

**Rockford Charter School Organization Board Meeting Minutes**

**June 26, 2025**

**11:30 a.m.**

**REVISED MEETING LOCATION:**

**Sosnowski Szeto, LLP, 6735 Vistagreen Way, Ste. 300, Rockford, IL 61107**

**In-Person Meeting**

1. Call to Order – at 11:38 a.m.
  - a. Present: Tamir Bell, Anisha Grimmiett, Carla Redd, La’Keshia Wingo, Jessica Iasparro, Erika Hannah (entered at 11:39 a.m.), Pastor William Martin (Providence Baptist Church), Maintenance Manager, Aaron Galassi, Interim Director of Teacher Development, Leoanny De La Cruz-Warren, Finance Director, Rick Aylward, Director of Climate and Culture, Starla Copeland, Interim Principal, Dr. Ebony Wrenn, Attorney Roxanne Sosnowski
  - b. Not Present: William Cunningham
2. Approval of Agenda
  - a. A motion to approve the agenda was made by La’Keshia Wingo and seconded by Carla Redd.
    - i. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
    - ii. Motion passed.
3. Approval of Special Board Meeting Minutes for May 15, 2025
  - a. A motion was made to Approve the Special Board Meeting Minutes for May 15, 2025, by Anisha Grimmiett and seconded by La’Keshia Wingo.
    - i. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
    - ii. Motion passed.
4. Public Comment
  - a. William Martin, the chairman and pastor at Providence Baptist Church introduced himself to the Board.
5. New Business
  - a. Discuss/Approve MOU for Summer Program
    - i. Dr. Ebony Wrenn explained that the summer program is going well so far. She informed the Board that the program averages 20-30 scholars per day. She stated that transportation worked out. Dr. Wrenn explained that incoming kindergartners are enrolled as well, which is seen as a huge plus in order to get them used to the school day and structure.
    - ii. Attorney Roxanne Sosnowski explained to the Board that transportation is being provided by RPS 205. She stated that the quote for transportation was about \$7,500, and there is room in the FY25 budget to cover that expense. Attorney Sosnowski explained that other costs include staff costs, which is being covered under payroll, as well as any other necessary materials.

- iii. A motion to Approve the MOU for the Summer Program was made by Carla Redd and seconded by La’Keshia Wingo.
  - 1. Roll Call Vote:
    - a. Tamir Bell – Aye.
    - b. Erika Hannah – Aye.
    - c. Anisha Grimmer – Aye.
    - d. Carla Redd – Aye.
    - e. Jessica Iasparro – Aye.
    - f. La’Keshia Wingo – Aye.
  - 2. All ayes. Motion passed.
- b. Discuss/Approve Contract for Employment for Teachers
  - i. Dr. Wrenn informed the Board that the two amendments to the contract include language about required licensure and degree, along with whether or not the dates of the contract will align with the fiscal year. Dr. Wrenn stated that she would still like to have discussion with Finance Director Aylward and CSBM to help determine what dates to align the contracts with.
    - 1. A motion was made to lay over the Approval/Discussion of the Contract for Employment for Teachers by Tamir Bell and seconded by La’Keshia Wingo.
      - a. Roll Call Vote:
        - i. Tamir Bell – Aye.
        - ii. Erika Hannah – Aye.
        - iii. Anisha Grimmer – Aye.
        - iv. Carla Redd – Aye.
        - v. Jessica Iasparro – Aye.
        - vi. La’Keshia Wingo – Aye.
      - b. All ayes. Motion passed.
- c. Discuss/Approve Sign-On Bonus Policy
  - i. Attorney Sosnowski explained that the Board needs to advise what number they would like to offer for the policy.
  - ii. Dr. Wrenn added that it has been extremely hard to recruit and retain high quality staff. She stated that it would be beneficial for the school to consider some form of incentive to make them more competitive and help fill the high needs positions.
  - iii. The Board came to a consensus to offer \$3,500 as the sign on bonus open to all teaching positions. The Board agreed to have the bonus payment broken up throughout the 12 months of the contract year.
    - 1. A motion to Approve the Sign-On Bonus Policy subject to amendments was made by La’Keshia Wingo and seconded by Anisha Grimmer.
      - a. Roll Call Vote:
        - i. Tamir Bell – Aye.
        - ii. Erika Hannah – Aye.
        - iii. Anisha Grimmer – Aye.
        - iv. Carla Redd – Aye.

