

RIVERSIDE LOCAL BOARD OF EDUCATION



Riverside High School  
May 9, 2025  
7:30 A.M. Special Meeting

**MINUTES**

A recording of this Board of Education meeting is available on the District’s YouTube page here:  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbTmn\\_sGBiEvF2c598hBCSg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbTmn_sGBiEvF2c598hBCSg)

**1. Opening Items**

A. Call to Order at 7:30 a.m.

Notice of this meeting was given in accordance with the provisions of Bylaw 0164B of the Riverside Local Board of Education which was adopted in accordance with Section 1.450 of the O.R.C. and the Ohio Administrative Procedures Act.

The Bylaws of the Board of Education can be found in BoardDocs.

- B. Roll Call: Fishel, Keeney, Brewster, Grassi, Krenisky - absent
- C. Pledge of Allegiance

**2. Motion to amend the agenda to add an item in the Board of Education Business section to move the \$200,000 for the CTE addition furniture purchase currently in the FY25 Permanent Improvement Fund budget to FY26.**

Motion: Fishel

Second: Brewster

Vote:

Scott Fishel	Aye <u>  X  </u>	Nay <u>      </u>	Abstain <u>      </u>
Dennis Keeney	Aye <u>  X  </u>	Nay <u>      </u>	Abstain <u>      </u>
Denise Brewster	Aye <u>  X  </u>	Nay <u>      </u>	Abstain <u>      </u>
Belinda Grassi	Aye <u>  X  </u>	Nay <u>      </u>	Abstain <u>      </u>

President declares the motion: carried 050925-1

**3. Motion to amend the agenda to postpone action on items A through C in the Board of Education Business section until all board members are present.**

Motion: Grassi

Second: none

**4. Consent Agenda: Finance/Audit**

- A. Resolution to approve a purchase order with Dubick Fixture and Supply, Inc. for a new cooler for the RHS Kitchen at a total cost of \$70,505.00.
- B. Resolution to approve an additional purchase order for FY2025 non-retainer legal services with Brindza McIntyre & Seed, LLP in the amount of \$50,000.
- C. Resolution to approve Then and Now Certificates over \$3,000 per ORC section 5705.41:
  - 1. To Brindza, McIntyre, and Seed, LLP in the amount of \$12,495.00 for non-retainer legal services.
  - 2. To Vivi, LLC in the amount of \$4,929.00 for digital signage works for multiple district buildings.
  - 3. To Robert Tromp in the amount of \$4,000.00 for Federal program consultant services during FY25.
  - 4. To Great Lakes Theater in the amount of \$4,074.00 for four performances for the LaMuth choir classes.
  - 5. To Perry Schools in the amount of \$7,950.00 for pool rental fee.
  - 6. To Concord Youth Baseball League in the amount of \$3,000.00 for 2024 Summer Mowing at LaMuth.
- D. Motion to approve the items listed on the Finance/Audit Consent Agenda as recommended by the Treasurer.

Motion: Keeney

Second: Fishel

Discussion: Mr. Fishel asked Mr. McIntyre to explain items B and C. Mr. McIntyre explained that the increase in billing for item B has to do with the increase in property tax valuation complaints. His firm gathers evidence specific to the property in question to support the auditor’s tax valuation then represents the district at a hearing. He said there are about eight times more this year than in the past. Usually there are ten to twenty in a year and this year there are more than 160. The potential loss to the district is \$194,461.00. Mr. Keeney asked what percentage gets a reduction. Mr. McIntyre said 25% to 40% receive the reduction in valuation, so the realistic potential loss to the district is \$50,000.00 to \$80,000.00. The Then and Now in item C represents money billed prior to the purchase order being created. Ms. Brewster questioned Robert Tromp in item C. Dr. Rateno said that we hire him to make sure our Federal Funds are in compliance.

Vote:

Scott Fishel	Aye <u>  X  </u>	Nay _____	Abstain _____
Dennis Keeney	Aye <u>  X  </u>	Nay _____	Abstain _____
Denise Brewster	Aye <u>  X  </u>	Nay _____	Abstain _____
Belinda Grassi	Aye <u>  X  </u>	Nay _____	Abstain _____

President declares the motion: carried 050925-2

**5. Consent Agenda: Personnel**

- A. Resolution to approve the following Certified Personnel:

**Resignation**

<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
Christopher	Basich	Principal	LaMuth Middle School	7/31/2025

**Resignation**

First Name	Last Name	Job Title	Location	Effective Date
Ellen	D'Amore	Teacher	LaMuth Middle School	7/31/2025
Cheryl	Lanning	Executive Director of Student Services	Central Office	7/31/2025

B. Resolution to approve the following Classified/Exempt Personnel:

**Resignation**

First Name	Last Name	Job Title	Location	Effective Date
Gary	Platko	Treasurer	Central Office	7/31/2025
Sally	Shelby	Accounting Specialist	Central Office	8/31/2025

C. Resolution to approve the following Summer Employment:

Summer 2025 Technology Worker, to be paid \$15.00 per hour:

Anna Pennock            Effective 05/19/2025

D. Resolution to approve the following Classified Substitute:

First Name	Last Name	Job Title
Charles	Gustavus	Custodian

- E. Resolution to approve a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Riverside Local Education Association regarding the incentive plan for early retirement.
- F. Motion to approve the items listed on the Personnel Consent Agenda as recommended by the Superintendent.

