

Board Meeting Minutes – Approved

Mission

Marine Area Community School will utilize the natural resources, history, arts, and civic stewardship of the community as a foundation for the study of language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, physical education, art, and other curriculum subjects. The place-based learning environment will be student-centered, designed by teachers, and reinforced and supported by the local community.

1.0 Call to Order 9:30 a.m.

1.1 Roll Call: Lisa White, Kristina Smitten, Glen Mills, Jon Dettmann, Lisa Dochniak

2.0 Approve Agenda

2.1 Director Dettmann added an item to old business: approve the new name of the school. The agenda was approved unanimously.

3.0 Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

3.1 Board meeting and workshop minutes from November 19, 2016, approved unanimously.

4.0 Community Comment

4.1 Win Miller congratulated the board.

5.0 Reports

5.1 **Facilities Report:** Director Mills reported that there will be a public meeting December 17, 9:00am, in the Marine Town Hall, regarding meetings with District 834, and facilities, land use, zoning, and moratorium of the current Marine Elementary building. The Marine City Council building use subcommittee has met many times and will report to the public. Members of the committee include Scott Spisak, Lon Pardun, Bill Miller, Gerry Mroska, Robin Brooksbank. Questions will be taken from the community.

Board Chair Smitten reported that MACS has received original architectural plans for the Wilder facilities. Facilities volunteer Mark Krusinski will help to review the plans, looking for necessary improvements. Chair Smitten requested approval for an expenditure (<\$200) in having the plans digitally scanned by a firm in Lake Elmo. On December 19, Chair Smitten and Mark Krusinski will be meeting with state code officials to review potential facilities and will discuss any code compliance issues, and Rivera Architects' review report. After that meeting, a list of required changes will be given to Wilder/Manitou Fund representatives.

Chair Smitten gave the Manitou Fund a sample lease, which they are reviewing.

Director Dettmann has talked briefly with May Township officials, and will be discussing further what May Township will require should MACS occupy the Wilder site, such as a Conditional Use Permit or an amended CUP, or a potential re-zoning amendment.

Chair Smitten reiterated that the facilities decision will happen soon, so that MACS is ready for students in the fall of 2017.

Vice Chair White asked if the class size decision was on track for soon after the facilities decision, possibly in January. Chair Smitten added that the Wilder facilities would comfortably accommodate 25 students per class, and asked for Director

- Dochniak's opinion of 25 per class. Facilities and class size parameters will be put on the agenda for the January 2017 meeting.
- 5.2 **Federal CSP Update:** Director Dochniak reported that we have been given some dates for start-up funding for things like financial management and special ed contracting: training on Dec 19, work session on Jan 11. Application due date is January 25, 2017. Annual awards to MN charters will range from \$100K-\$200K each, depending on projected enrollment (grant amount to MACS likely to stay the same all three years). The terms of the grant are: Year 1 March 2017 to Feb 2018, lasting for 3 years. Requirements include 1 licensed teacher on the board, an approved charter, and will need to be in operation within the first 2 years of the grant. (MACS meets all these requirements.) Consultant Nancy Dana has been giving MACS a lot of support and help on what we need to do to update our application.
- 5.3 **Financial Report:** Director Dettmann reported \$375 deposits (donation from St Croix Chocolate Company). Also received \$1100 in donations. Balance is about \$18,000. Thank you to the community for the support!!
- 5.4 **Governance Update and Federal IRS Filing:** Director White reported that we are still waiting for our attorney on the nonprofit status. Final draft expected this week.

6.0 New Business

- 6.1 **Review RFPs for Special Education and Financial Management/Accounting Services:** Because the CSP grant due date is later than initially expected, the decision regarding hiring of financial management was postponed from December 17 until the grant is in place. If the grant is in place at the next meeting, the decision can be made in January.

We have received proposals for special education services. Director Dochniak reported that MACS will need to appoint a director of special education to help design services. Seven RFPs were sent out. Two firms, Designs for Learning and Indigo, returned proposals. Director Smitten had a conversation with representatives from both potential providers, and a confidential committee reviewed the proposals. Committee recommendation will be announced soon, although must have CSP grant in place to formally contract with the provider, and the MACS board would like the executive director to have input on the decision once he/she is hired. Indigo asks for one lump payment up front, and in return provides a full range of services including staff training and personnel. Designs for Learning asks for a lower base payment, but then charges by the hour up to a 40-month cap of \$48,300.

