

Richmond Consolidated School - School Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday June 9, 2020 6:00PM

APPROVED

Present:, Adeline Ellis, Dewey Wyatt, Susan Benner, Peter Dillon, Jill Pompei, Jenevra Strock

Guests: Beth Smith, Roger Kohler, Lauren Broussal, Rachel Kanz, Ina Wilhelm, Michelle Smith, Gill Romano, Mary Shook, Alisha Deane, Brian Grebeldinger, Karen O'Donnell, Joy Mullen, Neal Pilson, Kara Smith, two others

1. Call to order 6:03 pm

Meeting to be held by conference call due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

An Executive Order from the Governor of Massachusetts relieves public bodies from the requirement in the Open Meeting Law that meetings be conducted in a public place that is open and physically accessible to the public, provided that the public body makes provision to ensure public access to the deliberations through telephone, internet, or satellite enabled audio or video conferencing or any other technology that enables the public to clearly follow the proceedings of the public body in real time. In addition, all members of a public body may participate in a meeting remotely; the Open Meeting Law's requirement that a quorum of the body and the chair be physically present at the meeting location is suspended. All other provisions of the Open Meeting Law, such as the requirements regarding posting notice of meetings and creating and maintaining accurate meeting minutes, as well as the limited, enumerated purposes for holding an executive session, remain in effect.

Connection: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/155455941> , (224) 501-3412 Access Code: 155-455-941

2. Positive messages -open call to hear positive observations related to our educational efforts.

AE: Graduation was wonderful. SB: commended the work the staff has done. PD: the gift basket that Richmond provides to the students is very nice. LB: 6th graders submitted on her own an article to the Richmond Record. Very nice to a student take it upon herself to contribute. AE: Sat in on a very nice Wellness session held by Christine Lendfest, had a pediatrician speak. She learned a lot, and thought the students had great questions. She thanked Ms Lendfest.

3. Public Comments: JM: The REA is looking forward to next school year and would like to work together with the School Committee and Admin to work on details to open school. AE: the next three weeks will be very telling and will get a good idea around school opening (more discussion later in meeting).

4. Correspondence: none

5. Review and approval of the minutes from:

4/14/20: SD motion, AE 2nd, all in favor, approved as amended, 4/17/20: DW motion, AE 2nd, all in favor, approved as amended, 4/21/20: SB motion, AE 2nd, all in favor, approved as amended, 5/11/20: AE motion, SB 2nd, all in favor, approved as amended, 5/12/20: SB motion, AE 2nd, all in favor, approved as amended, 5/13/20: SB motion, AE 2nd, all in favor, approved as is, 5/18/20: tabled to next meeting

6. Principal's Report

- a. Remote learning update: survey sent out (3 versions: Pref-2, 3-5, 6-8). Parents appreciated borrowing Chromebooks, 1-on-1 sessions, office hours. Parents felt communication was good. Issue raised about different teachers using different platforms which was overwhelming, especially for families with more than one student. Teachers comfort level improving, felt supported. Looking at a new learning management system. Looking to create a reentry committee to work on various scenarios and details.
- b. End of year activity: Very nice graduation event outside. Kindergarten to have a wave parade around circle so teachers can say good bye to students for summer. Step-up day to be held. Teachers have found a way for students to meet teachers for next year
- c. School Choice: Added some students but insuring class size will still allow for excellent education.
- d. PreK Billing: Request the SC to look at billing since these students weren't in the building and the programming was not as significant as for the older students. PD added: asked if the committee would be open to reducing or eliminating. These are the littlest kids where you don't want the on line for hours. Many families were not able to participate. This does not set precedent for next year as we likely will establish a better program for that age group. The March to end of year total amount is ~\$18K. We decided to table any decision until after the financial report discussion-n later in the meeting.
There does not need to be an annual vote on school choice, only if a change is to be made such as to exit the program. SB brought up that the COVID-19 situation may impact the number of kids ideally in a classroom next year (to be assessed as part of re-opening planning).

7. Superintendent's report

- a. Superintendent Evaluation: evaluation completed on time (5/13/20 minutes).
- b. Special Education Director Status: JS is retiring after 46 years, which is incredible. Can't say enough. She has served in many roles, huge asset to students, staff, and PD. Mary Shook is the new SPED Director, looking forward to working with her. JS will provide consultation to Mary to insure the transition is good given the complexity and

importance of the role. She will be working 2.5 days /week. Principal Pompei will work with her to set the best weekly schedule to meet student needs. DW expressed appreciation to Jenevra for the years of work and impact on so many in Richmond. When the time is right we will look to have a proper retirement set off.