- v. Jessica Iasparro – Aye.
      - vi. La’Keshia Wingo – Aye.
    - b. All ayes. Motion passed.
  - d. Discuss/Approve 2025-2026 SIP Plan
    - i. Dr. Wrenn informed the Board that the 25-26 SIP Plan was formed based off of the AIR data. Dr. Wrenn informed that Board that this plan is in draft mode, but she needs a Board-approved SIP Plan to submit to RPS 205 for grant purposes, however, the plan can always be amended. She explained that what was done this year instead of last year was the inclusion of a math and reading goal in order to be laser-focused on academics.
    - ii. Tamir Bell asked the Directors to share their thoughts on the difference in the process between this year and last year. Director of Climate and Culture, Starla Copeland, informed the Board that the process was more intensified and targeted. She stated that there is a specific goal, and they have been learning and implementing that when there is no goal, there’s no target.
      - 1. A motion to Approve the 2025-2026 SIP Plan was made by Carla Redd and seconded by La’Keshia Wingo.
        - a. Roll Call Vote:
          - i. Tamir Bell – Aye.
          - ii. Erika Hannah – Aye.
          - iii. Anisha Grimmett – Aye.
          - iv. Carla Redd – Aye.
          - v. Jessica Iasparro – Aye.
          - vi. La’Keshia Wingo – Aye.
        - b. All ayes. Motion passed.
  - e. Discuss/Approve Amendments for Tuition Reimbursement Policy/Tuition Reimbursement Request
    - i. Dr. Wrenn recommended that the policy includes undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs. She stated that there needs to be discussion on identifying where in the budget this reimbursement would come from because it was not previously budgeted.
    - ii. Anisha Grimmett asked if there is a way to set an amount to be given out within the school year on a first come first serve basis.
    - iii. Attorney Sosnowski explained that it is in the current policy that the reimbursements are subject to budget appropriation. She informed the Board that the budget that was approved at the last meeting would have to be amended to reflect tuition reimbursement in the budget. Attorney Sosnowski explained that the Board would need to come up with a targeted amount in the budget that they would want to put towards the program for the next school year.
    - iv. The Board came to a consensus to amend the policy in which the tuition reimbursement must be Board-approved. The Board also decided to allocate \$10,000 in the FY26 budget towards tuition reimbursement.

1. A motion was made to Approve the Amendments for the Tuition Reimbursement Policy/Tuition Reimbursement Request by Tamir Bell and seconded by Carla Redd.
  - a. Roll Call Vote:
    - i. Tamir Bell – Aye.
    - ii. Erika Hannah – Aye.
    - iii. Anisha Grimmertt – Aye.
    - iv. Carla Redd – Aye.
    - v. Jessica Iasparro – Aye.
    - vi. La’Keshia Wingo – Aye.
  - b. All ayes. Motion passed.
- f. Discuss/Approve Rockford Buzz Contract
  - i. Dr. Wrenn informed the Board that she recommended cutting merchandising and swag shop management from the contract, as well as social media content to allocate it to a teacher.
  - ii. Anisha Grimmertt stated that she agrees with removing the merchandising and swag shop management, however, she has concerns with social media content going to a teacher.
  - iii. The Board came to a consensus to have Dr. Wrenn ask Jacob Bradt at Rockford Buzz to provide an itemized list of the cost of the scope of work, as well as discuss the removal of the merchandising and swag shop management from the contract.
    1. A motion was made to lay over the Discussion/Approval of the Rockford Buzz Contract by Anisha Grimmertt and seconded by Carla Redd.
      - a. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
      - b. Motion passed.
- g. Discuss/Approve Additional 2025 Board Meetings
  - i. Dr. Wrenn recommended moving to a monthly schedule, seeing that the agendas are packed, on top of trying to push Jackson forward entering a renewal year.
    1. A motion was made to Approve Additional 2025 Board Meetings to move to a monthly meeting schedule by Tamir Bell and seconded by Jessica Iasparro.
      - a. Roll Call Vote:
        - i. Tamir Bell – Aye.
        - ii. Erika Hannah – Aye.
        - iii. Anisha Grimmertt – Abstain.
        - iv. Carla Redd – Aye.
        - v. Jessica Iasparro – Aye.
        - vi. La’Keshia Wingo – Aye.
      - b. Majority voting aye. Motion passed.
- h. Monthly Presentation by Consultant ElevatED Spaces, LLC
  - i. ElevatED Spaces, LLC, Consultant Shenita Johnson, explained that the company has done policy analysis, fiscal recommendations, staffing model

recommendations, conducted a compensation analysis, as well as the FY26 budget preparation. She stated that they are now working on the renewal process.

