

River Grove Elementary  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Tuesday, March 22, 2022 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM  
In the River Grove Commons

AGENDA

1.0 Meeting called to order by Chair Marcy Ost at 6:05pm.

1.1 Roll Call: Members present – Marcy Ost, Katherine Hardie, Angie Hong, Jessica Hansen, Katie Bruns, Annie Beck. Lisa Dochniak was not present. Other people attending included Drew Goodson (school director), Bridget Peterson (TAG), Breena Slivik (PTO).

1.2 Mission Statement – Ost read the River Grove mission statement.

1.3 Conflict of Interest – Ost read the River Grove conflict of interest statement and conducted a roll call to verify that all board members read the agenda. All members present indicated no conflict of interest.

2.0 Approve Agenda – The agenda was updated to note that the meeting is in-person at the River Grove Commons and not online. Motion by Hardie to approve the agenda. Second by Beck. All members voted yes. March 2022 Board Agenda approved.

3.0 Approve Minutes

3.1 February 2022 Minutes Approval - Motion by Bruns to approve the minutes. Second by Hansen. All members voted yes. February 2022 Board Minutes approved.

4.0 Community Discussion

4.1 River Grove Community Updates

4.1.1 Board Member Driven Initiatives - none

4.1.2 Authorizer Comments – not present

4.2 Community Comments - none

5.0 Finance Report & Actions

5.1 February 2022 Financial Packet - Bridget Peterson from TAG reviewed highlights from the Feb. 2022 financial report

- Based on the current budget projections, we will be slightly below our stated goal of having a 10% contingency fund in reserve.
- Credit card expenditures are now itemized on the payment register

5.2 Treasurer's Report

- The school purchased a Gator for \$30k and will get reimbursed for this expense next month. This will get funded through Federal SpEd funds.
- The financial committee will be meeting in early April to begin prepping the 2022-23 budget. There will be a full board workshop toward the end of April.
- The budget needs to be approved by June.

Beck motion to approve the February financial report. Second by Bruns. All members voted yes. February 2022 financial report approved.

### 5.3 Charitable Organization Annual Report Form approval (action item)

- The school is required to report donors and donations to the Minnesota Attorney General's Office because we are a tax-exempt, charitable organization.
- For the fiscal year ending in 06/30/2021, the school received \$39,338 in donations.
- There is a \$25 fee to file the report.
- Motion to approve and sign this document by Hardie. Second by Hong. All members voted yes. Charitable report approved.

### 6.0 Director's Report – Drew Goodson reviewed the March 2022 Director's Report

6.1 Contract Renewal – Hong helped to facilitate a workshop with teachers on Feb. 21, 2022 to develop and refine academic achievement goals for the reauthorization application.

Teachers talked about strategies for evaluating student growth and achievement. Goodson has received initial feedback from the Minnesota Guild and there will likely only be minor suggested changes for the five year report submitted this spring.

6.2 Hiring Status Timeline - River Grove will be hiring at least one new teacher for next year because we are adding another class section. The first round of interviews will be on March 28. Returning teacher contracts will be offered on April 18.

- Other staffing
  - There is a new bus driver for the Red Route again – Bob Vance.
  - River Grove will be bringing the occupational therapy (OT) program in house next year.
  - The speech specialist is out on leave and River Grove is looking for a temporary replacement.
  - Current staff will be providing their intent to return by March 25.

6.3 Enrollment Update - 40 new kindergarteners have accepted enrollment offers for next year and there are still 26 kindergarteners on the waiting list.

### 7.0 PTO Report – Breena Slivik

- The Read-a-Thon is complete and raised \$14,478! Top readers for each class will be announced next week, as well as top donations.
  - Because the kids raised \$10k they will get to SLIME DREW!
  - The school also collected many books for Books for Africa.
- We don't have results yet from the Acapulco fundraiser.
- There is a Culvers night on April 19.
- Gerten's plant sale coming up with pick-up just before Mother's Day.
- The PTO will be doing an all-staff appreciation week during the first week of May.

### 8.0 Academic Update – Annie Beck and Katie Bruns

- Teachers met with staff from Big River Farms to discuss opportunities for cross programming. They are very excited to work with our school and are open to a wide variety of possibilities, including bringing the kids to learn about farming, soil health, and the unique immigration history and cultures of the farmers.
- Dick Ungar from BARR will be meeting with River Grove staff. Katie Bruns met with the PTO last month and provided them with an update on the BARR program.

## 9.0 Old Business

9.1 Septic System Inspection Update – as part of our CUP update with May Twp. the school agreed to add signs to the road (now in place), limit attendance for the time being, and inspect the current septic system.

