



## RMAE Board of Directors MINUTES

Date: 08-08-13 6:30pm

LOCATION: Rocky Mountain Academy of Evergreen, Admin Building, Evergreen, CO

### Meeting Minutes

**Document Revision:** 12 August 2013

**Document Approval:** 12 September 2013

**Call to Order at: 6:38 PM**

#### **BOD Members in Attendance:**

Ned Parker, President  
Aaron Lessig, Vice President  
Thomas Seybold, Treasurer  
Dana Price, Secretary  
Bob Fiore, Parent Representative  
Jamie Price, Parent Representative  
Kristen LaJoy, Parent Representative  
Dan Cohen, Director  
Seth Anderson, Parent Representative (7:42 pm)

#### **Others in Attendance:**

Jon Tesseo

#### **Reading of Vision & Mission Statements**

##### **Public Comment**

None

#### **Consideration of Consent Agenda:**

- Board of Directors (BOD) meeting Minutes from 7 July 2013  
**Motion:** Ned made the motion to accept the minutes, Bob seconded.  
**Discussion:** None  
**Abstentions:** Kristen as she did not receive the Minutes to review.  
**Vote:** 6-0 approval (Seth not in attendance for this vote)

#### **Committee Reports:**

*AAA – no report  
Financial*

- Tom reported the Auditors will be at RMAE on August 27<sup>th</sup> and final numbers will be available. Currently our PPR is \$6400, which gives us a rough number of \$3,200,000. He doesn't understand Dina's "fudge factors", it is estimated that \$8,000 will be spent on each student leaving a gap of \$1600 per student. Tom's estimate came out closer to \$3,000,000.
- Dina & Tom to will meet every Friday.
- If the School Finance Act is passed this November, Charter Schools will receive \$600 per student in perpetuity each year for facilities, but could be offset by Free & Reduced lunch students. If we can get families to fill out the waivers for free and reduced lunch we can potentially offset the dollar amount. In a separate part of legislation there is also \$600 per student for teacher development/compensation. It is unclear whether this money is a one-time or ongoing fee. IF the Finance Act is passed in November our optimistic gap would be only \$400 per student. This does not include a rainy day fund or bringing teacher salary increase. Historically the gap has been between \$1100-\$1200 per student if you take into Annual giving & the Auction. Jamie stated if we are fortunate to fill the gap, the other fundraising should go to the items we are missing. The day in day out running of the school is what we are asking for at the beginning of this year for the initial ask. Raise \$

through other fundraising activities. Tom stated that what happens in November can really change the financial picture of the school.

- Jon stated that Charter Schools receive 1/4 of the Mill Levy whereas non-charter schools get the full amount. Non-charter PPR is significantly higher because of variations in funding such as this. From the state it is the same, but from the “take back” in Jeffco the PPR number never gets locked in therefore they can essentially take money back. They can also retroactively take money back. Half of the Kindergarten class income is not included in Dina’s budget as of right now. The gap is still significant, but not as significant as it seems. RMAE is going through the reserve funds too fast. Tom said there are disclosure issues that need to be addressed regarding the 5 yr budget and the Bond people. It needs to be defensible. The Taber and Bond dollars cannot be touched. BOD needs to know where the money is being spent, concrete numbers. \$1200 gap is a generalized amount. Ned would like to see a cash flow diagram showing how we expect to be spending our money vs. actual spending to help us nail down our numbers. Bob stated there is inherent elasticity involved in the financing of the school and it is probably a wise thing for Dina to be so conservative.

#### BOD Discussion:

- Dan – PTO will no longer handle the fundraising for the Middle School. There is ongoing fundraising for the MS trips such as pizza lunches, the snack shack, etc. These definitely need to be a calendar item. It isn’t working and needs to change. If they have a trip, you have to help them fundraise. PTO prefers the 3 coordinators to handle it, however, they need to coordinate amongst themselves. Suggestion: one fundraiser a year.
- Tom – We need to predict gap dollars with the ballot initiative passing and without. PPR, Mill Levy & Special Ed are firm numbers. 2012 finances: \$106,000 in donor dollars \$80,000 in other. These two figures are our biggest variables. \$55K was last years annual giving.
- Aaron – There needs to be predictability in the amount we ask parents to give for financial stability. The BOD needs to develop a fee structure to cover total cost of ownership and it has to be transparent as to why we are asking for the money. We also need to communicate to parents the % of families who pay, the % of families who can’t and the % of families who don’t. Are we trying to establish an annual fee amount? Those who can’t need to fill out the waivers.
- Jamie – We started at \$1600 but it’s probably closer to \$1200. This is not part of parent’s donations. We need to emphasize the participation factor to place ourselves in a better position for Grants. We also need to find alternative means for letting people know about our shortfalls. We need to outreach to the teachers and PTO before the Fire House meeting. Dan will let us know when we can meet with the teachers. The BOD is cohesive in its goals for this school year. Bob would like to make sure we take a positive approach.
- Possible phone-a-thon regarding the Fire House meeting on September 17<sup>th</sup>.

