



## Board Meeting Minutes – Draft for review

### 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

1.1 **Roll Call:** Lisa White, Kristina Smitten, Glen Mills, Jon Dettmann, Jackie Henschen (Not present: Lisa Dochniak)

2.0 **Approve Agenda** Motion to approve White, Mills

3.0 **Approve Minutes from previous Board Meetings :** Tabled for next meeting

#### 4.0 Community Comment

4.1 Angie Hong (Kindergarten parent) Noted the awareness of the City of Marine wishing to acquire Marine School building expressed desire to staying in the forest setting vs moving to the more traditional set-up of the Marine location. The forest setting is definitely an attraction to families who are looking for a non-traditional, place-based education format. She noted the research based positive impact of nature programs and non-structured play time on children's learning. Also noted is the marketability impact moving into future with potential change of location vs distance and the more unique setting the forest has to offer.

Betsy Anderson (Third, First, and incoming K parent) One vs Two Kindergarten sections: Her experience two classrooms per grade level provide opportunities for community building and collaboration and dividing students. Slightly concerned of the school being hard to get in. Livelihood and viability for community.

Justin Kaufenberg (first and K for next year) Is this effectively making a decision for the grade levels moving forward? Member Smitten addressed the concern stating that there is a plan to add a second section of first grade the following year and so forth until necessary grades are expanded. Jeff Roach chimed in with similar comments. Echo Starr also similarly commented.

Anna Haagstrom - Her child is 48 of 48 on lottery. If the oldest isn't able to get in, we'll lose families and volunteers that come along with it. Potential of adding at each grade leads to financial gains. Keep class sections at 25 as well.

Ele Anderson expand the idea beyond the local community into the broader community. This school is a Marine school - we are in Marine, but we need to be sure to include the broader community.

#### 5.0 Administrator Report

5.1 Enrollment 161, ADM 161.08, 70 apps for next year. (53 Kindergarten) Re-enrollment went out Feb. 1 due Mar. 1, 108 intend to return -- waiting on 41 responses. Sending a parent/student satisfaction survey this week.

Transportation: A seating chart has been installed on bus routes to address some behavior concerns  
Lunch participation is about the same. Now is the time to being thinking about ideas for next year. Questions about food service will be on the survey. Looking for people who want to take on the project so we don't miss opportunities.

Timeline for staffing (document attached): number of students and need for staff based on that number, who wants to return, who offered to return based on evaluation, and new staffing needs. Evaluations due from

teachers next week. Contracts will be issued in March and new staff openings in April. Solid evaluations within the timeline window will allow time for decision making  
Volunteerism has remained about the same since the issue was addressed

## 6.0 Reports and Discussion

### 6.1 Board Member Reports

6.1.1 None: Mills, Henschen, White

### 6.2 Financial Report

6.2.1 Running smooth balance is \$73K paying off accounts payable and CSP expenses (reimbursement coming) and due to be spent by February's end. We will lose a little bit based on ADM being less. Transportation expenses are higher than expected, but we are in good shape. Cash balance is in a good position, but we do need to pay off the line of credit at some point. Enrollment slightly under and expenditures are slightly under, which is pretty much a break-even. Year two sets the stage for the years 3-5.

### 6.3 PTO report

Parent group has been successfully raising money for the school. The sledding hill safety concerns have been helped by addition of hay bales. There continues to be a need for lunchroom volunteers depending on the day. Color Run April 18 on site (Kris Capra in charge). Opportunity to partnership with Zephyr Theater to get music and theater arts for the school. Family Day at Twins game is on the docket.

6.4 **Board Chair Report:** Herberger's Community Days coupon books \$5 on sale March 1-3 (Becky Pothoff and Jos Vodden) Wilder lease payment structure based on ADM estimate and the expected enrollment using spring numbers. Goal is to have a lease that reflects our actual enrollment to maximize the funding by the state. They pay us back for up to 90% of our lease costs. After 6 years, viable charter schools can purchase their own property. Wilder is interested in selling the property when the lease is up, which may make sense for us to acquire the property at that time. Lease begins July 1. Lease can be terminated by either party within the five years. Plans to expand to additional grade level sections for 2019 would need to be communicated to the authorizer by May 1 so that paperwork can be completed and submitted to the state by June 1. We should move forward with this option whether or not we have a need for the expansion because the application is good for three years.

## 7.0 Old Business

7.1 Minnesota Association of Charter Schools membership: All Board members are required to have trainings three times per year. MACS can help with acquiring this training as can the MN School Board Association. Finding training is difficult outside of these entities. TAG and The Nest can provide some of the training. Tom DeGree (MACS Associate Director) is willing to work with us on the fee to manage the pay schedule \$1850 (\$145.17/month for one year from the start date). Drew is excited about the potential of the networking that is available through the MACS membership. The cost can be written into our federal grant. Next grant request period is thought to be October 1. First grant period was six months- 36 months total is maximum timeline for grant release. Board is supportive of putting the MACS membership in the grant request.

