



## North River Collaborative Board of Directors

Friday, September 19, 2025

### Minutes

**Present;** Paul Tzovolos, Ellen George, Jeff Szymaniak, Felicia Moschella, Mark Bodwell, Gina Williams, Joe Baeta, Matt Ferron, Julie Hamilton and Alan Cron

**Absent:** Lori Jodoin, and Ryan Powers

- I. **Call to Order** -Chairwoman Julie Hamilton called the meeting to order at 9:05 A.M. She then asked for a motion to go into executive session.

### **II. Executive Session**

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) “to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements.”

#### **A. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of June 6, 2025**

#### **B. Discussion Regarding Executive Director Contract Negotiations**

**Motion:** Matt Ferron made a motion to go into executive session “to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements” Jeff Szymaniak second the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

**Motion:** Matt Ferron made a motion to adjourn the executive session and re-convene into open session. Mark Bodwell seconded the motion Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

- III. **Approval of Minutes for June 6, 2025-** Approval of the minutes had to be tabled until the next Board meeting due to not enough members able to vote on the minutes.

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

A. Summer 2025 and Opening of School Year 2025-2026 Update-Paul Tzovolos highlighted the 2025 summer programs and the opening of school year 2025-2026. Mr. Tzovolos told the Board that the summer programs were successful, and the new school year started off well with the opening of two new classrooms at the Pembroke Middle school.

**B. FY26 Budget Update-** Ellen George updated the Board on the FY26 General Fund Revenue and Expense Projection. Ms. George stated that the Learning Center is above projected enrollment while North River School and SAILS are currently under projected enrollment. Transportation is doing well, adding new routes and drivers.

**Motion:** Matt Ferron made a motion to accept the FY26 Budget update. Mark Bodwell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

**C. FY25 OPEB Trust Audit Report-** Ellen George reviewed the FY25 OPEB Trust Audit Report. The actuarial audit stated that the Collaborative performs actuarial valuations of its non-pension post-employment benefits liability in accordance with GASB reporting requirements. The Collaborative is expected to contribute \$175,000 annually and reimburse benefit payments for retirees from the Trust each year. The balance of funds as of June 30, 2025, was \$4,046,725.

**Motion:** Matt Ferron made a motion to accept the FY26 OPEB Trust Audit Report, Mark Bodwell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote

**D. Acceptance of Staff Resignations, Hires, Terminations, and Changes in Contract** - Paul Tzovolos presented the staff resignations, terminations and changes in contract to the Board for approval. Mr. Tzovolos advised the Board that the list was extensive due to all of the FY26 employment agreements for current staff.

**Motion-**Matt Ferron made a motion to accept the Hires, Terminations, and Changes in Contract. Mark Bodwell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

**E. Addition to the FY26 NRC Tuition and Service Rates Sheet-** Paul Tzovolos reviewed the FY2026 Tuition and Service Rates for the Board.

**Motion:** Matt Ferron made a motion to approve the FY26 NRC Tuition and Service Rates. Mark Bodwell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

**F. Adaptive Equipment Loan Program Lease Agreement-** Paul Tzovolos shared the North River Adaptive Equipment Lease agreement with the Board and highlighted the terms of the agreement and how the process will work.

**Motion:** Matt Ferron made a motion to approve the Adaptive Equipment Loan Program and Lease Agreement. Mark Bodwell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

**G. Addition to the Personnel Policy and Procedure Manual-** Paul reviewed the addition to the Personnel Policy and Procedure Manual for the Board's approval.

**Motion:** Matt Ferron made a motion to approve the addition to the Personnel Policy and Procedure Manual. Mark Bodwell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

H. Independence Academy Cape Cod Location Update: Paul Tzovolos updated the Board on the status of the Independence Academy Cape Cod location. Mr. Tzovolos advised the Board that he and Ryan Morgan have toured many properties and are working closely with a Cape realtor to find the perfect location for the school.

- I. **Legal Information Edits to North River Collaborative Student Handbooks-**Paul Tzovolos advised the Board that the handbooks were vetted by the NRC attorney to ensure that all changes were appropriate and within the guidelines set.

1. Transportation
2. North River School
3. Independence Academy
4. Learning Centers
5. SAILS

**Motion:** Matt Ferron made a motion to approve the Legal information Edits to the North River Collaborative Student Handbooks. Mark Bodwell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

**J. Learning Center Assistant Coordinator Position and Job Description-**Paul Tzovolos reviewed the job description for the Learning Center Assistant Coordinator position. Mr. Tzovolos explained to the Board that as the Learning Center continues to increase in enrollment there is a

need to add the position.

**Motion:** Matt Ferron made a motion to approve the Learning Center Assistant Coordinator Position and Job Description. Mark Bodwell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

**K. Approval of the NRC 2024-2029 Student Success Plan FY26 Action Items-** Paul Tzovolos reviewed the 2024-2029 Student Success Plan FY26 Action items:

**Pillar One: Program and Service Enhancement Action Plan 2025-2026**

1. Implement and analyze the application of Yondr Pouches, Positive Behavior Intervention Support Systems, and Social/Emotional Learning instruction on student learning and behavior data at North River School
2. Identify and develop a second Independence Academy location on Cape Cod.
3. Seek Multiple external perspectives focused on the engagement and support of families of students who access programs and services through North River Collaborative.
4. Explore the development of “modular programming” to meet finite and niche student needs.
5. Establish connections with organizations and school districts that are outside of the currently established radius of operations.

**Pillar Two: Facilities and Operations Action Plan 2025-2026**

1. Respond to the growth of the transportation department so as to continue to build capacity and quality through innovative actions.
2. Evaluate the existing custodial and facilities systems and resources to inform future practice from a financial and operational perspective.
3. Build ongoing relationships with state-approved vendors that will allow for ease of access and consistency in materials.
4. Continue to refine the clarity and consistency of the North River Collaborative brand through marketing, media and operations.

**Pillar Three: Human Resource Development Actions Plan 2025-2026**

1. Engage in reflective activities that enhance the understanding of culturally proficient practices across North River Collaborative.
2. Navigate a supportive transition following the departure of the van/driver monitor collective bargaining unit.
3. Provide resources and support to new and existing staff that establishes an internal system of employee assistance
4. Reestablish or ensure a connection with specific program/department safety measures from a training and operational standpoint.
5. Engage in activities that highlight and celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of North River Collaborative.

**Motion:** Matt Ferron made a motion to approve the NRC 2024-2029 Student Success Plan FY26 Action Items. Mark Bodwell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

**L. Approval of Executive Director Goals for 2025-2026-** Paul Tzovolos reviewed his goals for the year which coincide with the pillars of the Student Success Plan for FY26.

**Motion:** Matt Ferron made a motion to approve the Executive Director Goals for 2025-2026. Mark Bodwell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

V. Informational

- A. Reminder of Educational Collaborative Role/Responsibilities
- B. Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives (MOEC) Updates
  1. MOEC Annual Report

## 2. MOEC Leadership Academy

### VI. Other Matters of Interest to Board Members

**Motion:** Matt Feroon made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mark Bodwell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by Roll call vote.

Meeting adjourned at 10:02 AM

Respectfully submitted by:  
Mark Bodwell, Board Secretary  
NRC Board of Directors