- ii. Consultant Shenita Johnson advised the Board that there are key aspects that they should be able to recognize in the draft renewal application. She stated that this includes proficiency, in which Jackson performed higher than a RPS similarly situated school by greater than 6% in SY23-24 in English Language Arts. In addition, the school performed higher than the District in SY 23 in ELA and were within 10% of meeting growth in SY23 & 24. She highlighted that the school's enrollment in SY 24-25 was 241, in which the building use rate increased to 88%. Consultant Johnson stated that the school's financial position is strong.
- iii. Consultant Johnson stated that as it relates to the renewal, ElevatED Spaces, LLC, would suggest focusing on enrollment, academic growth and proficiency, meeting the requirement for number of certified teachers, professional development, addressing pending vacancy, and committing to structural adjustments.
- iv. Carla Redd exited the meeting at 12:53 p.m.
- v. Anisha Grimmert stressed that it is important how the message is carried across to the District when it comes to the renewal application. Attorney Sosnowski explained that something that helped in the last renewal application process was direct communication from some of the RCSO Board members to the RPS205 Board members. She explained that this included making personal phone calls and invitations to the school.

i. Discuss/Approve ElevatED Spaces, LLC, Contract Amendment in the Amount of \$40,000

- i. A motion to Approve ElevatED Spaces, LLC, Contract Amendment in the Amount of \$40,000 was made by La'Keshia Wingo and seconded by Erika Hannah.

1. Roll Call Vote:

- a. Tamir Bell – Aye.
- b. Erika Hannah – Aye.
- c. Anisha Grimmert – Aye.
- d. Jessica Iasparro – Aye.
- e. La'Keshia Wingo – Aye.

2. Majority voting aye. Motion passed.

6. Old Business

a. Discuss/Approve Awarding a Bid/Proposal for Roof Repair

- i. Attorney Sosnowski explained that initially, the Board approved a proposal from Prestige Contractors for roof repair. She informed the Board that, in conversations with Prestige, they indicated that they would not be able to perform the job at prevailing wage, nor would they be able to meet the insurance limits required under the RFP that was put out.
- ii. The Board asked Maintenance Manager, Aaron Galassi, for his recommendation. Aaron Galassi informed the Board that his recommendation would be the proposal from HC Anderson for the single-layer removal, which would have to

be approved by the City of Rockford. He explained that HC Anderson is a Union roofing company, so if anyone has knowledge on how to do just one layer, it would be them. Rick Aylward reminded the Board that HC Anderson is the company that did roof repair on the original building back in 2021. Aaron Galassi stated that the roof on the original building still looks great.

- iii. Anisha Grimmett asked what the risk would be in removing just a single layer.
- iv. Jessica Iasparro exited the meeting at 1:14 p.m.
- v. Aaron Galassi explained that if by chance the roof wasn't installed correctly, there would be leaks, however, the roof would be under warranty.
  - 1. A motion was made to Approve the Single-Layer Roof Repair Proposal from HC Anderson in the amount of \$283,760.00 by Tamir Bell and seconded by Anisha Grimmett.
    - a. Roll Call Vote:
      - i. Tamir Bell – Aye.
      - ii. Erika Hannah – Aye.
      - iii. Anisha Grimmett – Aye.
      - iv. La’Keshia Wingo – Aye.
    - b. All ayes. Motion passed.

#### 7. Chairman’s Report

- a. Discuss Board Retreat
  - i. Tamir Bell stated that he can work with Attorney Sosnowski’s office to figure out Board Retreat dates.
- b. Discuss Board Member Recruitment
  - i. Tamir Bell stated that there is a need for more Board members, especially with Anisha Grimmett stepping down.
- c. Discuss/Approve Resolution of the Board of Directors of Rockford Charter School Organization Electing Treasurer
  - i. A motion was made to Approve the Resolution of the Board of Directors of Rockford Charter School Organization Electing La’Keshia Wingo as Treasurer by Tamir Bell and seconded by Anisha Grimmett.
    - 1. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
    - 2. Motion passed.

#### 8. Marketing Committee Report

- a. No report given.

#### 9. Interim Principal Report

- a. No report given.

