

**Rockford Charter School Organization Board Meeting Minutes
December 21, 2023
11:30 a.m.
Jackson Charter School, 315 Summit Street, Rockford, IL 61107
In-Person Meeting**

1. Call to Order – at 11:42 a.m.
 - a. Present: William Cunningham, Jacob Bradt, Tamir Bell, Antonio Turner, Carla Redd (virtual), Executive Director Emily Wallen, Attorney Roxanne Sosnowski, Sikich Partner Ray Krouse
 - b. Not Present: Ricardo Montoya Picazo; Anisha Grimmett
2. Approval of Agenda
 - a. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Jacob Bradt and seconded by Tamir Bell.
 - i. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
 - ii. Motion passed.
3. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes of October 19, 2023.
 - a. A motion to approve the Board Meeting Minutes of October 19, 2023, was made by Antonio Turner and seconded by Jacob Bradt.
 - i. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
 - ii. Motion passed.
4. Public Comment – No Public Comment.
5. New Business
 - a. Presentation of Audit Report by Sikich, LLP.
 - i. Ray Krouse explained to the Board that the responsibilities of Sikich include forming and expressing an opinion on whether the financial statements are materially correct, fairly presented, and that they conform with U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). In addition, Sikich is responsible for forming and expressing an opinion on whether supplementary information is fairly stated in relation to the financial statements as a whole. Sikich is also responsible for reporting material federal awards non-compliance related to certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements. Sikich must report significant deficiencies, including material weaknesses, in internal control over financial reporting, as well as communicating specific matters to the Board.
 - ii. In regard to governance, the RCSO Board is responsible for overseeing the strategic direction of the organization and its obligations related to accountability, overseeing the financial reporting process, discussing significant accounting and internal control matters with management, informing Sikich about suspected fraud, including views of fraud risks, as well as informing Sikich about any matters relevant to the audit.
 - iii. In terms of management responsibilities, they are responsible for presenting financial statements in conformity with U.S. GAAP, design implement, evaluate, and maintain effective internal controls over financial reporting, communicate significant accounting matters to those charged with governance, and providing Sikich with unrestricted access to all persons and information relevant to the audit. In addition, management is responsible for adjusting the financial statements, including disclosures, to correct material misstatements, inform Sikich of subsequent events,

provide Sikich with written representations, and inform Sikich if their auditor's report will be included in an annual report.

- iv. Ray Krouse explained that regarding internal control over financial reporting, there was one finding that relates to segregation of duties where one individual in accounting has certain responsibilities that someone else isn't sharing with the other individual. He explained that the organization's internal controls should be segregated so that no one person has the ability to authorize and record transactions. In compliance testing, there were no instances of noncompliance.
 - v. Ray Krouse explained that in regard to the report on compliance for each major federal program, Sikich determined that the organization complied, in all material respects, with the compliance requirements that could have a direct and material effect on each of its major federal programs for the year ended June 30, 2023. Regarding internal compliance, Ray Krouse reported that Sikich did not identify any deficiencies in internal control over compliance that could be considered material weaknesses.
 - vi. Ray Krouse stated that Sikich did not encounter any significant difficulties related to unnecessarily brief time to complete the audit, unavailability of expected information or the organization's personnel, restrictions imposed by management, or extensive unexpected effort to obtain audit evidence. In addition, there were no material corrected misstatements, nor were there uncorrected misstatements.
- b. Discuss/Approve performance-based bonus policy for administrators.
 - i. Discussion/Approval of performance-based bonus policy for administrators was laid over to the meeting on January 18, 2024.
 - c. Discuss/Approve National Charter Schools Institute Proposal for Governance Training Services for RCSO Board Members in the amount of \$2,400.00.
 - i. A motion to Approve National Charter Schools Institute Proposal for Governance Training Services for RCSO Board Members in the amount of \$2,400.00 was made by Tamir Bell and seconded by Jacob Bradt.
 - 1. Roll Call Vote:
 - a. William Cunningham – Aye.
 - b. Carla Redd – Aye.
 - c. Antonio Turner – Aye.
 - d. Jacob Bradt – Aye.
 - e. Tamir Bell – Aye.
 - 2. All ayes. Motion passed.

6. Marketing Committee Report

- a. Jacob Bradt informed the Board that the five video Facebook ads have been running for 30 days. He explained that \$15 a day is being spent between the five ads. Jacob Bradt stated that within the 30 days, the branding has reached 11,775 people, over 15,000 pieces of engagement, 744 link clicks.
- b. Jacob Bradt explained to the Board that a newsletter is in the works to provide an Executive Director's Report, updates throughout the school for parents, recognition of leaders of the week, a section for parent resources, as well as the school lunch program.
- c. Antonio Turner suggested that an educational resource section should be added to the newsletter.

