APPROVED

River Valley Charter School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Wednesday April 30, 2025 at 7:00 PM

Location
River Valley Charter School Middle School Great Room

River Valley Charter School welcomes your participation at Board meetings. The purpose of a public meeting of the Board of Trustees (“Board”) is to conduct the affairs of the organization in public. Your participation assures us of continuing community interest in our school and assists the Board in making the best decisions for our school. To assist you in the ease of speaking/participating in our meetings, guidelines are provided at the bottom of this agenda. All materials for all board and committee meetings, are available on our Board on track public portal found at rivervalleycharter.org.

https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fus02web.zoom.us%2Fj%2F8516508581%3Fpwd%3D8roWrPp5aJXvEAFctC4bxo69QnaDfv.1&data=05%7C02%7Cdbaron%40burtonsgrill.com%7Cb0eff9d21d2c46993d6108dd45520937%7C19f3db8c5ae6418d871c94aec4420174%7C0%7C0%7C638742940850070424%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=DQiecQS%2BS2%2Bosh89Uf7z%2F3GYR0ZafmUmzdN1slvsq90%3D&reserved=0

Trustees Present
A. Godino (remote), A. Ting, B. MacQuade, C. Getz, C. Whitford, D. Herrera, D. Mitchell, E. Rankin, E. Simone, J. Nickerson, M. Connerton, N. Durkee, P. Ganley, T. Murdy

Trustees Absent
E. Bradley

Ex Officio Members Present
K. Kuse

Guests Present
A. Wetmore, Alison Salerno, Jen Giles, Marianne Curcio

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

D. Herrera called a meeting of the board of trustees of River Valley Charter School to order on Wednesday Apr 30, 2025 at 7:03 PM.

C. Public Comment

JGiles showed appreciation for the school and how much one of her children benefitted from their attendance.

D. Review Trustee Code of Conduct

II. Consent Agenda

A. Accountability Committee

B. Development Committee

C. Executive Committee

D. Committee on Trustees

E. Finance Committee

F. Vote on Consent Agenda

D. Mitchell made a motion to Approve the consent agenda as presented.
C. Whitford seconded the motion.
Note: There are no Finance Committee minutes for April.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

D. Herrera	Aye
A. Ting	Aye
N. Durkee	Aye
M. Connerton	Aye
B. MacQuade	Aye
E. Simone	Aye
C. Whitford	Aye
E. Rankin	Aye
E. Bradley	Absent
J. Nickerson	Aye
T. Murdy	Aye
D. Mitchell	Aye
C. Getz	Aye
A. Godino	Aye
P. Ganley	Aye

III. Budget Salary Line Item

A. Salary Line Item

C. Whitford made a motion to Approve the 3% increase in the Salary Line item for fiscal year 2025-2026.
E. Rankin seconded the motion.
Notes from CWhitford: We don't know that actual tuition for this year or what to budget for next year until June. This year's estimate is running true as of now. The balanced budget is looking good, with a larger surplus than expected. When we get into May, we will get a more accurate surplus and will decide what to do with it. The current surplus does not include our usual input from the foundation.

Next year's balanced budget includes an ask of $175 from the foundation.

This year's revenue is 3% over, but DESE is predicting 4.8%. We're being conservative on our numbers.

This leads to the 3% salary line item increase. KKuse will decide how this is allocated.

DHerrera notes that we are not just asking for funds from the foundation. This is fundraising that we have done and we are just asking for the funds back.

DMitchell - The foundation acts as an endowment that kicks off interest. Do we know what that amount is? CWhitford - This is something that the foundation has to look at. The number one focus should be performance.

ATing - For clarity, this is not a 3% increase on all salaries. This is a bucket that the director can allocate as they need to.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call	
D. Herrera	Aye
A. Ting	Aye
J. Nickerson	Aye
T. Murdy	Aye
E. Bradley	Absent
C. Whitford	Aye
A. Godino	Aye
D. Mitchell	Aye
P. Ganley	Aye
C. Getz	Aye
N. Durkee	Aye
E. Simone	Aye
E. Rankin	Aye
M. Connerton	Aye
B. MacQuade	Aye

IV. School Calendar

A. Start of School Date

C. Whitford made a motion to To approve the start date of Sept 2 2025.
E. Rankin seconded the motion.
First day of school September 2, 2025, expected last day June 17, 2026. Early release Wednesdays have been removed and five half day Fridays have been created.

MConnerton - Why the change? KKuse - I don't see it as an equitable trade. Students are missing too much time in the classroom. The only negative we discussed was people taking the Fridays to travel and not show up on those days.

MConnerton - If I remember right, they were created for the teachers to collaborate. Do we have any metrics to see if that happened? KKuse - my understanding was that it was for professional development. We think we can rework the time for planning. We also respect the needs of parents. DHerrera - At the board level, we did think it was to get consistency in levels. I dont think that happened.

ATing - Is Kinderhaus starting early? KKUse - No, but they will start slowly with half days.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call	
M. Connerton	Aye
T. Murdy	Aye
N. Durkee	Aye

Roll Call

C. Getz	Aye
D. Mitchell	Aye
D. Herrera	Aye
B. MacQuade	Aye
A. Ting	Aye
E. Simone	Aye
E. Rankin	Aye
E. Bradley	Absent
A. Godino	Aye
C. Whitford	Aye
J. Nickerson	Aye
P. Ganley	Aye

V. Director's Update

A. Discussion:

The full Director's Report appears in the board packet. Time was allowed for further discussion.

