



Marine Area Community School • MN District #4254
Board of Directors Regular Meeting
Marine Village Hall, Marine on St Croix 55047
January 21, 2017, 9:30AM

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, Lisa Dochniak

2.0 Approve Agenda

2.1 Director White added a marketing update; item 5.5. The agenda was approved.

3.0 Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

3.1 Board meeting and workshop minutes from December 10, 2016, and workshop minutes from December 17, were approved unanimously.

4.0 Community Comment

4.1 Win Miller thanked the board and commented on the “stellar job” of presenting at the joint District 834 and 4254 learning session.

5.0 Reports

5.1 **Financial Report:** Director Dettmann unable to be at the meeting. Report from finance committee: RFPs were sent out for financial services. Contracts cannot be approved until after we have federal CSP grant approval, but MACS is able to assess and recommend firms. Committee received proposals and interviewed applicants: Anton Group, BKDA, and Designs for Learning.

Anton Group scored overall 92 points total on evaluation sheet. BKDA scored total of 85 points. Designs for Learning scored 67 total. Full evaluation results are available upon request.

Finance committee recommendation, assuming no fundamental changes in needs, is to work with the Anton Group. Formal action can be taken when Director Dettmann is present and after CSP Grant is in place.

Director White noted that in 3 years, after CSP Grant is complete, reliance on outside financial services would lessen, and financial management for basic budgeting would be brought in-house. MACS would continue to outsource HR services or program for electronic reporting, taxes, health benefits, vacation, etc.

Director White also noted that MACS received \$200 in donations.

5.2 Governance Update

5.2.1 **Federal IRS Filing:** Director White reported that we are now able to file for our 501(3)c status. Board Chair Smitten will sign documents and applications and fee

of \$850 will be sent to IRS. In the interim, MACS can continue to use the Marine School Association as fiscal agent.

- 5.2.2 **Key staff roles and responsibilities (School Administrator, Teachers):** Upon further discussion with hiring advisors and suggestions from Director Dochniak, the position of "School Director" will be reframed as "School Administrator," and hiring for this position will happen at the same time as hiring for 7 classroom teachers. This sequence and job title will be more in line with the school's governance model. These new terms will be updated in the CSP Grant application. The position descriptions for the administrator and classroom teachers will be posted by February 1, 2017, and applications will be reviewed on Feb 28. Chair Smitten met with Eklund Consulting who was supportive of the drafts. Salary range for the administrator position could be between \$42-65,000 (depending on many factors), could be 32 or 40 hours per week with various role and responsibility configurations possible. If 32 hours per week, the position would still qualify for a FTE benefits package. MACS advisor Nancy Dana is working on the teacher position descriptions with direction from Director Dochniak. Teacher salary will not be specified in position description, and will be commensurate with experience. Teacher applicants will be asked for a teaching philosophy statement.

Director White noted that staff structure and governance model need to be a part of the CSP Grant application. She read:

"The school administrator reports directly to the board and will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the school. The responsibilities of this position include management of the Federal Charter School Program (CSP) Grant, work with the financial services consultant, compliance and reporting, facility management, technology, transportation, marketing/outreach, parent volunteer management, and support teaching team members, including but not limited to organizing and facilitating professional development.

The teaching team reports directly to the board and will have the responsibility to develop, implement, and evaluate the learning program, identify needed professional development, set the school schedule and teacher hours, evaluate colleagues, determine and broaden assessments, and promote positive discipline.

The teaching team and school administrator will share the responsibility of hiring and setting the staff structure, hire colleagues, nurture and capitalize on leadership and strengths of every member of the school community, and continue to employ colleagues based on their willingness and ability to participate positively in the classroom and the school community. Together they will define performance standards (and a basis for termination of staff, with the exception of the school administrator) based on levels of performance in these areas: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, professional responsibilities. They will determine school-level policy, set the budget, determine compensation, and address issues in direct and respectful ways.

The above will also be posted on the website.

