

MINUTES

Monocacy Montessori Communities, Incorporated (MMCI) Board of Trustees (BOT) Wednesday, July 29, 2020 @ 7:00 p.m., Virtual

BOT Members in Attendance: Travis Creamer, Nichole Dowlearn, Tara Dunsmore, Deb Knox-Teitel, Jeff Koehler, Jen Kuhn, Ellie Landru, Tori McCarthy (GC Chair), Carrie Jean Rathmell (CCM GC Chair), Kim Sexton, Shemica Sheppard, Rita Shewbridge, Molly Spence

1. Call To Order *Molly Spence called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.*

2. Discussion: MVM BOT Parent Trustee Position

BOT MVM Parent Trustee Don Townsend stepped down as of July 14, 2020. The open position was posted to the MVM community and two applicants were received: Rita Shewbridge and Kathleen Lutrell. Jen Kuhn explained the process to fill the position. Rita explained her interest in filling the position and how Montessori could be most utilized in a virtual setting. Kathleen explained her role on the board and how she could help move the BOT forward, specifically with state advocacy.

[Closed Session, Topic: To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals]

Molly made a motion to approve Rita Shewbridge as the Parent Trustee for MVM to fill the open position through December 31, 2021. Kim Sexton seconded. All voted in favor. The BOT thanked Kathleen for her years of service and asked her to stay involved sharing her knowledge and helping with mentoring and focused projects. The BOT welcomed Rita and Rita then joined as a member for the remainder of the meeting.

3. Welcome

Molly welcomed the community.

4. Community Comments

- *Jen Shemer shared that with our building closed we have an opportunity to think outside the box and possibly save in some areas, for example, rent. Jen suggested that maybe 3s and 4s should not be included this year. This is an opportunity to think through some opportunities we may be able to find.*

- *Michael Beth Edwards mentioned that the expectations in the fall are different than the spring and she needs access to her materials in the classroom. They cannot be boxed up.*

5. Consent Agenda Items

- June BOT Minutes approved on 6/22/20: 5 aye, 4 abstain, 0 nay, 4 did not vote.

6. Reports

5 Mins – MMCI President Report *Molly Spence*

Molly has been working heavily on facilities.

5 Mins – CCM VP Report *Christopher Chandler*

No update

5 Mins – MVM VP Report *Ellie Landru*

No update

5 Mins – BOT Treasurer Report *Jeff Koehler*

Both schools are working on budgets. Email sent to the board in advance of the meeting.

[Advance reports are included at the end of minutes.]

7. Updates

CCM update *Carrie Jean Rathmell / Marilyn Horan*

Advance report sent to BOT. Carrie Jean said follow up was received to Maryland Excels accreditation. They are waiting for the process to restart. Marilyn shared teachers are working incredibly hard, some not taking a day off. The school improvement team has a meeting next week and they will be making materials and very structured lesson plans.

MVM update *Tori McCarthy/Amy Dorman*

Report emailed in advance.

Fundraising Committee *Tara Dunsmore*

Tara has been working with MVM about the annual fund and will reach out to CCM. Schools are determining how involved they will be in fundraising this year.

Grants Committee *Jeff Koehler*

No Update

Lottery Committee *Melissa Najera/David Henry*

Jen Kuhn shared an email update from Melissa Najera. The number of withdrawals and enrollments have been similar this July in comparison to last July. Ellie asked Marilyn how transfers are being handled. Marilyn said there is some delay in getting information from other schools because many places have no staff on site. Our schools are using notice of withdrawal written from parents to start the lottery process in open positions.

Facility update *Molly Spence*

A meeting was held this week and the group is working well together as a team for the best possible outcome for both schools. The committee is working with a realtor to pursue options on some potential properties. There are some exciting opportunities and if they become more

concrete they will be discussed. Our lawyer is in regular contact with the MVM landlord and is in the negotiation process. The process seems to be moving forward with a few things left to negotiate. The goal is to have a signed agreement in the next couple of weeks.

