

Rockford Charter School Organization Board Meeting Minutes

July 21, 2022 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

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

In Person Meeting

1. Call to Order – 11:40 a.m.
 - a. Present: Kenny Cunningham, Anisha Grimmertt, Tamir Bell, Antonio Turner, Jacob Bradt, Executive Director Emily Wallen, Rick Aylward, Angie Smelter, Attorney David Kurlinkus, Megan Reff
 - b. Not Present: Jay Ware and Carla Redd
2. Approval of Agenda
 - a. A motion to approve the Agenda was made by Mr. Bradt and seconded by Mr. Bell. All aye. Motion approved.
3. Approval of Regular Board Meeting Minutes of June 16, 2022.
 - a. A motion to approve the regular board meeting minutes of June 16, 2022 was made by Mr. Bell and seconded by Ms. Grimmertt.
 - i. Roll call vote:
 1. Kenny Cunningham – Aye.
 2. Anisha Grimmertt – Aye.
 3. Tamir Bell – Aye.
 4. Antonio Turner – Aye.
 5. Jacob Bradt – Aye.
4. Public Comment - None
5. New Business
 - a. Discuss/Approve the authorization of Sikich’s proposal to perform Annual Audit Services for RCSO in the amount of \$16,700 for 2022, \$17,200 for 2023 and \$17,715 for 2024.
 - i. Discussion took place regarding the Sikich proposal. Mr. Aylward advised the Board that RCSO has been utilizing Sikich’s services for Annual Audits for the past four years.
 - ii. A motion to approve the authorization of Sikich’s proposal to perform annual audit services in the amount of \$16, 700 for 2022, \$17, 200 for 2023 and \$17,715 for 2024 was made by Mr. Bradt and seconded by Mr. Bell.
 1. Roll call vote:
 - a. Kenny Cunningham – Aye.
 - b. Anisha Grimmertt – Aye.
 - c. Tamir Bell – Aye.
 - d. Antonio Turner – Aye.
 - e. Jacob Bradt – Aye.

- b. Discuss/Approve the authorization for RCSO to rejoin the Illinois Network of Charter Schools with a membership fee in the amount of \$1,463.
 - i. Discussion took place regarding whether RCSO should rejoin the Illinois Network of Charter Schools (INCS). Dr. Cunningham advised the Board that this is the company that did the recent board member training.
 - ii. A motion to rejoin the Illinois Network of Charter Schools was made by Mr. Bell and seconded by Mr. Bradt.
 - 1. Roll call vote:
 - a. Kenny Cunningham – Aye.
 - b. Anisha Grimmnett – Aye.
 - c. Tamir Bell – Aye.
 - d. Antonio Turner – Aye.
 - e. Jacob Bradt – Aye.
- c. Discuss/Approve revisions to the RCSO Employee Handbook.
 - i. Executive Director Wallen went over the biggest revisions that were made to the RCSO Employee Handbook include the inclusion of the Tuition Reimbursement and Attendance Bonus provisions.
 - ii. Ms. Grimmnett inquired as to whether these policies that were included in the Employee Handbook were previously approved by the Board. Executive Director Wallen advised that these provisions were approved by the Board, but never incorporated into the Employee Handbook.
 - iii. A motion to approve the revisions to the RCSO Employee Handbook was made by Mr. Turner and seconded by Mr. Bell.
 - 1. Roll call vote:
 - a. Kenny Cunningham – Aye.
 - b. Anisha Grimmnett – Aye.
 - c. Tamir Bell – Aye.
 - d. Antonio Turner – Aye.
 - e. Jacob Bradt – Aye.
- d. Discuss/Approve Resolution of the Board of Directors of Rockford Charter School Organization Electing Officers
 - i. Dr. Cunningham presented the Resolution to the Board of Directors listing Kenny Cunningham as the Chair, Antonio Turner as Vice Chair, Carla Redd as Secretary and Tamir Bell as Treasurer.
 - ii. Mr. Bell inquired as to what the duties of the Treasurer are. Ms. Grimmnett and Mr. Aylward provided a brief description of the duties, including attending two finance committee meetings per year, budget reviews and the execution of checks on behalf of RCSO.
 - iii. A motion to approve the Resolution electing RCSO Officers was made by Mr. Bradt and seconded by Mr. Turner.
 - 1. Roll call vote:
 - a. Kenny Cunningham – Aye.
 - b. Anisha Grimmnett – Aye.
 - c. Tamir Bell – Aye.

