APPROVED

River Valley Charter School

Minutes

Special Board Meeting

Date and Time
Monday February 24, 2025 at 7:30 PM

Location
River Valley Charter 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.

Trustees Present
A. Ting, B. MacQuade, C. Getz, C. Whitford, D. Herrera, E. Bradley, E. Rankin, J. Nickerson, M. Connerton, N. Durkee, P. Ganley, T. Murdy

Trustees Absent
A. Godino, D. Mitchell, E. Simone

Guests Present
A. Wetmore

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 Monday Feb 24, 2025 at 7:31 PM.

II. Executive Director Contract Negotiations

A. Discussion on Contract Negotiations

E. Rankin made a motion to offer Karen Kuse a three-year contract with compensation as follows: 182K start salary with 5% yearly increase and a $15,000 relocation allowance. With a payback clause of 1/2 repayment if the contract is broken.
C. Getz seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

DHererra presented the full board with a history of contract negotiations with prospective Director Karen Kuse. Karen has been serving as Interim Director for the 2024-2025 school year after the retirement of former Director Jonnie Lyn Evans.

Several concerns were brought up by Trustees, including the financial soundness of meeting KKuse's hopes for compensation which are higher than the salary range in the job listing, the fact that KKuse will be one of the highest paid public employees in Newburyport, and the gap in pay between the Director and other school employees.

CWhitford addressed concerns about the budgetary impact of the discussed compensation amounts and assured the board the compensation is within the budget of the school. The question became just because it is affordable, is it the right thing to do?

Question: What KKuse aware of the salary range when she applied for the job and accepted the job? DHererra - Yes.

The salaries of other public education leaders were discussed along with other high ranking Newburyport public service employees, including the Superintendent of Schools and Police Chief. Several Trustees expressed discomfort at the comparative salary being considered, especially when the size of the school was compared to the size of local school districts. Trustees also were supportive of KKuse and reiterated how important she will be for the future of the school and reminded the rest of the board that Superintendents have a lot of support that KKuse doesn't have access to.

Discussion also covered the pay gap between the director and other educators within the RVCS community. It was brought up that on a deep dive of the history of school salaries, it was found that previous administrations contributed to this and it isn't necessarily indicative of KKuse's administration.

ATing led a discussion of different potential offers. The offers differed in base salary, yearly salary increases and a relocation allowance. Trustees weighed and altered the options and agreed to vote on the following salary offer:

A three-year contract with compensation as follows: 182K start salary with 5% yearly increase and a $15,000 relocation allowance. With a payback clause of 1/2 repayment if the contract is broken.

III. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

D. Herrera made a motion to ad.
E. Bradley seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call	
D. Herrera	Aye
C. Getz	Aye

Roll Call

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

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 9:19 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
A. Wetmore

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.