

**Marine Area Community School
Board of Directors Meeting
August 18 , 2018 – 8:30 AM
River Grove Commons**

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

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. Call to Order 8:30 a.m.

- 1.1. Roll Call: Jon Dettmann, Jessica Hansen, Dan Miller, Glen Mills, Kristina Smitten (via phone), Lisa White
Not Present: Jackie Henschen, Lisa Dochniak

2. Approve Agenda

- 2.1. Chair Elect Miller requested addition of discussion regarding structure and governance be added to today's agenda under new business.

3. Approve Minutes of May and June 16, 2018 Board Meeting and Revised Agenda

- 3.1. Motion to approve the agenda by Chair Elect Miller. Approved unanimously.
3.2. Chair White will record July minutes from the meeting with the teaching staff. The teacher presentation was not recorded, but a teacher outline will be included.

4. Community Comment

- 4.1. Krista Thomas, RG parent, presented the possibility of raising ongoing funds through the Scrip Program. She is willing to help with implementation. Families have the option of buying gift cards online or as a hard copy. The school buys cards at a discount and families buy them back at full price. A percent goes back to the school. A SCRIP app connects to a bank account and can be scanned upon purchase. Most larger retailers participate. A coordinator would be needed to provide education, monitor funds and release hard copies of gift cards. There were questions about whether or not the coordinator would need to be a school employee. Director White recommended connecting with Administrator Goodson. Chair Elect Miller suggested discussing this program as one of the fundraising options used by a future development committee.
- 4.2. Robin Brooksbank, community member, announced approval of the Marine Mills Folk School by the May township board in July to meet at River Grove. They are hoping to open on Oct. 6. They are planning to be at our back-to-school night. They are working on their fundraising. In the long term, they are open to pursuing grants in order to partner artists and historians with River Grove teachers as they are developing curriculum. They hope to be present at board meetings. Saturday classes will be meeting in the upstairs and downstairs of the Commons Building. Upcoming classes include seasonal preserving, a cookbook author and leather making.

5. Reports and Discussion

- 5.1. Administrator's Report: Drew Goodson
5.1.1. Enrollment: We currently have 195 signed enrollments with 3 in process, which is healthy given our goal of around 200, so that we have 192 by the end of the year. Marketing is ongoing. We are giving weekly tours and have an open house on Aug. 23rd. We have a presence at Summer Tuesdays as well as Facebook promotions and yard signage.

- 5.1.2. Transportation: The buses have arrived. Thank you to Chair Elect Miller, Glen Mills, Jim Maher and the Capra family. Routes and drivers are being finalized.
- 5.1.3.
- 5.1.4. Food Service: We hope to increase participation in the lunch program by providing our own menu. We have been consulting with Merry Domke, community member, at the Marine General Store Deli and will be using Cisco Foods. We will no longer participate in the National School Lunch Program. Although we will no longer be a part of the Free and Reduced Lunch Program, we will continue to have our small number of students apply for assistance. We will increase the lunch price by 30-40 cents to cover this cost, as well as increased ingredient cost. We are waiting on final numbers.
- 5.1.5. Facilities: We have added a new playground and a nature-scape donated by ArtSpoke. The Capra family, RG parents, as well as Scott DeMars, community member, and a group of volunteers have worked very hard this summer on assembly. We need additional volunteers to complete the playground installation. We will be using the Homestead Building for our 5th grade classroom. We have community cleanup today. Sean Samec, community member, donated window washing.
- 5.1.6. Community Connections: We will continue our partnership with the Zephyr Theater. We will be adding concerts and dance. Administrator Goodson and teachers met with the Minnesota Food Association Farm and are planning a fall harvest day as well as a school garden partnership. We will continue working with Warner Nature Center and will be adding a partnership with the St. Croix River Association and their Rivers Are Alive Program.
- 5.1.7. We will be introducing an activity fee/volunteer hours for families. This has the support of the PTO. The activity fee will allow important savings in the operational budget.
- 5.1.8. Staffing: We have added Libby Bingham as a kindergarten teacher, Mandy Lindemann as a 3rd grade teacher, Janel Koenig as a 5th grade teacher and Robin Walcheski as a special education teacher. Ron Gebrud is our new transportation coordinator. There are accepted offers out to 4 new bus drivers. We have hired one general ed. para and one special ed. para. The general education para may also be doing some custodial work. We are seeking a FT janitor, 2 general ed. paras, recess/lunch aides, 1 special ed. para, a pt receptionist as well as substitute paras and teachers.
- 5.1.9. *Administrator Goodson* brought forward a teacher contract presented to him two days prior to the meeting from Ex Officio Smitten regarding the founding documents, requiring staff signatures. He requested further clarification of the purpose for the document. He highlighted terms like “utilize in day to day decision making,” and “required,” as they relate to job performance. He felt that this should be in coordination with staff evaluation in assessing adherence to the founding documents and wanted clarification on how to communicate and use this document in a meaningful way with staff. He requested that there be time set aside for staff understanding and definition of the terminology used in this document.

Chair White explained that they'd like the staff to sign a contract recognizing they have read and understood the CSP grant, the contract with the MN Guild and the MN Statutes concerning charter schools. She said that there are sections that are more open ended and not prescriptive and would like to see where teachers have questions. She would like to present the documents to the staff during inservice.