- d. Antonio Turner – Aye.
- e. Jacob Bradt – Aye.

6. Executive Director's Report

- a. Executive Director Wallen presented the Executive Director's Report to the Board. Executive Director Wallen advised the Board that enrollment was currently at 190 students with a goal of 225 students to be enrolled by the start of the new school year.
- b. Executive Director Wallen introduced Ms. Smelter to the Board, she is taking on the role of Director of Data and Instruction for this upcoming school year. Executive Director Wallen advised the Board that the school is fully staffed with the exception of 4th grade. Executive Director Wallen advised that she has hired an In-House Substitute Teacher and Interventionist for the upcoming school year that would act as a substitute teacher when teachers were out and as an interventionist for students when a substitute teacher was not required for the day.
- c. Executive Director Wallen provided an update on summer school and advised the board that there were currently 30 students enrolled in the summer school program and for the most part attendance was good.
- d. Executive Director Wallen advised the Board that there would be no changes to curriculum and instruction for the next school year, however, they would be utilizing supplemental materials based on each student's current developmental level.
- e. Executive Director Wallen advised the Board that the facility is getting a deep cleaning and the fire extinguishers checked. The clocks for the school are currently on back order and she is unsure of when they will arrive. Executive Director Wallen advised the Board that she was currently waiting on the replacement furniture to be delivered.
- f. Executive Director Wallen advised that HTML (information technology) would be on campus updating and replacing computer and electronic equipment for the school. There were 70 chrome books that were identified as needing to be replaced.
- g. Executive Director Wallen advised the board that she was working on marketing for the next school year including new brochures having been printed, billboard placement, WREX commercial advertising and Facebook with a focus on back to school, school supplies, and African American studies and STEM courses available at RCSO.
 - i. Mr. Turner inquired as to where the billboards would be located at in Rockford and suggested that there be a billboard located on the intersection of School and Main. Executive Director Wallen advised that she has a meeting with the Billboard company and will find out where the billboard locations are.
 - ii. Mr. Bell and Mr. Bradt offered to meet with Executive Director Wallen to strategize marketing specifically with billboard placement and WREX commercials.
 - iii. Mr. Bell suggested that it might be time to produce a new marketing strategy to boost enrollment.
 - iv. Mr. Bradt suggested focusing on the fact that RCSO is not a private school and RCSO should utilize the term public (public charter school) in the marketing materials.

