

Rockford Charter School Organization Meeting Minutes
August 15, 2024
11:30 a.m.
Jackson Charter School, 315 Summit Street, Rockford, IL 61107
In-Person Meeting

1. Call to Order – at 11:31 a.m.
 - a. Present: William Cunningham, Antonio Turner, Ricardo Montoya Picazo, Jacob Bradt, Tamir Bell, Carla Redd (enters at 11:40 a.m.) Attorney Roxanne Sosnowski, Finance Director Rick Aylward, Director of Data and Instruction, Angie Smeltzer, Director of Climate and Culture, Starla Copeland, Executive Director Dr. Ebony Wrenn
 - b. Not Present: Anisha Grimmett
2. Approval of Agenda
 - a. A motion was made to approve the agenda by Jacob Bradt and seconded by Tamir Bell.
 - i. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
 - ii. Motion passed.
3. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes for June 20, 2024
 - a. A motion was made to approve the Board Meeting Minutes for June 20, 2024, by Jacob Brat and seconded by Tamir Bell.
 - i. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
 - ii. Motion passed.
4. New Business
 - a. Discuss/Approve Jackson Charter Marketing Contract with Rockford Buzz for a 12-month period in the amount of \$31,500.00.
 - i. Jacob Bradt exited the meeting at 11:33 a.m.
 - ii. A motion was made to table the Discussion/Approval of the Jackson Charter Marketing Contract with Rockford Buzz for a 12-month period in the amount of \$31,500.00 to the next meeting by Tamir Bell and seconded by Ricardo Montoya Picazo.
 1. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
 2. Motion passed.
 - iii. Jacob Bradt re-entered the meeting at 11:35 a.m.
 - b. Discuss/Approve Golden Apple Accelerator Agreement.
 - i. Director of Data and Instruction, Angie Smeltzer, explained that there is no cost associated with the Golden Apple Accelerator Agreement. As far as the terms of the agreement are concerned, Ms. Smeltzer has not heard anything back. Ms. Smeltzer brought to the attention of the Board Attorney Sosnowski's concern, which is that it is an extended term agreement, with each term being 2 years, Ms. Smeltzer explained that keeping the charter agreement in mind, Attorney

- Sosnowski advised that there may be an issue entering into Golden Apple Accelerator agreement for a term longer than one year.
- ii. Executive Director Dr. Ebony Wrenn stated that she is very familiar with the Accelerator program, and she believes that the school can move forward with the agreement because there is a way where if something were to happen, the program could be continued, and it would not impact the school.
 - iii. Attorney Sosnowski advised the Board just to note that Rockford Charter School Organization as an entity cannot enter into any contract beyond the term of the existing charter agreement, and the Golden Apple contract goes out to 2028. She explained that the school would need to reach out to Golden Apple and see if the end of the term could be amended to 2026.
 1. A motion was made to Approve the Golden Apple Accelerator Agreement subject to amendments by Tamir Bell and seconded by Jacob Bradt.
 - a. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
 - b. Motion passed.
- c. Discuss/Approve potential new Rockford Charter School Organization Board Members.
- i. Resolution of the Board of Directors of Rockford Charter School Organization Electing a New Board of Directors Member – La’Keshia Wingo.
 1. Tamir Bell informed the Board that La’Keshia Wingo was his recommendation. He stated that he would like to propose that La’Keisha Wingo be added to the Board to help in advancing the school forward.
 2. Director of Data and Instruction, Angie Smeltzer stated La’Keisha Wingo is a part of Alignment Rockford, which is a program that the school is looking at partnering with for kindergarten readiness.
 3. Tamir Bell indicated she also has that educational background that the Board had discussed bringing in.
 - a. A motion was made to approve the Resolution of the Board of Directors of Rockford Charter School Organization Electing a New Board of Directors Member – La’Keshia Wingo by Tamir Bell and seconded by William Cunningham.
 - i. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
 - ii. Motion passed.
 - ii. Carla Redd entered the meeting at 11:40 a.m.
- d. Discuss/Approve Resolution of the Board of Directors of Rockford Charter School Organization Re-Electing Anisha Grimmett as a Board of Directors Member.
- i. A motion was made to table the Discussion/Approval of the Board of Directors of Rockford Charter School Organization Re-Electing Anisha Grimmett as a Board of Directors Member to the next meeting by Tamir Bell and seconded by Jacob Bradt.
 1. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
 2. Motion passed.
- e. Discuss/Approve Resolution of the Board of Directors of Rockford Charter School Organization Re-Electing Antonio Turner as a Board of Directors Member.
- i. Antonio Turner informed the Board of his plans to step down from the Board due to conflicts in his schedule. Thereafter, no vote was taken on this resolution.
- f. Discuss/Approve Resolution of the Board of Directors of Rockford Charter School

Organization Re-Electing Carla Redd as a Board of Directors Member.