ERankin: Do we have any concerns about maintenance or the building? KKuse - We are trying to find the source of a few leaks in the roof. We're getting a new phone system.

DHerrera - Preliminary MCAS results are coming in June, is there a plan to review those earlier than the usual October. Perhaps approach faculty that we have the data in June. How can we leverage this?

Grounds Update -

The work is permitted and ready to roll. Got through Conservation Committee and no longer are required to remove phragmites. The ponds are man made detention ponds. NBPT City Council voted to approve the $150 from CPA. They also agreed to the rescoping of the project.

The requirements of the agreement and requests of ConCom are listed in the Director's Report. Note of change in report: We do NOT have to remove the phragmites.

DHerrera - Mentions that there is a very specific bidding process that we must follow.

The Board is in support of accepting the $150K from CPA. We will have a meeting next week for an official vote. May 5, 5 pm.

KKuse will get foundation approval to make the easement.

DMitchell - Are there other big programatic changes for next year? KKuse - We are most likely dismantling the Place Based Education program.

DHerrera - What is the rationale? KKuse - The change of administration and finances The school needs a reset. It needs to cut some of the extra and to focus on Montessori. While there has been a degree of support for PBE, there is a larger degree of concern.

DMitchell - It sounds like we have run at a surplus for four years, we are not in a financial constraint. I also take issue that the school needs a reset. The school is not broken.

ERankin - Would advocate for the school to find a way for children to be outside and exploring the mission of the school.

NDurkee - Even as a parent whose child loved PBE, I support a direction that is more Montessori and your vision. All classes will still have the opportunity to do creative things outside of the classrooms.

CWhitford - Do you see an increase in things like field trips?

KKuse - The kids need to be outside and they need continuity. They also need a full work cycle.

ESimone - From a perspective of someone who was here before PBE, the learning was a shell of what it could have been. We need to step away from using PBE as a selling point of the school.

CGetz- As a founder, one of the things that attracted us was the Montessori principle of Going Out. To get out into the community and learn or take what you've learned in the classroom and put it into practical use. But it has always been a juggling act because different teachers approach it differently. I want to make sure that you aren't driven by parents, that you are driven by Montessori method.

DMitchell - Recommends having a plan for the shift before dismantling the program.

KKuse - We are working on a plan for field trips and exploring the idea of the kids raising chickens here.

ATing - Recommends moving this conversation to next month so that we can put it on the agenda. Also, this is a management decision.

VI. Finance Committee

A.

Update

Finance Committee - Nothing in addition to the earlier Salary Line Item Vote.

VII. Committee on Trustees

A. Review Dashboards

JNickerson - Metrics for the dashboard.

Time in the meeting for people to huddle up and let us know what metrics you are going to use for tracking in the future.

Trustees split into the Committees to talk about their metrics for approximately 10 minutes.

Requests that the results of the discussions be emailed within a week so that they can be compiled at the next COL meeting.

B. Succession Planning

ATing - Now that you've had time to think about it, please communicate your interest in leadership positions in the next week.

VIII. Development Committee

A. Update

ERankin - Added a June meeting. We need to look at planning for next year and the annual fund.

Year to Date - Annual fund 25K, almost 20K through the Readathon. This is better than we've done in the past.

We will have more sophisticated software (Donor Perfect) for building and tracking relationships and fund raising efforts in the future.

IX. Accountability Committee

A. Accountability Committee

ESimone- Our last accountability committee was to revisit the dashboard mock up.

First pass - attainable KPIs.

Attendance, student retention, faculty, etc.

Made good progress on agenda items and is giving members their time back. Last meeting will be in June.

X. Exectuive Committee

A. COL Sign Ups

We have a few slots open still.

BMacQuade shared the rubric for the COLs so that Trustees had the background going into the COLs. She shared what to expect from a COL and the structure of the presentation.

It is the capstone of River Valley. It is the culmination of everything they've done, they analyze their learning style, their influences, how they've handled challenges.

B. Policy Approvals

C. Charter School Viability

CWhitford shared a synopsis of a MCPSA webinar that discussed Charter School Viability.

There is a call to action as there are a lot of concerns about things that could impact charter schools in the future. They mainly circle State and Federal Government and bills that have recently been introduced.

Changes in the DESE board. There is concern that some appointments of people who are anti charter school. MCPSA wants advocacy from the charter schools to reach out to the Governor's office. It was made clear that they don't want school resources being used for these actions.

The overall context was alarmist. There are definitely indicators of concern.

XI. Closing Items

A. Board Meeting Survey

B. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
D. Herrera

Documents used during the meeting

- 2025_03_31_accountability_committee_meeting_minutes.pdf
- 2025_02_13_development_meeting_minutes.pdf
- 2025_03_24_development_meeting_minutes.pdf
- 2025_04_09_executive_committee_meeting_minutes.pdf
- 2025_04_09_committee_on_trustees_meeting_minutes.pdf
- 2025_03_12_committee_on_trustees_meeting_minutes.pdf
- 2025_04_09_finance_meeting_minutes.pdf
- 4.30.2025 Director's Report.pdf
- River_Valley_Charter_School_Budget_vs_Actuals_Budget_FY25_PL_-_FY25_PL_(1).xlsx
- Committee Metrics Suggestions - RVCS.docx

THE ORDER OF BUSINESS MAY BE CHANGED WITHOUT NOTICE Notice is hereby given that the order of consideration of matters on this agenda may be changed without prior notice.

REASONABLE LIMITATIONS MAY BE PLACED ON PUBLIC TESTIMONY The Board Chair reserves the right to impose reasonable time limits on public testimony to ensure that the agenda is completed.