

MINUTES

Monocacy Montessori Communities, Incorporated (MMCI) Board of Trustees (BOT) Wednesday, December 16, 2020 @ 7:00 p.m.

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

1. Call To Order

Meeting called to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. Welcome

Molly greeted the community.

3. Community Comments

No community comments.

4. Consent Agenda Items

- *October BOT Minutes approved on 12/14: 7 aye, 0 abstain, 0 nay, 6 did not vote.*

5. Reports

MMCI President Report

Molly Spence

Molly communicated with the MVM landlord and MMCI will be extending the MVM lease for another 6 months. In 6 months if MVM wishes to stay they will need to go through another complete negotiation. The MMCI Facilities meeting met and discussed options for each school moving forward. There are a few options that are being reviewed but nothing is ready to come before the BOT. Starting in January Molly will begin training Tara, President Elect, to take over the role of President as of 7/1/21. Molly discussed the board changes after the election in November with two Parent Trustees starting in January and officers beginning a shadowing window in January and taking over in July.

CCM VP Report
No update

Christopher Chandler

MVM VP Report

Ellie Landru

No update other than what Molly shared.

BOT Treasurer Report

Jeff Koehler

Advance report sent, included at the end of minutes. Tara will begin training Rita Shewbridge in January for the Assistant Treasurer position.

6. Updates

CCM update

Carrie Jean Rathmell / Marilyn Horan

Carrie Jean - advance report sent, included at the end of minutes.

Marilyn - School Improvement team met to work on the hybrid mode. The team is tracking what CCM is doing both the same and different from FCPS. CCM is continuing parent pickup of supplies. CCM is trying to minimize times for families to come into the building. There are 10 students coming into the building for small group learning. Surveys have been received and CCM is determining who will come in and what days. CCM is trying to keep families together, but in some situations it may work better to have students alternate days. Traditional schools are reviewing feeder patterns for siblings. As a smaller school CCM is trying to accommodate families. There may be situations where a student is reassigned to another teacher. This is not a big deal in Upper El or Middle School because these are already working with students. There is no guideline for the district or official plan if a teacher has a medical reason to not return to the building. CCM is working to make the best decisions for the best interest of the students. The new secretary started today and worked from home due to the snow.

Carrie Jean added that the zoning exemption is continuing to progress. They have received a response and the hearing is scheduled for tomorrow.

MVM update

Tori McCarthy/Amy Dorman

Amy - The Instructional Leadership team was last week and the School Improvement Team met right away. The data from the intent form indicated that $\frac{1}{3}$ originally selected virtual. However, based on the most recent form, about $\frac{1}{2}$ have selected hybrid/virtual with the current intent form. The team will be planning cohorts A & B and try to match siblings with their home schools. It is also determining which doors will be used by which kids and traffic flow and other decisions like this. Tutoring was wrapped up this week. There were 5 instructors and 38 students in reading and 29 received assistance in math. The program received great feedback. The 6 week session model worked great. MVM will be continuing regular materials pickup. The

next will be the second week of January.

Tori - Tori and Amy attended a virtual seminar on EPA and risks with air quality and there were great ideas and strategies for how these pockets can be addressed. MVM had the second materials pickup this month. MVM also hosted a Montessori parent education session and an additional community coffee. MVM held a virtual book fair which had lower than usual numbers. The teachers held nightly read aloud sessions that had a great turnout. MVM distributed a Meerkat survey that focused on communication - how connected do families feel and what are the preferred methods of contact. MVM is working on the annual report and will be working again next week. A first pass should be complete after the break. It will go before the GC at their January meeting and then the BOT.

Fundraising Committee
No update

Tara Dunsmore

Grants Committee
No update

Jeff Koehler

Lottery Committee

Melissa Najera/David Henry

The committee met and confirmed the lottery dates of January 6-March 12. MMCI will use the same lottery system. There is turnover of volunteers this year and the two volunteers that are in charge will both be leaving the school this year. New volunteer replacements are being trained. The lottery system has been working well.

Facility update

Molly Spence

Nothing in addition to what Molly already shared.

Advocacy Committee

Eddie Benites

Report sent in advance.

