

**True North Rochester Prep Charter School**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**  
**September 22, 2021**

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Rosenberger at 12:30 pm.

**Roll Call**

The roll call was taken, and a quorum was found present.

Trustees Present:     Geoffrey Rosenberger, Chair  
                               Carlos Carballada  
                               James Costanza  
                               Langston McFadden, Esq  
                               James Ryan  
                               Ebony Miller-Wesley

Trustees Attending Remotely:

                              Josh Phillips  
                               Rebecca Sumner, Vice Chair  
                               Ron Zarrella, Finance Chair

Also Present:

Tara Marlovits	Chief External Officer, Uncommon Schools, Inc.
Brett Peiser	Chief Executive Officer, Uncommon Schools, Inc.
John Claypool	Associate Chief Operating Officer, Uncommon Schools Rochester
Paul Powell	Assistant Superintendent, Uncommon Schools Rochester
Christie Raymo	Director of Campaigns, Uncommon Schools Rochester
Christopher Tomlan	Partner and Senior Director, DBI Projects
Tocarra Hughes	Regional Senior Director, Uncommon Schools Rochester
Chantal Phillips	Regional External Affairs Coordinator, Uncommon Schools Rochester
Ted Eckert	High School Principal; Rochester Prep High School
Jeff Allen	High School Director of Operations; Rochester Prep High School

Attending Remotely:

Peter Hayward             Senior Director of Financial Management, Uncommon Schools, Inc.

**Approval of June 2021 Minutes**

The following motion was made to approve the minutes from the June 21, 2021 meeting.

Motion: Jim Costanza

Second: Carlos Carballada

Vote: Approved unanimously

**Public Comment**

No public comments were made.

**Uncommon Schools CEO Update**

CEO of Uncommon Schools, Brett Peiser made remarks regarding the network transition out of the last 18 months of a pandemic. Mr. Peiser highlighted that Rochester Prep currently serves 2800 students, which is 10 % of RCSD. Mr. Peiser concluded his presentation by noting how Uncommon Schools plans to push forward as an organization. Exploring novel initiatives that would focus on closing COVID-related learning gaps and emotional resilience for both staff and students would drive the advancement of our work.

**School Leader Update**

School Principal Ted Eckert reflected on returning to in-person graduation and the positive response to opening the doors to their new school building. Mr. Eckert shared that the faculty and students expressed that they finally feel they are having a high school experience. The students believe school leaders honored their promise. Mr. Eckert discussed the school's updated health and safety protocols and procedures, efforts on closing COVID related learning gaps, and social emotional learning initiatives being their school's major priority.

Mr. Eckert shared that In their second month of the school year, some exciting initiatives such as the capstone course through the Partnership with RIT, Athletics, HS2.0 Programming, Hispanic heritage Month Event, Students Council, Students Academic Enthusiasm, College Access & Success are all already underway. Grades and attendance are up, versus where they were last year. We have resumed college representative visits and student/parent engagement events. Students are bought in, committed, and excited about the school year.

**Associate Chief Operating Officer Update**

John Claypool discussed issues related to school bus transportation in the city of Rochester and the measures that Rochester Prep has taken to mitigate these issues and ensure students have transportation. Notwithstanding, there were still 450 students who needed to be routed on busses. Mr. Rosenberger named that the start of year attendance is lower than in prior years, typically low 90s and asked if this decline was related to transportation. Mr. Claypool shared that the drop was a combination of factors, including transportation and the return to school post-pandemic. Tara Marlovits added that attendance issues are widespread, noting the same challenges with attendance in NYC. Mr. Rosenberger asked for an attendance update in one week, to get ahead of the issue.

**Assistant Superintendent Update**

Assistant Superintendent Paul Powell provided an overview of our 2021-22 school year launch, noting the launch of Middle School #3. Mr. Powell identified the year's success drivers including revised curriculums, programs, special education initiatives, Summer Academy 2021, technology, and staffing. Mr. Powell mentioned another major goal is to ensure that social emotional wellbeing and strengthening diversity, equity, and inclusion is embedded across Home Office and regional teams and in the instructional practices and policies implemented in the schools. Mr. Powell also stated the impact of learning loss due to the pandemic.

Mr. Powell provided an update on staffing for the region. Noting challenges due to the limited teacher pipeline. To gain additional support in schools, the region is hiring teaching assistants.

**Associate Chief Operations Officer Compliance Update**

Mr. Claypool provided an overview of compliance updates of our 2021-22 school year launch. He expressed that the health & safety of all Rochester Prep community members is the region's top priority. Mr. Claypool identified the year's goals which included 95% in-person staff and students. He also discussed key success drivers such as developing vaccination tracking mechanisms and implementing revised health & safety systems.