#### RMAE Foundation

- Jon presented. The Foundation has met, but it was not as well attended as Jon had hoped.
- Jon has attempted to contact the Grant Writer, but has not heard back. He found a very good website for Grants. Aaron asked if there were any Math & Tech Grants. Does it help long term? Does it free up \$\$ to go somewhere else or new programs? We don’t necessarily need Grants for new programs. The Grants have rolling schedules with application deadlines, but it’s a good representation of what we can apply for in the future. Daniels Fund does a lot for Charter Schools, but not all necessarily apply to RMAE. The Grant Writer was paid \$1000 for an overview of the school and then she gets a percentage of the grants. She needs to be present at the September BOD meeting with overview document in hand to present.
- There are 7 Foundation Board members: Jackie Mohr, Kelli Anderson, Marie Lynch, Jeff Courtney, Andrew Boyle & Melissa Neace. Go through company websites in the greater Denver area to see who is doing educational grants. Melissa has the possibility of receiving dollars for the school. Jon would like to ask for funding a Challenge Grant? Mrs. Tesseo works as an Accountant for the School of Mines Foundation; Jon will ask how they go about fundraising. How do they find the people to ask for \$\$?
- Last week there was a Lunch and Learn seminar regarding fundraising at the League. Jon spoke with the Presenter and he is willing to do a live webinar with RMAE. August 19<sup>th</sup> is the next Foundation meeting.

- Jamie stated he has heard that in TX it's Corporations who fund schools. There aren't Grants, but the Corporations adopt a school. Possibility for this? There are Energy Companies here in Evergreen that we should be contacting.

#### *Marketing*

- Dana reported she has contacted Lisa Rutenberg, the new IT person, for emails & passwords to update events/finance calendar as necessary.
- Dana & Dan met regarding the revision of the "tuition-free" blurb on all of our Marketing material. They decided to have a further discussion with the Marketing Committee as a whole at the next meeting.
- Next official Marketing Committee meeting will be held August 27.
- Will ask Kate to put information out regarding the Fire House meeting.
- Historically the Mktg committee was made to bring in students, then to fix the website. Dan would like the BOD to charge the committee with marketing us externally. Brand image.

*PTO – no report*

*Preschool – no report*

#### *Facilities / Tech*

- Facilities will be tearing down the greenhouse and store it for a few weeks in order to move forward with the new field. Saturday is the teardown and reconstruct will happen in September after the extra dirt from the field is moved down to produce a leveled area by the Archeology dig site.
- A campus clean up day needs to be scheduled. Jason has done a good job on everything internal. Waiting for Tim's update before we can give a date for the cleanup day. Will be one of the Saturdays before school begins.

#### *Director's Report*

- Dan stated TCAP results are out, but will not be public until 8/14. Thursday morning reports will be in the newspapers, etc.
- Dan cannot share with the community until the 14<sup>th</sup> as well.
- A Charter Renewal Committee needs to be formed and the process needs to move forward immediately. There needs to be BOD representation. Bob has volunteered to participate.

*President's Report – no report*

### **Old Business**

#### **A. Field Committee Update**

1) Jeffco Planning and Zoning asked for a few minor notation changes on our revised Grading Permit Application plans, which were forwarded to High Point Engineering on 7/31/13. Once those revisions are made and resubmitted, we should be issued our Permit.

2) As far as I know, we are still waiting on construction/grading bids based on the revised plans. Drew may have them in his inbox, but he is out of the country until 8/14/13. We do have bids for fencing, turf, and "Observation and Materials testing" from Kumar & Associates who have pledged to donate 35% of the invoice back to the school. A bid request was also made for survey staking prior to grading (status unknown)

3) A few members of the Facilities Committee will be working over the weekend of 8/10 to disassemble the green house and temporarily store, primarily under the stairs of Building 1's north exit. We want the parts, especially the dome panels themselves very much "out of the way" to protect them until they can be reassembled in a new location (in the area where the Arch-dig boxes are, but up tight to road retaining wall).

