APPROVED

River Valley Charter School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Wednesday September 23, 2026 at 5:30 PM

Location
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.

Trustees Present
A. Salerno, A. Tsonas, B. Friedman, D. Candelario, F. Boghos, G. LeFave, J. Ellen, J. Nickerson, M. Connerton, M. Makin, T. Chaisson, T. Murdy

Trustees Absent
C. Getz, D. Mitchell

Ex Officio Members Present

J. Gustafson

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

T. Murdy called a meeting of the board of trustees of River Valley Charter School to order on Wednesday Sep 23, 2026 at 5:33 PM.

C. Review Trustee Code of Conduct

D. Public Comment

Karl Halsinger - questions about secretary's role, new special projects role, and other topics

II. Approve Previous Board Minutes

A. Approve Minutes

G. LeFave made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 06-30-26.
J. Nickerson seconded the motion.
No discussion
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

D. Mitchell	Absent
C. Getz	Absent

III. Board Business

A. Secretary

T. Murdy made a motion to Approve Meredith Makin as the Board Secretary for the FY26/27 School Year.
G. LeFave seconded the motion.

- Following the resignation of former Board Secretary, Achala, the Board opened a call for interested candidates to fill the vacant Secretary position.
- The opportunity was communicated to Board members on August 28 and again on September 9.
- Meredith Makin was the only Board member who expressed interest in serving in the Secretary role.

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

Roll Call

T. Chaisson	Aye
D. Candelario	Aye
D. Mitchell	Absent
A. Salerno	Aye
J. Ellen	Aye
J. Nickerson	Aye
M. Makin	Aye
A. Tsonas	Aye
M. Connerton	Aye
T. Murdy	Aye
F. Boghos	Aye
G. LeFave	Aye
C. Getz	Absent
B. Friedman	Aye

B. Special Projects Officer role description

T. Murdy made a motion to Approve the special projects officer role.
F. Boghos seconded the motion.

- The role description was developed following discussions between the Executive Committee and Meg Connerton to identify and address current board needs.
- The Board agreed that this position is temporary in nature and therefore will not be incorporated into the Board bylaws.
- A proposed amendment was made to remove the following sentence from the role description: *"Current responsibilities are limited to designated Board on Track administration and the organization and cleanup of specified governance records and documents."*

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

Roll Call

A. Salerno	Aye
D. Mitchell	Absent
T. Chaisson	Aye
M. Makin	Aye
M. Connerton	Abstain
G. LeFave	Aye
J. Ellen	Aye
B. Friedman	Aye
F. Boghos	Aye
A. Tsonas	Aye
J. Nickerson	Aye
C. Getz	Absent
D. Candelario	Aye
T. Murdy	Aye

C. Alnoba Board Norms

T. Murdy made a motion to Approve the board norms created at Alnoba.
G. LeFave seconded the motion.

- The Board reviewed a proposed set of Board norms adapted from the Alnoba Board Retreat model. The norms are intended to establish shared expectations for how trustees work together, communicate, engage in deliberations, and uphold a positive Board culture. The norms focus on conduct and relationships among Board members rather than governance procedures, which remain addressed through the Board's bylaws and policies.
- It was agreed that the Board norms will be maintained in Board on Track, made available during Board meetings, and incorporated into the Board's Trustee Code of Conduct.

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

IV. Finance Committee

A. Update

- The Finance Committee provided an overview of the FY27 budget approved in June, along with a review of financial performance for the first two months of the fiscal year.
- The Board discussed key budget assumptions, including conservative projections for tuition revenue growth. While available estimates suggest funding may increase by approximately 4%, the budget was developed using a 2% assumption to reduce financial risk associated with potential changes in state funding.
- The Committee noted several ongoing financial considerations, including declining tuition revenue trends in recent years, payroll costs representing the school's largest expense category, and healthcare costs continuing to rise at a rate that outpaces revenue growth.
- Financial results through the first two months of the fiscal year indicate the school is performing slightly ahead of budget and remains in a positive financial position.
- The Committee also reported that approximately $500,000 remains available for capital expenditures.

B. Capital Budget

G. LeFave made a motion to Approve $200K in capital improvement budget.
T. Murdy seconded the motion.

- The Finance Chair presented the proposed capital budget and provided an overview of ongoing efforts to assess and prioritize facility, infrastructure, technology, and equipment needs.

- The Board reviewed a capital improvement plan that includes completed projects as well as planned investments in technology, roofing, windows, playground improvements, furnishings, signage, and maintenance equipment. The proposed capital budget authorization was **up to $200,000**, funded through available capital reserves.
- The Executive Director noted that multiple bids are being obtained for projects where appropriate to ensure cost competitiveness and prudent use of funds.
- Projects will be scheduled to minimize disruption to educational programming and school operations.
- The Board discussed the value of ongoing facility assessments and maintaining a recurring capital planning process to proactively address future building and infrastructure needs. The current plan was informed by previous facility assessments, including recommendations identified through a comprehensive property review conducted in 2022.
- Trustees expressed appreciation to the Executive Director and parent volunteers who have supported the identification, assessment, and planning of capital improvement projects.

