

Richmond Consolidated School - School Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 18, 2020
4:30 PM

APPROVED

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

Absent: Susan Benner

Guests: Karen Fierst, Cristina Lenfest, Joy Mullen, Lauren Broussal Kate Rickard Beth Smith Michelle Smith, Rachel Kanz Challis Adams Neal Pilson, four others

1. Call to order: 4:33pm

The meeting was 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 info: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/688018717> , (571) 317-3122, Access Code: 688-018-717

2. Review and approve minutes: 5/18/2020 Tabled to next monthly meeting

3. Pre-K charge for mid-March to Year End:

PD explained that the details may not have been clearly conveyed or understood by the SC when it voted to charge 50% of tuition from March 16 to end of year. Many families expressed concern with the decision and asked for it to be re-visited.

PD updated the SC that the funds can be covered, and now is the right time to release families from the obligation. Preschoolers should not be on-line and the programming offered for this age doesn't compare to the older students.

DW made the motion to forgo the PreK Changes from March 16 to year end. AE 2nd, all in favor (SB absent).

This doesn't set precedent but needs to be looked at in the future

The concept of Richmond offering free pre-k as a value to young families living and moving

The Admin will relook at the new contract that is to go out to see how to manage similar situation-n in the future.

PD congratulated Richmond for passing the budget and thanks all those involved. He excused himself prior to the Superintendency Project discussion to avoid any conflict of interest.

4. Superintendency Project: RSC work with Consultant on the course of action, next steps.

Karen Fierst, Consultant, provided an update on moving out of Stage 1 to stage 2. Meeting next Thursday between Richmond and BHRSD School Committee. Richmond group agreed we want to look at financial arrangements, terms of arrangement, governance factors, administrated and operational impacts, and certainly educational impacts. Since last meeting, RSC authorized SAC representatives to talk to Lenox to understand what they had in mind. The SAC will provide update on that later in meeting. In the SAC meeting earlier this week, discuss responsibilities now that she is on board to facilitate. There is some confusion and a need to clarify soon due to bring in a consultant to facilitate progress.

Also had a check-in with Chair of BHRSD. There is a certain level of understanding by them that Richmond needs to understand other options, however there is a reluctance to get in to some type of bidding war. Need to understand how we intergrade all members of the SAC in to the process to address any confusion.

DW asked LB to provide an update. She Neal and Bob G met with Bo Vaughn, Lenox Chair. They got enough info to present to SAC two nights ago. They are looking at a shared arrangement, similar to what we are used to. No regionalization whatsoever as they aren't a Regional District (and don't foresee any plan in the future).. They

see sharing based on student population which would be roughly 80/20 Lenox/Richmond split. Haven't considered other services but would consider that. No direct sharing of school operation or culture beyond shared superintendent and/or business mgr services. No transportation reimbursements. No requirement to give up other high school tuition contracts. NP added that they are about to embark on a search for a Superintendent (currently served by interim Dr Cameron) after this summer. They said they would invite Richmond to participate in that process.

LB said the SAC unanimously this should be looked at in addition to the BH options, and there should be a follow up with Lenox to get more specific details. DW we want to be sure at the end of the days we make sound decisions, so the information gathered was significant to understand the scope of what that option would entail. Agreed we do need to get more information but need to be very strategic in the steps we take. Concern with BH response with how any Lenox steps advance. Richmond definitely would want to participate in any process identifying a Superintendent who may serve Richmond. With Karen, we need to work diligently through July, August on assessment of options.

NP want to clarify any comments made around confusion with the SAC role. He never felt it was the place for SAC to communicate directly with BH. It has always been strictly advisory to the RSC, and never have any role in direct communication with BHRSD. He also had concerns with what Karen said regarding concern about getting in a bidding war. He doesn't want exploration fo option to be misconstrued as trying to create a "bidding war." With potential significant changes to Richmond school, we have a responsibility and obligation to look at options available. DW agreed we have to have good info to make sound decisions. He said he had heard from Steve Bannon that we all need to be working on behalf of our constituents and it makes no sense to have a partner that is unhappy in an arrangement. It's far more straightforward for them than it is for Richmond. We do need to forge ahead to understand more about specific details of what an arrangement entails. LB said it is crucial we get actual information from H, still not clear that BH know we are only interested in 9-12 only. We don't have any basic information at all levels as there is so much more to consider that just financials.

DW: asked Karen how to advance the process, get more answer to questions. KF: The purpose of the meeting next week to work on details on how to get down to the working on understand the details, potentially setting up subgroups. IW: concerned this has been stalled, need to get more concrete progress. Why don't we have more financial info? How do we move ahead? If we don't have financial info, what will we be talking about. Karen conveyed the BH folks are looking to sit down and co-create. DW: how can we break through this barrier of getting an acceptable response to financial information has been requested. The meeting next week is key to open things up so we can move forward.

AE: very glad we got some initial concrete information from Lenox, need to be doing the same with BH.

NP: we are still at first steps trying to verify what viable options are, where BH is past that and wants to move ahead together.

AE: ask for confirmation that arrangement with BH would have to have some level of Regionalization, not interested in continuing with only shared model. DW: confirmed that is correct, there needs to be enough for them to continue.

All agreed the meeting next week was a critical one for moving forward

DW asked if there were any public comments. There were none.

5. Other unforeseen items - None
6. Adjournment 5:33pm DW motion , AE 2nd, all in favor

Submitted: D Wyatt