4) Negotiations are ongoing with EPRD regarding their Sponsorship of a GOCO grant. A meeting was held today between Tim Lane, Scott Robson (EPRD Director), and Liz Cohen (EPRD Grant Writer) to outline the basic framework of a Joint Usage/Revenue Sharing Agreement. A general outline of terms agreed to in principle (lots of details to be worked out still) include:

- a. RMAE would build (with privately raised and GOCO funds if awarded), and be responsible for Maintenance costs during the school year.
- b. RMAE would have priority usage during school hours, EPRD would have priority usage

and scheduling during non-school hours, and during the summer.

- c. EPRD would be responsible for maintenance during the summer (trash, port-john, and perhaps some additional cost of periodic turf maintenance that we'll have to do).
- d. RMAE may withhold certain "Slots" of non-school hours for their own use/purposes, and would schedule (sell) those slots independently.
- e. EPRD would schedule all other non-school hours in conjunction with the other fields it schedules for use by 3<sup>rd</sup> party organizations (youth sports), and EPRD programs.
- f. EPRD is moving to an hourly fee structure for all fields it manages/schedules, and would pass to RMAE the majority (90% or more) of whatever usage fees are associated with our field. These funds would go to our O&M of the field, fund for eventual turf replacement, and to the school general operating budget if there is excess beyond the first categories. Scott Robson is currently investigating potential usage fee amounts and anticipated usage of a field at RMAE, to give us a better idea of what we can reasonable expect.

\*Is the GoCo Grant still moving forward? Some open ended questions waiting for Tim & Drew.

\*Should we be moving dirt during school? The BOD feels we will need to postpone the digging of the field to December break or thereafter if it can't be completed before children are on campus. This needs to be communicated to the Facilities Committee. Spring Break is another option.

\*Dan – In his welcome back letter he will need to include updated information regarding the progress of the field. Dan will meet with Tim in regards to statement.

**B. RMAE BOD committee representative's elections**

BOD will hold off on committee representative's discussion until next meeting. Will also review committees to see if they are necessary.

**C. Verify/obtain updated BOD Directory**

Dana needs to receive information from Christine. Corrections were made, will be updated and redistributed. The District requires name, title & phone from Dan.

**D. Each Board Member Execute Conflict Of Interest Policy**

Need Conflict of Interest Policy from Christine. Everyone else turned in.

**New Business**

**A. Strategic Plan Review and Approval**

Aaron presented there are additions/modifications in red for review. Academic performance: peer review changed to teacher evaluations. Name changed to Teacher Leadership Team, Dan prefers School Leadership Team, which is made up of teachers and Dan. Dan's explanation of what the Team is: a hybrid of assistant director by committee/self monitoring committee. They will deal with items such as discipline, consistency within staff. This is an opportunity to maintain accountability but spread some responsibility. We would like to see the Teachers nominate others to this committee. Academic performance is "owned" by Dan & Bob. Financial Sustainability, Aaron will add "begin the process of a fee structure". At the bottom of "Tools" auto pay through the Foundation was added. Safe and Inspiring learning environment added social/emotional training because it is a continuation of what we are already doing with RAK. RAK is on the verge of going national. Our staff will be trained in order to have the science behind why dealing with children with social/emotional learning is just as important as other programs. SEL (social emotional learning) will be the next big acronym. It's important for parents/teachers/students to understand that we heard what they had to say through the survey and we are addressing the issues. Dan & Seth will be on the Safe & Inspiring learning environment. Parent Engagement will be the goals for Dana & Jamie. The biggest change will be regarding positive relations between Parent relations and Staff. Practice RMAE virtues – owner is AAA & the Teacher Leadership Team. Seth's question is how will they know the discipline problems have been handled correctly? Dan stated there will be information regarding discipline in the monthly Director's report. Dan & Seth need to discuss and decide on a measurable outcome. Teachers will be the best barometers for this information. Kristen has also been assigned to Parent Engagement. Dan stated he would like two changes Academic Performance, Teacher retention has BOD as an owner. The HR committee has been tasked for over a year with creating a creative compensation approach. Dan would like to see

