

Jun 18, 2025

Rockwell Board Meeting

Invited Dale Erling Just ME Evan Caldwell Rockwell Board ~~Cynthia Phillips~~

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Summary

Attendees Dale Erling, Michelle Coburn, Evan Caldwell, Lisa Pinkham, Julie Young (Chair), and Nate Adams reviewed and approved previous meeting minutes and discussed enrollment numbers. Nate Adams presented the FY26 budget, based on 253 students with a projected \$280,000 bottom line, which the board approved after discussing special education services, landscaping concerns, and salaries; the board also approved the FY25 budget after reviewing contingency lines, potential expenses like attorney fees, and addressing questions about an IRS bill and consulting fees. Dale Erling presented a positive fraud risk assessment, Chair led discussions and approvals on fee schedules, graduation requirements, the TSSA policy, and several other policies, and provided updates on building facilities including the teen center CO and ongoing repairs.

Details

- **Meeting Attendees and Pledge** Chair started the meeting by confirming the attendees: Dale Erling, Michelle Coburn, Evan Caldwell, Lisa Pinkham, Julie Young, and Nate Adams. They then led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance ([00:00:00](#)).
- **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes** Chair asked if everyone had read the minutes from June 2nd and requested a motion to approve them. A motion was made and seconded, and the minutes were approved by a vote ([00:00:00](#)).

- **Enrollment Report** Chair reported the current enrollment at 241 students. Shelley is conducting tours, and there is interest from potential students, but their enrollment status is pending due to Christie's absence ([00:01:22](#)).
- **FY26 Budget Hearing - Distribution and Overview** Chair introduced the second budget hearing for FY26 and asked Nate Adams to lead it ([00:01:22](#)). Nate Adams stated that he sent the budget out via the Rockwell board email, but experienced delivery issues ([00:02:42](#)). Nate Adams explained that the FY26 budget is a moving target that will likely change with enrollment and unforeseen summer factors ([00:03:50](#)).
- **FY26 Budget - Key Assumptions and Bottom Line** Nate Adams reported that the FY26 budget is based on 253 students ([00:03:50](#)). The budget projects a bottom line of approximately \$280,000, representing a 6.7% net operating margin and a 1.3 debt service coverage ([00:05:18](#)).
- **FY26 Budget - Special Education Services** Nate Adams mentioned an increase in the budget for special education services after discussions with Spedco. They aimed to overshoot this expense and will adjust it once formal contracts are received ([00:05:18](#)). Chair clarified that Spedco will be acting as the sped director, justifying the additional charge ([00:06:46](#)).
- **FY26 Budget - Salaries, Stipends, and Board Proposal** Nate Adams stated that stipends and salaries were reviewed, and the budget has been vetted multiple times ([00:06:46](#)). Nate Adams expressed comfort with the proposed budget and requested the board's vote for approval ([00:07:44](#)).
- **FY26 Budget - Landscaping Concerns** Teen Center raised concerns about MD's landscaping charges, particularly for snow removal, noting that the school handles much of it ([00:07:44](#)). Dale Erling supported this concern. Nate Adams acknowledged the feedback and agreed to look into the contract and cost breakdown ([00:08:47](#)).
- **Approval of FY26 Budget** Chair called for a motion to approve the 2026 school year budget, which was made and seconded. The budget was approved by a vote of the board members: Dale Erling, Michelle Coburn, Evan Caldwell, Lisa Pinkham, and Julie Young ([00:09:32](#)).
- **FY25 Budget Review** Chair moved to the FY25 budget, which is approaching the end of the fiscal year ([00:09:32](#)). Nate Adams explained that they aimed to

capture any potential expenses in the remaining week and a half and have built in a buffer for unexpected costs ([00:10:44](#)).

