

Marine Area Community School
Board of Directors Meeting
December 18 , 2018 – 5:30 PM
River Grove Clearing

BOARD MEETING MINUTES- DRAFT

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

1.1. **Roll Call:** Lisa White, Dan Miller, Jessica Hansen, Glen Mills and Jackie Henschen. Ex Officio Kristina Smitten. Jon Dettmann called in by phone. Lisa Dochniak arrived late. Absent: Ex Officio Kate Seitz.

2. Approve Agenda

Move the audit report (Item 5.2.1.1) to the beginning of the meeting. Motion to approve (Miller) seconded (Mills). Unanimously approved.

3. Approve Nov. 12, 2018 Board Meeting Minutes

Item 5.2.1 was amended by adding the words, “was achievable” to the last sentence. “The board felt as though the 10% requirement was achievable and gives the school more flexibility in growth planning.” Motion to approve minutes as amended. (Henschen) seconded (Miller). Unanimously approved.

Going forward, Secretary Hansen will cite meeting materials, when applicable, instead of directly incorporating them into the minutes.

4. Community Comment

4.1. **Citizen Comments** (none)

4.2. **PTO** (Kate Seitz report read)

They held a winter clothing drive on Dec. 1 and will donate the remaining items to the school. There will likely be another drive in the spring.

A possible pancake fundraiser at Sal’s will be set up for for the incoming 6th graders to raise funds for Camp Widji. They are looking for someone to lead this effort.

They are developing communication effort for families about the PTO, fundraising, volunteerism, etc... Kate will connect with Drew and Ele about a plan.

They hope to increase volunteers by setting aside \$500 for 23 background checks. More sponsorship will be provided, if needed.

The PTO will be meeting the first Monday of month going forward. The next meeting time is Mon., Jan 7 at 5:30 pm.

- 4.3. **Marine Mills Folk School** (not present, report by Lisa White)
Representatives will be at the meeting in Jan. They won't use campus this winter due to lack of snow removal on the roads on weekends. They will use our facilities again in the spring. They will be discussing collaboration with teachers on projects.

Admin. Goodson reported that they are doing a good job of use and compliance reporting for May Township.

5. **Reports and Discussion**

5.1. **Administrator's Report** (meeting materials)

Additional Comment: We have 2 new RG road signs to be installed. This community project was coordinated by Victor Guzman. The signs were donated by Tom Wirth and *Cindy Ferg?* Recognition also goes to Hayden Barbaris and Mark Miller who supported the project.

Mike Ptacek, a District 834 board member, reported that Jack Riley, a RG 4th grader, made a recent presentation to District 834's breakfast with legislators suggesting connections and partnerships between our schools.

5.2. **Committee Reports**

5.2.1. **Budget and Finance (Dettmann)**

We paid off the line of credit for last year and have a line of credit open for next year of \$140K. We now have a school credit card. We will receive \$38K in state aid, from the prior year, between now and June. The CSP grant will now submitting on monthly basis instead of quarterly, helping with cash flow. The grant expires at end of Feb., unless extended. It normally is. Working budget is using 180 ADM, which is a conservative view of revenue. He would like to adopt a budget in Feb.

Kyle Knudson (TAG) gave details about food service finances. He thinks our estimates for expenditures are most likely elevated, but he will look at data with Admin. Goodson to see how close it is to reality. There was \$3,800 that has not been collected from families. Letters will be sent out to encourage collection. Admin. Goodson will collect data to see if our lunch price increase to cover the cost of free-reduced meals is where it should be.

5.2.1.1.1. **Audit** (meeting materials)

Lucas Chase, from Clifton Larson Allen, provided an overview of the audit. He highlighted compliance areas, with Director Dettmann and Admin. Goodson responding to areas needing attention. The finance committee previously walked through this information. The audit found 1 invoice paid after 35 days of receipt, which is common for charter schools. Chase suggested getting 2 or 3 people involved in the receipt process. There were 2 receipts that were prepared and deposited by the same person. We have since implemented a segregation of duties for taking invoices, filling out deposit reports and making deposits. Chase highlight enrollment of 160 ADM. General Fund balance was

about 3.5% of expenditures. He suggested eventually adopting a fund balance policy to get to 20-25%. The board passed a fund balance policy at the last meeting.

Our final budget and actual budget was only 2.5% apart. We were close to the ideal of 1-2%.

Our food service fund was subsidized by the general fund by \$11K.

This difference was addressed in 5.2.1.

5.2.2. **Governance (Mills)**

Chair White is meeting with Ele Anderson to work out issues with the website, to allow for committee sign-ups.

