

**Rice Memorial High School  
School Board Meeting Minutes**

**The RMHS school board held a meeting on Tuesday, January 12th, 2021 at  
5:00pm via Zoom.**

**Those in attendance virtually were as follows:**

**School Board Members:**

Jerry Tarrant, Chair	Jason Barron, Vice Chair
Maureen Webb, Secretary	Alison Abry
Carol Boardman	John Lavoie
Michelle Lawrence	Jennifer Parks
Marie Thayer	Lyn Wood
Msgr. John McDermott	Fr. Tim Naples
Fr. Dallas St. Peter	

**Ex-Officio:** Lisa Lorenz, Principal and President  
Jeff Maher, Associate Principal

Jillian Getler, Student Council Representative  
Paul DiFalco, Faculty Representative  
Danielle Petralia, Rice Parent Organization Representative

**Meeting Minutes:**

At 5:00pm, Jerry welcomed the school board to the January 2021 meeting.

Father Naples led the board in an opening prayer.

**1. Student Council Report**

Jillian updated the board on student activities, noting that the Christmas school spirit week was successful and included dress down days, trivia, scavenger hunt. Students are hopeful for Stunt Nite to occur, they appreciated being asked to participate in the survey sent out by the administration. Students are grateful that midterms are cancelled. Seniors are finishing up college apps (most school deadlines are 1/15). There is a new anti-racism committee who is continuing to meet with Ms. Lorenz on a regular basis. Student Council is working on the logistics of sales for the traditional carnation sale for Valentine's Day. New items being discussed include organizing a February spirit week, looking for further direction on a possible Prom and other dances for the remainder of the year. There were no questions for Jillian. Jerry thanked Jillian for her report, and she left the meeting.

#### **4. Principal's Report**

Refer to the handout. Lisa highlighted that admissions is at a record high, 82 freshmen applicants (~20 at this time last year). Great news for the school. Lisa is working hard to bring a robust music program back to the school. Adding three courses to the current offerings and will continue to develop curriculum, hire a full-time music director, and more. This year's schedule changes have allowed for freshmen to take the arts classes while meeting core curriculum classes. Rice's partnership with Spiral, through St Therese Academy, the school is offering Chinese as a four-year language program. This is not a current offering in public schools. Lisa noted that she, Jeff, and the Finance Committee is in the middle of budget prep including working with each of the department chairs on their budgets. Marie asked about a school librarian in the budget; Lisa confirmed it has been discussed and is a long-term goal. Carol asked about a goal of about on how many students we want to accept. Lisa confirmed the school can handle 500 students, but COVID presents unique restrictions. The realistic goal is about 400. Marie reiterated the importance of a librarian; it is proven to increase standard testing scores. Today Librarians bring the technology to the student to educate on research, reading, etc. It is a vital position to an academic institution. Jerry reiterated that priorities are for raises for current faculty and moving to positions that are full time, librarian will also be considered.

#### **5. Faculty Report**

Paul shares that Stefan Parker, band & digital imaging teacher, reports that Sandy O'Brien '61 donated her baby grand piano to Rice. The piano was set up in the Rice cafeteria. The piano is being tuned, a custom cover was made, and the piano will be available to select music students during the day. Mari Miller reports that the school's Poetry Out Loud competition will be held via live stream on February 4<sup>th</sup>. Some sense of normalcy in this less than normal year!

#### **6. Rice Parent Organization Report**

Danielle reports that the teachers were handed baskets created by the RPO. Senior Ornaments were distributed and a Senior banner is coming out next. A teacher raffle will happen in April. Parents are wondering about Stunt Nite. Questions about COVID and school attendance. Parents were also questioning changes to exam week, wondering why it was changes and expressed that it was positive for the students. There was a question about attendance of the meetings; Danielle indicated there were about 15 in attendance, and they have seen a steady increase as the school year goes on. They publish a reminder in weekly email, which is sent to all parents. Jerry commented that the committee is effective and has resonated with the families. Parents now feel like they have a voice and have a way to obtain information/outlet.

#### **7. Subcommittee Reports:**

##### **a. Advancement Committee**

Committee is meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month. See handout. The Annual Fund has a goal of \$400k, \$200k unrestricted has been raised to date. The Day of Giving

will hopefully make up the difference. DOG is to be held in March, around 17<sup>th</sup>. The committee is discussing possible themes for the day. The goal is to create a “culture of giving” and the committee will be working to incorporate this into the day’s events. The Capital Campaign (\$4.1 is the goal) has about \$600k in tuition assistance left to raise. Christy and team are still working to meet the goal and wrap up the campaign. The advancement office will continue to support the alumni lunch and learns. The board had inquiries about how to increase awareness and encouragement of the sessions, suggested to talk it up with the RPO. Marie commented on the subject line of the email advertising the lunch and learns, emailed Christy with potential new tag lines.

