In Attendance: Sue Chandler, Kevin Larsen, Anne Rowe and JulieMarie Shepherd

Staff: Chad Burns, Marci Elder, Julie Stelzer and Cris Veteto

**Introductions**

Each board member and staff member introduced themselves to the group.

**Executive Session**

Sue requested a motion that the board enter into Executive Session, per C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(f)(I), matters pertaining to personnel. Kevin moved to enter into Executive Session, Anne seconded. The board unanimously agreed and moved to another location for Executive Session.

The board reconvened the regular BOCES meeting at 7:55 a.m.

**Approval of Agenda**

Sue requested a motion to approve the agenda. Anne moved to approve the agenda, Kevin seconded. The agenda was unanimously approved.

**Approval of Minutes**

Sue requested a motion to approve the minutes. She thanked Cris for the thorough minutes from the previous meeting, as they were lengthy. Anne moved to approve the minutes, Kevin seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved.

**Executive Director Report**

Chad stated that we are currently on track for an enrollment of 390 students for the 2012-2013 school year. We have an extensive wait list in grades K-5, and a smaller wait list for grades 6-11. As openings are available, we will enroll additional students, up through the October count date.

This is an exciting time at RMSEL as students are completing portfolios for teacher review. Seniors will participate in Portfolio Reading Day on May 11th and will present their portfolios before a passage panel on May 18th. Students in grades 3, 5, 8, and 10 will participate in Portfolio Reading Day on May 19th and will present their portfolios before a passage panel on May 29th. RMSEL passage ceremonies and graduation will take place on May 31st. Portfolios require students to document their learning through submitting various artifacts of their work, along with reflection on what they learned and how they met each learning target. They must also submit a personal statement, service learning log, character letters and other work specific to their grade level passage.

Chad stated that four crews are currently out of the building on fieldwork. Fifth graders are on the sailing trip to Catalina Island, 4th graders are canoeing at Bear Creek Lake Park, and two middle school crews are at Yellowstone National Park. The other two middle school crews will be going to Yellowstone next week.

Since the last BOCES meeting, PACK prepared the annual fundraising budget for the 2012-2013 school year. The goal is to raise over $65,000 to support RMSEL’s instructional needs, which is a $15,000 increase over the previous year. Chad thanked the members of PACK and said that RMSEL is fortunate to have this group of passionate and dedicated parents supporting the school. PACK also hosted the annual Talent Show, in which over 20 students performed acts ranging from poetry reading to martial arts demonstrations. This was a great community event, involving students from grades K-12.
Chad stated that RMSEL will be hiring 4 new positions for next year: a K-12 Spanish teacher, a K-12 Vocal/Instrumental Music teacher, a .6 Literacy Interventionist, and an Assistant Adventure Coordinator, as Roger Bonnet plans to retire at the end of the 2012-2013 school year. The interview team for these positions will consist of staff, parents, and an administrative team member. Each team will submit two finalists to Chad for final selection and hire. RMSEL has been fortunate to have a diverse and skilled applicant pool. Chad also welcomed RMSEL’s two new teachers for next year, Katie Frenzen (4/5 Crew Leader) and Jenny Kapke (2/3 Crew Leader).

Chad thanked the BOCES for their time and investment to RMSEL this school year as we continue to transition. Their leadership and dedication provides RMSEL’s leadership team with insight and direction moving forward.

Sue invited the board members to attend RMSEL’s graduation and shared that it is a very unique and special occasion. Sue asked if there were questions regarding Chad’s report. Michael Hemmelgarn asked for clarification regarding the Portfolio Reading Day on May 19th. Chad stated that students are not in attendance for Portfolio Reading Day. Passage panelists will read through their assigned portfolios that day. Marci expressed that Portfolio Presentation Day for grades 3, 5, 8, and 10 is on May 29th and that is the day students will have a scheduled time to present before their panel. Lucinda McGarvin asked where passage ceremonies will be held. Marci responded that they will be at RMSEL.

Open Forum
Sue stated that Open Forum is a time for attendees to express items of interest or concern that do not already appear on the agenda. The board will not hear discussion regarding items of personnel matters or issues relating to specific students, due to FERPA requirements. Each speaker is allowed 3 minutes to speak. Sue asked that speakers not be repetitive of previous speakers. The board will not respond to comments during the open forum portion of the meeting.

Susan Street, Chair of District Accountability Committee (DAC), parent of high school student: Susan summarized the discussion from the prior evening’s DAC meeting.

