



# *Yuba River Charter School*

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## **CHARTER COUNCIL Minutes**

**Meeting of February 9, 2011  
3:30pm YRCS Library**

Yuba River Charter School is a community focused on the development of our children. The primary responsibility for the governance of the affairs of the school falls upon the Charter Council, composed of teachers, staff, parents and community member(s). Regular meetings of the Charter Council are held the second Wednesday of each month. The Charter Council invites input from all constituencies of the school. For more information regarding the functioning of the Charter Council, see the Charter Council By Laws and applicable policies.

### **1. Call to Order - 3:30 PM**

**CC Present: Caleb Buckley (CB), Susan Egan (SE), Doris Rainville (DR), Leila Barber (LB), Dan Martinez (DM), Torrie Mudd (TM), Robert Wallis (RW), Mariana Nielsen (MN), Newman Peery (NP)**

### **2. Public Comment**

This is an opportunity for members of the public to address the council on non-agendized items. Note the council cannot discuss or take action on non-agendized items at this meeting, but such items may be agendized for a later council meeting for discussion and/or action. Agendized items may either be addressed at this time or when the items come up for discussion and/or action. All comments are to be pertinent to the business of the board as determined by the chair. Furthermore, comments which reflect adversely upon personal character or motives are out of order as are those which reflect racial, religious, economic or political views. Such statements are grounds for summary termination of the privilege of address.

**Heather Peery (HP) was present to read a letter in response to a parent concern letter received by the CC via email about the planning and oversight in place for the next first grade class. CC accepted the response letter and promised to respond to both the concerned parents and HP. A subcommittee of TM, DM, and CB was formed for this purpose, with SE as reviewer.**

**NP recused himself from the Public Comment portion of the meeting and waited in an adjacent room.**

### **3. Consent Agenda Action Items - None**

#### 4. Discussion Items

- a. Discussion of 1<sup>st</sup> draft of revised certificated salary schedule and benefit package.

A presentation of the current salary schedule was presented with no significant comment. Salary schedule seems approximately in line with, or slightly higher than, NCSA and Golden Valley Charter, two other similar charter schools.

A presentation of changes to the benefit package had significant discussion. Last year (I think it was 2 years ago - check with Susan), the CC approved removing the cap on YRCS contributions to health benefits for all certificated staff. Skyrocketing healthcare costs over the past year showed that this is an unsustainable financial situation for the school. A new cap of \$7,000/yr per employee total contribution for health and life insurance is proposed. The current cap level will negatively affect 2 teachers, but represents a significant cut in benefits for at least one teacher's family. The plan is to provide a stipend to these teachers that will decrease over time to help ease the burden of a sudden large decrease in income. Research indicates that YRCS is currently the only local charter school without some sort of cap on benefit contributions.

- b. Discuss process for re-chartering.

YRCS must renew its charter every 5 years to show continued success at achieving its goals and meeting program expectations. The current charter is due for renewal in June 2012. Planning is beginning now, with leadership of local charter schools meeting the week of Feb 14 to discuss the process and strategy. The current expectation is that the county board of education will take all current charter schools under its auspices, instead of the recent structure of having various local districts hold different charter schools. YRCS legal counsel says there is no issue with going directly to the county for such services.

The plan is to submit early, in the fall of 2011, to allow sufficient time for careful review and responses to any questions. The current charter requires significant rewriting as it is now exceptionally brief.

CB authorized to form ad hoc committee to draft the proposed revised charter. Draft due at May CC meeting for comment.

#### 5. Discussion/Action Items

- a. Shall the CC approve minutes for 1-12-11 and 1-28-11? DM 1st, DR 2nd - Passed unanimously, with a minor change to 1-28-11

- b. Shall the CC approve the 2<sup>nd</sup> interim budget to include cash flow, statement, and multi-year projections? **TM 1st, MN 2nd - Passed unanimously**

**Discussion:**

Income is \$14,000 greater than expected due to increased enrollment/attendance.

"Fiscal Report" article was provided to CC that details state budget predictions for schools in the upcoming years.

As expected, due to the state of California deferring payments to schools, YRCS is projected to have a small, but significant cash flow shortfall between approximately May through August of 2010. Due to meticulous financial planning by YRCS administration, the overall financial health of the school remains strong and several options for financing the shortfall have been identified, including securing a line of credit with good terms to be used for such emergencies. The preferred option is to ask Twin Ridges to allow YRCS to defer a large payment due until after the state's funding arrives. Several other options were discussed, with agreement by CC on administration recommendations for prioritization.

- c. Shall the CC approve the renewal lease for the Old Dairy property? **LB 1st, TM 2<sup>nd</sup> - Passed unanimously**

**Discussion:** The lease has been extended for 12 months with current tenants. They were informed of the potential activity on neighboring land parcel. Lease extension includes a buy out option in case YRCS determines occupancy is needed sooner to accommodate new site building project, but no significant activity is expected during this extension period.

