

Rockford Charter School Organization Board Meeting Minutes

June 20, 2024

11:30 a.m.

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

In-Person Meeting

1. Call to Order – at 11:30 a.m.
 - a. Present: William Cunningham, Antonio Turner, Jacob Bradt, Anisha Grimmett, Tamir Bell, Carla Redd (entered at 11:43 a.m.), Finance Director Rick Aylward, Director of Climate and Culture Starla Copeland, Executive Director Emily Wallen, Haley Braconier, Carlie Bates, Krista Williams, Attorney Roxanne Sosnowski
 - b. Not Present: Ricardo Montoya Picazo
2. Approval of Agenda
 - a. A motion was made to amend the agenda by Tamir Bell and seconded by Anisha Grimmett.
 - i. Voice vote: All members voting aye.
 - ii. Motion passed.
3. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes for April 18, 2024, April 23, 2024, May 7, 2024, and May 30, 2024
 - a. A motion to approve the Board Meeting Minutes for April 18, 2024, April 23, 2024, May 7, 2024, and May 30, 2024, was made by Jacob Bradt and seconded by Anisha Grimmett.
 - i. Voice vote: All members voting aye.
 - ii. Motion passed.
4. Public Comment – None.
5. Finance Committee Report
 - a. Discuss/Approve FY2024-2025 Rockford Charter School Organization Budget.
 - i. Finance Director Rick Aylward stated that the enrollment used for the FY2025 budget will be 230 students. He explained that he and Executive Director Wallen discussed that 230 would be appropriate seeing that the previous year enrollment averaged 245 students.
 - ii. Finance Director Rick Aylward explained that he projects that there will be \$442,000 positive income in regard to the Projected FY24 budget. This has a lot to do with conservative numbers used for tuition, as well as conservative numbers used to project ESSER funds.
 - iii. With the 230 estimated enrollment, Finance Director Aylward stated that projected per capita tuition will be at \$3,003,900. He explained that he increased the budgeted ESSER funds for FY25 because approvals have been going through and he does think that will continue, however, this will be the last year for the ESSER funds.
 - iv. Anisha Grimmett inquired about what can be done this year to help recover money

when it comes to being prepared for the loss of ESSER funds. She emphasized that there needs to be a way to help cover that cost because otherwise it may come to reducing in certain areas where the school may not necessarily want to. Finance Director Aylward stated that continuing to be conservative with tuition can help, since he thinks that tuition revenue will be higher than budgeted, but that doesn't completely cover the loss from ESSER funding.

- v. Antonio Turner asked why the Title I funds are budgeted in FY25 to be lower than the projected amount in FY24. Finance Director Aylward explained that Title I funds are computed by the federal and state governments as to what will be given next year. The projected at the moment looks like it could be a little bit lower. This number gets adjusted, and the real number is given out at a different time of year.
 - vi. Carla Redd entered the meeting at 11:43 a.m.
 - vii. Haley Braconier asked if Title I money is allocated to specific things. Finance Director Aylward explained that they allow you to get reimbursed for certain things. He explained that the main thing allowed for reimbursement are certain salaries for specific positions. Intervention personnel, coaching personnel, are easiest for the school to turn in for reimbursement and get it turned around. He further explained that Title I funds can also be used for professional development and transportation.
 - viii. William Cunningham asked if there are any large maintenance projects included in the budget. Finance Director Aylward stated that there are not currently any maintenance projects included in the budget. There is a project regarding IT and firewalls, but that cost will be reimbursed by 85% from an available grant.
 - ix. Anisha Grimmitt asked that there be some sort of plan shown within the first half of the year to show how the deficit from the ESSER funds will be recovered.
 1. A motion to approve the FY2024-2025 Rockford Charter School Organization Budget was made by Tamir Bell and seconded by Jacob Bradt.
 - a. Roll Call Vote:
 - i. William Cunningham – Aye.
 - ii. Antonio Turner – Aye.
 - iii. Jacob Bradt – Aye.
 - iv. Anisha Grimmitt – Aye.
 - v. Carla Redd – Aye.
 - vi. Tamir Bell – Aye.
 - b. All ayes. Motion passed.
 - b. YTD Budget Actuals
 - i. Finance Director Aylward stated that the school is \$858,870.21 ahead in revenue due to the ESSER and tuition excesses. Expenditures are at \$266,632.61. He stated that bottom line, the school is \$592,237.60 ahead of the budget.
 - c. YTD Cashflow Update
 - i. Finance Director Rick Aylward stated that the bank account is currently at \$3,104,501.70. He explained that there won't be any revenue until August or September.
6. 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 Carla Redd and seconded by Tamir Bell.
 1. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
 2. Motion passed. Entered into executive session at 12:08 p.m.
- ii. A motion was made to return to open session by Tamir Bell and seconded by Carla Redd.
 1. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
 2. Motion passed. Exited executive session at 12:35 p.m.

