

MINUTES

Monocacy Montessori Communities, Incorporated (MMCI) Board of Trustees (BOT) Wednesday, September 30, 2020 @ 7:00 p.m.

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

1. Call To Order

2. Welcome

Molly Spence welcomed everybody for joining.

3. Community Comments

No community comments.

4. Consent Agenda Items

- *August BOT Minutes approved on 9/28/20: 6 aye, 1 abstain, 0 nay, 6 did not vote.*

5. Reports

MMCI President Report

Molly Spence

Molly met with leadership from both schools which included VP, GC Chair, Principal, and liaison Dan Lippy. These are usually held monthly and are currently held virtually. The group discussed COVID resources needed. Dan Lippy shared that both schools should be preparing a plan for the next several phases of the FCPS plan. FCPS is in Phase 1 which is all virtual. Phase 2 is hybrid with some grades involved. Both principals are working with staff to create what Phase 2 looks like for each school. Principals will present to their GC, which will vote on the plan. After that it will be brought to the BOT for approval and vote. The BOT will advocate if there is a need to change the proposed FCPS plan. The BOT will give principals and staff the space to use their expertise to create the initial plan to fulfill each charter and the plan for FCPS.

CCM VP Report

Christopher Chandler

The annual zoning exemption for CCM is in process. Historically this has been granted every year but must be requested.

MVM VP Report

Ellie Landru

Ellie is waiting on the last list from Kathleen to make sure all of the responsibilities that Kathleen covered are handled and Ellie is in the process of solidifying her role with the BOT.

BOT Treasurer Report

Jeff Koehler

One of the items that came up through the audit process is the need to our Conflict of Interest and Ethics policies, which were sent to the BOT. These will strengthen MMCI's non-profit questions and the statements that are needed for IRS paperwork. The BOT will read these and make comments.

6. Updates

CCM update

Carrie Jean Rathmell / Marilyn Horan

Carrie Jean - Report emailed to the BOT [Included at the end of the minutes.] Carrie Jean also shared that for the zoning exemption CCM is requesting for the exemption to be good for 5 years this time instead of one year. Interviews were held by staffing for the custodian and a candidate was selected. This position is still going through the HR process. Because CCM was able to successfully hire through FCPS, CCM will cancel the contract with All Clean. The Girl Scout troop that has used the school building previously has reached out to the GC to utilize space once CCM reopens. Guidance will likely come from FCPS regarding extracurricular and building use, but should be on the radar of the BOT. Molly asked Carrie Jean to verify the number of individuals involved in the program which will help guide the decision making.

Marilyn added that CCM has been completely full for student count for 2 weeks. There are 6-8 staff members in the building every day. CCM has conducted material distribution.

MVM update

Tori McCarthy/Amy Dorman

Tori - Report emailed to the BOT, no additions. [Included at the end of the minutes.]

Amy - Maryland EXCELS was extended to MVM for this school year. Materials distribution was smooth and Montessori materials were distributed. A second distribution will happen Oct. 16. Many parent volunteers are participating. Back to school night is scheduled for October 7th and there will be 4 sessions back to back. There will also be sessions for parent education, volunteering, and specials. The night will begin with a social ½ hour with the Welcoming committee and it will end with closing remarks. MVM celebrated the International Day of Peace and ribbons went home with Montessori materials. Students tied messages of peace to the gate as they were able to stop by the school. Small group instruction started last week. 14 students are involved and it will soon be 15. Instructors are IAs and SEIAs who are pulling themselves away from other responsibilities. Currently it is going very well. There is outside time and snacks and they are receiving specialized instructions based on their needs. Materials from grants are coming in. New Chromebooks are delayed. Teachers were able to receive FCPS laptops purchased from COVID funds so they are not

using their home equipment. MVM enrollment is currently full.

[Rita Shewbridge joined.]

Fundraising Committee

Tara Dunsmore

MVM is working on the Annual Fund

Grants Committee

Jeff Koehler

No update. Volunteers are always welcome.

Lottery Committee

Melissa Najera/David Henry

Both schools' enrollment are full as of 9/30.

Advocacy Committee

Eddie Benites

The Advocacy committee has reached out to Frederick Classical Charter school to see what they are doing for advocacy. Eddie shared with the BOT that in September the county will start collecting legislative priorities. The county will then submit them to the state. This should be on the BOT radar for September every year. This should be done in two parts. As a school and as a stand alone non-profit representing two schools. In October there will be a hearing for what the County Executive will take to the state. For the Federal level the process begins in February. This would include grant funding. Eddie asked the BOT for two things - any history of advocacy documents and a bullet list of legislative interests we may have on the BOT agenda.