- Heidi Heissenbuttel had 5 issues she wanted to raise in Open Forum (attendance policy, recommends looking at unexcused absences only; RMSEL parent community K-12 feels fractured, asks for open meeting for high school parents with a facilitator; DAC quarterly meetings do not seem sufficient, more regular meetings should be set; high school electives changes, families and students want to continue to have the electives showcase; high school Spanish, parents want to know more about the direction of the Spanish program, who will interview, parent and student involvement).
- Kyle Ramirez requested more community meetings specific to school level so parents can discuss more with crew leaders about what is happening in their child’s crew/community. As students move up in grades, there is less communication with the crew leaders.
- Susie Apte, kindergarten parent, is thrilled with all the changes. She thought the last Chat with Chad was very productive. She specifically enjoyed connecting with a high school parent, Joanie Jackson. She felt like a lot of healing took place.
- Joanie Jackson agreed with the issues raised by Heidi, including attendance, and increasing community connections. She wants clarification regarding the drug policy, specifically about referring students back to their home school.
- Michael Hays wants to find balance between accountability and other EL principles, and also asked about the Spanish position hiring process.
- Michael Hemmelgarn talked about balance between policies being punitive vs. EL themes, suggested the use of surveys to communities to address issues and have discussions.

DAC addressed the membership positions in DAC, which are filled except for one position. They also discussed the attendance policy at length, and submitted suggested changes to the BOCES.

Hannah Breland, high school student: She appreciates that accountability has been put into place with students, which has brought some students up to the level of other students. If students are held accountable, teachers should be held accountable also. Regarding portfolios, only two teachers are available to review the 10th graders’ portfolio materials.
Things have been lost by teachers, or kept by teachers for months before being returned to the students, which puts more pressure on students. RMSEL will have fewer teachers next year with the same number of portfolios. She questions who will read them next year, if they will have time, or will students need to start portfolios earlier next year.

Sarah Coleman, high school student: She has been here for 2 years, and believes RMSEL is amazing school. She voiced that the high school student who spoke last month didn’t speak for all high school students, there are students with questions. The high school has had many changes this year with little information to students and parents. She stated that the changes are not all bad, but confusing, new, and different. Sarah was on the interview committee for Chad. He said, “I believe in transparency,” but she doesn’t feel that the high school has seen a lot of transparency, and they are looking for information. She respects that Chad is holding students accountable, but faculty and administrators must be accountable too. High school students and parents want more information.

Joanie Jackson, parent of high school student: She shared some of the concerns already voiced. Some families have sought her advice, and she directs them back to teachers. Students with alternative learning styles are struggling. Chad is bringing wonderful direction to RMSEL, but the flipside is confusion on the part of those students who may have mental health needs or struggle with their learning. Parents are voicing fear that their student will be kicked out of RMSEL because they aren’t achieving. Parents don’t know how to help them. If they aren’t achieving or attending, there may be other issues going on. There are some students who don’t belong at RMSEL because this is not a good fit for them. A student shared that he fears, “If you don’t do X and Y, you are being referred back to your home school.” The student may give up and we may lose a valued student at RMSEL. There are ways to work within legal rights of students to help them blossom.

Michael Hays, parent of two high school students: He thanked the board, and acknowledged this has been a challenging year with a lot of changes. Change doesn’t come easy, and is harder for some than others. He thanked Chad for his efforts this year, and believes that his heart is in the right place, and he wants to make RMSEL better. Accountability is a good thing, but it needs to be across the board. If we see accountability from our leaders, it is easier for us to be held accountable. Regarding electives, an elective showcase has previously been held twice a year, it is theatrical in nature and students organize it. Some of the electives for next year don’t bring that theatrical theme. He suggests that yoga, comedy, and music that is instrumental in nature be continued. He mentioned the letters previously sent to the board from parents who are here today, with concerns expressed. What is the process for the board following up with those parents? He voiced concern that nothing happens with their suggestions/recommendations.

Lucinda McGarvin, parent of lower school, middle school and high school students: She gave lengthy letters to the board last meeting, and has another letter to give the board today. She wants a response back from the board regarding her letters. The parents have asked for ongoing consistent communication within the community, particularly an open forum meeting with a facilitator. There is a fracture in the community because things aren’t being communicated across the entire community. She wants an open forum meeting with an EL facilitator. She expressed concern about two teachers hired this year; one has no EL experience, and the other was a student teacher here for one year. She feels that RMSEL is getting away from the core practices of EL.

Kyle Ramirez, parent of middle school student: She reminded everyone that Chad came to RMSEL and took over positions that for at least two previous years were already “broken.” She asked that we keep in mind that there were a lot of things that needed to be fixed, and they weren’t broken overnight. It took time for RMSEL to get in the condition it has been in. People want quick fixes, but they need to allow time for repairing the broken things. She asked that, out of respect for parents and Chad, parents give RMSEL time to address the things needing addressed.