7. Discussion/Action Item

- **Discussion:** *MVM and CCM Annual Reports*
 - *Special Meeting January 6 for Review and Approve of CCM Annual Report and Probation Report (joint CCM GC and BOT, open to public)*
 - *MVM Update*
CCM will report first to the BOE on February 10 and then MVM will follow two weeks later on February 24. The Annual Report requires a lot of work including gathering test scores and other data and then

each school must defend their execution of their charter in front of the board. CCM will also be responding to their probation from last year. There will be a special meeting on January 6th with the BOT and CCM GC to review the report and approve it. Carrie Jean shared that the Annual Report is not complete but they have been working hard and progress has been made. CCM is planning to send out the report 12/23 so that individuals can review over break if they choose. Molly requested that CCM make sure to clarify what they will cover instead of testing since this wasn't done. Carrie Jean agreed that these were not done in 2020 and this is usually a big component of the report. There is also no end of the year score for Scantron or the spanish assessment component. Most of the key assessment data was not available. Attendance is another key piece of data and there is only an attendance figure through March. While CCM presents the 2019-20 school year they will share the data that CCM does have. CCM has been looking into alternative testing options. Prior to Covid they were looking at the NWEA maps, however after Covid CCM is looking to stay with Scantron performance series for the time being. FCPS is using this for all grade levels so this provides comparative data especially during Covid.

Molly encouraged the schools to be prepared for hard questions and be ready to defend our data, even though everybody is aware that it is Covid and an abnormal time.

Tori shared that Amy has pulled the data for MVM. Next week Ellie, Tori, and Amy will be meeting to work on the Annual Report. There is a lack of closure with the data due to Covid. They will work to put it together to the best of their ability to reflect what MVM's last year has looked like. Molly encouraged both schools to try to put a positive spin on how Montessori has been well equipped for virtual because they have been taught to be independent for years. Being a Montessori school has put our schools at a large advantage and that will be communicated. Amy said that it will not look like every year's report but MVM will show their information as positive as they can. Molly encouraged both schools to find as much data as possible and to try to lead with positives.

Closed Session

Times: 8:18 p.m. - 8:40 p.m.

Maryland Open Meetings Act Closed Meeting Reason:

- *To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of an appointee, employee, or official over whom this public body has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals.*

[Return to Open Session]

- **Discussion/Vote:** Discuss and vote on candidate for the MVM BOT Parent Trustee position to replace Rita Shewbridge.

Rita Shewbridge was elected to become the Assistant Treasurer. This is a shadow position starting in January. We advertised and got one candidate - Elise Goodwin. Molly Spence made a motion to approve Elise Goodwin to serve January 1 through December 31, 2021. Tara seconded. All in favor (9)

- **Discussion/Vote:** Bookkeeper year end bonus.

For the past four years we have voted to approve a \$500 end of the year bonus as a sign of our appreciation for the work of our bookkeeper. Tara motioned to approve a \$500 bonus. Ellie seconded. Molly shared that Amy is a great resource and MMCI's only employee and we regularly hear how dedicated she is to her job. She steps up and asks important questions. Ellie agreed. All in favor (9)

Announcements:

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

- January 6 - CCM Annual Meeting Report and Probation Report Special Meeting (Joint BOT and CCM GC, open to public)
- January 27
- February 17 (DATE CHANGE)
- March 24 (DATE CHANGE)

Meeting adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

Advance Reports:

- *Financial Report (Jeff Koehler)*
- *CCM Update (Carrie Jean Rathmell)*
- *Advocacy Committee (Eddie Benites)*
- *MVM Parent Trustee Applicant for review*

Financial Report:*MMCI Accounts*

- *Unrestricted cash balance in checking account \$29,228*
- *Current Reserve Fund Savings balance \$367,429*

CCM Accounts

- *Projected Facility Fund Savings balance \$383,075*
- *Projected end-of-year PPA surplus \$895,278*
- *Unrestricted cash available in checking account \$112,789*

MVM Accounts

- *Projected Facility Fund Savings balance is \$793,750*
- *Projected end-of-year PPA surplus is TBD.*
- *Unrestricted cash available in checking account is \$38,429*

MMCI Expenses Expenses paid over \$2,000 threshold:

▷*DeLeon & Stang (audit payment) \$10,300.00*

Audit & 990

- *The invoice for MMCI's annual audit was received and has been paid.*
- *The final cost of the audit was \$10,300.*
- *MMCI's annual IRS Form 990 has been completed and e-filed.*

CCM

- *CCM's special exception zoning application has been completed and the \$905 fee paid to Frederick County.*

Fundraising Current fundraising totals:

▷*CCM donations \$5,533*

▷*MVM donations \$4,155*

CCM Update:

*GC Chair Report to MMCI BOT
December 2020
Submitted by Carrie Jean Rathmell*

Agenda Topics:

Agenda item: MEETING ADDED JAN 6 extra virtual meeting on Jan 6: joint meeting of CCM GC and MMCI BOT open to the community to review and approve CCM Annual Report & Probation Report prior to submission to FCPS through Dan Lippy on January 11. Completed Draft of Annual Report & Probation Report to be distributed by close of business Wednesday, December 23.

