

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

**The RMHS school board held a meeting on Tuesday, February 9th, 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

Jerry opened the meeting at 5:03 the meeting.

Father Naples led the board with an opening prayer.

Jerry noted that the board submitted the subcommittee reports early and it was appreciated.

Msgr McDermott made a motion to accept the minutes as submitted of the January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021 board meeting. John seconded the motion; the board all voted in favor of the motion. Minutes were approved.

**Agenda items for discussion:**

**1. Student Council Report**

Jerry welcomed Jillian to the meeting. Jillian reports that the tradition of Valentine's Day Carnations continues and are on sale in school this week. It is a very popular fundraiser with the students. Jillian noted that the students were frustrated that a recent snow day turned into a virtual day and many seniors chose not to attend class that day. Students are disappointed that Stunt Nite was officially cancelled but they understand that it is necessary. Jillian spoke about the new Student Diversity Union; the club will publish a monthly newsletter, has an Instagram account and more. The musical theater club will be putting together this year's musical in a creative way which includes filming outside and will present it to the school later this Spring. Students were very excited about the recent announcement

that allows Winter sports to resume. Jerry noted that the first hockey game is in Woodstock this weekend. Maureen noted that the Rice ski team was well represented and posted top results at the most recent competition. Msgr McDermott asked about who the faculty advisor was for the SDU; Jillian confirmed it is Ms. Lorenz and Mr. Maher. Father St. Peter mentioned to Jillian that he would like to join SDU, and they look forward to working together.

Jillian left the meeting.

## **2. Principal's Report**

Lise submitted her report to the board; there were no questions raised. Lisa highlighted the administration is working closely with the legal team on the dual enrollment lawsuit win. Lisa commented that in the case documents there is specific language on how the school will not have to alter curriculum, prayer time, etc. There are seventeen existing families at Rice who have applied to receive funds for the second semester. There are three transfer students next year from Georgia. Lisa is excited to report that the bookkeeper has accepted the position, and notes the candidate, Samantha Sellers, will be a great addition to the team. Current enrollment for next year is: 103 incoming freshman, 12 Sophomore transfers and 3 international students (but this is constantly changing).

## **3. Faculty Report**

Paul reports that TJ Matarazzo's poetry will be published in a digest. Paul shared a personal letter of thanks from TJ. Paul also reported that seven of the eight music students who auditioned for the New England districts were admitted. The music department is launching a new tradition of performing music in the cafeteria over lunch. Paul noted that the student council carnation sale is doing really well, with several parents ordering for students. Delivery of the carnations will just happen during first period unlike other years where it is throughout the day. Student Council is taking orders through Thursday; it is wonderful that this traditional can continue.

It is exciting to report that the Freshmen candidates for student council presented their speeches today for upcoming elections. The themes of the speeches were about how to get to know more people. Voting to occur prior to vacation.

## **4. Rice Parent Organization Report**

Danielle reports that there was a lot of talk about snow days and COVID at the recent meeting. The RPO continues to sponsor fundraisers including a cookie dough sale and the Rice gear store. Both events are going well. The RPO's goal is to recognize teachers this year and to show appreciation for everything they are doing for the students. The Senior banner was unveiled this Friday. The RPO is trying to come up with ideas for underclassmen, please let the committee know if you have any.

Regarding the recent remote day, the parent feedback is that the kids wanted a traditional snow day; everyone understands the shift but still desired to have a day off. Parents are also looking for more information around the COVID data when a positive case is identified. Jerry recognized that the administration is following state guidelines but would like to

develop a script to send out to the community the next time a positive case is identified. The goal is to execute the communication and tracing process quickly and efficiently. Jeff walked the board through the current process, noted the team has learned from the process and had a debrief. Contact tracing is mandated and must be done by school personnel – the last round that was done took 36 straight hours amongst 6 individuals. It is a long process, but the team communicated the results immediately. Danielle reiterated that the RPO deeply appreciates all the work everyone is doing.

## **5. Subcommittee Reports:**

### **a. Advancement Committee**

John submitted the committee's monthly report and there were no questions from the board. John shared the logo for Rice's Day of Giving which is a Green Knight standing in front of a wood pile. This will be distributed throughout the Rice community including students to educate around the logo and spirit of giving. Christy is working with the student council on student engagement. John noted that there was an article written about engaging school boards (author Jerry Tarrant) - John to distribute to the board.

### **b. Facilities Committee**

Jason submitted his report to the board, noting that he is continuing to work with the DRB for the city of South Burlington. The city has changed its course on approval; but the process is moving forward slowly. Jerry notes that the work that is being done is fantastic and the school is already seeing the results. Paul noted that the parking lot needs to be treated; a couple of teachers have slipped, and it is dangerous. Kirk is doing the best he can, but he is only one person. The walkway and the parking lot are very dangerous and slippery. Jeff responded that he has spoken with Ray Kaigle and he is going to spread sand over the parking lot at the next storm.

### **c. Finance Committee**

Michelle notes the committee has held two meetings since our last board meeting and she has submitted reports for both. Michelle notes that school was able to pay down a large piece of the debt to the Diocese. The school received a significant donation from the Pizzagalli family for tuition assistance. The committee has spent time with the budget to recommend a tuition rate for next year. The budget was resubmitted to the diocese today (2/9). Most important, Michelle reports that everyone is very excited that a bookkeeper was hired.

**d. Human Resources Committee**

No written report, this month's meeting is scheduled for tomorrow 2/10. Jennifer reports the main agenda item is to revise the faculty handbook. The goal is to have a new document that will reflect reality, address items such as remote learning and will be more user friendly for teachers and staff.

**e. Marketing & Enrollment Committee**

Carol submitted a report from the committee meeting held on 2/1. There was ad created and paid for which was posted to Front Porch Forum. FPF has a 250-character limit with a link to the white paper on academic excellence. The target is to generate interest within the local communities. Carol also noted that John Pelletier has offered educate local high school teachers on financial literacy in his summer institute at Champlain College. This will be free professional development for all educators in the state – including Catholic schools. It was noted that this is a great compliment to the Personal Finance class that is offered at Rice.

There were questions around the FPF ad, where it was posted, etc. Carol will review with Christy on the placement and other details. Lisa noted that it was only posted in Chittenden county but will move to other target areas like Stowe and the Islands in the next round.

Marie met with Lisa and Carol regarding consulting with the guidance department. Marie is learning about how the department is working today and will be happy to lend her expertise in any way she can to further the good work that is already being done.

**f. Vision & Mission Committee**

Committee report was submitted for review. The committee is looking to increase student engagement and appreciation of the religion department. The idea is to bolster the religion department; enhance and engage the curriculum. Committee is looking to raise the bar of the religious education and attract students to it. Lisa noted that she would like to be part of the committee. Paul noted that religion also has to be a priority at home for students to fully engage. The board discussed Rice's Catholic identity, the importance of highlighting religion throughout all areas of the school. It was noted by several board members that the school should consider bringing back an introductory class for incoming students on Catholicism, Catholic mass, etc.

## **6. Other business**

Jerry polled the board for other business and topics of discussion. There was no other business brought forward.

Paul and Danielle left the meeting.

At 6:29pm, the school board entered executive session.

At 7:13pm, the school board exited executive session.

Father Dallas led the school board in a closing prayer. The board meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Maureen Webb, Secretary