

**Rockford Charter School Organization  
Board Meeting Minutes**

**August 19, 2021**

**Meeting Held in Person at:**

**Jackson Charter School, 315 Summit Street, Rockford, IL 61107**

1. Call to Order – 11:51 a.m.
  - a. Present: Kenneth Cunningham (Joined VIA Telephone at 11:51 a.m. and joined in person at 12:02 p.m.), Carla Redd, Antonio Turner, Jay Ware (Joined by Telephone at 11:36 a.m.), Attorney Roxanne Sosnowski, Principal Shavina Baker, Emily Wallen, and Rick Aylward
  - b. Absent: Anisha Grimmertt
2. Approval of Agenda
  - a. A motion to approve the Agenda was made by Carla Redd and seconded by Antonio Turner.
  - b. All Aye. Motion passed.
3. Approval of the Regular Board Meeting Minutes of June 17, 2021
  - a. A motion to approve the Regular Board Meeting Minutes of June 17, 2021 was made by Kenneth Cunningham and seconded by Carla Redd.
  - b. All Aye. Motion passed.
4. Public Comment – None.
5. New Business
  - a. Resolution of the Board of Directors of Rockford Charter School Organization to Adopt Jackson Charter School Policy for Conducting Abbott Labs Binaxnow Covid-19 Antigen Testing;
    - i. Attorney Sosnowski provided a brief summary regarding the policy. This policy pertains to rapid Covid-19 tests that have been provided to Jackson Charter School from the Health Department. This policy outlines how Jackson Charter School will give the test and under what circumstances the test will be given. The policy provides that Jackson Charter School will only conduct tests on individuals who are symptomatic.
    - ii. A motion to approve the Resolution of the Board of Directors of Rockford Charter School Organization to Adopt Jackson Charter School Policy for Conducting Abbott Labs Binaxnow Covid-19 Antigen Testing was made by Antonio Turner and seconded by Kenneth Cunningham.
    - iii. All Aye. Motion passed.
  - b. Resolution of the Board of Directors of Rockford Charter School Organization Electing a New Board of Directors Member – Jacob Bradt;

- i. Attorney Sosnowski stated that this Resolution would be to fill the vacancy of Nathan Bryant's position on the Board. Attorney Sosnowski stated that the Board does have another vacancy as Scott Anderson has submitted his resignation from the Board of Directors.
      - ii. Kenneth Cunningham stated that he met with Jacob Bradt and he believes that Mr. Bradt is a phenomenal candidate. Mr. Bradt will bring some expertise in the marketing area as well.
      - iii. A motion to approve Resolution of the Board of Directors of Rockford Charter School Organization Electing a New Board of Directors Member – Jacob Bradt was made by Carla Redd and seconded by Kenneth Cunningham.
      - iv. All Aye. Motion passed.
    - c. Resolution of the Board of Directors of Rockford Charter School Organization Electing Officers;
      - i. Attorney Sosnowski stated that this is something that should be passed annually and asked for volunteers to fill these positions for the next twelve months or until there is someone that is trained that can fill the role and opened the floor for discussion.
      - ii. Kenneth Cunningham indicated that he would like for someone else to take over as President of the Board and asked for volunteers for someone to step up into that role. Jay Ware stated that he has some things that he has to get squared up and is not able to step into that role right now. Carla Redd stated that if she is selected as Chief of Police she does not know if she will be able to stay on the Board. Carla Redd stated that for now until she knows more she will be able to continue to serve in the Secretary role.
      - iii. Kenneth Cunningham arrived at the meeting at 12:02 p.m. in person.
      - iv. Kenneth Cunningham asked if anyone was willing to fill the Vice Chair position. Antonio Turner volunteered to be Vice Chair.
      - v. Kenneth Cunningham volunteered to be President for a second term.
      - vi. Attorney Sosnowski stated that Anisha Grimmert would continue to serve as Treasurer.
      - vii. A motion to approve the Resolution electing the following officers, Kenneth Cunningham as President and Chair, Antonio Turner as Vice Chair, Carla Redd as Secretary, and Anisha Grimmert as Treasurer was made by Kenneth Cunningham and seconded by Carla Redd.
      - viii. All Aye. Motion passed.
    - d. Discussion and Possible Adoption of Amendments to Retirement Benefits for RCSO/Jackson Charter School;
      - i. Attorney Sosnowski stated that Jackson Charter School has a retirement account and they would like to increase the contribution from a 1% match to a 5% match or somewhere between a 3 and 5% match. Attorney Sosnowski stated that Rick Aylward ran some numbers to check the costs and given the number of people that are currently on the plan there is not a huge increase in expense. Attorney Sosnowski stated that the staff recommendation would be to increase the match to 5%.
      - ii. Principal Baker stated when thinking about retention and commitment effort there needs to be something that is in place for Jackson Charter School

