

**Rockford Charter School Organization
Board Meeting Minutes
January 15, 2020
11:30am – 1:00pm
Swedish American Hospital, 1340 Charles Street, Rockford, IL 61104
Conference Room 1**

1. Call to Order – 11:30 a.m.

Present: Kenneth Cunningham, Scott Anderson, Carla Redd, Executive Director Mike Williams, Anisha Grimmett, Principal Shavina Baker, Rick Aylward, Attorney Roxanne Sosnowski and Nathan Bryant

2. Public Comment – None

3. Approval of Consent Items – Motion by Board

(Members may request individual Consent Items to be pulled for discussion)

a. Minutes of prior Board Meeting – 10/17/2019

i. Carla Redd was not listed in the October Minutes. Minutes need to be revised to add Carla Redd as being present.

ii. Motion to approve the 10/17/2019 with the addition to add Carla Redd as present made by Kenneth Cunningham and seconded by Carla Redd. All Aye. Motion passes.

4. Resolution to elect President and Treasurer of RCSO Board of Directors (Action Item)

a. Jennifer Hall has resigned as President and Board Chair, Scott Anderson has agreed to take that position, Kenneth Cunningham will remain as Vice Chair, Carla Redd will remain as Secretary and the Treasurer's position is open.

b. Discussion took place regarding what the Treasurer's position entails.

c. Motion to approve the Resolution to elect President and Treasurer of RCSO Board of Directors adding Anisha Grimmett to the Treasurer's position was made by Kenneth Cunningham and seconded by Carla Redd. All Aye. Motion passes.

5. Committee Reports

b. Finance Committee –

i. YTD Budget vs. Actual

1. Rick Aylward gave an update on the budget and actual report. RCSO is ahead of budget numbers at the end of December by \$255,000, which is made up of Revenue and Expenses. Some of this will probably get caught up in timing, however, of the \$255,000 about \$100,000 to \$150,000 is not timing related is real favorability to the budget.
 2. Principal Baker stated that the current enrollment is at 219.
 3. Rick Aylward stated that IFF is still in the process of getting the interest only payment approved and RCSO should know by the end of January on IFF's decision. IFF has mentioned that they may not be able to approve this as an amendment to the current loan which has a 5% interest rate and RCSO may have to do a new loan which would then make the interest rate 5.875% which is a large hike to consider for the life of the loan. Rick Aylward stated that he is working to get the interest only payments approved by IFF and then the Board can decide if they want to move forward, should RCSO be required to take out a new loan with a higher interest rate. The matter will be brought back to the Board with more information.
6. New Business
- a. Board Member Visit Share Out (discussion)
 - a. Anisha Grimmert spoke about her visit with the school. She recommended that other Board Members schedule their visits because it gives members a good opportunity to see the children and the impacts.
 - b. Carla Redd spoke about her visits to the school as she is frequently at the school.
 - c. Scott Anderson spoke about his visit to school and his meetings with Executive Director Williams and Principal Baker to get more background on testing scores and strategic planning to get a better outcome for RCSO families.
7. Old Business –
- a. School Works Renewal Site Visit Report (discussion)
 - i. Attorney Sosnowski stated that RCSO reached out to RPS 205 to ask for an extension of the Charter Renewal Application documents that were initially due January 1, 2020, however, at that time RCSO had not received the School Works Report or the RPS 205 Report and RCSO needed to have those documents before