Report Items:

1. FCPS Custodial Staffing Increase

- a. Carrie Jean motions to approve additional staffing of a 1.0 FTE FCPS benefitted Custodian for CCM. Money was budgeted for this position in the 2020-2021 budget in account 61088 Regular Custodian. Second: Susan. Motion passed: 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.*
- b. Context:*
 - i. When CCM transitioned back to FCPS custodial staffing from contracted custodial services per directive from FCPS, .5 Custodial was determined to be sufficient during virtual instruction. As we head into the hybrid model additional custodial staffing at a normal level is needed again.*
 - ii. Kate estimates that combined custodial salaries for the .5 Custodian and this 1.0 Custodian will be \$34K for the year. \$40K was budgeted.*

2. Rescheduled February CCM GC Meeting to Feb 3

- a. Carrie Jean motions to change the February CCM GC meeting date from the second Wednesday (Feb 10) to the first Wednesday (Feb 3) to alleviate the*

*conflict with the Feb 10 CCM annual report for the BOE. Second: Katie.
Motion passed: 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.*

3. Transitions to new GC Reps in January

- a. Kate will create a CCM account for Rene using the rshuler@carroll... format. Rene can begin using this account as soon as it is created. Susan will continue to manage the staffing email through Dec 30. January 1(or more like Jan 4 after return from break) the staffing account will be forwarded to Rene's account. GC SOP will be reviewed and revised as needed by the whole GC at the January meeting. GC chair will be elected at the January meeting. Monthly responsibilities and processes will also be reviewed at the January meeting.*
 - i. Carrie Jean figured out 12/8 how to link her GC account calendar to her personal calendar so she doesn't have to make duplicate events on her personal calendar. There is a collection of tips and tricks such as this to make navigating google accounts easier that will be shared/reviewed at the January meeting.*

4. November 2020 PreK3 Opening

- a. **PreK 3 Opening:** As discussed at the November meeting, there was a preK3 opening that occurred in November. After consulting the GC and Dan Lippy and MMCI President and VP during leadership, the decision was made to offer enrollment to the next child on the waitlist with attendance delayed until students return to the building. Slot was offered and accepted under these terms.*

5. Charter Amendment (Full Day PreK4) Work Group

- a. Work group has convened. First meeting held Dec 2 and next meeting scheduled for Dec 16. (New timeline - amendment request will come at a later date, not during the Feb 2021 Annual Report with BOE)*
- b. Researching and discussing*
 - i. Full day preK4 - especially in context of preK grant funding & transportation at location distant from central location in county*
 - ii. Implications for preK3 - especially with regard to 20 student class size limits with preK grant, no bus transportation for preK3*
 - iii. Impact to Montessori Pathways Accreditation if no longer having 3-year classrooms in primary*
 - iv. Timelines for preK grant application, approval and funding, charter amending, lottery & enrollment changes*
 - v. Does the approval process create a gap year between application and when changes will take effect? Would we then move to a new facility with current enrollment for a year and change in enrollment occurring the second year in the new facility?*
 - vi. Can these enrollment/charter amendment changes be made in such a way that when budget and facilities situations are different preK3 could be added back if eliminated now?*

6. Family & Staff Facilities Survey Conducted

- a. A survey was distributed to gather information about current family and staff anticipated enrollment, interest in bus transportation, and interest in full day preK at sites in Sabillasville and Jefferson
- b. Q&A information session hosted by [Molly Carlson](#) with good live participation. [Recording of info session](#) shared with community along with survey.
- c. Survey results to be discussed at the January GC meeting. Survey open until Dec 13. Family survey had 106 respondents as of Sunday morning.

7. Virtual Friend of Ed Residing Outside Frederick County:

- a. Julie Clark contacted me with a friend of ed recommendation for the GC for someone who lives outside of Maryland but would be able to serve through the virtual model. I checked with Marilyn and Molly Spence about their thoughts and any residency restrictions for the friend of ed position. Molly followed up with the following information.
 - i. The only thing I see that addresses this is the meeting attendance — in other words that all members must regularly attend meetings. I can find nothing that says they must be a local resident.

8. CCM New Secretary

- a. New secretary has been hired with a start date this week.
- b. On the agenda during training to meet with Kate Chasse and Amy O'Connor for orientation to the finance, budget, and bookkeeping process. Scheduled for early January.