6. Discussion/Action Item

- **Discussion:** COVID-19 BOT response - discuss role of BOT and expectations (Molly)

Molly reviewed the vote at BOE today to maintain virtual through the first semester. The BOT needs to discuss its role and how it can support each school moving forward. If necessary the BOT can schedule additional work sessions. Tara shared that her first concern is budgetary impacts. Second, the BOT needs to look into how this will impact Clubhouse Kids as the contract holder for this program. Marilyn shared that Clubhouse Kids has been in the process of finding a more permanent location so that they can possibly provide an all day offering. Ellie shared that FCPS employees are trained to clean the building to health department standards. Molly Carlson asked if families will be given the opportunity to homeschool and still maintain a spot in the charter schools. Molly mentioned she is discussing with FCPS this and also an extension on the PPA deadline. Tara suggested a survey and that the BOT start discussions on various plans for reopening in January. Shemica discussed how some students do well and some do not with virtual and suggested options for Montessori at home kits. Marilyn shared teachers are already doing this - creating laminated boards, stamp games, beads. Parents will pick up kits. She asked parents to wait and see what teachers have put together. Marilyn assured while there is urgency, teachers will have a plan after the school improvement meeting. There will not be extensive supply lists but there will be some school supplies they will ask you to have at home, for example, you may be asked to have dry erase markers. Tara recommended communication to families sharing this information. Ellie discussed the perspective that some families are very concerned about switching from in person manipulatives to the online learning approach. Ellie explained the process for the BOT to change or deviate in any way from how FCPS recommends holding the first half of the school year. First, the BOT would need to vote to approve this option and then it would need to request a waiver to deviate from the legally mandated charter from the Board of Education and, if approved, it would need to go to the state level for approval, so while it is possible, it would be very complicated, use a significant amount of political capital to put forward a request of this nature, and still might not be successful. Deb KT shared that families are asking for class placements and for virtual orientations for new families and for students changing levels. Tara mentioned that part of the charter includes a 3 year old program so to not include this age the BOT would need to ask for a waiver to not include these students. Marilyn said this will look very different and we have no control but they will get exposure. Ellie mentioned that the BOT should discuss that some families may want to remain virtual for the remainder of the year. Tara discussed that a basic plan for each scenario is necessary if school will return in January. It will provide comfort to our community even if all answers aren't available. Rita discussed guidelines to be sent to families at home who may have interest in materials. Molly Spence asked the board how the BOT can best move forward to address these issues. Molly Carlson

said the GC needs to start the process and move items up to the BOT that they need support to address. Carrie Jean suggested the process start with principals and staff as they have been awaiting the BOE decision. They have been meeting regularly to come up with a plan. The principal should discuss with the GC their plan. This should then be presented to the BOT once we know the financial impacts, but this will not be until we know the curriculum impacts. Tara agreed with Carrie Jean but shared that MMCI has a legal responsibility for programs like Clubhouse Kids. Also, MMCI is the charter holder so ultimately what is being decided falls back on MMCI and their responsibility to uphold the charter. Marilyn shared that they will start holding parent meetings and other things to include families more. The program will be different than in the spring. Molly stressed that it is important that the board work together as a team and support each role. As the board it is necessary to look at how this all fits in the charter agreement and are there things that are necessary to ask for exceptions or additional funds needed.

Molly recommended that the BOT provide guidance to the GCs to determine their challenges and goals and then let the BOT know how they can support them or if there are areas where an exception from our charter is needed the BOT can address these with FCPS.

Molly asked the board to think for a day or two and come up with a list to send GCs and ask GCs to respond with their plan. Jen Kuhn will send a list of items identified during this meeting to the BOT as a starting point.

- **Discussion: FY21 Budget (Tara/Jeff)**
Conversation moved to next month. Molly asked to make sure the BOT is addressing changes in budget - MMCI will not be spending some money that normally is spent and there will be other areas MMCI will need to spend where it wasn't planned. The BOT needs to be aware of these impacts. Tara mentioned both schools have received considerable funding due to COVID-19 in order to purchase technology and other necessary things. Both schools are working on individual budgets and after these first drafts more will be known.
- **Discussion: Financial Policies Review (Tara/Jeff)**
Conversation moved to next month
- **Discussion: Annual Meeting electronic voting (Jen Kuhn)**
Jen Kuhn discussed the process for the annual meeting election and recommended MMCI proceed with an electronic only election this year. The method was smoothly implemented last year with a good voter response. Due to the virtual nature of the Fall this seems to be the best approach. The BOT agreed to support electronic only voting for the 2020 Annual Meeting and the nominating committee will make sure there is an option for populations that may be unable to access the online platform.
- **Discussion: Insurance coverage and different levels for each school (Ellie Landru)**
Kathleen started and will continue to be managing this process. Jeff shared that we are waiting to hear the split between the two schools due to variances in coverage. Tara shared that because the vote last month was more general and for auditing purposes once the board knows the exact numbers the board can evote to approve with exact numbers.