#### **b. Facilities Committee**

Jason reports that the HVAC portion of the kitchen project is complete. The project is on the February agenda for South Burlington’s DRB, application had been submitted. Invoices have been submitted and reimbursement process is complete to the state for relief grant for equipment purchases. Jason noted that the school has about a 5-year life on the boilers, this is something to put on the radar, and would be about a \$250k project. There was a question on the final placement for the coolers, Jason confirmed they are off the back of the kitchen near the dumpster (the preferred choice). Jerry commented that the Jason has done a great job getting the project organized and driven to completion. Carol asked about the conditions of the fields, discussion on the possibility of a turf field in the future. It was noted that the facilities team is lean, Kurk is doing the work of three people and budget should account for adding FTEs. Jason will investigate separating field maintenance and custodial work. In the past facilities has used parent volunteers to spruce up the school, and Jason would like to organize something similar in the Spring. John asked about the status of the roofs; Jason noted that when we have had recent issues, they have been minor and fixed in house. There is a need for an inventory of the status of the roof and where repairs are needed. Jason would still like to pursue a solar project on the roof once it is stabilized.

#### **c. Finance Committee**

Michelle reports that the Finance committee is making great progress using the new model, which is allowing for visibility on where we will end up for the year. There has been a reduction from parish donations which is causing a break-even cash flow position versus cash positive position that was forecasted. Finance to review PPP and Department of Education opportunities at the next meeting. The committee will work with the diocese on PPP application and Jeff is the liaison for the department of education funding (that goes through South Burlington). Lisa working with Andrea on the forgiveness application for the first round of PPP loan.

#### **d. Human Resources Committee**

Jennifer reports the committee is meeting once a month, January meeting is tomorrow (1/13). The recent focus has been updating the HR4000 manual, as it relates to Rice and make recommendations to the diocese. The committee is now going to review the faculty handbook and bring it current. Focus on making sure everything is easily accessible and referenced appropriately. Once the handbook is updated, the committee will turn back to updating the HR4000 document. The faculty handbook is critical for day-to-day support of the faculty so that has turned into the immediate focus. The updated handbook will also drive the changes recommended to the policy document – ensure the documents and reference points are in sync and reflect the current practices.

#### **e. Marketing & Enrollment Committee**

Carol reports that committee met last night, 1/11, to welcome Dan Cunningham to the group. There was a generous gift made to Rice restricted to marketing. The committee reviewed the current marketing plan which is not extensive due to budgetary restrictions. Carol notes that the enrollment team is doing a great job with a 98% closure rate for prospective students. The plan is to work to update the marketing plan (see committee report). Short term focus will be to create a video to demonstrate what it means to be at Rice, community, culture, etc. The video will be broken into clips for social media use. The goal is to drive “brand awareness” through advertising and tell the Rice story. Anything produced will be sensitive to the local turmoil at BHS and Stowe, but also highlight why Rice is different. It was noted that we also need to continue to market the guidance department for their college prep and planning services. Carol reiterates how incredible Stacy, Heatherly and Christy have been and how hard they are all working. They are doing an incredible job. Lisa and the enrollment office continue to work through the tuitioning towns lawsuit, towns will now pay for tuition less religion curriculum. Board discussed the framework of the tuitioning towns lawsuit and latest injunction.

#### **f. Vision & Mission Committee**

Committee did not meet yet this month but plans to and is getting ready to dig in. Father Naples, Father St. Peter and Lyn will connect with Jerry to secure a meeting day and time. Father Naples is recruiting class chaplains, to resurrect the program. Father Wrench is content with teaching religion and philosophy. Father St. Peter notes that the Association for Christian Athletes has a formal chapter established at school through the campus ministry office. They have held a bible study and the discussions are bearing good fruit with the student athletes. Lisa would like the committee to consider

reinstating daily or weekly masses in some manner. Paul to send Father Naples the mass schedule so that other priests can be included in the rotation.

#### **8. Other business**

Msgr would like the committee reports and the meeting minutes in advance of the meeting. It is noted that the schedule the board previously agreed to follow: one week prior to the board meeting the complete board package is sent out including agenda, minutes, and subcommittee reports. The subcommittee reports should be reviewed prior to the meeting and any questions or follow up items are addressed during the board session.

#### **9. Executive session**

**6:36pm board entered into executive session.**

**At 7:14pm the board exited executive session.**

**Jerry called the meeting to a close. Msgr McDermott led the group in a closing prayer.**

**Meeting adjourned.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Maureen Webb, Secretary**