Kathleen Lutrell recommended Eddie reach out to Charter School Alliance because they have a pulse on needs for Charter schools. Eddie said she looked into this and their fee is \$2000 to be a member. Kathleen shared that MMCI has never agreed to join due to the fee but they have always been a good resource to talk to and as the first charter school in Maryland they still invite MMCI to be part of their events and initiatives. They are very focused on Baltimore schools and often their demographics and concerns are different, while some align.

Nominating Committee

Jen Kuhn

Jen shared that the nominating committee has begun communicating and preparing for the upcoming annual election. Open positions have been identified. The committee established a timeline for an email to be sent to the community with open positions, descriptions, the nomination form, and basic information about the schools and the election process on October 1. Nomination forms are to be received by October 28th. The electronic voting will be open November 4th through November 18th. The annual meeting will be held virtually and there will be an opportunity for floor nominations as in years past. Live meeting voting will be open for 24 hours. Results will be announced to the community after the live voting window has closed. Because the Secretary and

Assistant Treasurer position are both on the ballot and those are the individuals that handled the electronic voting software during the election last year, this year that will be the responsibility of both Vice Presidents and for consistency sake this will alternate each year. Jen will load the system and update the ballots but stop using the system before voting instructions are sent to the community on November 4th. Jen encouraged those in attendance to reach out to those they know that might be interested in a role on either the GC or BOT.

7. Discussion/Action Item

- **Discussion:** *Facilities Update Presentation (Molly Carlson/Kathleen Lutrell)*
Molly C. and Kathleen presented an update on the status of the MMCI Facilities Search.
- **Discussion/Vote:** *Financial Services Agreement (Kathleen Lutrell)*
Kathleen recommended to the BOT to table this vote to allow the Facilities Committee to obtain two additional quotes. Having a financial services agreement will provide a set of financial advisory options to MMCI as charter schools. Some of the financing MMCI has been considering consists of complex financial instruments. MMCI really needs somebody with experience in the field and can work us through the steps in the process to set up the best financing possible.
- **Discussion:** *CCM Pre-K Funding and Charter Amendments (Chris Chandler/Carrie Jean Rathmell/Marilyn Horan)*
CCM originally started looking at expanding PK4 to full day when CCM looked at locations that might be slightly further. As CCM looked into this they recognized there was a big push for pre-k for all and most other schools started at 4. Rarely did schools include 3s. CCM is against tuition. A charter amendment would need to be made for pre-k 4 to go all day. This program change would be for 20 full day 4s and would eliminate their 3s program. Ashley Madden, MVM primary teacher, was asked for input as she was in attendance and she shared that the change would make her sad as 3s are part of the Montessori cycle but she understands budgetary constraints and if it was decided to be in the best interest of the school she would embrace the change. The grant must be applied for 18 months in advance, so the grant would be for the 2022-2023 school year. CCM feels confident that they can meet all of the criteria needed for the grant. The CCM GC will review and create a report that will be reviewed at the GC level. The BOT will then review the plan. If approved it would then need to go through the BOE. Ellie will take this topic to the MVM GC to gauge interest.
- **Discussion/Vote:** *Montessori Tuition Reimbursement - Mary Ellen Wolfinger - CCM Upper Elementary (Marilyn Horan)*
A new staff member in Upper Elementary has submitted a request for tuition reimbursement. Molly motioned to approve the tuition expenses as requested in the amount of \$7,839. Jeff seconded. 10 aye, 0 nay

- **Discussion:** CCM Charter Probation (Chris Chandler/Carrie Jean Rathmell/Marilyn Horan)

The general plan on benchmarks is that there needs to be agreement on testing and benchmarks used for assessments and timeline. The BOT needs to approve a path forward. In order to decide specific metrics, the testing measure must first be decided. The proposal that CCM would like to make is to move forward using Scantron Performance Series and the FCPS benchmarks to the state assessments. CCM would like to use these during any years affected by COVID. They would like to use these benchmarks for the duration of the current Charter which is through 2024-2025. In order to do the NWEA Map well it takes training and development and there currently isn't the bandwidth to transition to this. When CCM gets through COVID and is back into more normal schooling then we can revisit the NWEA Map which CCM thinks has great potential for the next charter renewal window.

Closed Session

Closed session times 9:42 p.m. - 10:19 p.m.

BOT Closed Session Reason: To protect the privacy or reputation of an individual with respect to a matter not related to public business.

BOT returned to open session at 10:19 p.m.