Motion: Keeney

Second: Fishel

Vote:

Scott Fishel	Aye <u>  X  </u>	Nay <u>      </u>	Abstain <u>      </u>
Dennis Keeney	Aye <u>  X  </u>	Nay <u>      </u>	Abstain <u>      </u>
Denise Brewster	Aye <u>  X  </u>	Nay <u>      </u>	Abstain <u>      </u>
Belinda Grassi	Aye <u>  X  </u>	Nay <u>      </u>	Abstain <u>      </u>

President declares the motion: carried 050925-3

**6. Board of Education Business**

- A. The Riverside Local School District Board of Education hereby approves the attached Guaranteed Maximum Price Amendment to an agreement between Cleveland Construction, Inc. and the Riverside Local School District Board of Education for the Riverside Campus Improvement Project at a total cost of \$3,229,290.00.

Motion: Fishel

Second: Brewster

Discussion: Dr. Rateno read a statement from Mrs. Krenisky:

Good morning,

Unfortunately, I am unable to attend today's special Board of Education meeting, due to prior professional commitments. I had offered alternative dates to allow for full board participation, but unfortunately, the meeting proceeded as scheduled. After speaking with our construction manager, it was confirmed that the meeting could have been postponed until the following week without impacting the project timeline. As a former Board President, I always prioritized ensuring that all board members—regardless of differing viewpoints—had the opportunity to participate in important decisions. I believe this collaborative approach is key to effective governance, and it is disappointing to see this principle disregarded. I would ask for the board president to take this into consideration in the future.

Though I cannot be present today, I want to reaffirm my commitment to serving on this board and representing our community. I remain dedicated to advocating for student-centered decision-making, responsible financial management, transparency, and meaningful community involvement

One significant agenda item for today's meeting is the approval of a \$500,000 advance from the General Operating Fund to the Permanent Improvement (PI) Fund. I spoke directly with our treasurer, who explained that this advance was added to the agenda so that he could legally certify that the funds are available in the PI fund for the construction contracts related to the High School CTE addition and Riverview expansion. While this advance is expected to be repaid during the next fiscal year, it is essentially a short-term financial maneuver that shifts funds around to present a more favorable financial picture.

The greater concern is that our district is deficit spending, in the General Fund. This advance does not address the district's long-term financial challenges—it merely defers them. Our treasurer feels compelled to take this step because he believes that a majority of the board members will approve moving forward with the contracts, even if the necessary funds are not available in the PI Fund at the moment, and will look to the administration to "find a solution" later. This is not sustainable financial planning, and it only postpones the inevitable consequences.

It's also important to note that our Treasurer, Mr. Platko, has previously expressed concerns about funding these capital projects in this manner. He has cautioned the board that relying on internal fund advances—particularly while the district is already deficit spending—is not a sustainable financial strategy. His professional guidance highlights the risks of shifting money between funds to create the appearance of solvency, and he has advocated for a more responsible, long-term approach. Ignoring that advice not only undermines the role of our financial leadership, but also places our district in a vulnerable position moving forward.

Another troubling issue is the dismissal of community feedback. When this plan was initially proposed, members of the public attended meetings and voiced their concerns. These concerns were heard but ultimately disregarded by the majority of the board. The community now has no meaningful outlet to voice their opinions, even though these decisions will have a lasting impact on our district.

This situation could have been avoided if the board had developed a comprehensive, long-term strategic plan for the district that is supported by the administration, staff, and community. We have an incredibly talented and qualified administration and staff who are fully capable of creating and executing a plan that addresses both immediate and future needs. It is crucial for the board to trust and empower the experts

within our district, allowing them to do their jobs, develop tactical steps, and create a path forward that prioritizes sustainable growth over short-term fixes.

I do strongly advocate for transparency, accountability, and giving the community a voice in decisions that affect them. Major capital projects like these should be part of a larger, well-thought-out plan that includes input from the community. Ensuring that the community's voice is heard and respected. Instead, the current approach silences those who will ultimately bear the financial burden for years to come.

