

ReNEW Charter Schools

Minutes

Board Meeting 10-12-2017 (Recreated)

Date and Time

Thursday, October 12, 2017 at 5:30 PM

Location

1607 South Carrollton

Trustees Present

J. Marshall, K. Conklin, K. Parke, L. Sherman, M. Clem, N. Hardie, P. Parquet, R. Roig, S. Rosenthal

Trustees Absent

B. Weimer

Guests Present

Jeff Southerland, K. Gutterrez, Nyesha Veal, S. Gallagher, S. Satchfield, Scott Satchfield

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance and Guests

B. Call the Meeting to Order

S. Rosenthal called a meeting of the board of trustees of ReNEW Charter Schools to order on Thursday Oct 12, 2017 @ 5:36 PM at 1607 South Carrollton.

C. Approve Minutes from 8/17/2017 meeting

R. Roig made a motion to approve minutes from the Board Meeting on 08-17-17. N. Hardie seconded the motion. The board VOTED unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Recommendation of New Board Member - Mykell Clem

A. Discussion and Vote

Mykell is a lawyer from New Orleans who went to LSU undergrad and then Southern University Law School. Her views on academics are in solid alignment with what ReNEW is working to do, and she brings diverse perspectives to the board. Kathy Conklin met her at a seminar on charter school law and Mykell has toured charter schools with Steve

Rosenthal. In response to Liza's question about how many is the ideal number of members for our board, Steve replied that 11-13 is an ideal; we are currently at 9, and odd numbers tend to be better.

R. Roig made a motion to admit Mykell Clem to ReNEW's Board of Directors. K. Conklin seconded the motion. The board VOTED unanimously to approve the motion.

III. Finance

A. Finance Committee Report

John Marshall reported that 3 months into the year, there is not too much to report.

October headcounts have come in and the actual numbers of students as compared to what we had projected, matched up very well, with minimal difference. Projections so far this year look good. We are down about 28 students network-wide. As it is rare to get new 7th and 8th graders in at mid-year, we will be looking to get lower school students in for February.

B. Resolution - CEO and COO to sign grant proposals

J. Marshall made a motion to authorize the CEO and COO to sign grant proposals and contracts. R. Roig seconded the motion. The board VOTED unanimously to approve the motion.

C. Resolution - Barbara Schuler to sign AmeriCorps grants

J. Marshall made a motion to allow Barbara Schuler, ReNEW grants staffer, to sign and submit proposals and contracts related to the AmeriCorps grant that ReNEW has. R. Roig seconded the motion. The board VOTED unanimously to approve the motion.

D. Resolution to remove certain check signing authority

L. Sherman made a motion to Give CEO the authority to remove anyone who ceases employment with ReNEW Schools, from any accounts on which they are check signatories. R. Roig seconded the motion. The board VOTED unanimously to approve the motion.

E. Resolution on dual check signing

R. Roig made a motion to Approve this Resolution allowing one approved signatory on checks less than or equal to \$15,000, and 2 signatures on checks above \$15,000, one of which must be the CEO, Board Chair, Board Treasurer, Board Vice President, or Board Secretary. J. Marshall seconded the motion. The board VOTED unanimously to approve the motion. The proposal is that we increase the check dollar amount cutoff at which we need dual signatories to \$15,000 & restructure who the second signature is, so that it does not have to be a board member. For a while, checks in excess of \$5k need signature by 2 people, one of whom is a board member. Other charter management boards allow the COO or CFO to sign as second signature rather than board members,

so we still have a strong control in place, by requiring board member to sign.

Randy moved to approve as is, and review in 6 months to see if another C-level exec could – but Kathy wanted to further discuss. Steve stated that with a total operating budget of \$40MM, \$15k is a very low number for dual signatures. John mentioned that finance committee member Jeff Teague had suggested identifying ‘usual vendor suspects’ – and designate those up to a certain cap, but then other vendors would be flagged by name, for review & second signature. Additionally, Kevin pointed out that there are many ETFs that go out that are far over this cap – so this isn’t a perfect check/balance. However, Kevin stated that there is a very rigorous, segregated process for check cutting – the person who cuts the check is not the reviewer etc.

Kathleen proposed a documented walk-through of the process for check-cutting at a future meeting. Pauline, Liza, Kathy – all were in agreement that coming up with a board-approved process based on best practices - is the road that we should follow and that we should not engage in micromanaging through reviewing individual transactions.

Tania described the annual audit to test ReNEW’s controls – the auditor runs a segregation of duties test & a disbursements test that includes various check & balance components on various sample transactions. The board ultimately decided to approve the motion as is, and at the next meeting accountants will come in and talk to us on our financial controls.

IV. Board Chair - FYI Items

A. Update on charter renewal process

Steve reported that there is no update, scores have not been released. Steve expects within the next 4 weeks we will know a lot more. We will need to meet as a board once the RSD makes some decisions. In the meantime, LDOE's John White & the RSD's Kunjan Narechania – paid a visit to RCAA last week. Steve met with OPSB staff today who mentioned that they’d heard from the RSD that ReNEW looks much better. This was great feedback to hear.

B. Reminder on Financial Disclosure Requirement

Steve stated that original Financial Disclosures were filed in May. However, if a board member filed for an extension on your 2016 Federal and State income tax returns, then he or she must file an amended Financial Disclosure report by 10/31/17.

C. Millage Vote

Steve stated that this is a key vote that we should all support as these millage dollars are needed. Steve has signs for anyone who wants them, but as a board we cannot take positions on the millage. There is as of now no organized opposition as of now.

V. CEO Report - Academics and Schools

A. CEO Report

Kevin stated that board meeting guest Jeff Southerland, of 501c3 Aple Educators has been a strong friend of ReNEW and charter schools city-wide. They grant & scholarship opportunities, disaster assistance and lots of other support services to teachers and schools.

Kevin further reported that ReNEW has made a pretty significant transition to Academic and Operations sides with Tania as COO and Sean as the lead on the Schools Team. We have focused in on the needs of school directors in a strategic fashion – offering both pressure & support. The focus is on supporting school leader development via Vasy & Sean. Retaining teachers, recruiting & retaining students, with a special emphasis on retaining students.

ReNEW is currently focusing from a curriculum & assessment perspective on new & revised resources that the LDOE is releasing, with LEAP 360. Under Obama – Race to the Top was released a while ago – a competitive grant program. The ultimate vision was a state curriculum & assessment system that would rival the ones everyone pays for. Now the state of Louisiana has come out with a great assessment system, that is user-friendly and intuitive for kids. Students will have 3 TEST TRIES prior to taking the LEAP – so they get practice. This is especially important for grades 4 & 8, as we return to a higher stakes environment – that students must pass the test at grades 4 & 8 prior to moving up to the next grade level. There are also great curricular resources happening at the state level, Sean reported. He also reported that instructionally, is where we still have lots of room to improve – we are working on empowering school directors to facilitate this.

On Tammy Robichaux's end, there are 3 things she is working on, large scale. Firstly - ensuring data is at the fingertips of anyone who needs it. Secondly, teacher retention. We are developing goals for these numbers. Retention numbers are bad across the district – teachers will leave frequently both for other schools, and for other occupations. Thirdly, student persistence – students staying longer at ReNEW.

Insight results – a survey of ReNEW staff by TNTP – will be presented at next board mtg, and will give us a great perspective into the inner workings of ReNEW on the ground, in the classroom.

VI. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

L. Sherman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:43pm. N. Hardie seconded the motion. The board VOTED unanimously to approve the motion. There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:43 PM.