

Marine Area Community School
Board of Directors Meeting
October 8 , 2018 – 6:30 PM
River Grove Commons

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

1.1 Roll Call: Lisa White, Dan Miller, Jackie Henschen, Lisa Dochniak, Jon Dettmann, Jessica Hansen, Glen Mills

1.2 Ex Officio Board Members: Kristina Smitten as former Board Chair, Kate Seitz as PTO President

2.0 Approve Agenda

Motion to approve (Henschen) seconded (Mills). Chair White amended the agenda, removing operating protocol discussion, accountability and operation reports will be combined, move budget & finance report to beginning of meeting. Unanimously approved.

3.0 Approve Minutes of Sept 10, 2018 Board Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve (Henschen) seconded (Hansen). Director Mills indicated that absent members should be noted on minutes. Unanimously approved.

4.0 Committee Report for Budget and Finance

Director Dettmann: Waiting on some expense information for September reports, but budget should be on track. The CSP annual report has been submitted and approved, releasing final CSP payment. The revised budget is still in process, targeting to have a draft available for the board at the November meeting. The audit has been going smoothly and report will be available for November board meeting. Mr. Knuteson agreed that a revised draft budget should be available by November.

5.0 Community Comment

5.1 Citizen Comments

No comments

5.2 PTO

Ex Officio Seitz: Withrow Ballroom fall fundraiser was a great success, raising about \$14,000 after expenses. The PTO recently made a \$10,000 payment to River Grove per a request from Administrator Goodson. These funds have supported band and orchestra, artist in residence and BBQ. She noted the upcoming Sportsman's Dinner fundraiser at Sals. The PTO is also funding bullying prevention performances from CLIMB theater, as well as working on communicating the availability of music scholarship funds to River Grove families.

5.3 Marine Mills Folk School

Robin Brooksbank: The Folk School opened in October with great success - 49 students in 5 classes. They have a few upcoming classes aimed to further engage the River Grove student and family community. They are grateful for the partnership with River Grove and looking forward to seeing it grow and strengthen.

6.0 Reports and Discussion

6.1 Administrator's Report

- River Grove currently has 184 students, 4 students lower than projections. Will look at budget implications and work out scenarios and possible cuts or spending holds.
- Working to create a marketing team involving parent expertise to recruitment efforts.
- Transportation -90% done with routes. Close to reaching goal for under 70 minutes per route. GPS tracking coming soon. There are far less issues than last year.
- Lunch annual inspection passed. There is an increase in lunch takers, with additional ala carte.
- A new janitor hired and beginning in October.
- Harvest Day was postponed due to weather but working on some other community service opportunities
- St. Croix River Association - classes are taking field trips with this organization.
- Uptick in volunteers since request for \$100 or 10 volunteer hours went out to the parents. We are still looking for more help during lunch and recess.
- Still need sub teachers and paras, but waiting on any new hires until budget reworking.
- Developing coaching activity schedule among the teaching staff. Working on curriculum mapping, teacher feedback and evaluation tools, as well as parent communication on student classroom work.
- All teachers will be CPR certified during MEA break.
- MCA scores from last year will be discussed during MEA break as well.
- NWEA testing will be done school wide 3 times a year to help identify and target areas of intervention need for students within reading and math instruction.
- 6th grade 1 week retreat to Camp Widjiwagen was a success.
- Safety Day at River Grove was a success with police and fire representatives on campus.

6.2 Committee Member Recruitment

Creating a committee page for engaging the community in committee opportunities. Each committee will have an explanation page, with an inquiry link if that committee is looking for additional community members. Goal is to tap the community expertise and involve them on these committees. Various committees will have different schedules and frequencies, depending on the role of the committee.

6.3 Committee Reports

6.3.1 Personnel Committee

Director Hansen: This would be an ad hoc committee. Member Hansen and Member Dochniak prepared a proposal for the committee goals and structure.

Chair White shared a recommendation that if a staff member wants to bring an issue before this committee, any staff members on the committee will abstain from engaging in this issue.

Director Miller: This committee would not solely be responsible for evaluating the administrator, but rather all committees would contribute evaluation based on their areas of engagement with the administrator.

Director Smitten: Noting that some of the proposed roles may be inter-staff committee responsibilities vs board responsibilities.

Director Hansen: Agreed, primary objective for the committee is to make sure these personnel issues are addressed, whether via direct board involvement or at the staff level.

Discussion about committee structure and chair, identifying potential conflicts of interest should a current teacher chair this committee. It was decided that a teacher on staff should always be present on this committee, but not be its chair. Additional discussion about potential issues with a committee of 4 board members being a quorum, and the implications for public notice, minutes and potential voting.

Directors agreed that the committee should be created, and after that should continue to refine its role and procedures.

Director Miller: motion to accept the personnel committee outline as written by members Hansen and Dochniak, with amendment that the board chair will also permanently chair this committee unless the board chair is an employee of River Grove. Seconded by Director Henschen. Unanimously approved.

6.3.2 Academic Excellence

- Sheriff's office and Fire Dept visits in October
- 2 classrooms are inviting weekly guest readers from the community
- 1 class raised funds to purchase refreshments for an upcoming community event where members of the community will be interviewed and celebrated.
- 5th grade constructed pumpkin catapults and will make scientific measurements while using these devices.

6.3.3 Facilities/Accountability/Operations

Transportation planning is nearing its final state, being reviewed by some experts in this field. After the internal review is complete, the final plan will be reviewed with drivers and a community review night will also be held prior to implementation.

