

BLACK RIVER PUBLIC SCHOOL
Special Board Meeting Minutes
May 18, 2020

Item 1. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Black River Public School was called to order by President Tom Pietri at 5:34pm on May 18, 2020, through a Zoom webinar. Recognition was made that a quorum was present through a roll call.

Item 2. ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Elizabeth Bauman, Mike Camarota, Maria Carrizales-Alonzo, Ruth Crouch, Craig Davis, David Kibler, Mary Mims, Kim Mitchell, Tom Pietri

Members Absent:

None

Staff Present:

Shannon Brunink (Head of School), Michelle Byrne (Administrative Assistant), John Donnelly (Dean of Students), Krista Ekdahl (BR Teacher), Kyle Lawton (BR Teacher), Jim Levering (Elementary Administrator), Brent Rowe (BR Teacher), Beth VanSluyters (BR Teacher), John Zoellner (Business Director)

Public Present:

Matt Cawood (GVSU Charter Schools Office), Kim Eich (BR Parent), Errol Goldman (BR Attorney), Brandie Navarro (BR Parent), Lisa Pearson (BR Parent)

Media Present:

None

Item 3. BOARD MEMBER OATHS

Motion to nominate Ms. Ruth Crouch as board member after the expiration of her current term on Black River's Board of Trustees. The resolution passed unanimously upon a motion by Mr. Pietri, seconded by Ms. Bauman. (9-0)

Mr. Cawood administered the oath of office to Ms. Bauman, Ms. Carrizales-Alonzo, and Mr. Davis. All will complete the corresponding paperwork and Mr. Cawood will file it with the GVSU Charter Schools Office.

Item 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There being no corrections, all minutes of the Board's April 13, 2020 meeting, were approved upon a motion by Mr. Pietri, seconded by Ms. Carrizales-Alonzo. (9-0)

Item 5. CONTINUITY OF LEARNING PLAN RESOLUTION

Motion to ratify last month's vote approving the Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plan as written. The resolution passed unanimously upon a motion by Mr. Pietri, seconded by Ms. Carrizales-Alonzo. (9-0)

Item 6. ADMINISTRATION REPORT

Mr. Brunink praised the awesome work teachers are doing to engage students at all levels and indicated that many are rising to the challenge choosing to submit work to raise their grades. After going through this difficult process teachers will emerge with more tools and flexibility, making them better educators. A task force to brainstorm scenarios for next school year has been created to address normal, hybrid, and remote possibilities. Sub-committees will address a wide range of issues including: instruction, facilities, temperature/symptom testing, finance, mental health, and communications. All possibilities are in mind while evaluating the effects of likely budget cuts. The safety of the Black River community remains the first priority. With next year's uncertainty the school is moving forward with filling open positions. Mr. Levering is working with his team to determine if on site Montessori training is possible if the need arises to bring a new candidate into the BR elementary. Mr. Donnelly has been working with the GVSU Charter Schools Office and WGVU who will be producing this year's digital graduation ceremony. Graduates will receive further announcements in the next few days and they are excited to celebrate the accomplishments of this year's seniors, which include the first group to have completed Kindergarten through 12th grade at Black River.

Mr. Camarota thanked Mr. Brunink for his vision for the future and working ahead. He asked for clarification on the tracking of engagement as well as stressed the benefit of student perspectives on the task force.

Mr. Davis congratulated the school on the recent US News and World Report ranking and asked about any technological obstacles the school has encountered over this time of remote learning. He also indicated that if plans for the fall required hybrid or remote learning it would be a great opportunity to learn from college professors that do this more regularly.

Ms. Carrizales-Alonzo explained how important communication will be and that many parents benefitted from a better understanding of how this year's practice within the content areas, although grades could not go down, would help students be prepared for moving on to the next grade.

Item 7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Pietri read aloud the comments from the public. Ms. Kim Eich explained the benefits of a week by week schedule if hybrid learning were necessary for next year. Ms. Lisa Pearson indicated she was pleased to hear the school planned to include parent perspectives on the task force. Ms. Brandi Navarro shared beneficial OAISD resources that could support Black River's task force committees.

Mr. Pietri thanked Black River's teachers for providing necessary stability in these uncertain times as well as high quality engagement to keep student minds sharp. He indicated that there may likely be the need for a July board meeting as plans for next year are continually developing.

Item 8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 6:33pm.

NEXT MEETING:

The next regular meeting is scheduled for 5:30 pm on June 22, 2020, at Black River Public School's 491 Columbia Avenue Campus.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary M. Mims, Secretary