Molly asked the BOT members again for somebody to step up to support MMCI in the areas of advocacy especially at the state level and in working with other charter schools. Eddie Benites, MVM GC Secretary, shared that she has a background in advocacy and an interest in helping MMCI in this role.

Jen Kuhn thanked Carrie Jean Rathmell for stepping up as virtual meeting moderator to allow our virtual BOT meetings to be open to the public and flow smoothly.

Molly adjourned at 9:31 p.m.

Announcements:

1. Upcoming MMCI Business Meetings (held at 7PM the FINAL Wednesday of each month):
meetings will be virtual until further notice

- August 26
- September 30
- October 28

2. Minutes and Agendas may be found online at <http://mmcimd.org/calendar/>

Advance Reports Submitted to the Board of Trustees:

- CCM Update (Carrie Jean Rathmell/Marilyn Horan)
- MVM Update (Tori McCarthy)
- MVM Update (Amy Dorman)
- Treasurer Update (Jeff Koehler)

CCM Update

1. Facilities Search:

- New properties of interest this month
- Jefferson School
- 800 Oak St
- Working with Ken Breen & Touring Properties
- Sabillasville continues to be on the RADAR
- FYI the [excessed Dearbought & Alan Linton properties](#) are being used by Frederick County for affordable senior & workforce housing
- Participating in upcoming MMCI Facilities meeting

2. COVID Funds

- Big thanks to Marilyn for planning for CCM to utilize these funds, meeting the quick turn around deadlines, and coordinating with FCPS personnel to facilitate
- Here is a [folder with CCM COVID Grant documents](#).

3. Water Damage at Corporate Ct

- There was water damage in one of the primary classrooms earlier this summer and more recently in ceiling tiles in Marilyn's office.
- The cause was determined to be frozen AC units.

4. Building & Maintenance (Eric Riccio & Travis Creamer) & Marilyn Horan have both been in communication with the Landlord and the building manager about repairs which as of the time of the writing of this report have not been fully completed. Travis and/or Marilyn can give an update on the current status at the MMCI meeting.

5. 2020-2021 Budget

- Final numbers for [CCM PPA received from FCPS available in this folder](#).
- Looks like a 2% increase in the adjusted PPA.
- \$10,539.62 per student
- \$2,845,697 CCM total for 270 students
- Note the 17 Aug deadline for the detailed budget.
- Kate Chasse, Marilyn Horan, and Cathy Rossomondo have started working on budget.

6. Rent at Corporate Ct

- Landlord inquired about the rent payment due on July 1 per the CCM lease.
- Amy O'Connors responded that we are unable to make this payment yet because FCPS has not yet released the funds. Amy says this has been the case every year. We are never able to make our rent payment by July 1 because we never have our funds from FCPS at that time.

7. BOE Decision regarding Draft Reopening Plan

- CCM is awaiting the BOE decision regarding the FCPS Draft Reopening Plan so that work can move forward for prepping for the start of the school year.
- Deadline for submission of the FCPS plan to MSDE is August 14.
- Watching the BOE upcoming virtual meetings

Wednesday, July 29 3:00pm

Wednesday, August 5 time TBD

8. Charter Work Groups

- FCPS Meeting was cancelled last minute by Mark Pritts due to concerns of people not ready to meet in person yet. Mark requested that MMCI submit possible dates to Dan Lippy for rescheduling virtually. We have not received information about a new date yet.
- The ideal for CCM staff would be to have a plan in place to use from the start of the school year.

9. Former CCM Students now in High School accepted in FCC early admissions

- I (Marilyn) would like to share some exciting news with you. Two students from CCM have been accepted into FCC through the early admission program. There were 25 junior and senior high school students from across the county chosen. These two ladies will be juniors this year. I am also pleased with the reflection of their diversity - one student is Hispanic and one is black. Statistically, since we only had 12 students in that class, I think we did pretty well.

10. Reimbursing Staff Members who completed Montessori Training

- Worked with Amy O. to reimburse staff members who completed their Montessori Training following the terms of their training & reimbursement agreement. This included confirming reimbursement amounts following the policy for a staff member who registered for elementary I & II but chose to change program to only completing elementary I.