7.0 New Business

7.1 Marine School Building Resolution

Chair White: explanation of the proposed resolution - the original intent of the founding board to use the Marine school building, and the request by the City of Marine for the River Grove board to formally indicate its intent to occupy the building at some point. Chair White also expressed a desire to incorporate the feedback and perspectives of the board and community during discussion.

Director Miller: Agreed with the heart of the resolution to explore the possibilities afforded by the Marine building, but feels we need to involve the entire River Grove community more thoroughly, as well as conduct a thorough financial analysis, before any concrete decisions or commitments are made.

Robin Brooksbank (community member): The resolution is written with the understanding that if the population of River Grove outgrows the Wilder campus, that Marine Elementary would be considered as the primary expansion campus.

Director Mills: Marine will purchase the building regardless River Grove's commitment, but would prefer to have River Grove as the occupant if possible.

Discussion ensued about the bonding process for purchase of the Marine school, what revenue stream may be expected by the bond-holders, and that at this time there is no intent to tie River Grove into any commitment regarding these bonds.

Director Miller: Has heard concern about the Marine centric language in the resolution, expressed again the desire for extensive community input and wondering about the necessity of this resolution.

Director Smitten: The founding documents of the school and its learning program were written with the Marine school and its environment in mind, and the basic tenets of those documents as well as the expectations of the MDE have not changed.

Chair White: This resolution was targeted to the citizens of Marine and their decision to purchase the building, it was not meant to exclude others, but rather solely address concerns of Marine citizens.

Director Miller: Expressed his opinion that a split campus is not currently viable, nor would it be for the foreseeable future. Wilder has expressed interest in selling the current campus to River Grove at some point. While he does envision a future where River Grove uses the Marine building in some capacity, he believes all options must be thoroughly explored before any decisions are made.

Scott Spisak (community member): Encouraged the school to pass the resolution to further reaffirm its interest in keeping the Marine school as an option, and interest in using that space for future expansion.

Director Dettmann: This resolution is just beginning the process, informing the community that there is interest in the potential of the Marine building, and being transparent with the community in publicly indicating this interest. Messaging is also important - making sure the community understands what this is, and what it isn't.

Director Seitz: Wondering about the Wilder portions of the resolution, unsure which of the statements are factual. Can these be addressed by Wilder representatives? The resolution language also feels like it comes from Marine and not from the board. Can it be tweaked so that it feels more like the board's voice?

Director Smitten: Affirming the need for the River Grove's community's voice to be heard in how the learning program works. Also feels it is imperative that students be at the Marine school eventually to fulfill the learning program objectives and goals set out in the founding documents. The Wilder buildings require significant work, and the campus has size constraints that would need to be carefully considered by River Grove before any decision to stay long term or possibly purchase the property. Wilder is not currently investing in the buildings, and wanted lease terms that required very little maintenance obligation. While the setting is beautiful, the significant challenges of the property also need to be acknowledged and considered.

Discussion ensued considering the language of the resolution, what portions reflect the current position of the board vs that of Marine citizens, what portions provide important context and should be retained for background purposes, and whether certain portions should be removed. The amount of time required for public review of the resolution before board passage was also discussed.

7.1.1 Citizen Comments

7.1.1.1 *Angie Hong:* Really appreciated the clarification offered by the board discussion around the context of the resolution. She expressed her desire to see the entire River Grove community involved with an equal voice in charting the future course of the school. She understands now the intent of the document and its focus toward the Marine community.

7.1.1.2 *Kris Capra:* Reiterated appreciation for the clarity brought by the evening's discussion, and thanked the community members who have worked so long on bringing about the school. Wondering why Wilder is not investing in the property, and asked the board to be mindful of the optics of their characterization of Wilder's intent in this regard. Expressed some concern about the Marine-centric tone of the resolution, and asked the board to consider the significant impact the current location and environment may have on attendance at River Grove. Glad the school has options, but believes a great deal of conversation must come before any decisions.

7.1.1.3 *Charlie Anderson (parent, resident of Marine):* 2 points:
1. Believes Marine needs, rather than wants, a school in its community to remain vibrant. Noted that the town overwhelmingly supports the school and desires a strong long-term partnership, and believes this resolution will reinforce that relationship.
2. Understands that the current setting is a big draw, and asks that future conversations concerning the Marine property include recognition of its proximity to many outdoor and natural resources. Expressed his belief that a move to Marine would include significant continuity in outdoor assets and programming.

7.1.1.4 *Brad Welp (parent, resident of Marine):* Generally favors the resolution. Believes the town of Marine would be a lifelong partner for River Grove, and a reliable long-term supporter, whereas Wilder is merely a

landlord, not a partner. Believes this should not be overlooked.

7.2 Marine School Building Resolution Part II [Continued after Citizen Comments]

Continued discussion regarding public notice of the resolution prior to board action. Consensus was eventually reached that for a resolution of this type, immediate board action would not be an issue. During discussion, the resolution was altered to remove the split campus language, remove some of the language concerning the Wilder facilities, and include language to emphasize and acknowledge the larger community involvement in River Grove. Additional wording proposed by Director Dettman: *Whereas the Marine Area Community School recognizes and values the input and contribution of all members of the school community.*

At this time Chair White asked for a motion to approve the resolution as amended. Director Mills made the motion, Director Dettmann seconded.

Members then discussed next steps, including the need to further research all options with Wilder as well as Marine. Members also discussed the need to clearly communicate this process to the school community, setting a timeline with points for community and staff engagement, while working on both the learning program and long term facilities options and their associated financial obligations.

After this discussion, the motion to approve the amended resolution carried unanimously.

8.0 Next Board of Directors Meeting: November 12, 2018 at 6:30pm in River Grove Clearing

9.0 Meeting Adjourned