#### 10. Director of Climate and Culture Report

- a. Director of Climate and Culture, Starla Copeland, explained that there is a goal for attendance. She stated that for next year, the goal is to have the daily average of students increase to 86%, a 10% growth from the past year’s 76%.
- b. Director Copeland asked that the Board help the school on the “National” days, in which the school holds celebration days for the students. She stated that this helps the attendance initiative. In addition, Director Copeland, asked the Board help to contribute to the school’s “House” system. She asked that the Board try to think of anyone that aligns with the “House” key areas including leadership, academic achievement, literacy, and music and

fine arts, to arrange to speak at an assembly for the students.

11. Interim Director of Teacher Development Report

- a. Interim Director of Teacher Development, Leoanny De La Cruz-Warren, explained that the school has been very intentional with summer professional development. She informed the Board that data was collected from the teachers to see where they were at and what their needs were in order to customize the professional development retreat.

12. Finance Committee Report/Finance Manager Report

- a. YTD Budget Actuals
  - i. Finance Director, Rick Aylward, informed the Board that the school is \$266,983.21 ahead of budget in terms of revenue. He stated that the school is \$97,117.41 under budget in terms of expenses.
- b. YTD Cashflow Update
  - i. Finance Director Aylward stated that the bank account stands at \$3,725,261.25.
- c. Fundraising/Development Plan – item to be moved to the July meeting.
  - i. Give/Get
  - ii. Finance/Fundraising Committee
  - iii. Facilities Committee established by the Board
    1. Identify Composition of Committee

13. 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 Anisha Grimmiett.
    1. Roll Call Vote:
      - a. Tamir Bell – Aye.
      - b. Erika Hannah – Aye.
      - c. Anisha Grimmiett – Aye.
      - d. La’Keshia Wingo – Aye.
    2. All ayes. Motion passed. Entered executive session at 1:57 p.m.
    3. Dr. Ebony Wrenn exited executive session at 2:38 p.m.
  - ii. A motion was made to exit executive session by Anisha Grimmiett and seconded by Tamir Bell.
    1. Roll Call Vote:
      - a. Tamir Bell – Aye.
      - b. Erika Hannah – Aye.
      - c. Anisha Grimmiett – Aye.
      - d. La’Keshia Wingo – Aye.
    2. All ayes. Motion passed.

14. Discuss/Approve Revised Employment Agreement for Dr. Ebony Wrenn as Executive Director
  - a. A motion was made to Approve Revised Employment Agreement for Dr. Ebony Wrenn as Executive Director by Erika Hannah and seconded by Anisha Grimmer.
    - i. Roll Call Vote:
      1. Tamir Bell – Aye.
      2. Erika Hannah – Aye.
      3. Anisha Grimmer – Aye.
      4. La’Keshia Wingo – Aye.
    - ii. All ayes. Motion passed.
15. Discuss/Approve Employment Agreement for Starla Copeland as Director of Student Support and Engagement
  - a. A motion to Approve an amended Employment Agreement for Starla Copeland as Director of Student Support and Engagement with a 5% salary increase was made by La’Keshia Wingo and seconded by Erika Hannah.
    - i. Roll Call Vote:
      1. Tamir Bell – Aye.
      2. Erika Hannah – Aye.
      3. Anisha Grimmer – Aye.
      4. La’Keshia Wingo – Aye.
    - ii. All ayes. Motion passed.
16. Discuss/Approve Employment Agreement for Leoanny De La Cruz Warren as Director of Teaching and Learning
  - a. A motion to Approve Employment Agreement for Leoanny De La Cruz Warren as Director of Teaching and Learning was made by Anisha Grimmer and seconded by La’Keshia Wingo.
    - i. Roll Call Vote:
      1. Tamir Bell – Aye.
      2. Erika Hannah – Aye.
      3. Anisha Grimmer – Aye.
      4. La’Keshia Wingo – Aye.
    - ii. All ayes. Motion passed.
17. Discuss/Approve Employment Agreement for Rick Aylward as Finance Director/Fiscal Manager
  - a. A motion to Approve Employment Agreement for Rick Aylward as Finance Director/Fiscal Manager was made by La’Keshia Wingo and seconded by Erika Hannah.
    - i. Roll Call Vote:
      1. Tamir Bell – Aye.
      2. Erika Hannah – Aye.
      3. Anisha Grimmer – Aye.
      4. La’Keshia Wingo – Aye.
    - ii. All ayes. Motion passed.
18. Adjournment
  - a. A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Anisha Grimmer and seconded by La’Keshia Wingo.



- i. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
- ii. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

**Next Board Meeting: July 18, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. (Meeting will be held in-person at Sosnowski Szeto, LLP, 6735 Vistagreen Way, Ste. 300, Rockford, IL 61107)**