## 8.0 New Business

8.1 Class size: Board attended last Staff training, and there is concern of number of students in the primary grades especially, with some classes having 26. At older grades, having more students causes problems with differentiation. Staff recommends retaining class sizes at 25 with support of a dedicated classroom paraprofessional or teacher aide at K-2 grades. Currently there are two who are focusing their time in K-2. Member White made a motion to accept the staff recommendation of keeping class sizes at 25 through all grades K-6 with the understanding that additional support team members such as interventionists, paraprofessionals, etc. will be in the K-2 classes. Seconded by Member Henschen. Question about cost was raised by Member Dettmann, but it is hard to put a cost estimate on it. If we have 25 students in each of these classes, we have funding to provide and offset the additional support person at approximately \$15,000 per staff person. There may need to be sacrifices to accommodate this need if the numbers don't add up. We currently have two paras in the budget, so this scenario will be adding one more to the budget. If needed, there could be an effort to acquire the funds through donations. Other schools with 25 students often have paras,

and classroom dynamics can alter the need for paras over time. We want to make sure that staff has support to meet the needs of the current students. Transportation costs will take a lot of our budget, and scaling back one of the buses to make room in the budget for these positions. Member White amended the motion to approve the class size recommendation of 25 students per class with the intent to put dedicated support team members in grades K-2. Approved

8.2 Kindergarten Sections: Staff would like to have peer collaboration at their grade level and grow to two sections, but not three. Adding another section of first grade for the following year and second grade the next. Approximately \$100,000 net to add another class to our budget. Do we run the risk of additional transportation costs? It will depend on the route length (less than 60 minutes is most profitable) and number of students on each route. About half of new students coming to Kindergarten are interested in being bused. Facility will increase to six buildings from the existing five. Staff will determine the location of new Kindergarten, but it will not be in the new building. With the addition of sections in the coming years, expansion will need to happen in the 2020 school year. Member Henschen made a motion to add a second Kindergarten class. Motion seconded by Member White. Unanimously approved.

8.3 Transportation: Administrator Goodson brought forth that we have until March 1 to decide and inform the MDE if we are going to provide our own transportation like we did this year or if we will be using district transportation. If we provide our own, we must provide for everyone in the district that the charter is located in (834). We would then get transportation aid from the state of about \$50,000. But our costs would be around \$200,000 for four buses and \$250,000 for five buses. If we piggy-back on the school district, they would be in charge of all aspects of our transportation, excluding field trips and any days that we have school that District 834 does not. Drew met with representatives from 834 Kristen Hoheisel (financial operations) and Benjamin Davis (transportation). The results of the meeting indicate a maximum of 70 minute bus ride and a 6.5 hour school day with bell times 9:55 am drop off and 4:30 dismissal. North of Dellwood stops would be brought right to the school. Those south of Dellwood would be transported to the St Croix Prep school and then shuttled to Marine. Future impact on start times for the district in 2020 were brought up and may or not impact us favorably. This year's transportation costs are about \$206,000 minus the \$50,000 (\$290 per student) refund from the state leaving \$156,000 balance to come from our general fund. These are important dollars for us, especially when we want to look at adding personnel. If we utilize district transportation, we can maximize our general fund money for our learning environment and build our program. However, we are then tied to unreasonable start and end times. A parent survey will go out this week and a meeting Monday, February 26 will be held to share information and gather thoughts from parents. We can shop bus companies to get a better price, but the cost won't change much. Buying a bus or fleet of buses has its own cost implications as well, and this will be mapped out at the community meeting. Meeting with other charter schools in the area would be a good way to band together to work out transportation possibilities. There is an option to do before after school programming and carpooling, but waivers would need to be signed. We cannot charge for transportation. Any agreement with a bus company is an annual commitment. Negotiating the cost per student could save us money. Some companies have reached out to explore other options. There are fleets around here that aren't submitting bids because of our remote location. The survey will help us understand how the population feels about the start times and how will this impact our enrollment and the core of our mission and vision. A challenging budget is more desirable than an unreasonable bell time. Costs saved from using district transportation would allow us to purchase a van or a bus. Bus drivers during their off times could perform janitorial. Further discussion will continue at the meeting. Board members will meet to make a decision about busing for the coming year following the community meeting on February 26th at 6:30pm.

## 9.0 Authorizer Comments

9.1 Not present

10.0 **Next Board of Directors Meeting:** Saturday, March 10 at 8:30 am

11.0 **Adjournment** Motion to adjourn by Lisa White, Second by Mills 11:00 am

