



Marine Area Community School • MN District #4254  
Board of Directors Regular Meeting  
14189 Ostlund Trail North, Marine on St. Croix, MN 55047  
**April 21, 2018 8:30 AM**

## Board Meeting Minutes – 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 8:30 AM

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

#### 2.0 Approve Agenda

2.1 Motion to approve Dettman, Second Mills

#### 3.0 Approve Minutes of March 10, 2018 Board Meeting

3.1 Motion to approve Mills, Second Dettman

#### 4.0 Community Comment

4.1 Brian Mader inquired about the Second and Third grade girls wanting to use space at the school for Girl Scout meetings. The Boy Scouts needed to acquire their own CUP. Kristina has the full information on how this may move forward.

#### 5.0 Reports and Discussion

##### 5.1 Administrator's Report

5.1.1 Enrollment is currently 161 students with an ADM of 161.40. It keeps fluctuating between the 160-162 range. Two students are in flux and will not be paid back for them until Fall. There are 191 signed enrollments for next school year and nine students in process of enrolling, which would be a total of 200 students with additional students on the waiting list in First, Second, and Third grades. Preliminary budget for the coming school year will be based on 192 students. A marketing campaign will be starting next week in Gazette and various Social Media outlets and will highlight our Open House on May 10.

5.1.2 Transportation Committee met on March 26 to look at the purchase or lease of bus(es) for next year. Initial numbers look positive for the potential to purchase one bus and then the use of organized hub stops which allows the potential for using fewer buses from Minnesota Central, which is financially helpful. There will be discussion with MN Central about the potential for decreasing the number of buses from four to either three or two to save costs. The flexibility of start/end times from 8:30 to 3:30 is a big concern for parents. Students are getting home too late. Hub stops could also alleviate long bus rides (hour or less). If we were to go from four to three buses, we would save 50k. Reducing the amount of home stops and converting them to hub stops would greatly decrease the amount of time enroute. A lot of Charters use primarily hub stops. MN Central is going to create scenarios for us so we can weigh the options. The contract is up for renewal, so we would want language in the contract to reflect the options presented. The question is whether we can accommodate all student riders with three buses. Owning one bus would be a good place to start since it would allow us to use the bus for field trips. We hope to have clarity by next meeting.



- 5.1.3 Lunch Service: Drew is in the process of responding to a site visit in December, and there is concern that the amount of time involved in the accountability and paperwork outweighs the number of participants in the lunch program. A new direction will be looked into next month.
- 5.1.4 Facilities: Lots of snow and mud and somewhat of an issue with corner flooding in one of the Third grade buildings (resolved), but overall the buildings are holding up well with the amount of snow and melting.
- 5.1.5 Staffing: 100% of core staff have elected to return, which is very positive in a new school. Interviews were held last week for the positions of Special Education teacher and Kindergarten Teacher. We hope to get offers out next week. Our Special Education program is growing, and we anticipate 50 Special Education students next year or 25%, which is a little bit higher than normal number. Because of that we have converted a position to Teacher/ Coordinator so that this person can be in charge of coordinating all of the services we have on site. There will also be a need for Paras to support these students. Four recess support staff were hired to monitor students at recess so that our Paras can gain back time to work more directly with students. Currently we have postings for PE Specialist, Speech Pathologist and Janitor and Paras for next year
- 5.1.6 Community Partnerships: Zephyr Theater has been getting accolades for their integration of Music and Theater for all students and to help carry on the tradition of the Sixth Grade play (with Fifth Grade singers). The play is May 16, 17 and 19 in the Marine Town Hall. A concert for the other grades will be held at Christ Lutheran on May 29. MFA visits will begin in May so that students in all the grades will experience various food farming related lessons. There are four lessons teachers can choose from including Amazing Chickens and Meet the Farmer. They are open to tailoring to meet the academic standards.