Michael Hemmelgarn, parent of high school student: He thanked the board for being here, and the commitment to help a non-traditional, EL school. He recognizes that Chad came into an already strained situation. He pointed out that developmental needs of children K-12 are significantly different. The experience of high school parents has differed from that of lower school parents particularly. His son has panic attacks, and Chad has reached out to him numerous times, which Michael appreciates. He is concerned that the shift appears to be moving to punitive rather than EL approach. We
need to pay attention to design principles, and determine why things have been put into place. He is very drawn to the EL design principles as that is why he came to RMSEL. What can we do to network with other EL schools? He suggests offering student surveys and staff surveys for confidential feedback like other schools do.

Consent Agenda
Attendance Policy – Chad informed the board that there are some revisions being suggested by the District Accountability Committee (DAC), so the policy will be open for discussion during Discussion Items. The Attendance Policy will be an action item for the June meeting.

Action Items
2011-2012 Supplemental Budget – Julie stated that this supplemental budget is a revision to the budget that was approved in January. Primary changes are to supplemental PPR received, after school enrichment program and fundraising. Sue questioned the trash removal fuel surcharges. Julie said that this will be a continual expense due to rising costs and an additional fuel surcharge on top of that. Regarding fingerprints, due to the requirement of teacher licensure, substitutes also must be licensed. The revision to the budget is primarily to avoid note disclosure from the auditor. Sue asked for questions, none were voiced. She thanked Julie for her hard work on the budget. Sue requested a motion to approve the supplemental budget. Kevin moved to approve the supplemental budget, JulieMarie seconded, and it was unanimously approved.

Discussion Items
2012-2013 Budget – Changes in this budget proposal include: PPR is increasing by .31% over the previous projection, increasing enrollment, PACK projected budget for fundraising, adjustments to facilities cost, and insurance premiums (waiting for renewal on dental and bridge plans). Julie is estimating the carryover from this year to next year on the conservative side of $50,000. A specific resolution will be requested by the board to utilize the budget carryover added to ending fund balance as a draw-down of the beginning fund balance for the subsequent budget year. Sue asked if RMSEL is absorbing the PERA percentage increase, and Julie responded, yes. The tax return for 2011 is very close to being completed, and will be sent to the board by the end of this week. The June 6th meeting to adopt the budget requires a quorum be present to vote. Chad expressed thanks to Julie for working in multiple budget years with multiple budget revisions, this has required an enormous amount of time. Chad stated also that this week is teacher appreciation week. PACK gave each teacher an additional $500 for classroom use for instruction support supplies. We are purchasing iPads, almost doubling the amount of technology resources within the building.

Budget Update
This information is regarding the current year actual budget. The lease appears to be $25,000 short, but this is due to a timing difference in the statement dates and payment dates. There are a couple of budgets for refurbishing classrooms. The merchant fee account is over budget due to credit card payments being made by our parent community. We had to purchase a new refrigerator for the staff lounge. A reduced budget and rising costs are the cause for the repairs and maintenance account to be over budget. Sue expressed appreciation for the ability to absorb costs without using reserves. Anne commented regarding the thoroughness and organization of Julie’s work, and how impressive it is to the board, and Kevin agreed with this statement.

2012-2013 Meeting Schedule - Sue expressed the need to discuss the future meeting schedule for BOCES meetings. Kevin stated that he has a standing commitment on the 3rd Wednesday morning of each month. Sue asked board members to determine whether morning or evening meetings are better for their schedules. Chad is flexible either way. JulieMarie prefers morning, and Kevin agreed. Meetings will potentially change to the 2nd Wednesday of the month, after confirming with absent board members. The meeting schedule will be finalized at the next board meeting on June 6th, and will begin with the August board meeting.

Attendance Policy was moved from Consent Agenda to Discussion Items – Chad requested that, due to changes made by DAC, the board review the proposed attendance policy. Chad pointed out that revisions are now reflected with strikethroughs and italics. JulieMarie questioned an apparent strikethrough on the bottom of page 2. This appears to be
Items for Future Agenda
Sue asked if there are things the board members would like to add to the agenda. Kevin expressed his desire to come to RMSEL and see it in action, to learn more about RMSEL. Chad stated that both Anne and Claudine have come to RMSEL and spent time with Chad and in the school. He will be happy to do the same with Kevin.

Adjournment
Sue requested a motion to adjourn the board meeting. Anne moved to adjourn the meeting, Kevin seconded. The board meeting was unanimously adjourned.

Sue Chandler, President

Anne Rowe, Secretary/Treasurer