7. Executive Director's Report

- a. Executive Director Emily Wallen stated that as of closing on Thursday, December 14, 2023, student enrollment was at 240. She explained that all classrooms are fully staffed as well.
- b. Executive Director Wallen explained to the Board that all instructional staff members met with the administrative team in a one-on-one setting in order to check employee morale and gain feedback from the staff. The overall feedback determined that teachers are not happy with

aspects of the reading curriculum and would like more support during workshop times. Executive Director Wallen explained that two additional paraprofessionals have been hired as teacher aides to help support teachers during workshop times. In addition, a new special education teacher has been hired to work with special education students in kindergarten through 2nd grade.

- c. Executive Director Wallen informed the Board that formal observations of instructional staff began the week of December 11, 2023. She explained that in order to target the area of concern in math, while keeping literacy in the forefront of planning and instruction, the school has partnered with math professor, Dr. Linda Figgins from Northern Illinois University. Dr. Figgins is engaged in an observation learning cycle with the teachers of the building. Dr. Figgins helped with planning hands-on math lessons with each grade level team. She then returned to the school to observe these lessons and provide feedback to the teachers. In addition, Dr. Figgins provided recommendations and suggestions to these teachers, who in turn revised their lessons, and then were recorded while giving these lessons for further review from Dr. Figgins.
- d. Executive Director Wallen informed the Board that from the meeting with Dr. Woulfe regarding the Illinois Report Card, feedback indicated that students with learning disabilities are a targeted area of concern in the building. Executive Director Wallen explained that students with learning disabilities will be a large focus in data analysis, while continuing to look at the school as a whole overall.
- e. Executive Director Wallen informed the Board that there was an event that occurred considering the facility, safety, and security. She explained that on December 19, 2023, around 11:30 p.m., she received a call that police were at the school and 'Door H' was wide open. While there was never anyone seen entering the building, all of the doors from then on were open, as well as the door handle broken off on 'Door J' of the school. Executive Director Wallen stated that police did three walkthroughs of the building, and while nobody was seen, and nothing seems to have been taken, it was clear that someone had been tampering with doors. She explained that the door has been fixed and there is going to be a camera installed by the door that was tampered with.
- f. Executive Director Wallen stated that the school is due for a tornado drill in the near future.
- g. Executive Director Wallen went through upcoming events. Events include Santa's Workshop December 19, 2023, through December 22, 2023, Jackson Charter Staff Holiday Party on December 20, 2023, Christmas Musical on December 21, 2023 from 5:30-7:00 PM, Last Day Before Winter Break on December 22, 2023, Return From Winter Break on January 8, 2024, and the RCSO Board Retreat on January 18, 2024 from 11:30-2:30 PM.

8. Finance Committee Report

- a. YTD Budget to Actuals
 - i. Finance Director Rick Aylward explained that the revenue through November is about \$368,000 above the budgeted number, which is mainly from tuition from higher enrollment, in addition to ESSER funds being higher as well. He explained that expenditures are about \$44,000 over budget, mainly due to personnel and higher enrollment.
- b. YTD Cashflow Update

9. Executive Session – (if needed)

- a. Personnel - 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.

- i. A motion was made to enter executive session by Tamir Bell and seconded by Antonio Turner.
 1. Roll Call Vote:
 - a. William Cunningham – Aye.
 - b. Antonio Turner – Aye.
 - c. Jacob Bradt – Aye.
 - d. Tamir Bell – Aye.
 - e. Carla Redd – Aye.
 2. All ayes. Motion passed. Entered executive session at 12:34 p.m.
- ii. A motion was made to exit executive session was made by Tamir Bell and seconded by Jacob Bradt.
 1. Roll Call Vote:
 - a. William Cunningham – Aye.
 - b. Antonio Turner – Aye.
 - c. Jacob Bradt – Aye.
 - d. Tamir Bell – Aye.
 - e. Carla Redd – Aye.
 2. All ayes. Motion passed. Exited executive session at 12:58.

10. Adjournment

- a. A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Carla Redd and seconded by Tamir Bell.
 - i. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
 - ii. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 12:59 p.m.

Next Board Meeting: January 18, 2023, at 11:30 a.m. (Meeting will be held in-person at Jackson Charter School, 315 Summit Street, Rockford, IL 61107)