Ex Officio Smitten stated that as a board, we are accountable for fulfilling the obligations within the founding documents. There wasn't the time to focus on these as a staff last

year when decision making. We should be documenting our alignment with these documents and she is concerned that the team may do things without incorporating the original founding intentions into decision making and when looking at roles and responsibilities, or when presenting to the board. There are specific requirements and accountability goals. They are not prescriptive but set the foundation for the reason the school exists. The Dept. of Ed. approved this foundation. There is a lot of redundancy and not cumbersome. We need to know what we are responsible for. As we look at potentially going into Marine Elementary, we need 2 years of information that demonstrates to MDE that we have met our obligations. It will be easier if we show how our decisions align with the founding documents. The contract is an extra push of encouragement to reflect on those documents and is requesting that all staff and board sign.

Director Dettmann stated that the staff is being asked to read, understand and utilize the founding documents. He said that the document requesting staff signatures isn't a contract. He said that if after reviewing the founding documents, there is concern about not being able to utilize portions of the documents, then it needs to be brought to the board. This is not optional, staff has to use the documents, whether or not the teachers sign it. He felt that the wording of the document for signing should remain the same.

Director Miller was concerned about the contract piece and expectations regarding the wording and what the ramifications are if the signed document is not followed. He asked for the board and teachers having time to review and bring forth questions. He wants to make sure staff is utilizing the documents, with time for staff and the board to read, discussion, meet and understand what is being asked of all of us.

Director Hansen has looked over the founding documents and said that they are extensive, with hundreds of pages, and are very specific regarding curriculum, roles of teachers and the board. There are many gray areas that merit further discussion with staff and board. The document put forward for staff signatures says that "the board of directors will require" alignment. It is important for all board members to be aware of the contract and participate a discussion. There is still a lot of confusion about roles and responsibilities of board and staff, given the differing definitions on our website and different definitions within the documents. There are areas outlined, such as budgeting and termination of staff, that have not been followed. She said that this is a good conversation in continuation of the our last board meeting with teachers. She is willing to help create a plan of action to distill the volume of information in the documents with a goal of creating clear roles and expectations as well as job descriptions.

5.2. Board Member Reports

- 5.2.1. Director White thanked the transportation committee for the buses, Administrator Goodson for the lunch program and the staff, community and board members for time spent on the hiring committee.
- 5.2.2. Financial Report: Director Dettmann reported that the fiscal year 2018 audit will take place this fall and is not expecting any surprises. We have \$122,000 out on our line of credit and will pay this back when we get the state holdback funds that include 3 payments of \$50,000-\$60,000 in Aug., Sept. and Oct. We will need to pay this one year loan back to the bank by Nov. 1. We will talk to them in October about continuation of this loan. We will be revising the budget. Our first finance committee meeting before the next board meeting.

6. Old Business- none

7. New Business

7.1. Board Elections: Welcome to our 2 new board members, Dan Miller and Jessica Hansen. There was an email discussion and conversations about with Ex Officio Smitten about board roles. One board member expressed interested and was nominate for each position. Director Hansen was appointed as Board Secretary, Director Dettmann was appointed as Board Treasurer, Director Miller was appointed as Board Chair-Elect and Chair-Elect White was appointed as Board Chair. Voting was unanimous.

Chair White stated that there was no discussion or vote needed for the Ex officio role.

Chair-Elect Miller suggested that the PTO chair to be added as an advisor to the board, in a non-voting role, to increase community involvement. Katie Seitz, PTO President, would like to partner closely with the board and will discuss this at the next board meeting.

7.2. Board Calendar: Chair-Elect Miller suggested that we move the board meetings from Saturday mornings to the second Tuesday of the month at 6 pm for more community and teacher access, as well as coordinating with the PTO meeting times. We need a structure for more involvement, greater openness and wider conversations for the long-term viability of our school. We are also transitioning away from the founding board, with Ex Officio Smitten moving to non-voting status and additional founding board members ending their terms in the coming months. Administrator Goodson and Chair-Elect Miller will look at using Google Hangout for directors who are out of town. Krista Thomas, community member, also voiced concern about Saturday mornings and suggested meetings after school. Katie Seitz, PTO President, suggested a different room for more comfortable meetings. We will look into using the Meeting Hall.

7.3. Committees: Director Dettmann suggested the establishment of governance and personnel, finance and nominating committees, with each director taking part, so that each can make a report at the board meetings. He would like a structure in place by the next board meeting. He would also like involvement of staff and community members on committees. Chair-Elect Miller would like to clarify board expectations and move away from board involvement in day to day operations and management of staff, especially when it comes to the role of Board Chair and Chair-Elect. He would like more structure in place for the staff and general oversight, as well as transparency and ease of transitions on the board. He provided a document from MDE regarding school board operating protocol that could be used with staff. It could set a standard for a board and staff process, patterns of communication and chain of command. Director Hansen agreed with this suggestion, as it addresses the requests by staff at our last meeting for a process when interacting with the board. Ex Officio Smitten suggested that Tom Degree facilitate a board conversation about our operations and processes. This could count as a required board training. She would like board members to let her or Chair White know what committee they are interested in. Chair White suggested governance, finance, personnel and nominating committee. Ex Officio Smitten suggested an academic excellence and development committee. She is willing to put committees in place and share ideas for tasks of committees, but will not be a part of any committees. She can support this process through the end of the year. Director Hansen asked a question about the need for minutes on committees, and details regarding responsibilities in our bylaws. Chair-Elect Miller suggested we communicate about what we are interested in heading up and then build a committee with other board and community members.

8. Authorizer Comments- none

9. Next Board of Directors Meeting: Tentative - Monday, September 10, 2018 at 6:00 PM (amended)

10. Adjournment