- d. Shall the CC approve revisions to the Director's job description? **DM 1st, LB 2<sup>nd</sup> - Passed unanimously**

**Discussion:** Added the duty to represent YRCS at meetings of the JPA (Joint Powers Agency, a group of local charters joining to share special education services). It was recommended that CB provide JPA agendas to CC for oversight, but otherwise is fully authorized to act on YRCS behalf.

Also corrected a few typos.

Discussed whether the current job description is too long and detailed and decided to consider this document for more comprehensive revision in priority with other policies and documents requiring evaluation.

- e. Shall the CC approve revisions to the enrollment process to omit home study priority category? **RW 1<sup>st</sup>, MN 2<sup>nd</sup> - Tabled unanimously**

- f. Shall the CC approve a policy for independent educational assessment (2<sup>nd</sup> reading)? **DM 1<sup>st</sup>, TM 2<sup>nd</sup> - Passed unanimously**  
**Discussion:** This policy, agreed to by JPA, mostly includes State of California education code regulations. It is YRCS' intention to remain in harmony with JPA recommendations. It was recommended for CB to continue dialogues and processes with this group that will ensure families have a route of appeal for educational assessments that are performed.
- g. Shall the CC approve the application for membership as separate LEA (Local Education Agency) in Nevada County SELPA (Special Education Local Plan Area)? **LB 1<sup>st</sup>, DR 2<sup>nd</sup> - Passed unanimously**  
**Discussion:** Currently, the county office of education is legally responsible for special education services, with districts represented by superintendents at meetings. This application will provide YRCS a voice at the meetings that determine special education funding. This is also a recommended direction of the JPA. Although this step increases YRCS' potential legal risk, it also provides a significant potential for increased funding and control over our special education services.
- h. Shall the CC authorize the New Facility Building Project TEAM to approve plans, engage in bidding and negotiate contracts related to the building project? **DR 1<sup>st</sup>, MN 2<sup>nd</sup> - Passed unanimously**  
**Discussion:** RW, SE, CB, Wayne Sjolund as Project Manager, and 450 Architects selected as team. The team will negotiate details on all contracts needed for new site building, with final review and approval by CC. At each major milestone, architects will provide a current set of drawings and report on the next step. Monthly reports to CC will be provided.
- i. Shall the CC accept the proposed Prop 39 facilities from the GV and NC school districts to include possible use of NC elementary school campuses? **DR 1<sup>st</sup>, LB 2<sup>nd</sup> - Rejected unanimously**  
**Discussion:** None of the facilities offered suited YRCS, being in general more expensive than our current facility and being scattered among several campuses. Status of NCE campus remains unclear and has thus far been presented with expensive rent options. The hope is that YRCS can avoid moving campuses twice by completing building on the new site within a few years instead of pursuing other rental options.
- j. Shall the CC approve entering into a contract with a survey company for the design phase of the Rough & Ready and Old Dairy facility project? **NP 1<sup>st</sup>, TM 2<sup>nd</sup> - Passed unanimously**  
**Discussion:** Lowest bid selected out of three received from Engineering Firms. This project will provide a map of the site

including items like topography, utilities, large tree locations, etc.

- k. Shall the council approve a contract for architectural services from 450 architects of San Francisco? MN 1<sup>st</sup>, LB 2<sup>nd</sup> - Moved to table unanimously

Discussion: Although the team was able to negotiate a somewhat reduced rate from the firm's original bid, it was discussed as still being high compared to the standard rate for architects. 450 Architects provide significant experience with Waldorf campus design and a style that is very well suited to our school, but the use of many modular buildings and the fact that a lot of the preliminary design has already been completed and paid for, gives ground for further improvement in rates. The team was asked to have further discussions with 450 architects.

## 6. Reports

- a. Director - Caleb Buckley - to include: Update on Strategic Plan and Bldg. project

- i. Over 20 hours was spent on the Strategic Planning process. CB expressed concerned that the list of tasks for the next 12 months did not include enough programmatic recommendations. The planner stated that some of these types of goals would be incorporated in as part of drafting the final Strategic Plan from earlier parts of the meeting, allowing review and revision for these items during review of the final document. The goal is to have a rough plan available at the end of February, an approval vote during March CC meeting, and a presentation to the community on March 22.
- ii. Building item was discussed in 5.h, 5.j, and 5.k

