



**North River Collaborative Board of Directors**  
**Friday, June 4, 2021 9:00 AM Via Zoom**  
**Minutes**

*In response to Governor Baker's declaration of a public health emergency and the related Emergency Executive Order dated March 12, 2020, the North River Collaborative Board of Directors shall be meeting remotely until further notice. **The Meeting ID #82161049831 provided through ZOOM and a Passcode of jMt4Jd will be used for this purpose.***

**Present:** Art Sullivan, Colleen Forlizzi (for Alan Cron), Steve Donovan, Matt Ferron, Derek Swenson Marc Wright, Mike Laliberte, Christine Godino, Marc Bodwell, Clarice Doliber, Peter Schafer, Jeff Szymaniak

**Special Guest:** Attorney Matt Feeney, MHTL

**Absent:** Julie Hamilton, John Marcus, Liz Legault, and Alan Cron

**I. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 9:00AM by Vice-Chairman Derek Swenson.

**II. Approval of Minutes May 7, 2021-**

**Motion:** Christine Godino made a motion to accept the minutes of May 7, 2021. Matt Ferron seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote: Mark Bodwell-yes, Christine Godino-yes, Peter Schafer- yes, Derek Swenson- yes, Jeff Szymaniak, yes and Matt Ferron- yes.

**III. Approval of Warrants**

**Motion:** Christine Godino made a motion to approve the warrants. Peter Schafer seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote: Mark Bodwell-yes, Christine Godino-yes, Peter Schafer- yes, Derek Swenson- yes, Jeff Szymaniak, yes and Matt Ferron- yes.

**IV. Discussion/Action Items**

**A. FY 21 April Financials Enc. A-** Mike presented the April Financials and Steve reviewed the Transportation pricing sheet.

**Motion:** Peter Schafer made a motion to accept the FY 21 April Financials. Mark Bodwell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote: Mark Bodwell-yes, Christine Godino-yes, Peter Schafer- yes, Derek Swenson- yes, Jeff Szymaniak, yes and Matt Ferron- yes.

**B. OPEB Trust-Enc. B**

**Motion:** Matt Ferron made a motion to adjourn the public Board meeting and to reconvene at the close of the Health Insurance Retirees Trust meeting. Jeff Szymaniak seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote: Mark Bodwell-yes, Christine Godino-yes, Peter Schafer- yes, Derek Swenson- yes, Jeff Szymaniak, yes and Matt Ferron- yes. Meeting adjourned at 9:15 AM.

**Motion:** Peter Schafer made a motion to open the NRC Health Insurance Retirees Trust. Jeff Szymaniak seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote: Mark Bodwell-yes, Christine Godino-yes, Peter Schafer- yes, Derek Swenson- yes, Jeff Szymaniak, yes and Matt Ferron- yes.

Meeting commenced at 9:15 A.M.

Attorney Matt Feeney presented the final OPEB Declaration of Trust document. Matt explained that there were two votes needed for the new OPEB Trust and he expressed his concern with the requirements of eligibility, but he acknowledges that those can be addressed through changes in the NRC Policies and Procedures handbook. He wants to ensure we are compliant with the rules based on the Galenski case which challenged minimum eligibility requirements of employment in one entity to obtain retirement benefits (health insurance

etc.). Matt explained the two amendments he needed the Board to vote on: 1. The HIRT Trustees need to vote to amend and restate the North River Collaborative Retirees' Health Insurance Trust Fund into the OPEB Declaration of Trust. 2. The Treasurer/Custodian/Trustee of the OPEB Trust needs to vote to adopt the Declaration of Trust for the North River Collaborative Other Post-Employment Benefits Liability Trust Fund (OPEB Trust). Once the Trust is adopted it must be signed by the Treasurer/Custodian/Trustee of the OPEB Trust and then filed with the Board Clerk and the Executive Director. The new OPEB Trust will be in effect on the 91<sup>st</sup> day after the vote.

**Motion:** Peter Schafer made a motion to amend and restate the North River Collaborative Retirees Health Insurance Trust Fund into the OPEB Declaration of Trust. Jeff Szymaniak seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote: Mark Bodwell-yes, Christine Godino-yes, Peter Schafer- yes, Derek Swenson- yes, Jeff Szymaniak, yes and Matt Ferron- yes.

**Motion:** Art Sullivan, Treasurer/Custodian/Trustee of the OPEB Trust, accepted the adoption of the Declaration of Trust for the North River Collaborative Other Post-Employment Benefits Liability Trust Fund (OPEB Trust).

**Motion:** Art Sullivan closed the Health Insurance Retirees Trust meeting.

**Motion:** Peter Schafer made a motion to re-open the NRC Board of Directors Meeting. Matt Ferron seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote: Mark Bodwell-yes, Christine Godino-yes, Peter Schafer-yes, Derek Swenson- yes, Jeff Szymaniak, yes and Matt Ferron- yes.