If we continue down this path—prioritizing unplanned capital expenses over operational stability—we risk triggering deeper financial challenges. We owe it to our students, staff, and taxpayers to make sound, transparent, and responsible financial decisions. These choices have long-term consequences, and I believe our community deserves a full and open discussion before committing to this direction.

While I cannot be at the meeting today, **my request is that the board postpone any action on the agenda items related to moving forward with these capital projects.** This pause would allow our district administration the necessary time to develop a fiscally responsible plan—one that addresses our facility needs without jeopardizing the long-term financial stability of the district. We must ensure that any major investment is part of a thoughtful, strategic approach that protects core instructional priorities and does not create undue financial strain in the years to come.

Thank you for your understanding.  
Respectfully,

Lori Krenisky  
Riverside Board of Education Member

Mrs. Grassi said that moving the furniture expenditure to FY 26 will still involve making advances from the General Fund. This is not sustainable for the General Fund, since projecting out to 2030 will still involve advances through 2028 and we might not have \$300,000.00 in the General Fund at that time to advance due to the uncertainty of the state budgets. Mr. Fishel asked about the differences in projected costs for the architectural fees. Mr. Platko explained that the initial contract with the architect included improvements to the High School that we are no longer doing. Mr. Fishel said that there will be savings of \$206,000.00 in the Buckeye financing since we will not have payments for June, July, and August. Ms. Brewster asked about leftover funds at the state level for the CTE grants. Mr. Platko said that he asked for an addition \$1,000,000.00. No decision has been made at this time.

Vote:

Scott Fishel	Aye <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nay <input type="checkbox"/>	Abstain <input type="checkbox"/>
Dennis Keeney	Aye <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nay <input type="checkbox"/>	Abstain <input type="checkbox"/>
Denise Brewster	Aye <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nay <input type="checkbox"/>	Abstain <input type="checkbox"/>
Belinda Grassi	Aye <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nay <input type="checkbox"/>	Abstain <input type="checkbox"/>

President declares the motion: carried 050925-4

- B. The Riverside Local School District Board of Education hereby approves the attached Guaranteed Maximum Price Amendment to an agreement between Cleveland Construction, Inc. and the



- E. Motion to amend the amount of the advance in Item D to \$325,000.

Motion: Fishel

Second: Brewster

Vote:

Scott Fishel	Aye__X__	Nay_____	Abstain_____
Dennis Keeney	Aye__X__	Nay_____	Abstain_____
Denise Brewster	Aye__X__	Nay_____	Abstain_____
Belinda Grassi	Aye_____	Nay__X__	Abstain_____

President declares the motion: carried 050925-7

- F. Resolution to approve an advance from the General Fund (001-0000) to the Permanent Improvement Fund (033-9197) in the amount of \$325,000. Funds to be returned to the General Fund in Fiscal Year 2026.

Motion: Fishel

Second: Keeney

Vote:

Scott Fishel	Aye__X__	Nay_____	Abstain_____
Dennis Keeney	Aye__X__	Nay_____	Abstain_____
Denise Brewster	Aye__X__	Nay_____	Abstain_____
Belinda Grassi	Aye_____	Nay__X__	Abstain_____

President declares the motion: carried 050925-8

- G. Motion to amend the agenda to revise the permanent appropriations for Fund 033 for fiscal year 2025 to reduce the amount by \$175,000.

Motion: Fishel

Second: Keeney

Vote:

Scott Fishel	Aye__X__	Nay_____	Abstain_____
Dennis Keeney	Aye__X__	Nay_____	Abstain_____
Denise Brewster	Aye__X__	Nay_____	Abstain_____
Belinda Grassi	Aye__X__	Nay_____	Abstain_____

President declares the motion: carried 050925-10

- H. Resolution to approve the permanent appropriations for Fund 033 for fiscal year 2025 as amended.

Motion: Fishel

Second: Keeney

Vote:

Scott Fishel	Aye__X__	Nay_____	Abstain_____
Dennis Keeney	Aye__X__	Nay_____	Abstain_____
Denise Brewster	Aye__X__	Nay_____	Abstain_____
Belinda Grassi	Aye_____	Nay__X__	Abstain_____



B. Motion to adjourn at 9:12 a.m.

Motion: Fishel

Second: Keeney

Vote:

Scott Fishel      Aye X      Nay \_\_\_\_\_      Abstain \_\_\_\_\_

Dennis Keeney      Aye X      Nay \_\_\_\_\_      Abstain \_\_\_\_\_

Denise Brewster      Aye X      Nay \_\_\_\_\_      Abstain \_\_\_\_\_

Belinda Grassi      Aye X      Nay \_\_\_\_\_      Abstain \_\_\_\_\_

President declares the motion: carried 050925-13

Attest:



Board President

5/22/25

Date



Treasurer

5/22/25

Date