7. New Business

- a. Discuss/Approve Request For Proposal responses for Leadership Consulting Services for Jackson Charter School.
 - i. Attorney Sosnowski gave a summary of each of the proposals submitted. The proposal from the Addington Method has an 8–10-week project timeline. With 2 days a week of services, there would be \$1,000 due a week for the engagement. With the proposal from Dr. Ebony Wrenn, the project timeline was 10 weeks. This included check-ins with members of the executive team, as well as a team-building activity that would be inclusive of all members of the executive team. This proposal included 2 days per week, at 3 hours per day, and a \$10,000 engagement. The next proposal was from Grace and Salt Academy. This included a 10-session project timeline of 8-10 weeks total. The timeline would follow up with a report to be prepared for presentation to the RCSO Board. The proposed cost from Grace and Salt was \$20,193. Ms. Carter at Posterity 45, LLC, proposed an 8–10-week timeline, including 1 to 2 days at the school, as well as meetings with the administrative team both individually and as a whole. The cost for this proposal was \$15,500.
 - ii. Jacob Bradt stated that the proposal from Grace and Salt is way over the school’s budget. He added that one thing to consider is that the proposals from Dr. Wrenn and Mr. Addington leave room in the budget to continue services afterwards if necessary.
 - iii. Anisha Grimmert pointed out that in the RFP, it was specified that people who have worked in education was a preference and there are two proposals that came in that fit that preference.
 - iv. Tamir Bell asked staff how the experience has been with Mr. Addington’s process, seeing that he has been within the school in recent months. Haley Braconier shared that in the process of Mr. Addington giving his reports back, some of the information should have been kept confidential. Krista Williams stated that what Mr. Addington said was what staff had felt, but he shared it in a professional manner. Ms. Williams said that the information was beneficial and stated that it is refreshing that something is being done to continue to help the school past Mr. Addington’s report. Carlie Bates explained that she appreciated the process with Mr. Addington. She felt that his questions were thoughtful and were based on his

observations that he had made to better understand Jackson staff and administration.

- v. Jacob Bradt asked that Ms. Copeland and Ms. Wallen share their thoughts, seeing that they will be the ones primarily working with the consultant. Executive Director Wallen stated that having someone with an educational background is key. She stated that she spent a lot of time with Mr. Addington explaining how things work in education, so a lot of things had to be clarified. Mrs. Copeland explained that while Mr. Addington may have been more corporate versed, he dealt with relationships, and that's what needs to be dealt with. She further explained that Mr. Addington is familiar with the current staff at the school. Carla Redd agreed, stating that Mr. Addington could hit the ground running because he's already been at the school, putting in a lot of work.
 - vi. Tamir Bell stated that he believes Dr. Wrenn could help from an educational standpoint when the school year starts. He stated that Mr. Addington can help the school from a leadership perspective. He ultimately believes both consultants can help the school in different ways.
 - 1. A motion was made to Approve Request For Proposal responses for Leadership Consulting Services for Jackson Charter School through Mr. Addington at the Addington Method by Carla Redd and seconded by Jacob Bradt.
 - a. William Cunningham – Abstain.
 - b. Jacob Bradt – Aye.
 - c. Anisha Grimmitt – Abstain.
 - d. Carla Redd – Aye.
 - e. Tamir Bell – Aye.
 - f. Antonio Turner – Aye.
 - 2. Majority voting Aye. Motion passed.
 - 3. William Cunningham and Tamir Bell exited the meeting at 1:04 p.m.
 - b. Discuss/Approve potential new Rockford Charter School Organization Board Members.
 - i. There are no potential new Rockford Charter School Organization Board Members at this time.
8. Marketing Committee Report
- a. Jacob Bradt stated that the school has been engaged in a number of community events. There was a booth on the first day of City Market, and they are scheduled to attend again in August. The school also is scheduled for a break dance battle at Live at Levings on July 28th. Jacob Bradt stated that they also had a Jackson Charter tent at the Juneteenth celebration.
 - b. Jacob Bradt stated that the Facebook and Instagram ad campaigns have been going the last six weeks or so. These are targeted towards families that live in the Greater Rockford Area, specifically those with elementary range children.
 - c. Jacob Bradt stated that the school is \$7,000 under budget for marketing expenses.
9. Executive Director's Report
- a. Executive Director Emily Wallen stated that rounds one and two of intent to enroll packets have gone out. As of June 19th, there have been 190 students that have submitted completed forms with intent to enroll. She explained that there is always a rush that comes in during August, so the 190 is not unusual for this time.

- b. Executive Director Wallen stated that summer school started on Tuesday. She explained to the Board that this year, the school has made efforts to take into account the schedules of the parents. In previous years, summer school was Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to noon. This year, summer school runs Tuesday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. In this case, the students are still able to get those hours in, and family schedules are being taken into account.
- c. Carla Redd asked how many students are in summer school. Executive Director Wallen stated that there are 25 students.
- d. Discuss/Approve necessary contracts for the upcoming 2024-2025 school year.
 - i. Executive Director Wallen stated that all staff intent to return contracts have been done, and classrooms are fully staffed with the exception of 2nd and 5th grades. Additionally, Executive Director Wallen explained that Mrs. Copeland proposed a new position, a restorative classroom teaching role. This position has been posted and interviews will be conducted to ensure the best candidates.

10. Director of Climate and Culture's Report

- a. Ms. Copeland stated that her top priorities for the next two months are classroom management, restorative practices in the classroom, and stakeholder partnerships.
- b. Anisha Grimmertt asked if there is a way, in terms of stakeholder partnerships, to include the Board with activities that are happening within the school, whether its in the community or at Jackson. This way, the Board can either show up or just know in advance what is going on in regard to the school. Mrs. Copeland agreed that this can be done.

11. Director of Data and Instruction's Report

- a. Report carried over to the August board meeting. Request was made for Mrs. Smeltzer's report to be sent to the Board electronically in an effort to provide time for the Board to review the academic testing data as soon as possible.

12. Adjournment

- a. A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Carla Redd and seconded by Antonio Turner.
 - i. Roll Call Vote:
 - 1. Antonio Turner – Aye.
 - 2. Jacob Bradt – Aye.
 - 3. Carla Redd – Aye.
 - 4. Anisha Grimmertt – Aye.
 - ii. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Next Board Meeting: August 15, 2024, at 11:30 a.m. (Meeting will be held in-person at Jackson Charter School, 315 Summit Street, Rockford, IL 61107)