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

V. Development Committee

A. Update

- The Development Committee presented its fundraising goals and priorities for the 2026-2027 school year. The Committee established a fundraising goal of **$300,000**, representing an ambitious increase over prior years.
- Fundraising efforts will include both school-based events and broader community engagement opportunities across the school's sending communities.
- Planned initiatives include a Read-a-Thon, a Fun Run with a community give-back component, and exploration of an annual golf tournament involving school, community, and corporate sponsorship participation.
- The Annual Fund campaign will transition to a primarily digital format to improve efficiency and reduce administrative and printing costs. The Committee is also exploring the use of student-created content, including middle school-produced videos, to support fundraising and community engagement efforts.
- The Committee discussed opportunities to expand the school's presence within the local community through recurring annual events and sponsorship activities. Additional efforts include exploring the creation of a community marketplace or portal designed to strengthen connections and support within the RVCS community.
- Committee members will continue to coordinate with the Executive Director to align fundraising initiatives with school priorities and identified needs.

- The Committee will also pursue grant funding opportunities to diversify and expand revenue sources.

VI. Exectuive Committee

A. Update

- The Board Chair provided an update on Executive Committee activities and key governance priorities, including charter renewal preparation and planning for the selection of a permanent Executive Director.
- The Board noted that RVCS is entering the third year of its five-year charter renewal cycle and discussed the significant work required to prepare for renewal. Trustees also discussed the importance of leadership stability during this period, particularly given that leadership continuity is one of the factors considered by DESE during charter renewal reviews.
- Trustees were reminded that Joey was hired as an Interim Executive Director and that the Board had previously committed to conducting a search process for a permanent Executive Director. The Board discussed considerations related to the timing of a search, including organizational readiness, the anticipated cost and effort involved, and the benefits of supporting continuity during the charter renewal process.
- The Board discussed the duty of loyalty to the school as a main point to consider when making the decision as to how best to proceed.
- The Board reviewed a future-state Executive Director role design intended to create a more sustainable leadership structure and discussed options for conducting a search while allowing for an effective leadership transition.
- The Board also discussed the importance of obtaining input from Joey regarding her interests and willingness to support various leadership transition scenarios.
- Joey indicated a preference for conducting a search in the near term to complete the process and recommended vChief as a potential search partner based on its familiarity with the school, experience supporting similar engagements, and overall cost-effectiveness.
- The Board was reminded that vChief came recommended to RVCS by MA Charter.
- The Executive Committee recommended scheduling a special Board meeting in October to consider and vote on whether to initiate a search for a permanent Executive Director and, if approved, to consider engaging vChief to support the search process. The goal would be to support an orderly transition and provide overlap between the interim and permanent Executive Director, if feasible.

VII. Director's Update

A. Director's Report

- The Executive Director provided an update on the start of the school year, reporting that the school is fully enrolled and nearly fully staffed, with one remaining front office position to be filled.
- Summer efforts focused on staff recruitment and onboarding, professional development, compliance reporting, policy review, financial management activities, and preparations for the opening of school.
- The Board received updates on facilities, operational, and technology improvements completed over the summer, including building maintenance projects, infrastructure upgrades, and organization of school spaces.
- The Executive Director reviewed priorities for the coming year, including student performance analysis, strengthening instructional practices, ongoing professional development, financial audit activities, DESE compliance and reporting, policy updates, and continued support for staff and family engagement.
- The Executive Director highlighted the need for the tardiness and absenteeism policy to be reviewed and identify how the school can work with families to provide assistance. The Board inquired and was informed that letters are not sent home to families if chronic absenteeism and that the school does have a duty to know what is going on and to be involved to help the families. The issue of excused versus unexcused absences was also discussed in the context of determining an absence.
- The Board discussed the need for additional storage and records retention space as part of ongoing efforts to organize and archive school records.
- Additional facility and security priorities include upgrades to building security systems and modifications to fire doors to improve safety and security operations.

VIII. Closing Items

A. Board Meeting Survey

Posted prior to meeting and request everyone take part.

B. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 7:12 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
T. Murdy

Documents used during the meeting

- RVCS BOT Special Projects Role.pdf
- RVCS_Board_of_Trustees_Norms_Alnoba.docx

- August_Financials (1).xlsx
- RVCS_Capital_Plan_2026-27.docx
- RVCS_ED_Leadership_Pathways_Board_Summary.pptx
- September 2026 IED Report (1).pptx
- River Valley SY2025-26 Annual Report -2.pdf
- RVCS Sept. Highlights (1).docx
- DRAFT RVCS Data Dashboard (1).xlsx

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.