

# MINUTES

**Monocacy Montessori Communities, Incorporated (MMCI) Board of Trustees  
(BOT) Wednesday, February 17, 2021 @ 7:00 p.m.**

**BOT Members present:** Molly Carlson, Nichole Dowlearn, Tara Dunsmore, Elise Goodwin, Jeff Koehler, Jen Kuhn, Ellie Landru, Jen Mayo, Carrie Jean Rathmell (CCM GC Chair), Shemica Sheppard, Molly Spence, Amy Sullivan

1. Call To Order

*Molly Spence called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.*

2. Welcome

*Molly S. welcomed the community.*

3. Community Comments

*None*

4. Consent Agenda Items

- January BOT Minutes approved on 2/15/21. Jen K motioned and Ellie seconded. 7 aye, 6 did not vote.

5. Reports

MMCI President Report

*Molly Spence*

*The BOT February meeting is one week early due to the MVM Annual Report with the FCPS Board of Education. CCM recently presented their Annual Report and it was attended by Molly Spence, Carrie Jean, and Marilyn Horan. The CCM presentation was received very positively for test scores, leadership, and the school in general. There were new board members and they were still learning Montessori. MVM has included an educational component to help the new members better understand our organization.*

CCM VP Report

*Christopher Chandler*

*No update*

MVM VP Report

*Ellie Landru*

*No update*

BOT Treasurer Report

*Jeff Koehler*

*Advance report sent, included at the end of the minutes.*

## 6. Updates

### CCM update

Carrie Jean Rathmell / Marilyn Horan

*Marilyn - CCM welcomed back 51 students (65 previously planned) on Tuesday. 35% of CCM will be returning in hybrid. Students were well prepared and wore their masks. Few reminders were necessary. Lunch was a larger obstacle because the lunch on the menu was not available. Arrival and dismissal were very smooth and 3 exits were utilized. Teachers are working to fine tooth comb their processes but everything was very positive. Amy and Marilyn have been working on the ESSER II Grant. This will allow our schools to get some items that we would have otherwise struggled to purchase. MVM and CCM will invest in NWEA and Montessori materials. The teachers that have needed to stay home for their health have been able to do so and they have been able to make arrangements for every class to have coverage. At the Annual Report it came up that we did not have the same masks and air purifiers as other schools and Dr. Alban committed to fixing this and put things in motion the next day. MVM and CCM have received the masks and are waiting for the delivery of the air purifiers. CCM will be holding an informational meeting for prospective families.*

*Carrie Jean -*

*Advance report sent, included at the end of the minutes.*

### MVM update

Tori McCarthy/Amy Dorman

*Amy - Marilyn's update pretty much parallels the MVM update. MVM was very happy to have kids back in the schools. The carline was very smooth, even with the new traffic flow. Kids went to classes and were quickly settled. Everybody was working and using their materials. One primary student needed mask reminders. There were no meal glitches and dismissal was smooth. ESSER funds were submitted. Families are asking for more tutoring and MVM is looking into options to mitigate learning loss. MVM needed more air purifiers than CCM. MVM has received PPE, plastic shields and masks with a window. MVM will receive some gowns for special education. There is hand sanitizer throughout the building. District employees walked the building and made recommendations. There are 6 foot stickers on the floor and it is very clear where students should stand.*

*Tori - Amy, Marilyn, Molly, and the BOT stepped up and fought for our charter schools to advocate for equal opportunity of equipment and it is greatly appreciated. MVM has finally started a Facebook community for members. MVM is grateful to Amy and all the work she has done to reopen.*

*Molly shared that FCPS announced that air purifiers and PPE had been ordered for all schools but charter schools were overlooked. There was communication and in the future if something is ordered that is important to keep all kids safe, charter schools will be in the loop. MMCI did get in writing a statement from an FCPS official that the expectation in the future is that our schools will be notified when major purchases are made to allow us to be on par with other schools. FCPS helping us to get the air*

*purifiers has helped us to do something efficiently and more cost effectively than we would have been able to do on our own. We will still need to push and advocate that we are part of the public school system.*

*Amy added that one of the benefits of being included is that FCPS goes through a process of vetting the equipment that they are purchasing and making sure that it is the right equipment for our school.*