**Development Committee Meeting Update- Trustee James Ryan**

Mr. Ryan presented on recent development efforts and activity, noting that the RPHS capital campaign has raised approximately another \$100k since the last meeting. Mr. Ryan is considering offering another tour for potential donors. The RPHS capital campaign has raised \$6.2 million dollars of its \$7 million dollar goal. Mr. Ryan also noted that \$365,000 has been raised since spring 2020 for COVID-19 relief and other programmatic and operational expenses; \$30,000 has been raised to establish the William G. McGowan Foundation for the College Access Success Department. Mr. Ryan shared completed commitments Since the previous meeting. Specifically, Pluta Cancer Center's Young Professionals Board has donated 120 backpacks to our elementary and middle school students for FY22. 60 laptops and chargers from the Shore Foundation for Rochester Prep students and class of 2021 alum. Lastly, through the Scholarship Fund, we acquired \$2000 emergency funds support from JIm & Joyce Magee to support families of recently deceased students.

**Finance Committee- Trustee Ron Zarella**

Mr. Zarella shared that the budget is on track with a surplus of just over 11%, \$4.8 million. This is a result of revenue from government grants, CARES money and low expenses related to students learning from home during the pandemic. The RPHS capital project is on track; the total is \$24 million with \$16.5 million spent so far and \$7.5 million remaining. ESSER I & II funds have been included in the FY22 budget. ESSER III funds are more expansive. The ESSER III fund is just over \$4 million. Mr. Zarella shared that the board was in discussion with Uncommon about how that money will be shared. Most of the money will be used toward operations.

Uncommon has hired a project manager, Annette Riffle, to oversee the application process and to ensure compliance. The application deadline is September 30th.

Peter Hayward added that ESSERII funds were used for health and safety, instruction, staff retention- onetime bonus to assist with significant challenges with this year. ESSER III, preliminary budget based on historical data from FY21 as the planning has not begun for FY22. ESSER III is more compliance heavy. The project manager will be gathering input related to use of the funds via stakeholder engagement plan. All board members will be asked to participate in this survey.

Mr. Zarella asked about parent participation in the engagement plan. Ms. Marlovits confirmed that there are several rounds of feedback coming soon.

#### **Facilities Committee- Trustee Ron Zarella**

Mr. Zarrella shared an update on topics discussed by the Facilities Committee and reviewed the progress of renovations and improvements that took place during the summer of 2021. The summer improvements budget was \$2.5 million, but total costs may come in below that.

#### **Summer Improvements Include:**

**85 St. Jacob St.-** Partial roof replacement, repairs to masonry chimney, mechanical and plumbing repairs.

**305 Andrews St.-** Flooring installation and plumbing fixture adjustments to accommodate elementary aged children.

**432 Chili Avenue-** Installation of 2nd barrier of entry

**630 Brooks Avenue-** Water main replacement

**899 Jay St.-** New boilers, roof drain line replacement, roof hatch replacement, and door hardware replacement.

#### **Ongoing Projects:**

**305 Andrews St.-** Window replacement, long lead time on windows, estimated completion next summer.

**432 Chili Avenue & 630 Brooks Avenue-** Parking lot replacement (\$200,000)

#### **RPHS Construction Project**

The full completion of the high school project is slightly ahead of schedule and on budget. Phase 2 is ongoing and likely to be turned over earlier than planned. At the request of Mr. Rosenberger, anti-intrusion film will be installed in the main entry way for safety. This in addition to the bulletproof glass on the outside of the building.

RPHS Athletic Fields

Mr. Zarella shared that Uncommon will manage the athletics field through DBI, who will in turn hire a real estate broker by mid-October to navigate the acquisition of 20 private parcels. The schematic design should be obtained by November/December of this year and public agency review of the project will likely happen in May 2023/2024. The total estimated duration is 38 months.

There is an agreement with Uncommon for managing the project, \$5,000 monthly. The Board is interested in a different fee structure. Mr. Ryan asked for deliverables related to Uncommon/DBI management of fields. Chris Tomlan shared a breakdown of the monthly management fee. The fee is about the home office support from numerous departments, finance, real estate, etc. Uncommon manages DBI.

Mr. Rosenberger shared that the Brooks Avenue lease is not part of the master lease and had expired. He shared that the board will be voting to approve the lease at the next board meeting. Mr. Rosenberge also mentioned that he is waiting to receive a study from the University of Arkansas on the funding differentials between RCSD and Rochester area charter schools by Thanksgiving.

The Board did not go into executive session.

**Meeting adjourned**

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion: Geoff Rosenberger  
Second: Rebecca Sumner  
Vote: Approved unanimously

The meeting concluded at 1:45 pm.