

The Charter Institute at Erskine
Board Meeting Minutes
May 13, 2020

The Board meeting of the Charter Institute at Erskine was held online at 11:00 AM. Dr. Rob Gustafson called the meeting to order and gave the Invocation. Board members in attendance were Dr. Rob Gustafson, Mrs. Marjorie (Beth) Gustafson, Mr. Stu Rodman, Mr. Martin O'Connor, Rev. Tony Foster, and Dr. Tom Hellams. Attendees from the Charter Institute at Erskine included Mr. Cameron Runyan; Mr. Vamshi Rudrapati; Mrs. Ciera Bing; Mr. Johnley Li; Mr. Allen Ray; Mr. Derek Phillips; Sarah Timmons, Attorney at Law; and Mrs. Paula Gray.

The roll was taken by Mrs. Gray and a quorum was present.

Dr. Hellams made a motion to approve the agenda for the May 13, 2020, meeting, and adopt the minutes of the April 8, 2020, meeting as presented. Mrs. Gustafson seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Public Comments:

There were no public comments for this meeting.

Executive Session:

Mr. O'Connor moved to go into Executive Session for discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rodman and carried. The Board went into Executive Session at 11:08 AM and returned to Open Session at 11:45 AM. No actions were taken during Executive Session.

Action Items:

a) Virtus Academy of South Carolina Amendment Request

Mr. Rudrapati stated that Virtus Academy of South Carolina requested an amendment to move into a new building for the 2020-2021 school year. Virtus Academy is hoping the change will help them meet racial composition requirements and achieve academic success. Mr. Rudrapati reported that Institute staff will be working closely with Virtus Academy. The Institute's staff recommendation is for the Board to consider approval of the amendment.

Dr. Gustafson stated that Virtus Academy of South Carolina does have issues that need to be dealt with and close attention must be paid to them over the next year.

A motion was made by Mr. Rodman to approve the amendment to allow Virtus Academy of South Carolina to move into the new building for the 2020-2021 school year. The motion was seconded by Dr. Hellams.

Mr. Rodman stated that his motion is made with the expectation that issues will be addressed by the Institute and that the Board of Virtus Academy will take this very seriously.

The motion carried unanimously.

b) Summit Classical School Amendment Request

Mrs. Terri Hall, Principal of Summit Classical School, presented the request to add fifth grade for the 2020-2021 school year. Mrs. Hall explained how adding fifth grade will open opportunities to increase enrollment.

Dr. Hellams moved to approve the amendment to allow Summit Classical School to add fifth grade for the 2020-2021 school year. The motion was seconded by Mr. O'Connor and carried unanimously.

c) 2020-2021 Budget (First Reading)

Mrs. Bing presented the 2020-2021 Budget for First Reading and answered Board questions. After discussion, Mr. O'Connor made a motion to approve the 2020-2021 Budget for First Reading. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Gustafson and carried unanimously.

Mr. O'Connor requested that the second reading of the budget include appropriate footnotes so the Board can easily see changes such as medical benefits and large percentage differences.

d) Superintendent Evaluation

Dr. Gustafson presented this item as a responsibility of the Board and stated that a committee consisting of Mr. Rodman, Mr. O'Connor, and Dr. Gustafson would review an evaluation tool and pass their findings on to the other Board members. Attorney Timmons described the recommended evaluation tool. Dr. Gustafson stated that they are planning to present the evaluation at the June meeting to coincide with the second reading of the budget.

Mr. O'Connor made a motion to approve the format as presented for the Superintendent's evaluation in draft form and the evaluation process as outlined to be presented at the June Board meeting. The motion was seconded by Dr. Hellams and carried unanimously.

Information Items:

a) Rosewood Classical Charter School Withdrawal

Mr. Rudrapati announced that Rosewood Classical Charter School has withdrawn their charter due to their inability to secure a location.

Superintendent's Report:

Mr. Runyan reported that the Institute is focusing on opening high quality schools in South Carolina. He is meeting with legislators and gaining support because of their interest in high quality schools. A proposal for new legislation for a policy initiative is being discussed but has been postponed due to the current COVID-19 situation. He is continuing to work with staff in the Senate office on this initiative. The House came back into session to pass a continuing resolution for the State budget and the assumption is that the Senate will approve this resolution and move it on to the Governor for his signature.

Mr. Runyan stated that although accountability has been suspended for the schools due to COVID-19, the Institute is using this time to develop a new accountability model as a pilot with the hope that it has the potential to go beyond charter schools. He added that the Institute's accountability team has been busy. They noticed that instruction at the schools has not been aligned with South Carolina State Standards, so staff took the initiative to train the schools on Curriculum Mapping. Sixteen out of seventeen schools attended the training.

The transfer process is on the way for the schools transferring into the Institute effective July 1, 2020, and Mr. Rudrapati is leading the initiative. Mr. Runyan stated that the stakes are high to migrate all new information and integrate it with current data.

Mr. Runyan reported that the preliminary paperwork for the CARES Act funding has begun.

Mr. Runyan announced that the Institute will not be able to have the Annual Awards Banquet in person this year but will have it virtually. Plans are being made for the event to be as special as possible for the winners. Mr. Rudrapati added that Dr. Mick Zais, United States Deputy Superintendent of Education and former South Carolina State Superintendent, will announce the Institute Teacher of the Year.

Adjournment

As there was no further business, a motion was made to adjourn by Mr. Rodman and seconded by Dr. Hellams. The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 1:04 PM.