9. Annual zoning exception process for Corporate Ct continues to progress

- a. [Paperwork received from zoning board](#)
- b. Hearing scheduled with Zoning Board of Appeals for Thursday, Dec 17 @ 6:30pm - Sherry Quinones will attend

10. Planning for Hybrid Reopening

- a. CSI (School Improvement) team holding weekly planning meetings
- b. Held discussion Q&A during Dec 9 GC meeting - parents asked questions and Marilyn provided information

11. FCPS New Volunteer Training Process Coming

- a. Marilyn received an email this week outlining the new online volunteer training process for FCPS volunteers. According to the email links will be added on school websites and this task will need to be completed by volunteers annually.
- b. More specific details are not known at this time. Principals are to watch for upcoming additional emails.
- c. Will ask Dan Lippy for more information at the CCM Leadership meeting.

12. On the Facilities RADAR

- a. ARCHITECT FOR FACILITIES PROJECT: CCM facilities realized we have a question about what the process and timeline is for selecting an

architect to work with CCM/MMCI on facilities projects. Action item from the GC meeting to consult with MMCI.

- b. Should we go through the process of soliciting written bids from a minimum of 3 firms now (as we did with JLL for financing) so that when there is a project ready to move forward we can act or do we need to wait until we have a more solid project before selecting the architect we plan to work with?*

Advocacy Committee Update:

Summary:

1. Growth of the Jefferson/ Brunswick Area
2. Letters requesting meetings
3. Lottery Committee- information request regarding student data
4. Outstanding projects

Upcoming Events:

- December 22, 2020, Frederick County Council workshop (5:30 pm)
- January 3, 2021, Congress convenes for the 117th Congress.
- January 13, 2021, Maryland General Assembly convenes for the 442nd Legislative Session.
- January 13, 2021, FCPS Board of Education meeting (6:00 pm)
- January 27, 2021, FCPS Board of Education meeting

1. Growth in the Jefferson/ Brunswick Area

Growth in the Jefferson and Brunswick area continues to be an issue for FCPS. In recent years, FCPS has redistricted families from Valley Elementary in Jefferson to surrounding schools. Often, families have to travel further to new, redistricted schools that many consider a lower standard. Families are very unhappy about these moves, and overcrowding at Valley Elementary continues to be an issue.

In October, FCPS requested an architectural feasibility study and listed the current Facility Condition Index (FCI) as “critical” for Valley Elementary stating that it is already over capacity. The RFP is [here](#).

In December, the Frederick News-Post reported that because of significant growth in the greater-Brunswick area, the new elementary school construction project that has yet to break ground is expected to open to overcrowding.

Moving two, new schools to the Jefferson-Brunswick feeder area may help FCPS overcome many of its overcrowding challenges.

2. Letters requesting meetings

I'm pregnant and recently left a difficult first trimester behind me. As a result, I was unable to get these letters to you earlier. Letters were drafted to BOE members and local officials from the Jefferson area congratulating, introducing MMCI, and requesting meetings as appropriate.

Please review, sign, and send the letters as soon as possible. I recommend copying individual's email addresses and/ staff contacts.

3. Lottery Committee- information request regarding student data

One of the first questions any office will ask MMCI is, "How many students come from my district?" Knowing this information is not only important for these meetings. As we consider new locations, it will allow us to understand our families travel needs. As we move to new locations, knowing this information will allow us to understand how our residency changes over time.

Is this information available through the Lottery Committee? If not, can it be incorporated? All information can be found by inputting addresses, then clicking an arrow to expand the "My Voting District." I need the following information:

- Congressional District
- Legislative District
- COUNCILMANIC District
- Senatorial District

4. Outstanding projects:

MMCI promotion email

In October, I recommended setting up a promotional email account for MMCI. This project is still under development.

MMCI Representative Backgrounder

I continue to research and develop our internal document on the backgrounds, contacts, staff contacts, etc. of our local and state representatives.

MVM Parent Trustee Applicant:

We received one applicant for our open parent trustee position filling Rita Shewbridge's role as she will be moving on to shadow for the AT role. The position will start 1/1/21 and we will vote at the December meeting.

Applicant: Elise Goodwin

Why are you interested in the position?

I am interested in being a parent rep for MMCI. My son Zach has attended MVM since Kindergarten and is currently in the 6th grade. The MMCI and MVM communities have been a unique and wonderful place for Zach. I have volunteered in the past in many different capacities. I served as a Co-chair of the Strategic Planning Committee, I participated in the Building Search Committee, Building and Grounds Committee, and most recently (last school year) on the fundraising committee for the Fall Festival. I treasure our community and would like to continue to serve. I think my years at MVM have given me the experience and perspective that will benefit the role as parent rep. Thank you for your consideration.