Rye Neck Schools

RYE NECK UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
300 HORNIDGE ROAD
MAMARONECK, NEW YORK 10543

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING
MARCH 4, 2025

Present: Mary Lanza, Director of Technology and Communications
Dr. Eric Lutinski, Superintendent of Schools
Trustee Nikki Barker
Tunc Altinbas
Michael Gillespie
Meghan Keane Graham
Ilissa Miller
Delia Osgood *(Absent for Community Forum/Participate Remotely in Closed Session)*
Carolyn Mahar, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance
Michael Scarantino, F.E. Bellows Elementary School Principal
Mary Ellen Chiera, District Clerk

I. Opening of Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. VMS Community Forum

Trustee Barker opened the meeting by explaining the purpose of the Technology Committee which was established to gain industry insight, best practices and recommendations on technology related issues facing the District. It is an advisory committee that is a non-decision making committee. She stated that now that the Committee has spent the year evaluating the technology components of the VMS, the Board thought it would be beneficial to hold a meeting to answer questions from the community regarding the VMS and discuss the possible additions of features to the existing camera and security system. Trustee Barker then explained the reasons why there is a need for security upgrades to our VMS.

Mrs. Lanza then explained what biometrics and facial recognition technology do and emphasized that the District will not be using these technologies since State Technology Law §106-b prohibits school districts in New York from purchasing them. She then reviewed the law and explained that using biometrics in a VMS was never part of the conversation and has not been included in license pricing from the vendor. The only feature Rye Neck would use is analytics, which is a technology that uses algorithms to analyze video footage to detect and understand what's happening in the video. It helps the platform learn the environment to detect threats.

Next, Mrs. Lanza reviewed the questions she received through the community survey. They were questions regarding the need for a new system, the laws and process having to do with AI, budget implications, security and the Avigilon system specifically. She stated that the needs were based on recommendations from the security company, user feedback and requests and the status of the current system. The District would like an expandable system that can be accessed on any device, including mobile devices. In addition, it should be able to receive mobile alerts and have a search function. Mrs. Lanza advised that the current software is not being updated and it needs to be replaced. However, we do not need to replace the cameras at this time.

Mrs. Lanza then reported that the Technology Committee had five open meetings on this topic since September. They developed functional requirements with input from key stakeholders, researched information and provided questions to ask other districts and consultants. They developed an evaluation matrix based on the priority features required for campus security, accessibility, network and data, cost, and the education experience of the company. Mrs. Lanza then conducted interviews with those vendors who met the functional requirements, which led to the selection of Avigilon since they can provide us with all the features we are looking for where other vendors have to source out some of the services to third-party vendors. The last step in the process is a final review by the District and Board to make a final decision.

Mark Garbett from Avigilon then explained the scope of the AI that would be used with this system. He stated that it is very narrow - it will identify if the subject is a person or a vehicle and breaks it down further. If the camera detects fighting outside, the system quickly puts out an alert to a Rye Neck staff member, who can gather the information and will notify the appropriate staff to handle the situation if necessary. The cameras have the AI built in and will take a couple of weeks to learn the scene and the environment. Mr. Garbett reiterated that the system will not have facial recognition, but it does perform an appearance search based on what a person is wearing (i.e., a red shirt). In addition, it integrates with the Districts Salto locks.

With regard to cybersecurity, Mr. Garbett explained that Avigilon has a lot of protections in place to protect data; the District will determine which staff receive permission to access the system; information collected by the system will not be going outside of the District, and can be erased as frequently as the District determines; and there is a lot the system can do to secure privacy (i.e. blurring out sections of a video). Additionally, Rye Neck's data will not be used to train Avigilon's larger model. It solely uses the data to learn Rye Neck's environment (i.e., traffic patterns, hallway occupancy, normal gathering times), which will allow the District to set alert rules to notify District staff when a change to the environment occurs (i.e., a fight in the hallway, a large gathering of cars or people during a normally quiet time, a student climbing a fence or down by the pond).

Next, Mr. Scarantino reviewed the security upgrades that have been put in place since 2023. These include the installation of Salto locks on lockdown spaces and offices and window film throughout the district. They have hired security guards through KH Briger, and installed parking lot cameras at the MS/HS and Daniel Warren. In addition, the District will be installing a security vestibule at the HS main entrance, and parking lot cameras at F.E. Bellows. He stated that as we continue to work on security, it would be helpful to be proactive with the use of the Avigilon system.

Finally, Mrs. Mahar stated that, with regard to the budget, the system has pricing tiers based on the number of cameras, analytics on the cameras, the use of weapon detection, and environmental sensors. Everything is an add on so we can purchase whichever features we choose. The upfront cost is a one time cost of $155,000 for the purchase of the system and the labor to install it. This number is already worked into the budget. The recurring costs will be between $4,000 to $9,000 per year. She stated that the conversation will now move to the Board to decide how the District will proceed.

III. **IT RFP Scope of Service Review - CLOSED SESSION**

No minutes were taken.

IV. **Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for April 9, 2025. The focus will be on 2025-2026 goals and Action Plan development.

V. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Mary Ellen Chiera
District Clerk