Director White asked if there would be redundancies if we used Indigo (because both MACS and Indigo would possibly use the same financial management firm); Director Dettmann thought no, but there will be some overlap with special ed and financial management services (the systems will need to match up). Board members Smitten, Dochniak, and Dettmann added that Designs for Learning has in-house financial management, as well as a full range of services, and that projected costs were hard to tease apart. Indigo seems more specialized. Director Dettmann said Designs for Learning also submitted a proposal for financial management.

Chair Smitten thanked the committees for their work.

- 6.2 **Executive Director (ED) Job Description Review:** Draft is in board member packets. Chair Smitten stated that the current draft needs to be reworked to reflect an inspiring position description. Official start date would be July 1, 2017, but the position would be an hourly contract prior to July 1 to allow the ED to attend workshops and board meetings. Chair Smitten has spoken with a couple of firms to help write and disseminate the job description; goal is to post it by January 1 with responses by January 31 and tours of potential facilities soon thereafter.

Board members debated some of the points in the draft ED description, such as

a 32-hour position, possession of a current teachers' license, number of years of education experience, and post-graduate degrees. Chair Smitten noted the model at Marine Elementary of a part-time principal and full-time administrative assistant, and the 32-hour ED position at St Paul City School. Chair Smitten asked board members to further review the draft job description.

6.3 **Marketing Plan and Newsletter:** The marketing communications committee has drafted a newsletter and marketing plan. The newsletter has a Q and A format, and will be sent out soon, with monthly updates. The marketing plan is a start and will be refined soon. Vice Chair White also noted that the board is beginning to collect information on web development and maintenance. RFPs will be sent out soon.

6.4 **School Visit – New Country School, December 7, 2016:** Board members Smitten, White, and Dochniak visited the elementary part of this school in Henderson. This school started as a high school about 20 years ago, adding the elementary grades about 4 years ago. This consensus-modeled school no longer has an ED; instead teams of teachers make decisions. Their 85-student elementary model is multi-age/grade, with some overlap in grades, which allowed kids a lot of flexibility. All staff has been trained in responsive classroom and recommend that approach and practice “mindfulness” throughout the day. They have flexible learning spaces without rows of desks – instead using a variety of task settings, weaving technology in as appropriate (not one-to-one tablet/laptops) and combining technology with the math curriculum in 4-6th grades. They also handle their own transportation, and have more control over their food services because they don't take federal funds. The MACS representatives met with Aaron Grimm, formerly with Ed Visions, and now is a “teacher-powered school ambassador.” Mr. Grimm cautioned that the workload and decision making be divided equally among the teachers to avoid burn-out. Including the high school staff, the school has about 30 on staff, including a business administrator, information technologist, and half-time nurse. About 65% of the budget goes to salaries. The students get to choose a different project to work on every 4 to 6 weeks, so for one hour per day the students had focused project time and one hour for lunch and recess. The overall school day is a bit longer to accommodate this. Band and orchestra can be included in one of the project blocks. Community experts assist with projects. Each room gets \$3000 per year to allocate toward technology.

Vice Chair White discussed their transportation model. The schools own their vans and buses, and the paraprofessionals all have bus licenses. The classes take frequent field trips (each Friday).

Board members hope to visit at least one more charter school soon, and will use what has been learned in the revision of the CSP grand application. The tours are open to community members.

6.5 **Meeting with Superintendent Pontrelli, December 12, 2016, 1:30PM:** Chair Smitten and Vice Chair White will be meeting with District 834 Superintendent Denise Pontrelli to prepare for the joint learning session in January 19, 2017.

7.0 Old Business

7.1 **Enrollment Update:** 188 applicants to date. Official enrollment materials will be requested in spring 2017.

7.2 **District 834 Partnership, Joint Board Meeting Learning Session January 19, 2017**

7.3 **Name and Brand Approval:** Director Dettmann commended the work that Ultra Creative has put into creating a name, logo, and brand for MACS. Feedback given at the last workshop was used by Ultra to revise to the name/logo: Grove Elementary, A Marine Area Community School. The “G” can be used as an identifying brand graphic in itself. The colors in the leaves represent diversity. The shape represents a pathway or river. MACS will hold a “brand launch” in January 2017, with representatives from Ultra

to help explain the thoughts behind typefaces, colors, shapes, symbols, etc.

Vice Chair White moved to approve “Grove Elementary: A Marine Area Community School” as the name and the logo in slide #4 with revised G and slanted tagline (“A Marine Area Community School”) typeface. Director Dochniak seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

8.0 Other

8.1 **Next board of directors meeting:** January 21, 2017, at 9:30AM at the Marine Town Hall. Agenda items will include establishing committees for transportation, hiring, and food service. Please contact admin@marineareaschool.org if interested.

9.0 Adjournment: 10:30 am.