- i. A motion was made to Approve the Resolution of the Board of Directors of Rockford Charter School Organization Re-Electing Carla Redd as a Board of Directors Member by Tamir Bell and seconded by Ricardo Montoya Picazo.
 1. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
 2. Motion passed.
 - g. Discuss/Approve Resolution of the Board of Directors of Rockford Charter School Organization Re-Electing Dr. William Cunningham as a Board of Directors Member.
 - i. A motion was made to Approve the Resolution of the Board of Directors of Rockford Charter School Organization Re-Electing Dr. William Cunningham as a Board of Directors Member by Jacob Bradt and seconded by Ricardo Montoya Picazo.
 1. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
 2. Motion passed.
 - h. Discuss/Approve Resolution of the Board of Directors of Rockford Charter School Organization Re-Electing Jacob Bradt as a Board of Directors Member.
 - i. A motion was made to table the Discussion/Approval of the Board of Directors of Rockford Charter School Organization Re-Electing Jacob Bradt as a Board of Directors Member to the next meeting by Carla Redd and seconded by Tamir Bell.
 1. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
 2. Motion passed.
 - i. Discuss/Approve Resolution of Rockford Charter School Organization Electing Officers.
 - i. A motion was made to Approve the Resolution of Rockford Charter School Organization Electing Officers by Carla Redd and seconded by Tamir Bell.
 1. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
 2. Motion passed.
5. Marketing Committee Report
- a. Jacob Bradt informed the Board that enrollment is at 210 students. He stated that the school is on a strong track to hit the goal of 240 students for the school year. Jacob Bradt explained that his focus around enrollment has been mostly through digital ad campaigns and community involvement.
6. Director of Climate and Culture's Report
- a. Director of Climate and Culture, Starla Copeland, explained to the Board that the school is looking into holding a gala to raise money for the school. She wanted to bring this idea to the Board to see if they would be willing to use their influence to help direct the organization of an event like this.
 - b. Ms. Copeland informed the Board that the school received \$3,300 towards an additional stipend for teachers to put towards their classrooms. One of the newest teachers, Ms. Brandy, had mentioned her \$150 stipend to her children, and they decided to match that stipend not only for her, but for all of the teachers in the building. She informed the Board that they are also donating 139 backpacks for the students.
7. Director of Data and Instruction's Report
- a. Director of Data and Instruction, Angie Smeltzer, informed the Board of the Illinois Readiness Assessment data as of August 9, 2024, based on the published reports from Pearson. She stated that school demographic reports should come out in the fall. Ms. Smeltzer explained that the report is broken down by math and ELA for grades 3 through

5, with the total percentage based on the students. She explained that for the charter agreement for next year, it is required that the school reaches 6.9% at the “Met Expectations” level or higher for math, and around 16% for the “Met Expectations” level or higher for reading. The report shows that the school currently has achieved 3% for math and 9% for reading.

- b. Ms. Smeltzer explained to the Board that the school has hired an Academic Enrichment Interventionist, who will work specifically with the students that are almost at grade level or above grade level so that they can have more challenging and enriching work. In addition there will be interventionists working with the below grade level students as well.
- c. Ms. Smeltzer explained that the school is also implementing WIN time, which stands for “What I Need”. This WIN time will be every Wednesday for 2.5 hours where the entire school is going to be focused on small group instruction. There will be additional teachers in every classroom in order to provide that small group instruction.
- d. Antonio Turner asked how much of this educational time is paved around student interest. He explained that students read and learn based on their interest level.
- e. Ms. Smeltzer explained that that staff will get together each week to plan and analyze data for each WIN time. She explained that the soft skill that Antonio Turner had previously mentioned, will also be addressed during that time. It’ll specifically be more for academics, but WIN time is going to be the opportunity where the staff will be able to meet the students at their interest level.

8. Public Comment

- a. Haley Braconier explained to the Board that staff had spoken to board members Tamir Bell and Jacob Bradt about possibly having a staff member represent the staff on the Board. She asked if there has been discussion about this possibility.
- b. Attorney Sosnowski explained that the Board could have staff members attend the board meetings, and that Board composition is dictated by state statute and the Charter Agreement. Attorney Sosnowski stated that members of the public, along with staff, are welcome to bring ideas and proposals to the Board during public comment.

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 Carla Redd and seconded by Tamir Bell.
 - 1. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
 - 2. Motion passed. Entered executive session at 12:21 p.m.
 - ii. Ricardo Montoya Picazo exited executive session at 12:29 p.m.
 - iii. A motion was made to return to open session by Carla Redd and seconded by William Cunningham,
 - 1. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
 - 2. Motion passed. Exited executive session at 12:48 p.m.

10. Discuss/Approve Employment Contract with Dr. Ebony Wrenn for the position of Interim Principal.

- a. A motion was made to Approve the Employment Contract with Dr. Ebony Wrenn for the position of Interim Principal by Antonio Turner and seconded by Tamir Bell.
 - i. Roll Call Vote:
 1. Jacob Bradt – Aye.
 2. William Cunningham – Aye.
 3. Antonio Turner – Aye.
 4. Tamir Bell – Aye.
 5. Carla Redd – Aye.

11. Finance Committee Report

- a. Discuss/Approve Revised FY2024-2025 Rockford Charter School Organization Budget.
 - i. Finance Director Rick Aylward explained that the Board previously approved a proposed budget that contained a roughly \$90,000 deficit. He informed the Board that he had some discussions with Ms. Copeland, and they came to an agreement to increase the numbers in some of the line items.
 - ii. Finance Director Aylward informed the Board that there was a Finance Committee meeting in which the changes to some of the line items were discussed.
 - iii. Finance Director Aylward explained to the Board that once he started receiving all of the new staff and teacher contracts from Ms. Wallen, it came to his attention that the wage number on the budget was very low in comparison to the actuality of what had been offered. He stated that the revised numbers are in the revised budget. Finance Director Aylward informed the Board that with these revised numbers, the budget shows a deficit of \$545,100.
 1. A motion was made to table the Discussion/Approval of the Revised FY2024-2025 Rockford Charter School Organization Budget to a September Special Board meeting by Carla Redd and seconded by William Cunningham.
 - a. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
 - b. Motion passed.

12. 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 12:53 pm.

Next Board Meeting: October 17, 2024, at 11:30 a.m. (Meeting will be held in-person at Jackson Charter School, 315 Summit Street, Rockford, IL 61107)