

**RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**One Corliss Park**  
**Providence, Rhode Island 02908**

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**MEETING MINUTES**

**Date:** November 14, 2006

**Time:** 6:00 PM

**Minutes recorded by:** Jake Camara

**Minutes Approved on:** November 14, 2006

**Interpreters:** Meribeth Anderson, Carol Fay, Jon Henry

**Minutes**

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting of the RI School for the Deaf Board of Trustees was called to order by Chairperson Marc Gursky at 6:09PM in the RI School for the Deaf Conference Room.

**II. Roll Call of Board of Trustees**

**In Attendance:** Carol Dorros, Karen Fifer Ferry, Marc Gursky, Neil Leahey, Jennifer LeComte

**Excused:** Kathleen Ellis, Tracy Karasinski, Maureen McEntee

**III. Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes**

**a. September 12, 2006**

- i. **Motion** made by Trustee Dorros to approve the minutes of September 12, 2006. Seconded by Trustee Fifer Ferry. Approved unanimously.

**IV. Public Comment**

- a. Todd Murano requested that minutes from the Communication Committee be posted for people to view and that discussion take place regarding these issues so that there is communication in the community.

## V. Reports

### a. Interim Director

- i. Interim Director John Plante highlighted items from his October and November Interim Director's reports.
  1. Discussion took place regarding possible Boy Scout involvement at the School for the Deaf and recent State testing.

### b. Coordinators

- i. **Action:** Chairperson Gursky asked Helen Litterst to pick a month with John Plante to give a brief overview of the State Assessment process.
- ii. Discussion took place regarding the recent Cochlear Implant Survey.

### c. Sub-Committees

- i. Building Committee
  1. Chairperson Gursky thanked the Building Committee for organizing the Pep Rally that took place.
  2. Chairperson Gursky thanked Bruce Bucci for his enthusiasm and being such an active participant in the Pep Rally and in this process.
  3. Discussion took place regarding the current building process.
- ii. National Search for a Director Committee
  1. Trustee LeComte informed the Board that the following people were either nominated or have volunteered for this committee:
    - a. **Dana Janik** was nominated by the Teacher's Union to serve on the committee with **Robin Henderson** as an alternate.
      - i. **Motion** was made by Trustee Fifer Ferry to approve Dana Janik. Seconded by Trustee Dorros. Approved unanimously.
    - b. **Jonathan Seamans** has volunteered to serve on the committee.
      - i. **Motion** was made by Trustee Fifer Ferry to approve Jonathan Seamans. Seconded by

Trustee LeComte. Approved unanimously.

- c. **Diane Bertozzi** has volunteered to serve on the committee.
  - i. It was decided to hold off on approval of Diane until there is support shown from the staff for her participation in the committee.
- d. Jonathan Seamans stated that he would like to make a presentation regarding personnel during Executive Session.
  - i. Chairperson Gursky invited Jonathan Seamans to make a presentation in Executive Session.
- e. Discussion took place regarding the critical need for a consultant to help the Board with this process.

iii. Board Development

- 1. Chairperson Gursky informed the Board that there is a need to add two Deaf or Hard of Hearing members to the Board.
- 2. Trustee Fifer Ferry suggested contacting the Friends of RISD Board regarding the current vacancies on the Board.
- 3. Trustee Leahey suggested posting the vacancies on the web and on the CDHH website.

iv. Finance Committee

- 1. Trustee Fifer Ferry informed the Board that there have been two meetings since the last Board meeting.
- 2. Trustee Fifer Ferry stated concern that she has been meeting as the sole Board member.
- 3. Discussion took place regarding the need for a quorum at Committee meetings and Board meetings.
- 4. Jonathan Seamans thanked Karen for her hard work.

v. Communication Committee

- 1. Chairperson Gursky stated that this is a committee designed to discuss the issue of the Communication philosophy.
- 2. The next step is to look at a forum that will be facilitated by an outside mediator for people interested in the topic of a communication philosophy.
- 3. The committee is not to determine that there is any

particular communication method or system for use within a classroom.

4. Deborah Topol informed the Board that there is a “Communication Statement” which was worked on in 2002 and not pursued that should be brought back to the table as a starting point.

vi. Policy Committee

1. Chairperson Gursky appointed himself to this committee and John will also serve.
2. One of the first topics to be discussed is “Graduation Requirements”.
3. Trustee Fifer Ferry volunteered to serve on this committee.

vii. Personnel Committee

1. Chairperson Gursky stated that Trustee Abols was the chair of this committee.
2. Trustees Dorros and Fifer Ferry nominated Trustee Leahey for Chairperson of this committee.
3. Chairperson Gursky offered to help Trustee Leahey get started if he is willing to chair this committee.
4. Trustee Leahey stated that he may be interested in other positions on the Board and will contact Trustee Karasinski and will inform the Board as to whether or not he is interested in the Board Secretary position.

**VI. New Business**

**a. Discuss Representation from Friends of RISD and PTO**

- i. Trustee Dorros suggested once the PTO has had their first meeting, they be invited to come to the Board meeting.
- ii. Chairperson Gursky suggested having Ashley send out the regular agenda to the PTO contacts.

**iii. Public Comment**

1. Earnest Okwara, President of RI Association for the Deaf, stated that he would like to find more information about Friends of RISD because he does not know much about them.
2. He informed the Board that alumni give a lot of support to the school as well as RIAD and the John Spellman Center. He would like discussions to be open, as some

organizations have been excluded. He stated that if it is going to be discussed that organizations have representation on the Board, all organizations should be given equal representation.

3. He also stated that people should not be representing organizations, but representing the children of the school and if there is space offered to the Friends of RISD at the school, there should be space offered to other organizations.
- iv. Discussion took place regarding the involvement of organizations, conflicts of interest and non-discrimination policies.
- v. Earnest Okwara gave a brief overview of the advocacy organizations, RIAD and the John Spellman Center.
- vi. Chairperson Gursky has received feedback from staff members that not everyone is given an equal opportunity to receive funds from Friends of RISD and concern has been expressed that when people make donations to the school, they are made to Friends of RISD. There is no oversight by the school or the Board of Trustees.
- vii. Trustee Dorros suggested that Chairperson Gursky and Trustee Fifer Ferry meet with Gerry Dandeneau. What the two boards want should be the same thing and there should be shared priorities.
- viii. It was agreed that Chairperson Gursky and Trustee Fifer Ferry should meet with members of the Friends of RISD Board.

## **VII. Agenda Items and Next Meeting Date**

- a. Remove Finance Director's Report from future agendas

## **VIII. Adjournment**

- a. Meeting adjourned at 8:50PM.