## 5.2 Board Member Reports

- 5.2.1 Financial Report: March statement reflects smooth operation and a tap into our line of credit because there was some delay in receipts of CSP funds, which went into the account as of this week. Committee met with Kyle and Scott from TAG regarding the budget for next year, which is pretty tight. The budget calls for an ending Fund Balance of about 4% as of right now, which is right on the line but well within the normal range for a beginning charter school. The goal will be to come in at about 20% in the coming years. On the revenue side, the budget is built around 192 ADM, which is conservative. We had a slight bump from the state (2%) and we assumed \$12,000 from fundraising, which may also be conservative based on past experience. Ideas are being generated that will be an important part of our finance moving into next year. On the expense side, saving money on transportation is a very important piece for us. We do have a couple of other places we can look at for cuts including health benefits for teachers, although teachers are interested in a better benefits package, and we do want to look at that. First grade staffing would be hard to scale back on as well, and we could trim back janitorial by asking for volunteers to help in this area. Hiring a Custodian rather than a service could save money (estimated \$16). As posted, the position would have the person come in part way through the day at 2:00 and stay until 6:00 when it is still daylight. The Board needs to adopt the budget next meeting.
- 5.2.2 Personnel Committee Report: Members White, Mills and Dochniak have met a few times to review evaluations from all of the staff. The intentions were to see how the staff worked as a team to accomplish the mission and vision of the school. Contracts were extended to all of the teaching staff. Going forward, we will be working with them to help them become more effective team members. The process had its share of difficulties, including finding ways to have staff observe each other. Next year's plan will incorporate ways to make this happen.

## 5.3 PTO report

- 5.3.1 The Color Run is May 18 on the school campus. Funds raised will go toward the playground. A child who gets \$30 in donations gets a tshirt and Color Run packet.

## 6.0 Old Business

- 6.1 Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors will be held May 19 at 8:30 at River Grove. Board elections will take place that day. We will be adding two new members to our Board. A note was sent via email and there was an announcement in the Country Messenger. Those interested need to submit a statement by April 30, 2018. Voting will happen by mail return ballot or in person May 19. Ballots will be mailed to all parents and guardians



and staff by May 5. Currently we are filling two unoccupied Board positions thereby adding two new positions to the board since all six want to remain. Current Board members are still considered Founding members until successors are elected but must step down or be elected as an operational Board member by the end of the third academic year. Those that are interested in serving shall provide a written statement of their qualifications to share with eligible voters. Within the statement, those interested are asked to state their reason for seeking a board position, any specific skills that will benefit the board and general statements about themselves. Statements shall be limited to 300 words. Submit the nominations to [info@marineareaschool.org](mailto:info@marineareaschool.org) by April 30, 2018. Ballots with information about the candidates will be distributed the first week in May. The school community will be asked to vote at the annual meeting May 19, 2018. Eligible voters include parents and guardians of students attending River Grove, employees at River Grove and current Board members. The two seats elected will serve a three year term starting July 1, 2018.

## **7.0 New Business**

- 7.1 Marine Mills Folk School: Kathy Marker (community member) and Emily Anderson (RG parent) shared on behalf of originator Robin Brooksbank the idea for the folk school, which came from a research project. A board consisting of community members has been established and has applied for non-profit status. The concept has been presented at May Township to acquire CUP and they were excited about it, and there was an article in the paper about it. The goal is to have the program up and running in the fall, including partnership with River Grove to use Wilder Forest. The program would run nights and weekends during the school year and during the summer months and breaks. The size of the program would have two classes going at a time at the onset of the program (10 to 15 students per class). Other programs would include artists talks and seminars. There is a program in Grand Marais that stemmed from the Great Idea contest resulting in bringing back traditional based skills and the idea of slowing down, creating community and making things. The teachers at RG support the idea and are willing to explore collaboration. Suggested meeting with the staff this Summer. Caution that we respect the local programming at Warner and William O'Brien. Program will be funded by donations and tuition, which may impact River Grove community donations. Community Meeting end of May will be announced in Messenger.
- 7.2 Kindness Project: Joan Steffen and Joe VandeVeer have been compiling responses to the question, "What is kindness?" and visited River Grove First grade to film the responses. We can use the video for marketing purposes once the video is edited.

## **8.0 Authorizer Comments**

- 8.1 Not present

## **9.0 Next Board of Directors Meeting: May 19, 2018 at River Grove Commons 8:30 AM**

- 10.0 Adjournment:** 9:15 AM Move to adjourn Dettman with the request to add Budget as a priority item on the May 19 agenda, Second Henschen.