HR/Dan. Currently, it consists of Dan and Dina. Dan said there would be staff on it as well. Tom should be included because of the salary part as well. Bob volunteered to be on this committee. The other change Dan wants is the Math every day. They have compromised with AAA in having Math 4 days a week instead of 3 or 5. Dan has tried for weeks to restructure the current program, but it doesn't work for RMAE MS. It will be restated as increased Math contact. Next step is to finalize and broken up into goals BOD member's can manage. It will then need to be presented to PTO, Teachers & Foundation. Bob – is it worth presenting to both PTO & AAA? Do we want to present to all of these bodies all at the same time? No, two separate groups, teachers & parent groups. Get feedback from each group in case further changes may need to be made to the presentation. Dana commented that we need to differentiate between filling the gap and fees so the "Fee" structure in Financial Sustainability needs to be changed. Aaron will work on this item. You have to pay your Registration Fees through Jeffco Connect. The gap needs to be paid through PayPal on the RMAE website directly to the Foundation.

Jon departed at this time.

**Motion:** Seth made the motion to approve with the condition that we change the word "Fee", Tom seconded.

**Discussion:** None

**Vote:** Approval 8-0

#### **B. State of the School preparation**

Aaron and Jamie need to get the fee strategy and make the Strategic Plan consumable. The Charter School video also needs to be reviewed. The BOD members need to begin thinking about their individual goals and how they will be achieved.

#### **C. Facilities Fee proposal**

Dana reported \$300 per student to be included in the RMAE Registration Fee Schedule and is listed as a "required" fee. This dollar amount was obtained by pulling the line items I felt pertained to facilities from Dina's spreadsheet.

Measurables:

- 1) Maintenance of school buildings
- 2) Operating cost of buildings
- 3) Janitor salary
- 4) Future construction

Reiterate to parents that we receive absolutely no money for facilities as a Charter School.

School Finance Act – to be voted on this November. Discussed possibility of Facility Fee with Dina and she would like to wait until after the November vote to see how the money gets distributed. The concern is that while we will receive some facility monies, we will lose monies in other areas.

Also discussed Facilities Fee with Joni Malli from the Colorado League of Charter Schools - Charter411 Service. We need to have measurables to support the fee, which are listed above and they advised us to discuss with legal counsel before proceeding. I mentioned this to Dina as well and she will discuss with some of her colleagues at the next League meeting.

This needs to be a sustainable, long-term fee. Dan stated it cannot be on the Jeffco registration fee. We wouldn't be able to track it and wouldn't necessarily get the money back. Jeffco is the most monopolizing authorizer in the state. It doesn't mean our legal counsel can't fight it, but it would not be easy to have control of this money. Dan is willing to communicate with Jon regarding this fee. If the School Finance Act passes, Jeffco will absolutely not allow it on the registration fee schedule. There could be other possibilities in how we charge this fee. Kristen suggested our own registration page on the website with this fee on there and then put a link to the Jeffco site to continue registration. This is a different "ask" of parents. Dan thinks it would be better to have a registration packet. Email to parents and have them bring it in physically. Pass out a flyer on the 17<sup>th</sup> at the back end of the meeting regarding this fee.

#### **D. Review of Staff Handbook**

Ned reported: Homework for BOD. Dina to continue passing out.

**E. Staff Appreciation Dinner**

Ned reported: The BOD has traditionally sponsored a welcome back dinner for old and new teachers. Target the Staff week. Potluck provided by the BOD. Tentatively at Kristen's house on Thursday, 8/22, 4 pm.

**F. Board Training modules (#1, #2)**

Ned reported: #1 Board Member Conduct, #2 Board Structure and Responsibilities Shelved until next meeting.

**Action Items** (to be completed at the next Board meeting):

- A. Board Training modules (#11 Productive Board Meetings, #12 Effective Committees, #1 Board Member Conduct, #2 Board Structure and Responsibilities)
- B. Review and Discuss Director's Goals, Dan will include the 2 Action plans from the Strategic Plan and will give the School Leadership Team a definition.
- C. Annual Review of Emergency Procedures Plan moved to October BOD meeting.
- D. Board Bio's need to be completed and sent to Aaron by August 16, 2013.
- E. Review of Staff Handbook

**Board Comment:** None

**Next Meeting – September 12, 2013**

**Adjournment: 9:57 PM**