- Wilder had the septic inspected last fall and received notice in January that it is non-compliant. Washington County requires the septic system to be upgraded and compliant by January of 2023.
- Wilder has suggested that the school ought to pay for upgrades to the septic system, estimated at \$250-350k. The school is still leasing the property from Wilder. Both the county and May Twp. deem septic upgrades to be the responsibility of property owners, not renters. We may need to negotiate a compromise with Wilder.
- This will affect our ability to construct a new classroom or acquire a portable classroom to add a new class section for the next school year. As such, our current best solution for next year is to remodel the downstairs of the commons to add new classroom space.
- Hansen – did the school do something wrong to cause the system to become noncompliant?
  - No. The septic system had not been inspected or upgraded since the early 1980s.
- Hong - Washington County requires that septic systems be inspected and upgraded at the time of sale, and replaced if found to be noncompliant. Wilder would need to upgrade the system when they sell anyway. It wouldn't be appropriate to spend public taxpayer funds to replace the septic system, to the financial benefit of a private foundation.
- Hardie – we may need to consider contingencies when our lease runs out – either an extension on our current lease or potentially forming an affiliated nonprofit to purchase the land and buildings.

## 9.2 Teacher Compensation Update

- A Teacher Compensation committee has been formed. This committee presented the Board with recommendations for teacher compensation to recognize the extra work that teachers and staff have put in during the past two years due to COVID.
- Recommendations include:
  - Scheduling one non-school teacher work day in May to allow teachers to catch up and prepare for the last weeks of school
    - Hourly employees who will lose a work day will be offered the choice to take a day off unpaid or participate in end-of-the-year cleaning and organizing for pay
  - Offering a one-time stipend of \$150 for all teachers that participated in Distance Learning activities during the 2021-22 school year due to students being placed on a COVID related quarantine.
  - Looking for ways to provide additional compensation at the end of May.
- Discussion:
  - Goodson – we typically offer staff 2% per year pay increases. That won't be sufficient in the coming year. The state has indicated they will give us additional funds to be able to offer a 4% increase next year. Minneapolis teachers are in their 11<sup>th</sup> day of strike. St. Paul schools narrowly avoided a strike. He would offer the teachers \$1000 if funds allowed, but we also have a number of new expenses and uncertainties.

- Hong - \$150 seems so low. It almost feels embarrassing to offer the teachers so little. It is frustrating that the state has such a huge budget surplus after underfunding the schools throughout COVID.
- Bruns – \$150 was based on how much the school would spend for a one-day substitute teacher.
- Beck – could we approve a \$3000 addition to the budget now to allow for a minimum of \$150 stipends but not write checks until later to allow for us to find more funds between now and June?
- Hansen – thanks to Bruns and the teacher committee for preparing this proposal. She would also like to continue the conversation about pay in general at the school.
- Bruns – when talking with teachers, some suggested that time was even more important than money. Hence, the suggestion for one non-school teacher work day.
- Hansen – wants teachers that work here to feel like they are valued by the school, the board, and the community.
- Beck – it is frustrating that teacher stipends and pay are always the adjustable expense when other things get fully funded.
- Hong – and yet teachers are the most important part of a school.
- Goodson – 70% of schools in Minnesota are offering stipends for teachers right now. Stipends are between \$100-1500 per teacher. However, other schools got much more in COVID funding assistance from the state. We should also talk about pay for paras. Currently, we are paying paras the same amount as fast food employees.
- Hardie – now that we’re coming up on the end of the year, we can look at the budget and find places to pull more funds for teacher compensation. This is something important to her as a parent.
- Hardie – would it be up to hourly staff to decide if they work that day or not?
- Goodson – yes. They will be encouraged to work that day but can choose to opt-out, no pay if they do.
- Hardie – motion to approve holding a non-school teacher work day in May, during which hourly employees will be invited to do end-of-year work. Second by Beck. Motion approved.
  - Hong – does this include the \$150 stipends too?
- Ost – Motion to approve holding a non-school teacher work day on May 9, during which hourly employees will be invited to do end-of-year work or take an unpaid day. In addition, this motion would also include creation of a \$3000 pool within the budget to provide stipends at least \$150 each to eligible staff. Finally, this motion includes revisiting the amounts available to teachers during the April and May board meetings. Second by Hardie. All members voting yes. Motion approved.

## 10.0 New Business

10.1 Board Elections (May 2022) – there are three board positions ending this year – Ost, Hong, and Bruns. Ost would like to offer in-person and online voting options. Ele Anderson will be sending out a call for nominations soon.

10.2 Policy Project - Member Hardie presented the board with a policy related to document retention. She reviewed the policies of several charter schools and noted that they were all very similar. There is also a “policy for policies.” It will always be a two-month process to approve new policies because they require two readings before approval.

- Ost – would this also include an emergency policy? Yes.
- Ost also noted that other charter schools policies are nearly identical. She encourages board members to look at the St. Croix Prep website. It is very well-laid out and easy to read.
- Hardie will bring a revised policy to the board for first review next month. If anyone would like to help develop one of the policies let her know.

11.0 Next Board of Directors Meetings: Tuesday, April 19, 2022

12.0 Adjournment – Chair Ost adjourned the meeting at 7:49pm.