



Marine Area Community School • MN District #4254  
Board of Directors Regular Meeting  
Marine Village Hall, Marine on St Croix 55047  
**February 18, 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, Jon Dettmann

### **2.0 Approve Agenda**

2.1 The agenda was approved unanimously.

### **3.0 Approve Previous Meeting Minutes**

3.1 Board meeting minutes from January 2017 were approved unanimously.

### **4.0 Community Comment**

- 4.1
- Ele Anderson noted the historical significance of the founding board's work.
  - Win Miller applauded the board and noted the compliments regarding professionalism of the founding board by the financial advisor at the 8:30 workshop.
  - Director Mills added that the meeting with the May Township board regarding the charter's use of the Wilder Forest facilities went very well. The MACS board will move ahead with paperwork
  - Becky Pothoff asked about the charter's library and book donations. Chair Smitten responded that there will be a library, and once the administrator and teachers are hired, they will make decisions about library locations in individual classrooms/central library/both.

### **5.0 Reports**

- 5.1 **Financial Report:** Current balance is just under \$17,000. Some of this money will be used for upcoming necessary expertise. Donations continue to come in and are needed. Director White and Ele Anderson will be setting up an online Razoo account with a website link for those who want to donate electronically.
- 5.2 **Governance Update/Federal IRS Filing:** 501(3)c filing was submitted on February 3. It may take a couple of months to hear back. The Marine School Association will continue to be the fiscal agent until Grove/MACS's nonprofit ID number is known.

- 5.3 **Staff Hiring:** The school administrator and classroom teacher positions are posted on the MACS website and on various job bulletin boards and social media. The jobs will remain open until filled, with the first round of application review starting after February 28. There is an on-line application at <http://www.marineareaschool.org/jobs/hiring/>.

MACS will be looking for committee volunteers to assist with the hiring process. The committee may consist of 2 board members, and perhaps 4 community members, and/or perhaps someone from our authorizer or another teacher-powered school. Advisor Nate Eklund suggested candidates teach a sample lesson to a few students

All names and qualifications of applicants will be confidential until the second round of interviews according to state law upon request. Chair Smitten anticipated only 2 rounds of interviews. References will be requested at the second interview phase and will not be public.

Additional job fairs will be held in April, and Mr. Eklund advised the board not to be in a hurry to hire during this first round.

- 5.4 **Wilder Facility Status:** Mark Krusinski has been helping with the facilities assessment and working with the Manitou Fund regarding a potential lease of the Wilder buildings. The MACS board did meet with the May Township board regarding a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) and zoning change, which is due to the Township next week. Wilder Foundation is technically the applicant for the CUP. The Township's public hearing regarding the request will be March 30.

The facilities committee received a proposal from a potential architect for services regarding compliance and programming spaces. They are targeting about 700 sq feet per classroom, and have asked the architect to identify suitable spaces to accommodate the school's needs (a target of 8 classrooms within 3 buildings). The architect firm has not yet been contracted with. The estimate is about \$16,000 for the work, which will include space planning, permitting, and contractor bid packages, and the MACS board will also request that the Manitou Fund assist with that fee and/or amortize it into the lease. A meeting with the Manitou Fund is scheduled for Monday Feb 20. There is also a \$2000 fee for the CUP and \$700 fee for the zoning request. Wilder Foundation will escrow the amount temporarily for reimbursement once agreements are signed. The two submittals require application fees of \$100 each, which MACS will pay.

Chair Smitten reiterated that both Wilder and Manitou have been very positive and supportive, and that the facilities remain an excellent option for the school.

**E-Rate\*:** Director White and Mark Krusinski met with an organization that helps to install technology in schools, conducting a walk-through the facilities to discuss what is required in the buildings in terms of connectivity. MACS was given the names of consultants who help to manage the E-Rate application process as well as installation of technology. Category One services include telecommunications, telecommunications services and Internet access; Category Two services include internal connections, managed internal broadband services and basic maintenance of internal connections. The funding amount is based on free and reduced lunch percentages at the school. The grant needs to be written and posted on the federal government website for 28 days so that vendors will have a chance to bid on the work. Then, in May, MACS will inform the E-Rate

program administrator which vendor will be hired based on objective scorecard results.

Director White met with one consultant (Bonnie Overweg, Dakota Academic Consulting), who works with a lot of charter schools. Previous customers of this firm will be contacted for references. This consultant charges \$3200 for both Cat 1 and Cat 2 work for writing and administering the grant. Director White estimated that MACS would be granted 50% of our technology costs by using the E-Rate program. Some of the CSP funds will also earmarked for technology. This consultant is flexible about payment schedule.

