

We believe that a diverse group of individuals with a variety of backgrounds and perspectives can help us achieve our mission of providing a transformative educational experience for all students. If you have experience in education, finance, construction, or other areas that would be helpful to the governance of the school, we invite you to join us. If this is of interest to you – please send an email of interest to **bot@rivervalleycharter.org** for next steps.

X. Director Search Update

A. Update

Provided by Albert Ting--
Search Committee just formed 3/18/24, meeting tomorrow night again
7 Faculty/staff members volunteered; 5 BOT members (Denise, Albert, Meg, Chris, Ali)
Search Committee will be under Executive Session

XI. Closing Items

A. Public Comment

None

B. Board Survey

Request for each member to complete now.

C. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
E. Bradley

Documents used during the meeting

- Director's Report to the BOT_MARCH 2024 Meeting.pdf