- **FY25 Budget - Contingency Line and Bottom Line** Nate Adams detailed the decrease in the contingency line to \$33,000 as anticipated expenses were moved to appropriate line items ([00:11:48](#)). Even with the buffer, the FY25 budget shows a solid bottom line with a 5% net operating margin (approximately \$210,000) and a 1.23% debt service coverage ([00:12:54](#)).
- **FY25 Budget - Attorney's Fees and Sped Funds** Chair inquired about the inclusion of attorney's fees for the outside audit in the FY25 budget. Nate Adams confirmed that the legal fees line item was increased to \$30,000. Chair also asked about sped funds, and Nate Adams reported that they are in good standing with a little bit of room ([00:14:06](#)).
- **FY25 Budget - IRS Bill and Floor Stripping** Chair raised questions about an IRS bill and the cancellation of floor stripping until July. Nate Adams stated that legal counsel advised holding off on the IRS payment as it might be deducted from funds owed to them ([00:15:13](#)). Nate Adams confirmed that the \$10,000 floor bid has been pushed to the next fiscal year ([00:16:20](#)).
- **FY25 Budget - Consulting Fees and Questions** Chair asked if consulting fees were included in the FY25 budget, which Nate Adams confirmed. Chair stated they had no further questions, and no other board members had questions for Nate Adams ([00:17:16](#)).
- **Approval of FY25 Budget and Audit Fees** Chair requested a motion to approve the FY25 budget, which was made and seconded. The budget was approved by a vote of the board members: Dale Erling, Evan Caldwell, Lisa Pinkham, and Julie Young. Dale Erling then inquired about the anticipated fees for Edie Bailey's audit this year, and Nate Adams estimated they would be similar to last year with a potential small increase ([00:18:08](#)).
- **Fraud Risk Assessment Overview** Chair introduced the annual fraud risk assessment, explaining that Dale Erling had completed it previously. Dale Erling detailed the assessment process, which involves rating compliance across various categories, and mentioned the school scored 375 out of 395, indicating a very good stance ([00:19:07](#)).
- **Fraud Risk Assessment - Internal Audit Function** Dale Erling noted that points were lost due to not having a formal internal audit function ([00:20:01](#)). Nate

Adams clarified that an internal audit function is typically required for districts with over 10,000 students, making it not applicable for them. The board agreed that the school is still in a low-risk range ([00:21:01](#)).

- **Fraud Risk Assessment - Score and Further Questions** Chair mentioned that the current score is higher than in previous years and confirmed that the internal audit was the only area where points were not earned. No further questions were raised regarding the fraud risk assessment ([00:21:47](#)).
- **Fee Schedule and Fee Waiver Policy - Changes** Chair initiated a second review of the fee schedule and spend plan, noting that the budget had already been covered. Chair recalled that the fee schedule was combined with the fee waiver policy this year. The key change to the fee waiver policy is that fees cannot be charged for elective classes required for graduation ([00:22:41](#)).
- **Graduation Requirements Discussion** Chair led a discussion about the minimum graduation requirements, currently at 24 credits. Shelley expressed concerns about potentially increasing it to 26 credits, but Chair suggested that the new administration should determine this ([00:24:46](#)). There was a discussion about the state's requirement of four English and four math credits versus the school's current policy of three each ([00:25:44](#)).
- **Fee Schedule Concerns and Errors** Lisa Pinkham expressed concerns about the emailed fee schedule, noting that some fees had ranges instead of fixed amounts ([00:28:26](#)). There was discussion about a potential error with a decimal point and concern about the schedule being locked in Aspire once approved. Chair mentioned discrepancies and high spending by Cindy on items like costumes ([00:29:26](#)).
- **Fee Schedule Approval and Late Documents** Chair highlighted past issues with discrepancies between the approved fees and what was in Aspire ([00:30:33](#)). Teen Center made a motion to approve the fee schedule, which was seconded and passed by a vote of Dale Erling, Michelle Coburn, Evan Caldwell, Lisa Pinkham, and Julie Young. Teen Center acknowledged sending out documents late but confirmed they were the same ones received earlier ([00:31:20](#)).
- **Teacher and Student Success Act Framework Policy (Formerly TSSA)** Chair introduced the consideration of the revised Teacher and Student Success Act framework policy (formerly TSSA). Chair noted that the policy changes were to harmonize with state law and that much of the language was familiar ([00:32:11](#)).