Molly voted to close the meeting and Ellie seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

Announcements:

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

- October 28
- November 18 -
ANNUAL MEETING

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

Advance Reports

The following reports were sent to the BOT prior to the meeting:

- *CCM Update*
- *MVM Update*
- *Treasurer Update*

CCM Update (Carrie Jean Rathmell)

1. *Finance GC Parent Representative position posted as immediate opening to be filled by appointment at October 14 regular GC meeting*
2. *Facilities - Molly Carlson supports Kathleen Lutrell's recommendation to sign an agreement with JLL for financial advising services*
3. *2019-2020 CCM Yearbooks delayed from Lifetouch arrived and were distributed. Many remain that were not picked up.*
4. *Zoning exception process for Corporate Ct - process continues. Current step notarized letters on letterhead from both the landlord and MMCI. Being handled by Sherry Quinones*
5. *First CCM Leadership with Dan Lippy was held Monday, September 21 with Marilyn, Molly, Carrie Jean, and Dan present. Scheduled monthly through August 2021.*
6. *Chris Chandler had still been using the VP-elect email account. Work with Bob to get this transitioned and Chris is now at vp-ccm@mmcimd.org account.*
7. *Girl Scouts requested use of the building (library and volunteer room) when the schools reopen. What level of reopening of the building allows for use such as this?*
8. *HVAC unit got complaints from the hotel about excessive noise level with an offer to have hotel maintenance repair it if it was not addressed quickly.*
9. *GC members surveyed for interest in continuing to serve on the GC in preparation for November elections*
10. *PreK Attendance policy distributed to PreK families with information that 10 unexcused absences for preK student can result in loss of enrollment with slot being offered to the next child on the waitlist.*

11. *Posting for .5 FCPS Custodian. Interviews conducted on Friday, September 25. If we transition to hybrid instruction. Custodial staffing levels for CCM may be something that needs to be revisited.*
12. *GC welcomed Camille Smith as a staff representative on the GC filling vacancy for Mary Lou Reynolds who needed to take a leave from the GC after years of service.*

MVM Update (Tori McCarthy)

Updates and reminders on the movements of GC and Committees:

- *MVMPCS' GC continues to move forward with the SY 2020-2021 Student Activity Fund and School Fund. Members are actively reviewing funding categories to determine if any of the currently empty categories are extraneous and should be zeroed out. The final SAF and SF is slated to be voted during the October meeting.*
- *MVMPCS' available technology and the communities needs continue to be reviewed. The GC approved the lease of hot spots from T-Mobile to service families in the school who do not have reliable internet access. The hotspot contract is under review.*
- *Our committee chairs continue to make strides in reorganization. Keeping volunteers engaged continues to be a challenge in the virtual world but new ideas for engagement are being explored.*
- *MVMPCS looks forward to kicking off the Annual Giving Campaign for SY 2020-2021 and are currently moving to approve funds to initiate marketing activities.*
- *The GC has 3 positions up for election during this next election cycle: 2 Parent Representatives and 1 Friend of Ed. All 3 members who currently sit in these seats are eligible for reelection and intend on running.*

Votes Completed:

- *August 31, 2020, the GC approved the August 2020 meeting minutes via eVote*
- *September 14, 2020, Jen Shemer was approved as the GC Chair for the calendar year 2021 term to begin January 1, 2021 and end on December 31, 2021.*

- *September 14, 2020, the 2020-2021 Parent Handbook document was approved as amended with the edits discussed to be completed by the GC Secretary prior to community distribution.*
- *September 14, 2020, up to \$1,000 was approved for the lease of hotspots and services to be provided T-Mobile or comparable vendor.*

Upcoming Worksessions and Meetings:

- *October 5, 2020, @ 6:30 pm, Monthly GC Voting Meeting to be held virtually.*

Treasurer Update (Jeff Koehler)

MMCI Financial Notes August 2020

- **MMCI Accounts**
 - Unrestricted cash balance in checking account is \$15,317.
 - Current Reserve Fund Savings balance is \$355,974.
- **CCM Accounts**
 - Projected Facility Fund Savings balance is \$374,850.
 - Projected end-of-year PPA surplus \$895,278.
 - Unrestricted cash available in the checking account is \$89,830.
- **MVM Accounts**
 - Projected Facility Fund Savings balance is \$785,577.
 - Projected end-of-year PPA surplus is \$63,300.
 - Unrestricted cash available in the checking account is \$20,868.
- **MMCI Expenses**
 - Expenses paid over \$2,000 threshold:
 - ▷ Utica Insurance (insurance premiums – partial bill) \$19,512.00
 - ▷ Kathleen Balodis (CCM teacher reimbursements 1&2) \$2,747.50
 - ▷ Garza Law Firm (MVM lease negotiations – partial bill) \$2,640.00
- **MMCI Audit**
 - The MMCI annual preliminary audit took place July 13th and the final fieldwork audit took place August 17th – 21st. The final audit report was reviewed and approved on August 28th. There were no significant findings or issues.

- MVM Lease
 - MVM lease negotiations were completed by Garza Law Firm.
 - Mr. Morelli was paid on 9/2 by wire transfer per his request.
- Fundraising Current fundraising totals:
 - ▷ CCM donations \$2,472
 - ▷ MVM donations \$1,492

Of note, CCM received a one-time \$2,000 donation from the family of 2 enrolled students.