- h. Discuss/Approve Employment Agreement for Director of Climate and Culture
 - i. Executive Director Wallen, Mr. Turner and Ms. Grimmatt provided the Board with an update regarding interviews for the Director of Climate and Culture position and presented their two recommended candidates (Starla Copeland and Tereka Chapell).
 - ii. Ms. Grimmatt advised that the committee interviewed three candidates and all of the candidates interviewed had different strengths that would meet RCSO's needs.
 - iii. Executive Director Wallen advised that the next step would be to invite Ms. Copeland and Ms. Chapell to RCSO for in person meetings as the interviews conducted were done so remotely. This would allow for Executive Director Wallen to provide the candidates with a tour of the school and with one candidate (Ms. Chapell) being from Philadelphia, it would be an opportunity for her to get a tour of Rockford.
 - iv. Mr. Turner indicated that Ms. Chapell is very familiar with the restorative justice system based on her experience on the East Coast which is 3-5 years ahead of other demographics and she is familiar with the systems that are available. Mr. Turner stated that Ms. Chapell is in tune and better connected with younger mothers and is willing to get to know the Rockford Community. Ms. Grimmatt advised the Board that Ms. Chapell has the personality to get to know the Rockford Community very well and have it not be a factor for her in this kind of transition. Mr. Turner stated that he believed it would be a good idea to hire an outsider. Discussion occurred regarding possible reimbursement for out of state candidates. Mr. Bell inquired as to how soon Ms. Chapell, if selected for the position, would be able to move to Rockford to start work. Mr. Turner stated that Ms. Chapell knows that if she is selected that she would be expected to start work during the first week of August.
 - v. Executive Director Wallen advised the Board that Ms. Copeland had excellent knowledge of the field, and she is local. Ms. Smelter stated that Ms. Copeland has a teaching background and has ties to the Rockford Community. Mr. Turner advised the Board that Ms. Copeland has experience working in the restorative justice field longer. Executive Director Wallen stated that where one candidate is lacking, the other candidate has that experience and vice versa.
 - vi. Dr. Cunningham advised the Board that a selection for this position would need to be made by next week.
 - vii. Attorney Kurlinkus advised that his office could prepare a contract for this position if needed. Mr. Aylward stated that he believed RCSO had a contract template that could be tweaked for this position as well.
7. Finance Committee Report
- a. Mr. Aylward advised the Board that RCSO currently had just over \$2 million in cash, and there were not a lot of changes to the financials from the previous meeting. Revenue is currently over budget by \$1 million. The main items that caused the over budget include the tuition payment which was \$2,600 per student (this was an increase from last year), and the ESSER funds were higher by \$430,000. Expenditures were \$68,000 over budget, however, over all the budget is \$950,000 to the positive. This may effect the upcoming budget. Mr. Aylward

advised that the next group of ESSER funds that could be received in the amount of \$1.5 Million and determining what those funds could be used for. These funds will be available until 2025.

8. Executive Session (if needed)

Go into Closed Session to Review Closed Session Minutes and to discuss the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or specific volunteers of the public body or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee, a specific individual who serves as an independent contractor in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or a volunteer of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity.

a. Mr. Turner motioned to enter into Executive Session and was seconded by Mr. Bell.

i. Roll call vote:

1. Kenny Cunningham – Aye.
2. Anisha Grimmett – Aye.
3. Tamir Bell – Aye.
4. Antonio Turner – Aye.
5. Jacob Bradt – Aye.

ii. Entered into Executive Session at 12:30 p.m. Executive Director Wallen, Mr. Aylward and Ms. Smelter left the meeting.

b. Mr. Bell motioned to exit Executive Session and was seconded by Mr. Bradt.

i. Roll Call Vote:

1. Kenny Cunningham – Aye.
2. Anisha Grimmett – Aye.
3. Tamir Bell – Aye.
4. Antonio Turner – Aye.
5. Jacob Bradt – Aye.

ii. Exited Executive Session at 12:53 p.m.

9. Discussion took place regarding the creation of Committees within the Board of Directors.

a. Mr. Turner suggested creating 3-5 committees and then assigning no more than 2 – 3 Board members per committee and creating a committee for Culture and Climate, Finance and Marketing, and Education to avoid any open meetings act violations. Mr. Turner volunteered to be on the Education and the Culture and Climate committees. Mr. Bell volunteered to be on the finance and marketing committees.

b. Dr. Cunningham suggested that the bylaws be reviewed to ensure that these Committees could be created. Mr. Turner stated that he would like to amend the bylaws to include the committees and those roles.

10. Adjournment

a. A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Bell and seconded by Mr. Bradt.

i. Roll call vote:

1. Kenny Cunningham – Aye.
2. Anisha Grimmett – Aye.

3. Tamir Bell – Aye.
 4. Antonio Turner – Aye.
 5. Jacob Bradt – Aye.
- ii. Meeting adjourned at 12:58 p.m.

Next Board Meeting: August 18, 2022 at 11:30 a.m. (Meeting will be held in-person at Jackson Charter School, 315 Summit Street, Rockford, IL 61107)