11. Maryland EXCELS Accreditation

- Received an email stating that CCM accreditation was about to expire and that we need to post new accreditation. This was somewhat confusing because we previously received information that site visits which are our next step in the accreditation process are on hold until further notice due to COVID. We are following up on this to make sure we aren't missing any steps that we should be taking now.

12. CCM Corporate Ct Zoning exception

- Sherry Quinones is handling this for CCM this year.
- She started the process and something (I don't remember the specific) is on hold due to COVID.

13. Parent Square Renewed for 2020-2021 School Year

- CCM renewed our contract with Parent Square as our school communication platform (which includes GC distribution) for the 2020-2021 school year

14. Staffing Vacancies

- Marilyn can provide an update on the current status of hiring to fill vacancies at the meeting.
- Upper elementary
- 1.0 counselor
- Instructional assistant(s)
- custodial

MVM Update (Tori McCarthy)

Updates and reminders on movement of MVM GC and Committees:

- The GC is collaborating virtually to update the Student Handbook for MVM. We have scheduled a vote on this document for our August 3rd meeting and are evaluating whether to table the vote until FCPS releases the final back to school plan to make sure the handbook appropriately reflects FCPS and BOT guidance for SY 20-21.
- Mary Romanic has stepped down as a MVMPCS GC Parent Representative. Multiple candidates have applied for the position and the GC is currently conducting interviews. A new Parent Representative will be voted in to complete the vacant term (through 12/21) during the August voting meeting.
- GC members have been working with the community to reimagine some of MVMPCS' back to school traditions for a virtual world. There have been some great ideas shared and I am encouraged by the creativity of our community.
- The GC is still actively seeking a chair for the Fundraising Committee and co-chairs for several additional committees.
- Annual budget work session will be held virtually on Monday July 27, 2020 to discuss the budget for SY 20-21.

Votes Completed:

- July 6, 2020, the GC approved additional funds for the 8th grade promotion ceremony.
- July 14, 2020, the GC approved the April 2020 meeting minutes via eVote.
- July 24, 2020, the GC approved the July 2020 meeting minutes via eVote.

Upcoming Worksessions and Meetings:

- July 27, 2020 @ 6pm, Budget Work Session
- August 3, 2020 @ 6:30 pm, Monthly GC Voting Meeting to be held virtually

MVM Update (Amy Dorman)

I. Staffing continues to be fluid as people accept offers at other schools. We currently have offers out for our special education teacher and custodian openings. We are continuing to conduct

interviews for additional open positions.

II. FCPS principal meetings have been rescheduled and will resume once the reopening plan has been determined at the end of this month (July 29th). At this point, however, we are focusing on a virtual opening. Included in this planning are:

- A. finalizing classroom placements
- B. scheduling a "resource room" for virtual student support
- C. planning for tutoring
- D. scheduling interventions and special education

III. ESSER/GEER Grants were updated to include an infusion of funds earmarked for Technology, Technology/Professional Learning, and Tutoring. Assuming requests are approved, teachers will each receive a laptop to use; more MVM students will have access to devices instead of just one per family; we will be able to offer tutoring support after hours to our students; and staff will receive training and support on progress monitoring software. Other materials ordered with COVID-19 Relief Funds include:

- A. Plexiglass shields and 2 plexiglass "rooms" to isolate sick children in the nurse's office
- B. Disinfectant sprayers (to sanitize Montessori materials)
- C. Tri-Kleen UV-Portable HEPA unit (nurse's office)
- D. Social-emotional wellness materials (including PATHS curriculum at all levels and special seating for community rooms)

E. Subscription to Montessori educational videos (includes resources for families and staff and lesson demonstrations for students)

IV. Enrollment is currently at 100%. MVM has experienced the typical turnover that is normally seen during this time.

Treasurer Report

- The FCPS PPA has been released. The adjusted PPA is \$10,539.62, which is a 2% increase over last year.
- Both schools are making good progress on the FY21 budgets. CCM had a budget planning meeting earlier this month, and MVM is having a meeting this Monday. The submission deadline to FCPS is 17 Aug, so we need a quick turnaround on the GC and BOT votes.
- Both CCM and MVM requested funds through FCPS for the CARES Act, and both schools submitted spendplans. MVM should receive \$49,875 and CCM \$52,867. These amounts are based on PPA numbers and need to be spent by 31 Oct 2020. Specific line items include: technology infrastructure/professional development; tutoring; and technology.