- b. Business Manager - Susan Egan

- i. Applying for line of credit at favorable terms to ensure that YRCS has financial flexibility in times of emergency.
- ii. Working on YRCS tax return with accountant, a new activity due to the property ownership and rental income.
- iii. Obtaining and reviewing quotes from new health care insurance providers, though similar searches in the past show that differences between plans tend to be minimal.
- iv. Redesigning website in partnership with Greg Wilker, and by reviewing other dynamic websites such as created by Golden Valley Charter School.
- v. The review of YRCS fiscal soundness is on state agenda. One challenge recently discussed by one of the reviewers is that although YRCS did meet its API (Academic Performance Index) based on STAR scores, it did not meet its AYP (Annual Yearly Progress) score. CB wrote a letter explaining the missed target,

and it is expected that the fiscal soundness will be passed in spite of this low number. One major reason for the low AYP is students opting out of STAR testing, lowering the school's overall score.

c. Parent Council - Robert Wallis

- i. Great feedback from participants on the watercolor class offered by Patricia Montijo. It was recommended to include a "donations gratefully accepted" notice on future offerings for Parent Education to help offset the costs of such events.
- ii. How to fund sports programs, such as rental costs for gym time for practices, is an on-going discussion item.
- iii. The accounting records for PC have been brought up to date, allowing the council to more accurately manage its finances.

d. Ed Foundation - Doris Rainville

- i. No meeting upon which to report this month.

e. Faculty - Leila Barber

- i. 8<sup>th</sup> grade play, Much Ado About Nothing is scheduled for the weekend of Feb 10.
- ii. Parent Appreciation Tea is scheduled for Feb 18, including 1<sup>st</sup> grade's first performance.
- iii. Kwong Chew will visit the lower grades to present a Chinese New Year celebration.
- iv. Swing dance classes are now being provided for the upper grades.

f. CC Chair - Torrie Mudd - to include: Director's evaluation update

- i. Strategic Planning activities continuing with an early draft provided by Gary Gardner. TM working on action plans for those tasks identified to be completed during the first 12 months of the plan's implementation. The goal is to have a draft by end of February that will include a summary. The second version of the draft will include action plans.
- ii. Director Evaluation on-going.

7. Closed Session - 7:00 PM

- a. Shall the CC approve the renewal of lease on LLC Bitney Springs property?
- b. Shall the CC approve the employment of attendance clerk?
- c. Director's cont'd presentation of certificated faculty evaluations.

8. Reconvene and Report out of Closed Session - 7:15 PM

- a. Unanimously rejected by roll-call:  
Caleb Buckley, Susan Egan, Doris Rainville, Leila Barber, Dan Martinez, Torrie Mudd, Robert Wallis, Mariana Nielsen, Newman Peery

- b. Approved Unanimously by roll-call:  
Caleb Buckley, Susan Egan, Doris Rainville, Leila Barber, Dan Martinez, Torrie Mudd, Robert Wallis, Mariana Nielsen, Newman Peery
- c. Unanimously tabled due to late hour.

## 9. Next Meeting Agenda Items and Action Items

- a. March Meeting
  - i. Revised contract for architectural services from 450 architects.
  - ii. Approve final Strategic Plan.
  - iii. Updates on attendance
  - iv. Approve line of credit contract
  - v. Revised lease on LLC Bitney Springs property
  - vi. Director Report: Faculty Evaluations
  - vii. Teacher Contracts, grade 1 - 8
  - viii. Shall the CC elect a Treasurer to Parent Council? [This item may be delayed.]
  - ix. Shall the director evaluation be approved?
- b. April Meeting
- c. May Meeting
  - i. Review draft of revised YRCS Charter.
- d. Action Items
  - i. TM, DM, CB: Respond to parent concern letter and to HP with SE review of any correspondence before sending.
  - ii. CB draft revised YRCS Charter with ad hoc committee.
  - iii. TM write a thank you to families for increased attendance efforts and emphasize the difference it made in state funding.
  - iv. TM to write a thank you to the participants of the strategic planning meetings.
  - v. All CC read "Fiscal Report" article regarding expected funding of schools by state of CA.
  - vi. CB to provide CC with JPA agendas.
  - vii. TM, CB, SE to prioritize next set of policies, job descriptions, or other documents that require comprehensive revisions, potentially to schedule a subcommittee over summer to provide recommendations on a few.
  - viii. TM to add new "Site Team" to Reports section of future CC agendas.
  - ix. New site team to further negotiate with 450 architects to achieve an approvable contract.
  - x. MN to include in CC meeting summary for the newsletter the importance of encouraging all families to participate in STAR testing and how much not taking these tests affects many state evaluations of the school. She will emphasize how much faculty works with students to negate the "test stress" often experienced by students over these tests in other types of school settings.

- xi. RW to bring to PC the recommendation to include a "donations gratefully accepted" notice on future offerings for Parent Education to help offset the costs of such events
- xii. CC members encouraged to look at Golden Valley Charter School website

10. Call to Adjourn - 7:30 PM

Respectfully Yours,

Mariana Nielsen  
Charter Council Secretary