#### **C. NRC Policies and Procedure Handbook Changes-Enc. C-**

**Motion:** Mark Bodwell made a motion to approve the changes to the NRC Policies and Procedures Handbook: Criminal Victim/Witness Leave, Course Reimbursement, Video Recording Policy, Service Animals, Non-Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Complaint Procedure, Sex Discrimination and Harassment Policies and Procedures, Student NRC Anti-Bullying and Cyberbullying Policy. Peter Schafer seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote: Mark Bodwell-yes, Christine Godino-yes, Peter Schafer-yes, Derek Swenson- yes, Jeff Szymaniak, yes and Matt Ferron- yes.

#### **D. Financial Disclosure for Financial Interest in MMHG-Enc. D**

**Motion:** Peter Schafer made a motion to approve Mike Laliberte's financial disclosure for financial interest as a voting member of the Mayflower Municipal Health Group because he also receives health insurance from the group. Matt Ferron seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote: Mark Bodwell-yes, Christine Godino-yes, Peter Schafer- yes, Derek Swenson- yes, Jeff Szymaniak, yes and Matt Ferron- yes.

#### **E. RDA Architect Proposal Approval-Enc. E-** Steve Donovan reviewed the proposal for services by RDA. Only those services completed would be billed by RDA.

- Peter Schafer warned that NRC should request to stay with the primary people of RDA through the end of the project. He liked their work but was disappointed when the non-primary team took over at the end of the Abington Schools project
- Derek Swenson offered that he has had good experiences working with RDA.
- Matt Ferron stated he has confidence they (RDS) will do a great job.
- Chris Godino was concerned with the ceiling of cost for the architect of \$95,500.

**Motion:** Mark Bodwell made a motion to approve the RDA proposal with any fees from FY21 coming out of the General Fund and any fees from FY22 coming out of the Capital Reserve Fund. Peter Schafer seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote: Mark Bodwell-yes, Christine Godino-yes, Peter Schafer-yes, Derek Swenson- yes, Jeff Szymaniak, yes and Matt Ferron- yes.

Steve asked the Board to create a Building Subcommittee comprised of up to three superintendents to assist with the planning and review of the project as well as to authorize any change orders during the duration of the project. He went on to suggest that the committee should also include up to three Special Education Directors, the Executive Director, the Assistant Executive Director, the Director of Business Services and one additional NRC Program Coordinator.

**Motion:** Christine Godino made a motion for Marc Bodwell, Derek Swenson, as chair and herself as the three Board members to sit on the Building Committee and approve the composition of the rest of the Building Committee as suggested by Dr. Donovan. Matt Ferron seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote: Mark Bodwell-yes, Christine Godino-yes, Peter Schafer-yes, Derek Swenson- yes, Jeff Szymaniak, yes and Matt Ferron- yes.

**Independence Academy Financial Summary for FY21-Enc. F** – The auditor has requested that the Independence Academy loss for FY21 be voted on formally by the Board. The monetary loss is estimated to be around \$80,000 to \$90,000 for FY2021 due to a reduction in enrollment There are several reasons for the enrollment challenges in FY21: 1) a reduction to the amount of the DESE grant for FY2021 compared to previous years 2) COVID-19 and its effect on enrollment 3) the inability of NRC to provide transportation five days a week (districts are not required to provide transportation unless required by the student’s IEP – which is rare) 4) the lack of referrals from Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment facilities.

**Motion:** Jeff Szymaniak made a motion to accept the Independence Academy monetary loss for FY21 of \$80,000 to \$90,000. Mark Bodwell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote: Mark Bodwell-yes, Christine Godino-yes, Peter Schafer-yes, Derek Swenson- yes, Jeff Szymaniak, yes and Matt Ferron- yes.

**F. Student Handbooks 2021-2022 Approval-Enc. G (handbooks under separate cover)**

**Motion:** Jeff Szymaniak made a motion to approve the Independence Academy, North River School and Learning Center Student Handbooks as presented. Peter Schafer seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote: Mark Bodwell-yes, Christine Godino-yes, Peter Schafer-yes, Derek Swenson- yes, Jeff Szymaniak, yes and Matt Ferron- yes.

**G. Acceptance of Staff Resignations, Hires, Terminations, and Changes in Contract-Enc.**

**Motion:** Jeff Szymaniak made a motion to accept the staff resignations, hires, terminations and changes in contract. Mark Bodwell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote: Mark Bodwell-yes, Christine Godino-yes, Peter Schafer-yes, Derek Swenson- yes, Jeff Szymaniak, yes and Matt Ferron- yes.

**H. Vacation Carry Over 10 Days-Enc. I** – As a result of the pandemic , Dr. Donovan asked the Board to allow up to 10 days of vacation to be carried over to the following fiscal year for staff that receive and still have vacation time to use for the past year.

**Motion:** Peter Schafer made a motion to approve the carryover of up to 10 vacation days to the following fiscal year for those staff members who receive and still have vacation time on the books. The carried over vacation days will be required to be used in the first sixty (60) days of fiscal year 2022. Matt Ferron seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote: Mark Bodwell-yes, Christine Godino-yes, Peter Schafer-yes, Derek Swenson- yes, Jeff Szymaniak, yes and Matt Ferron- yes.

