



## North River Collaborative Board of Directors

### Agenda

Friday, February 7, 2025 - 9:00 AM

In Person with Remote Option (If Required)

198 Spring Street, Rockland, MA 02370

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/doc-zrux-wok>

Or dial: (US) +1 260-577-9166 PIN: 414 217 793#

*On March 29, 2023, Governor Healey signed into law an extension of the temporary provisions pertaining to the Open Meeting Law to March 31, 2025. Specifically, this further extension allows public bodies to continue holding meetings remotely without a quorum of the public body physically present at a meeting location, and to provide "ad equare, alternative" access to remote meetings*

**Present:** Paul Tzovolos, Marie Grable, Ellen George, Joseph Baeta (remote), Ryan Powers (remote), Julie Hamilton, Elizabeth Legault, Jeffrey Szymaniak, Matthew Ferron

**Absent:** Mark Bodwell, Lori Jodoin, Felicia Moschella, Alan Cron

**I. Call to Order**- Chairman Joe Baeta called the meeting to order at 9:16 AM. He then asked for a motion to go into executive session.

### **II. Executive Session**

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a) (1) "To discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual and (3) To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares"

**Motion:** Liz Legault made a motion to go into executive session to discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member, or individual, and (3) To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigation position of the public body and the chair so declares, and to reconvene into open session. Jeff Szymaniak seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

**Motion:** Liz Legault made a motion to reconvene into open session. Julie Hamilton seconded the motion. Motion Carried unanimously by roll call vote at 9:24 AM.

### **III. Approval of Minutes**

#### **A. Board Meeting November 1, 2024 (vote previously postponed)**

**Motion:** Liz Legault made a motion to approve the minutes of November 1, 2024. Jeff Szymaniak seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

## **B. Board Meeting December 13, 2024**

**Motion:** Liz Legault made a motion to approve the minutes of December 13, 2024. Jeff Szymaniak seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

### **IV. Discussion/Action Items**

- A. **FY25 General Fund Revenue and Expense Projection-** Ellen Geroge reviewed the FY25 General Fund Revenue and Expense Projection noting the Transportation department is running at a surplus and North River School is roughly \$180,000 in a deficit position due to low enrollment and decreased referrals.

Chairman Joe Baeta asked if the decline in enrollment for North River School was from member districts or non-member districts.

Liz Legault asked if the decline in enrollment at North River School is due to leadership or staffing.

Paul Tzovolos advised the Board that he had recently met with Southeast Collaborative Regional Organization members and they have all noticed a decline in enrollment due to families opting for private placements or districts opting to keep students in district.

**Motion:** Liz Legault made a motion to accept the FY25 General Fund Revenue and Expense Projection. Julie Hamilton seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

### **B. Acceptance of Staff Resignations, Hires, Terminations, and Changes in Contract**

**Motion:** Liz Legault made a motion to accept staff resignations, hires, terminations and changes in contract. Julie Hamilton seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

### **C. Approval of Expenditure from the NRC Capital Fund**

1. **North River School Gymnasium Hallway-**Paul Tzovolos asked the Board to approve an expenditure of \$7500 in capital funds for a wall and additional lighting in the gymnasium hallway.

**Motion:** Matt Ferron made a motion to approve the expenditure of \$7500 for the North River School gymnasium. Liz Legault seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

2. **Capital Fund September Vote Update-** Paul Tzovolos reviewed the most recent expenditures from the capital fund that were approved by the Board in September from the capital fund. The cost of the land survey done by Garvey Surveyors came in at \$6,200, \$800 less than expected. The clinical space that has been constructed in the lobby of the conference center came in at a cost of \$11,500.

D. **North River Collaborative Student Success Plan Mid-Year Update-** Paul Tzovolos presented a mid-year update of the Student Success Plan. Chairman Baeta stated to the Board and Mr. Tzovolos that he thought the Student Success Plan was well done.

E. **Member District Professional Staff Cost of Living Increases for FY26-** Paul Tzovolos surveyed the Board on the status of their district negotiations. B-R advised that negotiations are still ongoing with 5% and 5.5% offered with no counter yet. EB is still in negotiations with the current offer of 3 years at 6%. Holbrook has negotiated a 3-year contract at 2.5% over three years. W-H has negotiated 9 ¼ % over three years. Stoughton is at 3.75% with parental leave as well no sick day buy backs. Paul Tzovolos told the Board that he had information that three additional districts had a 3.7% average, so he decided to give all employees a 4% raise.

F. North River Collaborative 50th Anniversary Celebration Update- Paul Tzovolos told the Board that there are three events being planned for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Collaborative. Plans are under way for a NRC staff and community event at Rockland Golf Course, a student event to be held on the grounds of North River School and a gift of possibly t-shirts to all staff.

G. FY26 Budget -First Reading

1. Budget Presentation-Paul Tzovolos presented the first reading of the FY26 Budget to the Board. Mr. Tzovolos thanked the Board for their continued support and pointed out structural changes to the budget including combining the Learning Center Programs for students with multiple disabilities and students with autism or developmental disabilities as well as the separation of the Learning Center summer budget as a discrete entity. Mr. Tzovolos also pointed out the Clinical Services Department has been restructured in a single budget page.

The FY26 budget:

- A 4% salary increase for all staff including drivers and monitors (plus \$1 additional per step for monitors) which is based upon the average salary percentage increase of the settled teaching contracts for member districts for FY26
- Teacher assistant and registered behavior technician salary scales will be increased by 4% plus one additional dollar per step. This will allow us to support staff and remain competitive.
- A recommended additional percentage due to comparable salaried for the Business Manager, Transportation Director and Human Resources Coordinator.
- An increase of 3% for NRC tuition rates for the North River School, Learning Center programs, and SAILS program. Independence Academy will have a 5.4% increase in tuition based on the foundation budget. The budget also reflects a 15% surcharge for non-member districts with no impact to Transportation as it is a separate calculation.
- The ESY Learning Center program has been restructured to a six week program instead of a 7 week program.
- An additional ASD classroom will be added to Bryantville in FY26 with 1 additional teacher and 2 additional paraprofessionals.
- Considering future expansion of Independence Academy near the Cape.
- No proposed rate increase for the MSW program for FY26 due to the rate restructuring of a single rate for 2.5 days of support.
- District Services will increase by 3% except for the Visually Impaired (TVI) and Orientation and Mobility (O&M) service rate which will increase by 5% for FY26.
- No overall increase costs in Transportation aside from incidental cost increases

2. FY26 Reformatted and Combined Rate Sheet -Ellen George presented the FY26 reformatted and Combined Rate sheet.

3. Treasurer Certification of FY26 Budget-Paul Tzovolos advised the Board that included in the FY26 proposed budget is the certification from Treasurer Arthur Sullivan.

4. Question and Feedback

**F. Approval of the transfer of \$175,000 from North River Collaborative general fund for FY25 to the Retirees Health Insurance Trust for the purpose of paying retirees health insurance and for future payments.**

**Motion:** Liz Legault made a motion to approve the transfer of \$175,000 from the North River Collaborative's general fund to the Retiree's Health Insurance Trust for the purpose of paying retirees health insurance and for future payments. Julie Hamilton second the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

IV. Informational

A. Professional Development Listing

B. Central Office Staff Budget Presentation-Virtual-March 14, 2025 at 1:00PM

V. Other Matters of Interest to Board Members

**Motion:** Liz Legault made a motion to adjourn. Julie Hamilton seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Meeting adjourned at 10:32AM

Respectfully submitted,  
Ryan Powers, Board Secretary  
NRC Board of Directors