- staff that will show them that they are a competitive option.
- iii. Antonio Turner asked what the numbers looked like to increase it to a 5% match. Principal Baker stated that it would not be everyone it would only be those who elect to enroll in the retirement program.
  - iv. Rick Aylward stated that the match would not start until after staff members have been with Jackson Charter School for one year.
  - v. Jay Ware inquired about vesting. Attorney Sosnowski stated that there is no vesting because it is not a pension plan, so it is the employee's money from the minute that both the employee and school puts it into the plan.
  - vi. A motion to increase the retirement benefits to a 5% match was made by Kenneth Cunningham and seconded by Carla Redd.
  - vii. All Aye. Motion passed.
- e. Discussion and Possible Adoption of Educational Assistance Program – Policy 100.4 for RCSO/Jackson Charter School Employees;
- i. Attorney Sosnowski stated that Jackson Charter School would like to attract and maintain professional talent, and tuition reimbursement is a way to do that. Attorney Sosnowski provided a summary of all of the requirements needed in order to qualify for the program. Attorney Sosnowski stated that the policy is going to be based upon RCSO's ability to fund the program.
  - ii. Carla Redd inquired if we knew anything about Rockford University's agreement with RPS 205 regarding education. Antonio Turner stated that it was the Urban Education Master's program and it is not technically free and it is not weighted highly. It is a smaller program with a discounted tuition. Principal Baker stated that it is her understanding that this program does not provide licensure for the students that complete the program.
  - iii. Kenneth Cunningham stated that a limit might be something to consider because he would hate to have someone enter the program thinking that they would be reimbursed for their tuition only to find out that there are no funds because the cost of education has increased. Antonio Turner suggested finding out what the average cost is for a master's degree and then offering the average amount for reimbursement and stated that the grade point average should be higher than a C average. Attorney Sosnowski suggested raising the satisfactory grade to a B or better.
  - iv. Principal Baker stated that the average cost of a master's program is \$33,000.00 for Illinois. Rick Aylward stated that annually RCSO could a lot approximately a max of \$30,000.00.
  - v. Carla Redd inquired how many teachers have expressed an interest in getting their master's degree. Principal Baker stated that she has two teachers currently that have expressed interest.
  - vi. Antonio Turner suggested doing yearly reimbursements instead of waiting for three years after completion of the master's program in an effort to keep teachers with the school because there is nothing keeping them in the school for three years.
  - vii. Kenneth Cunningham stated that he has concerns making teacher's wait three years after achieving their master's degree reimbursement. Attorney Sosnowski stated that it is difficult to collect the reimbursement back should the teacher not honor the three year service agreement.

- viii. Carla Redd suggested doing an annual pay down. Attorney Sosnowski stated that the school could do 25% after 1 year of service is completed then 25% after 2 years of service and then 50% after 3 years of service.
  - ix. A motion to approve Adoption of Educational Assistance Program – Policy 100.4 for RCSO/Jackson Charter School Employees as amended with the amendments being a step down reimbursement of 25%, 25%, 50% for a three year term up to a max of \$30,000.00 was made by Kenneth Cunningham and seconded by Antonio Turner.
  - x. All Aye. Motion passed.
- f. Discussion and Possible Adoption of Attendance Incentive – Policy 100.5 for RCSO/Jackson Charter School Employees; and
- i. Attorney Sosnowski stated that this would allow for Principal Baker to offer an end of year bonus to employees who come to work and do not use a lot of sick time. Principal Baker stated that this is a way to reward them for not using them. Rick Aylward stated that he would say approximately 50% of their employees do not use all of their sick/unpaid time off days.
  - ii. Antonio Turner inquired as to on average how many sick days do staff members have. Attorney Sosnowski stated that they have 8 total, 4 per semester.
  - iii. Principal Baker stated that it costs the school more money when staff is out because she has to outsource for a substitute to cover the classroom for that day.
  - iv. Antonio Turner expressed concern that there was only a \$50.00 difference from missing no days to missing one day. Attorney Sosnowski suggested setting the no days at \$500.00.
  - v. A motion to approve Adoption of Attendance Incentive – Policy 100.5 for RCSO/Jackson Charter School Employees with the modification of no sick days staff members are able to obtain a bonus of \$500.00 was made by Kenneth Cunningham and seconded by Carla Redd.
  - vi. All Aye. Motion passed.
6. Executive Session – Personnel (if needed)
- a. Shavina Baker, Emily Wallen, and Rick Aylward were excused at 12:35 p.m.
  - b. Entered into Executive Session at 12:35 p.m.
    - i. Present: Roxanne Sosnowski, Antonio Turner, Carla Redd, Kenneth Cunningham, and Jay Ware.
    - ii. Shavina Baker entered Executive Session at 12:55 p.m.
  - c. Exited Executive Session at 1:05 p.m.
  - d. Jay Ware left meeting at 1:05 p.m.
7. Principal’s Report
- g. Principal Baker stated that she was not going to read the Principal’s Report and would like for the Board to read it and reach out to her with their questions.
8. Finance Committee Report
- a. Emily Wallen and Rick Aylward joined the meeting at 1:05 p.m.
  - b. Rick Aylward presented the Finance Committee Report.
  - c. YTD Budget to Actuals

- i. Rick Aylward stated that there were \$75,000.00-100,000.00 under projection.
  - d. YTD Cashflow Update
    - i. Rick Aylward stated that there was \$55,000.00 loss and we budgeted \$100,000.00 loss so RCSO is ahead by \$45,000.00.
  - e. Principal Baker stated that Esser was funded, and they are waiting on 100 iPads that were ordered back in April.
- 10. Principal's Report Continued
  - a. Carla Redd stated that she was going through the Principal's Report and inquired if anyone has reached out about face masks. Principal Baker stated she has not received any questions from parents.
  - b. Kenneth Cunningham inquired as to whether any schools had required Covid-19 Vaccines. Carla Redd stated that it was not a local school, but there was one that was going to mandate the vaccine or get tested on a regular basis.
  - c. Principal Baker stated that a majority of their staff is vaccinated and estimated that it was approximately 70%.
- 11. Adjournment
  - a. Motion to adjourn made by Kenneth Cunningham and seconded by Carla Redd.
  - b. Meeting adjourned at 1:16 p.m.

**Next Board Meeting: October 21, 2021 at 11:30 a.m. (Meeting will be held in-person at Jackson Charter School, 315 Summit Street, Rockford, IL 61107)**