Director White motioned for MACS to hire Bonnie Overweg, Dakota Academic Consulting, to help with the E-Rate grant up to \$3200. Director Dettmann amended the motion to ask the vendor to allocate payment terms over an extended time. The motion passed unanimously.

*\*From <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oii/nonpublic/erate.html> The universal service Schools and Libraries Program, commonly known as "E-rate," provides discounts of up to 90 percent to help eligible schools and libraries in the United States obtain affordable telecommunications and internet access.*

**5.5 Transportation:** Volunteer Jim Maher has been leading research into transportation for MACS. MACS is by law obligated to arrange for transportation to all students who reside in District 834 boundaries if their families request the service, and they live 2 or more miles from the school.

On Wednesday Feb 22, Directors White and Smitten and Mr. Maher will be meeting with District 834 transportation employees.

Mr. Maher researched various transportation options: MACS contracting its own services, pooling resources with other charters and private schools in the Stillwater area, using district transportation fully, or using a hybrid system with the district. Funding for transportation comes from the state on a per pupil basis: \$283 per student. Costs per student for the District are closer to \$450 per student. So, for MACS at capacity of 175 students, the state funding would be approximately \$50K. If MACS uses district transportation, that money would go to District 834. If MACS contracts its own transportation with a provider, costs are projected to be \$40K per bus, with a minimum of 3 buses needed. For comparison, New Heights Charter, with a similar number of students, uses 15 District contracted buses. MACS could also buy or lease its own buses, hire drivers, provide insurance, etc. Statewide, 75% of charters provide their own transportation. In the boundaries of ISD 834, all the other 4 non-district schools use 834-provided transportation. Other concerns, especially if using district-provided transportation, would be start and end times of the school day. Mr. Maher reported that the other charter schools probably do not view pooling transportation resources as practical due to the locations of the schools and the numbers of students. Special needs students may require special transportation.

Chair Smitten noted that March 8 will be Charter School Day at Capitol. She will be meeting with legislators and would be happy to carry the message of need for increasing state aid for transportation, as the District is losing money annually.

## 6.0 New Business

- 6.1 **School Readiness Checklist:** Chair Smitten presented a checklist from the school's authorizer that has been guiding the founding board members for about a year. Director White asked other board members to review the list.
- 6.2 **Review Minnesota Open Meeting Law (Statute 13D):** Each board member received a copy of the law by email, and will review it. The law highlights were discussed at the board meeting.
- 6.3 **Minnesota Green Schools Coalition Roundtable – February 23, 2017:** Director White will be attending on Feb 23 this roundtable at the U of MN to discuss the “three pillars of Green Ribbon Schools: Environmental Impact, Health & Nutrition, and Environmental Education.” For more information, visit: <https://www.seek.state.mn.us/calendar/green-schools-roundtable-barriers-and-solutions>
- 6.4 **Reading Corps:** Community volunteer and MN Reading Corps tutor Christine Dettmann applied for Grove to be a site for Reading Corps, and the school has been approved!
- 6.5 **Minnesota Food Association:** Chair Smitten reached out with a suggestion to partner with the MN Food Assn on food and nutrition services as well as notifying the families who work there of the opportunity for their kids to attend MACS. This organization currently operates across the road from the potential Wilder/MACS site. A formal meeting will be sometime next month.

## 7.0 Old Business

- 7.1 **Brand Presentation, Sharon Gorney of Ultra Creative:** Ms. Gorney brought a presentation of the brand/logo for Grove Elementary. The origins of the name came about because of associations with nature, literal definition of “a small group of trees that grow together” being an apropos analogy, and a strong, established word that works well for the name of a school. She also talked about the design process of the logo (which was done by Andy Powell of Marine), and its representations/connotations of children, diversity, growing, nature.
- 7.2 **Federal CSP Submittal:** The grant request was submitted. MACS should hear soon from MDE.
- 7.3 **St. Croix Valley Foundation Grant Request:** Director White noted that this foundation is accepting applications for a \$5,000 grant for a consultant for the teaching team and nutrition personnel to integrate nutrition and local farming into the curriculum and food services such as menu planning.

## 8.0 Other

- 8.1 **Next board of directors meeting:** Tentatively planned March 11, 2017, at 9:30AM at the Marine Town Hall. This may change from the date of the 18<sup>th</sup> due to spring break.

## 9.0 Adjournment: 10:53 am.