PD just got an update on bussing. Previously he got guidance from the State, attorneys, and other admins. Guidance is that some portion of the down time be paid but only part. Recommend 75% less of cost May 15 to end of year (~\$46K). Doesn't set any precedent for future. AE brought up concerns of paying too much in this time. DW made the motion to authorize PD to amend and finalize the adjustment of 75% less the cost May 15 to end of year (~\$46K). DW motion, SB 2nd, DW and SB voted in favor, AE against. Commission will give more guidance next week. They did provide guidance on safety equipment which could be a very large expense. PD asking for patience and plans are being worked and revised as things evolve (day by day) There was discussion about what money is available and what can be applied to these unplanned costs. Berkshire County Education Taskforce update: working them on potential use of Canvas learning system. RCS working to understand what it is how it can be of value. Fees covered by task force grant

8. Special Education Director's report:
Communicated to her contacts that Mary taking over. State said we can do remote learning over the summer. JS appreciated the kind words, and said that it has been an honor to work in Richmond.
9. Budget Status, Upcoming Town Meetings. The Finance Committee has approved 4:1 to endorse the Richmond Education Budget appropriation value. DW provided a summary of the upcoming Town meeting and town elections. Adeline is on the ballot as well as Ian Wilhelm for the open seat. DW noted that this was also Susan's last meeting and thanked her for the time and contribution to the School Committee and School.
DW reminded all that the difficult financial situation continues so we'll really need to practice frugality and diligence on controlled spending. PD said he is still waiting budget info from state, but reminded that Richmond will be less impacted by any cuts compared to other districts.
10. Superintendency Contract, Advisory Committee Update:
We are formalizing a one year extension of services with BHRSD as we work on our future. An SAC meeting next week (5/16). DW will be posting a SC meeting on May 18 to advance the discussions and plans. LB: SAC did get some direction for SC in last meeting. Talked about the follow-up with Lenox. Lauren, Bob, Neal did have discussion and understand what type of arrangement they have in mind. These details will be covered in future meetings. LB feels she has a clearer idea of what the SC wants. DW: To make sound decision we need to be sure we sufficiently understand options. BHRSD is not interested in year by year extensions while Richmond investigates range of scenarios. NP: we have an obligation to be sure we look at and understand options, and shouldn't rush in to anything. PD: on behalf of BH, if we can't figure out that we can move in a common direction by the end of this year, we should move on. NP and LB: we should be able to arrive at a decision point by last few month of this year. Further discussion about needing to focus on structural aspect of future arrangement and not on specific individual we know of are comfortable with right now.
11. Financial Report: PD reported that we in good shape, doing normal end of year reconciliation. DW had a question about the Activity Advisor stipend discrepancy between what is contractually available and planned for, and actual. JP and PD to look at line item budgeting to insure they are accurately reflect jobs being filled. SB asked about Maintenance of Grounds and Maintenance of Buildings. Spending on incremental work on heating system, there is a warrant item coming up to finalize heating system gaps (language of last year to be updated so the funding can be used). AE: Asked about SPED transportation. Nothing paid, so PD to follow up.
Pre-K Tuition: more discussion about what to do with the P-K tuition from March, and other money available to the end of the years for needs (no money is carried over to the next year, it goes to the town as free cash). PD conveyed the importance of end-of-year spending balance and not to "use it or lose it." Need to be sure we insure needs are covered but giving some surplus back to the town is see and good.
The conversation broadened to overall needs and available money, and how the Pre-K money factors in to this.
SB motion to only charge 50% tuition from March 16 to year end. AE 2nd, all in favor.
Further discussion on spending plans to year end. DW asked for clarity on what spending is really needed has to be done. How do we not miss out on obtaining what we know is needed (technology, safety equipment...).
12. Other unforeseen items: IW asked about IEPs over the summer. JS: none need to be in the building, the State is allowing remote. Asked about extra SPED budget, JS explained it is not residential but for more students in building. Asked about school choice and if SPED factors considered (PD explained that it isn't and can't be).
13. Adjournment SB Motion at 8:04 pm, 2nd DW, all in favor

Submitted: D. Wyatt