- moving forward. RPS 205 approved the extension and the new due date is February 1, 2020.
- ii. Attorney Sosnowski asked Board Members to review the materials related to the Charter Renewal and provide some of their thoughts on the materials. Attorney Sosnowski went through the documents related to the Charter Renewal.
 - iii. Attorney Sosnowski stated that the District has indicated that it is not approving contracts for longer than three year terms which is different from the previous five year term contracts that were granted to RCSO in the past.
 - iv. Attorney Sosnowski stated that one of the challenges for our application is that the student achievement is not meeting the benchmarks that the District would like to see. RPS 205 indicates in their summary draft report that RCSO's proficiency lags significantly behind the District. The measurement might be based District wide in which case it would not be an adequate comparison.
 - v. Attorney Sosnowski stated that RCSO will have to rely mostly on the documents presented in the application to the School Board because there will not be enough time to go point by point explaining the reasons behind the data that Dr. Woulfe will be presenting to the School Board Members.
 - vi. Nathan Bryant suggested reaching out to the School Board members to advocate for the renewal. Kenneth Cunningham suggested reaching out to the School Board member that represents the area of Jackson and inviting that School Board member to visit the school. Attorney Sosnowski suggested inviting all of the School Board Members to the school.
 - vii. Anisha Grimmett stated that doing a pictorial view in the application to make it easy to see the information RCSO wants to showcase and it will be remembered by School Board Members after reviewing the application.
 - viii. Executive Director Williams stated that RCSO should showcase students that have been with RCSO for a significant period of time where over time students have significant growth in a short amount of time, instead of only looking at those students that have only been with the school for a short amount of time.
 - ix. Executive Director Williams stated that the School Board has contracted with ECRA to help them come up with benchmarks for each of the Charter Schools and

those standards will be seen by RCSO first and then applied to the other Charter Schools in the area. ECRA will take all of the sources of data and give RCSO benchmarks based on the data where ECRA feels the performance should be at, and not where compliance is based on with the State requirements.

- x. Discussion took place regarding whether the contract should be amended to change the maximum enrollment amount from 1500 to 600 due to the fact that in the report prepared by RPS 205, RPS 205 measured enrollment negatively because RCSO does not have 1500 students, even though the contract states that 1500 is the maximum enrollment RCSO can have and does not state that is the required amount. Nathan Bryant expressed concern in decreasing the maximum enrollment figures because it will be easy to decrease it, however, it will be hard to get it back if RCSO decides to open a second campus later on down the road. Attorney Sosnowski stated that this section could be amended to request that RCSO not be measured negatively on the enrollment figures because the contract does not require 1500 students and is not a benchmark that must be met.
 - xi. Attorney Sosnowski stated that another change that RCSO staff suggested seeking within the application, is a change in the allocation of funding that RCSO receives. The current charter agreement is at 100% of PCTC and in the proposal RCSO and staff suggested the funding coincide with the 2017 amendments to the School Code.
- b. Educational Outcomes, Curriculum, Classroom, Testing
- i. Principal Baker presented the data dashboard to Board Members. The dashboard captures attendance, MAP data and behavior all in one place for RCSO.
 - ii. Executive Director Williams stated that staying the course with the budget that RCSO has is going to go in a negative direction and have a negative impact on RCSO students and RCSO cannot count on grant funds because RPS 205 is holding up grant funds which prevents RCSO from remaining in compliance with RCSO's current grants because RCSO is not getting reimbursed from RPS 205 after they have received those funds from the State.
 - iii. Anisha Grimmert suggested reaching out to Dr. Ehren Jarrett to let him know that this is a problem that RCSO is facing with RPS 205 and not being able to get the funds reimbursed that RPS 205 has received from the State.

- iv. Executive Director Williams stated that RCSO has laid off critical staff that will affect the academic performance of RCSO's students.
 - v. Principal Baker stated that at the beginning of the year, RCSO had a Community and Engagement Specialist during the first 6 weeks of school and they had 95% attendance; there were TA's in every single classroom for academic and behavioral support, all TA positions and the Community and Engagement Specialist position have been eliminated.
 - vi. Scott Anderson asked Rick Aylward to provide the Board with a forecast of what the budget is showing currently and then a forecast what the financial budget would need be to get RCSO to where they want to be by the next Board Meeting.
8. Next Board Meeting Date and Location – 2/19/2020 – 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m., Swedish American Hospital
9. Adjournment: Motion by Kenneth Cunningham and seconded by Carla Redd.
 - b. Meeting adjourned at 1:09 p.m.