**I. Confirmation of Title III Grant for 2021-2022-** Clarice reviewed letter going out for the Title III Grant for the 2021-2022 school year.

**J. NRC Action Plan Summary-Enc. J** -Steve summarized the NRC Action Plan.

**K. Treasurer Evaluation and Salary- Enc. K-** Steve reviewed the NRC Treasuer, Art Sulliavan’s evaluation. In addition he asked the Board to approve an increase in his salary to be equivalent to the salary he receives at South Shore Collaborative where he is also the Treasurer. He is slated to receive \$16,000 this year at NRC and \$23,000 from SSEC. Steve told the Board he believes the increase makes sense specifically because of the intricate and uniqe budgeting due to Transportation and also because he has agreed to be the sole trustee for the NRC Health Insurance Retirees Trust.

**Motion:** Peter Schafer made a motion to approve the Treasurer, Art Sullivan’s evaluation. Jeff Szymaniak seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote: Mark Bodwell-yes, Christine Godino-yes, Peter Schafer-yes, Derek Swenson- yes, Jeff Szymaniak, yes and Matt Ferron- yes.

**Motion:** Peter Schafer made a motion to approve the increase in salary from \$16,000 to \$23,000 for the Treasuer. Matt Ferron seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote: Mark Bodwell-yes, Christine Godino-yes, Peter Schafer-yes, Derek Swenson- yes, Jeff Szymaniak, yes and Matt Ferron- yes.

**L. Reorganization of the Board and Sub-committees-Enc. M-** The Board must re-organize itself annually by electing a Chair, Vice-Chair, Clerk, and Treasuer by a majority vote for a one year term. Unless otherwise voted on by the Board, the Vice-Chair will move into the Chair, and the Clerk/Secretary will move into the Vice-Chair the following year.

**Motion:** Peter Schafer nominated Derek Swenson as Board Chair, and Peter Schafer as Vice-Chair. Jeff Szymaniak seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote: Mark Bodwell-yes, Christine Godino-yes, Peter Schafer-yes, Derek Swenson- yes, Jeff Szymaniak, yes and Matt Ferron- yes.

**Motion:** Peter Schafer nominated Alan Cron as Clerk/Secretary. Jeff Szymaniak seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote: Mark Bodwell-yes, Christine Godino-yes, Peter Schafer-yes, Derek Swenson- yes, Jeff Szymaniak, yes and Matt Ferron- yes.

**Motion:** Peter Schafer nominated Art Sullivan as Treasurer. Jeff Szymaniak seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote: Mark Bodwell-yes, Christine Godino-yes, Peter Schafer-yes, Derek Swenson- yes, Jeff Szymaniak, yes and Matt Ferron- yes.

**Motion:** Jeff Szymaniak made a motion to continue the Personnel and Evaluation Subcommittee as is with Matt Ferron as Chair, and Peter Schafer and Jeff Szymaniak as members. Matt Ferron seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote: Mark Bodwell-yes, Christine Godino-yes, Peter Schafer-yes, Derek Swenson- yes, Jeff Szymaniak, yes and Matt Ferron- yes.

#### **M. Executive Director**

1. **Evaluation-Enc. N-** Matt Ferron, Chairman of the Personnel and Evaluation Subcommittee reviewed the evaluation of Executive Director, Steve Donovan. Matt said that Steve does well in managing NRC and is always accessible. Matt commended Steve for excellent work this past year under COVID.

**Motion:** Matt Ferron made a motion to accept the Executive Director’s evaluation for FY21. Jeff Szymaniak seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote: Mark Bodwell-yes, Christine Godino-yes, Peter Schafer-yes, Derek Swenson- yes, Jeff Szymaniak, yes and Matt Ferron- yes.

2. **Contract-Enc. N-** The FY22 contract for the executive director was reviewed.

**Motion:** Matt Ferron made a motion to approve the FY22 contract for Executive Director Steve Donovan. Peter Schafer seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote: Mark Bodwell-yes, Christine Godino-yes, Peter Schafer-yes, Derek Swenson- yes, Jeff Szymaniak, yes and Matt Ferron- yes.

**N. Other Matters of Interest to Board Members:** Steve summarized the DESE Transportation guidelines for the summer program. DESE recommends keeping things status quo but it is not required Steve will ask each individual district their preference: status quo or all open no restrictions. DESE has said come fall there will be no restrictions but there is a caveat about if things change... this could pose a lot of problems

**V. Informational**

**A.** Professional Development Offerings-O

**B.** Executive Director Quarterly Report for April-Enc. P

**C.** Collaborative Board Member Training Reminder-**Hamilton** (please contact the DESE Board Mgmt. Paulajo Gaines at [pgaines@doe.mass.edu](mailto:pgaines@doe.mass.edu))

**Motion to adjourn:** Peter Schafer made a motion to adjourn. Jeff Szymaniak seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote: Mark Bodwell-yes, Christine Godino-yes, Peter Schafer-yes, Derek Swenson- yes, Jeff Szymaniak, yes and Matt Ferron- yes.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 A.M.

Respectfully submitted by:

Peter Schafer  
NRC Board of Directors Clerk