



Marine Area Community School • MN District #4254
Board of Directors Regular Meeting
Marine Village Hall, Marine on St Croix 55047
March 11, 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, Lisa Dochniak

2.0 Approve Agenda

2.1 The agenda was approved unanimously.

3.0 Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

3.1 Board meeting and workshop minutes from February 18, 2017, were approved unanimously.

4.0 Community Comment

4.1 Audience question regarding curriculum. Member Dochniak replied that the school will be “place-based,” meaning the surroundings will add to ability to do things like hands-on science, civics, and history. The school will be “teacher-led,” meaning teachers will make core decisions and will choose the curriculum within the framework of Minnesota state standards; exact curricula (i.e., the publisher) has not been chosen. The third leg of Grove’s platform will be “project-based,” with maker spaces so that learning is attached to projects to give relevance to subject matter. The classrooms will be traditional single grade per class.

Another audience question was asked at the end of the meeting about ranked enrollment. Chair Smitten explained the lottery, which was held after the initial open enrollment period ended. Applications received after the lottery are added based on when they are received. Applications are not the same as enrollment. MACS feels parents are entitled to have a good sense of the facilities and teachers prior to making enrollment decisions, and will have an open house on site in early May. Enrollment packets will go out in April. At that time, we expect a lot of movement on the waiting list.

Another question was asked about number of sections per grade. Chair Smitten responded that MACS has not yet made the decision. Part of it depends on the response to actual enrollment (vs. applications).

5.0 Reports

5.1 **Financial Report:** Member Dettmann reported that the financial situation is mostly the same as last month. Current balance is just over \$16,000. There was an \$850 expenditure for the nonprofit application. Chair Smitten noted that a potential donor requested to be able to use Benevity. Member White noted that the Marine School Association, which is acting as a fiscal agent for now, can accept those donations on behalf of MACS.

5.2 **Governance Update/Federal IRS Filing:** MACS received a notice from the IRS regarding the 501(c)3 filing, which was submitted on February 3. They have the application, and we will be notified within 90 days if the application is approved, and within 180 days if they need more information.

Member White asked for the Board members to sign the conflict of interest policy that was passed.

5.3 **Staff Hiring:** We have received an impressive number and quality of applications for the school administrator and classroom teacher positions. One application is from Board Member Dochniak, and so she will not be involved in any discussion or decisions relating to hiring. The Fair and Open Hiring Process will be followed in all hiring.

Chair Smitten and Member White contacted community members who had experience with and/or interest in helping on a hiring committee. The committee, whose members will remain confidential, will conduct initial applicant screening and first interviews. With guidance from hiring consultant Nathan Eklund, the committee will recommend second interviews. Mr. Eklund may be more involved after the second interview phase. The committee will then make recommendations to the Board, who will make all job offer decisions starting in the second or third week of April. The Board will meet in a closed session to discuss job offers (date TBD).

Applications received after today's board meeting will be placed in a "round 2" group. If not all the positions are filled in the first round, applicants from the second round will be considered.

The on-line application at <http://www.marineareaschool.org/jobs/hiring/>.

5.4 **Wilder Facility Status:** MACS has submitted the Conditional Use Permit and Zoning Text Amendment materials to May Township, who considers the materials complete. There will be an approx. \$3,000 escrowed fee for the township attorney and city planner review that goes along with those applications. Therefore, the MACS board wants to be sure that the school can enter into a lease agreement with Wilder Foundation, so will not move forward with the CUP until the lease status is known. Members of the May Planning Commission did tour the Wilder buildings to hear their thoughts. The public hearing for May Township will not be on March 30.

Manitou Fund (future purchaser of the Wilder property) has reviewed the lease, and the Wilder Foundation will be having a meeting within the next week or two, so MACS should hear about the lease soon.

Although everything is progressing positively with leasing the Wilder facilities, Chair Smitten did tour the Christ Lutheran Church with an architect as a backup plan.

The changes and improvements to the Wilder buildings will not need to be as extensive as originally envisioned, saving time and money. There are plenty of

large spaces to accommodate the classes and programming needs. Minimal repairs may need to be done to the spaces, which have already functioned as educational spaces and therefore are in good shape to be a school.

District 834 did amend their self-imposed stay to allow itself to discuss the sale of the current Marine Elementary School building to the City of Marine. (The committee that is working on this is separate from the charter school.)

In response to an audience question, Chair Smitten noted that there are positives to having the school at the Wilder space, and positives to having the school in the current Marine Elementary building. She added that the future governing Grove Board may make different location decisions as the options become available.

- 5.5 **Technology:** Although there won't be a lot of tenant improvements needed, some improvements will be required for technology and communication access. Member White is working with Technology by Design, who will put bids together to get the buildings wired for internet access – both high speed internet to the site, and then the individual buildings wired. The E-Rate consultant Bonnie Overweg will help get federal funding. The technology is required for state-mandated testing.
- 5.6 **Nutrition Services:** Member White and volunteer Jill Wilson attended a MDE nutrition services training seminar. The federal Free and Reduced Lunch requires a lot of paperwork and regulations if a school chooses to participate in the program. Rough estimates indicate \$25,000/year in federal funding for the FRL program, but also a lot of work. Other option is to provide our own food services, or contract for food services. At present, we are waiting to see if MACS gets the CSP funding, so that conversations can begin with the accountant about the operating budget.

Chair Smitten noted that MACS did apply to the St Croix Valley Foundation for a \$5000 grant for a nutritionist to help design educational programming to integrate nutrition and local farming into the curriculum and food services such as menu planning.

6.0 **New Business: None**

7.0 **Old Business:**

- 7.1 **Federal CSP Submittal:** As of this board meeting, we have not heard news regarding the federal start up grant.
- 7.2 **District 834 Partnership:** Because it has been a month since the joint learning session, Chair Smitten sent a note to the 834 board asking for any thoughts regarding partnership. Board Chair Hoepfner responded and suggested an additional joint learning session.

Members of the MACS board met with 834 employees Kristen Hoheisel and Ben Davis regarding transportation. There will be another meeting in the first part of April.

MACS could also help with enrollment communications to make sure both MACS and 834 school systems and families get the enrollment information needed.

Music programming and materials distribution (desks, etc.) may be areas for collaboration.

8.0 Other

8.1 **Next board of directors meeting:** April 15, 2017, at 9:30AM at the Marine Town Hall.

9.0 Adjournment: 10:39 am.