- **Approval of TSSA Revision and Discussion on Unions** Chair requested a motion to approve the TSSA revision, which was made and seconded. The policy was approved by a vote of Dale Erling, Evan Caldwell, Lisa Pinkham, and Julie Young. There was a brief discussion about the state legislature's ban on unions, with concerns raised about potential bias ([00:32:59](#)).
- **Building and Facilities Update - Teen Center CO and Stage** Chair provided a building and facilities update, starting with the continued wait for the Certificate of Occupancy (CO) for the teen center ([00:34:07](#)). The stage construction is still ongoing with electrical work expected to be completed soon ([00:35:04](#)).
- **Building and Facilities Update - Backup Lights, Bathrooms, and Drinking Fountains** Chair reported that replacing backup battery lights was pushed to July, with a parent (a journeyman electrician) doing the work for free in exchange for services ([00:35:04](#)). Some sparking bathroom light fixtures are being addressed as part of a larger replacement of 29 fixtures ([00:36:07](#)). Three drinking fountains were replaced, and there are a few more remaining in the gym and high school hall ([00:37:10](#)).
- **Building and Facilities Update - Reserve Study, AC, and Major Repairs** Chair mentioned the need to complete a reserve study but stated they lack the current capacity to do so ([00:37:10](#)). Concerns were raised about the aging air conditioning system, particularly the air handler above the gym, which could be a significant expense. The board discussed potential help from Lisa Pinkham's husband, who works in HVAC ([00:38:03](#)). The original hot water heater is also nearing the end of its life ([00:39:05](#)).
- **Building and Facilities Update - Vendor Vetting** Dale Erling emphasized the importance of carefully vetting contractors, recounting a past negative experience with KOH ([00:39:57](#)). Teen Center highlighted that Troy now supervises any outside workers ([00:40:50](#)).
- **Building and Facilities Update - Vehicle Policy Concerns** Dale Erling raised concerns about the lack of a comprehensive vehicle policy, particularly regarding who is qualified to drive the school vans ([00:42:01](#)). Liability issues and vehicle maintenance were also discussed, with suggestions for a checklist and tracking of maintenance ([00:42:51](#)).
- **Policy Review - Admissions and Enrollment Policy** Chair moved to policy review, starting with a revised admissions and enrollment policy to match current laws. Chair noted some interesting language, including about independent toileting

(00:45:16). The policy was approved by a motion, second, and a vote of Dale Erling, Lisa Pinkham, and Julie Young (00:47:06).

- **Policy Review - Conflict of Interest Policy for Federal Awards** TChair introduced a conflict of interest policy for federal awards, which was deemed straightforward. The policy was approved by a motion, second, and a vote of Dale Erling, Lisa Pinkham, and Julie Young (00:48:10).
- **Policy Review - Constitutional and Religious Freedom Policy** Chair presented a new Constitutional and Religious Freedom Policy based on recent changes in state law. There was a discussion about the history of seminary at the school and property ownership (00:48:10). Issues with an unrecorded access to the seminary building were mentioned (00:50:11). The policy was approved by a motion, second, and a vote of Dale Erling, Michelle Coburn, Evan Caldwell, Lisa Pinkham, and Julie Young (00:51:45).
- **Policy Review - B Schedule and B Waiver Policy** Chair presented revisions to the B Schedule and B Waiver Policy to reflect the legal requirement of not charging for classes needed for graduation (00:51:45). The policy was approved by a motion, second, and a vote of Dale Erling, Michelle Coburn, Evan Caldwell, Lisa Pinkham, and Julie Young (00:52:42).
- **Executive Session Motion and Reason** Chair raised the need for an executive session to discuss character, competence, and fitness of individuals. A motion to enter executive session was made, seconded, and approved by a vote of Dale Erling, Michelle Coburn, Evan Caldwell, Lisa Pinkham, and Julie Young (00:52:42).
- **Executive Session and Voting Procedures** Chair facilitated the process of exiting executive session and taking a vote on the matters discussed within. The importance of keeping discussions about personnel and legal matters private during executive session was reiterated (01:39:23). A motion was made and seconded to take action on the executive session discussions, followed by a voice vote to adjourn.

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