There was additional discussion of potential teacher and administrator salaries. Director Mills noted a recent article in the Minneapolis paper about teacher salaries. Director Dochniak speculated that MACS may attract more experienced teachers, and Chair Smitten noted that the amount in the school's budget for teacher salaries is higher than average charter school salaries. Director White noted that although salaries for charters are usually not able to match regular district schools, MACS is hoping the teaching/governing environment and philosophy will be an attraction.

- 5.3 **Staff Hiring** (discussion part of 5.2.2)

- 5.4 **Transportation, Food Services and Staffing Committee Updates:** Transportation and Food Services committees have begun. The transportation committee turned in a report, which the board will study. All options are being considered, not just district (834)-provided transportation.

Will need to create a staffing committee, and a few people have stepped forward. Community members are welcome to participate on committees!

- 5.5 **Marketing Update:** Ele Anderson noted that the newsletter for December was emailed and posted; we are working on the January issue. The committee will work on an announcement and community appreciation party for possibly March. The website and Facebook page are updated frequently.

Chair Smitten suggested that the board pause it's work on sending out RFPs for website design/development until after the CSP Grant is in place. Instead, Ele Anderson submitted a proposal for about 5 hours of "immediate marketing needs and website updates" at \$25/hour, which included name changes (adding/changing to "Grove"), logo changes, newsletter writing and design, and PR. Chair Smitten made a motion to hire Ele Anderson to assist with essential marketing needs as proposed not to exceed \$500; Director White amended the motion to include reimbursement for expenses of \$290. Director Mills seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

6.0 New Business

- 6.1 **Federal CSP Approval to Submit to MDE:** Director White reported that the CSP Grant committee, including advisor Susan Rose who has a lot of experience in this area, has been putting in a lot of hours on the application. The application was also reviewed by 8 other people in the charter/education field. Will be incorporating the feedback into the application and submitting it to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) on Tuesday, January 24. It will take a couple of months to hear back from MDE. The CSP Grant can be for up to 3 years of start-up funding; Grove/MACS is applying for the equivalent of 2 years at once because the school can be considered to be in 2 phases of the grant at this time. The funds can pay for textbooks and curriculum materials, desks, technology, attorney, website, financial management, professional development, etc. Cannot be used for food, operating administrator (although can pay for start-up administrator), or teacher salaries.

- 6.2 **Facilities Recommendation:** The committee (with coordinator Mark Krusinski) has been doing due diligence on three properties: Wilder Forest facilities, Christ Lutheran Church, and the Marine Elementary building (which is not likely available for fall 2017 opening). Visits to and conversations with Wilder representatives are ongoing. The committee will also go to the May Township board on Feb 2 to discuss amendment to the Conditional Use Permit and zoning. The committee has also talked to Wilder about necessary building improvements, which Wilder seems agreeable and accommodating on.

Director White made a motion that MACS enter into lease negotiations with the Wilder Forest facilities. Director Mills amended that we should continue to be in discussion with the church as a backup in case there are problems with the Wilder facilities. Chair Smitten will ask Mark Krusinski to look further at the church. The motion passed unanimously.

- 6.3 **Recommendation for Financial Management and Accounting Services:** See above 5.1

7.0 Old Business

- 7.1 **Enrollment Update:** Chair Smitten announced MACS has 198 applications.
- 7.2 **District 834 Joint Board Discussion:** This conversation took place on Thursday, January 19. Chair Smitten read a statement of why MACS continues to try to build a positive relationship with District 834: "Marine Area Community School board and Stillwater Area Schools' board will work together to provide for a positive and meaningful partnership that benefits our communities, families, and most important our students."

7.3 St. Croix Chocolate Company Fundraiser: The company met their goal of selling 100 chocolate owls, and will now pause production. The item can come back in the future. Chair Smitten acknowledged the support of St. Croix Chocolate and this successful fundraising opportunity.

8.0 Other

8.1 Next board of directors meeting: Tentatively planned for February 11, 2017, at 9:30AM at the Marine Town Hall. (This may change.)

9.0 Adjournment: 10:17 am.