Ex Officio Smitten reported that she and Director Mills met to discuss elections and a process for bringing actions forward. They are consulting with Great River School and will provide a draft. Chair Elect Miller provided a document at an earlier meeting outlining board protocol. This will be shared with the governance committee.

5.2.3. **Academic Excellence (Henschen)**

A few classroom highlights: The 5th grade is making simple machines, studying Native Americans and exploring Newton's Law through experiments. Our student advisory council facilitated the collection of 320 lbs. of food for Valley Outreach. The 6th grade learned outdoor survival skills at Warner Nature Center. First grade will be building a chicken coop in January. Kindergarteners created blankets with their 6th grade buddies to donate to Valley Outreach as a part of their emphasis on generosity and community service.

5.2.4. **Facilities (Miller)**

Chair Elect Miller, Chair White and Administrator Goodson met with our authorizer regarding our campus and the discussion surrounding a future split campus of upper and lower grades, with Marine Elementary as an additional school site. They found that this option is off the table before 2021 or 2022, given the needed 3 years of audited financial data and 2 years of academic data, prior to MDE's consideration of a legal school expansion. 51% of instruction must be provided at a main site and only one site can receive lease aid. They are focusing on the financial viability of our options as a guiding factor when considering our school site.

One option is to purchase the Wilder property. The finance committee has obtained a purchase price for the campus. Wilder is very interested in selling to us, since conservation groups aren't able to buy the buildings. The finance committee is exploring maintenance and possible future building costs, given our growing enrollment.

Another option would be to move the entire school to Marine Elementary. However, we are in year 2 of a 5 year lease. Miller also feels that there would be significant parent push-back on this option. Would current families follow us to Marine Elementary? We would also need guaranteed funding for expansion at Marine Elementary, since we have already outgrown that site.

Miller would like to find a way to utilize the Marine Elementary building, in cooperation with the city. We have the option of exploring the addition of grades 7-8 at Marine Elementary. He feels that most families would like to stay at Wilder and expand to a Jr. High.

The next steps are a meeting with MDE, continued gathering of data and community conversations, possibly in January. As a parent rep, Miller feels it is important for parents to know that a decision has not been made and that we need to listen to what our parent community wants.

Smitten feels there might be pushback if we don't move to Marine Elementary. She feels we need to look at our options for near term and long term financial sustainability. She would also like an analysis of the delivery of our learning program.

Director Mills wants to consider ways of expediting the timeline, including legislative options.

Director Dettmann is concerned about our lifespan at Wilder. He feels that purchasing this facility is not desirable. He wants further analysis of our options.

Admin. Goodson noted that this discussion is a top concern for families. New enrollees and touring families ask about this topic and he feels we need a clear timeline. We have open houses on Jan. 8 and 12. He also suggested a parent survey. Chair White felt a survey would be premature. She wants parents to give a fully informed response.

Director Dochniak wants to talk about what the vision was for the school in Marine. It was different. What can it look like there? She feels we need a workshop to look at instruction, finances, etc.. Chair White will send out a poll for a workshop.

5.2.5. **Operations (Miller)**

Chair Elect Miller will be meeting with Eugene Piccolo, MACS Executive Director, to discuss board structure and operations.

5.2.6. **Personnel (White):** none

6. **Old Business**

6.1. **Marine Elementary School Facility** (see Facilities discussion: 5.2.4)

7. **New Business**

7.1. **2017-2018 Annual Report and World's Best Workforce** (meeting materials)- This was submitted to MDE.

7.2. **Special Education Procurement Policy: Admin. Goodson** (meeting materials)
Indigo has a new Special Ed. Director who spent time looking at our programming and procedures this fall. She suggested using a reimbursable service to look at our policies, since special ed. reporting is being monitored with increasing strictness. She prefer that we have this specific policy for special ed., since she knows this policy is acceptable to MDE.

An additional paragraph about fraud is a necessity. Also, there is an addition of specific powers to enter into contracts. The Executive Director would have the authority to legally bind contracts, up to \$25K, as is typical to expedite contracted services. There were questions about how this fits with the policy we have currently and whether we can add it to our existing policy (Dettmann). This topic will be tabled for the next meeting, to be looked at by the Operations Committee.

8. **Authorizer Comments:** none
9. **Next Board of Directors Meeting:** Jan. 15, 2019 at 6:30PM in River Grove Clearing
10. **Adjournment** Motion to approve (Henschen) seconded (Hansen). Unanimously approved.