Fundraising Committee  
*No update*

*Tara Dunsmore*

Lottery Committee

*Melissa Najera/David Henry*

*Advance report sent, included at the end of the minutes.*

Facility update

*Molly Spence/Molly Carlson/Kathleen Lutrell*

*Kathleen - The big news is that MMCI was waiting for a response to the LOI from the Jefferson School. They did respond but it is asking us to wait longer. They received approval from their board to proceed but will be considering all options. This movement felt positive however was not a firm commitment. It is still a process. They have one other offer and are also looking at internal options for repurposing within their organization. MMCI is also interested in the Ballenger Center property. There are issues with this property with the tenants. Kathleen is recommending an LOI to determine how we could use the building. There are tenants all throughout the building and as schools we would need to have their tenants consolidated so that our schools could be in spaces together and not throughout the building. If we are interested in pursuing this we need to formally communicate what our needs are for using the space.*

Advocacy Committee

*Eddie Benites*

*Advance report sent, included at the end of the minutes. Eddie shared an example of how advocacy can work: a commissioner mentioned they were interested in composting and didn't get response from FCPS schools. Eddie reached out to principals and CCM shared that they are composting and received a grant to get started. Eddie then shared that her husband who works for NASA has resources that can help create a biofuel clock so one minor step with CCM turns into a NASA backed project that can get attention and build on to the next step.*

## 7. Discussion/Action Item

- **Discussion/Vote:** BOT to proceed with extending the CCM lease by exercising the option of extending the current Corporate Ct lease for one-year (2021-2022) based on the recommendation by the CCM GC. (Carrie Jean Rathmell/Chris Chandler)  
*Molly motioned to approve the CCM lease for one year at Corporate Ct. Jeff Koehler*

seconded. Tara asked if we needed to exercise the option for the lawyer that was approved last month. Carrie Jean shared that because this was already an option in their lease this was not necessary because it was in place with their current lease. CCM is currently on their 2nd of 3 years of options. Each year has a 3% increase. CCM did not feel comfortable with the 5 year option because it was putting all of their eggs into one basket and it is not long term sustainable. Kathleen suggested that MMCI work with our realtor to determine how feasible the Jefferson School option will be and Molly Carlson suggested looking into a 6 month option. CCM must give notice by the end of February. Kathleen suggested contacting the lawyer with the situation.

- **Discussion/Vote:** Review 3 architecture proposals for CCM and approve up to a dollar amount for initial project work. (Molly Carlson and Kathleen Lutrell)  
Molly C shared that after the last meeting the BOT discussed that comparable bids were needed. Studio MB has done several schools including Montessori. They have done work with the Barrie school. They have an approach to Montessori design principles. Kathleen feels that their background with Montessori gives them an edge. Studio MB will be about \$19,000 for the project. ZA+D is slightly less expensive and is better known locally. Kathleen feels that either school would do an excellent job. Kathleen and Molly C shared that they would like the BOT to make a decision so that when MMCI has a property to move forward with an architect is in place to move forward. There was a third proposal reviewed that came in at over twice the amount. Molly Carlson made a motion to have MMCI engage Studio MB for architectural services according to the proposal presented on February 17 for up to \$20,000. Molly Spence seconded. 11 aye, no nay/abstain.
- **Discussion:** Alumni Engagement & Tracking (Molly Spence)  
Molly shared that at the CCM Annual Report it was asked how our students do when they leave our schools. Molly shared that it would be helpful to track our alumni and better understand what they do when they leave. There are a lot of opportunities for this project (interviews, pictures, videos, data) to share with the BOE and community about where our students have ended up. CCM has started gathering this information for their accreditation process. Marilyn shared that there is a google form where data has been collected and as CCM only has 3 8th grade classes this has been easy to track. Tara shared that this can be done at the BOT level but that it can still paint school specific pictures. There could be teams at each specific school with individual efforts. Molly wants MMCI to have this information because there is strength in having this knowledge at a central location. Amy suggested that this might be better held at the GC level and then funnel up to the BOT. The BOT discussed having a Parent Trustee that can take ownership of the process. Carrie Jean shared that it is important to plan properly so that both schools are collecting the same data and collecting the data that we need. This needs to be addressed by each school's leadership meetings and it can be discussed with Dan Lippy on how to get data on the schools. Each school's GC can come up with a standardized set of questions that is asked. Hopefully a trustee can step forward to help the BOT use this information that we gather for the best possible scenario to use for marketing, tours, and Annual Reports. Molly Spence will follow up with the leadership meetings to begin to discuss how we gather information more formally.

- **Discussion:** Lottery Equity - Marketing & Communications efforts  
(Tara Dunsmore)

*We have many applicants in our lottery every year. The BOE wondered how we are reaching out to various communities. Molly mentioned different festivals and areas that we can make sure we have a presence. Molly C. mentioned that reaching out to parents for organizations families are already involved in may be helpful. Tara shared that this was discussed last year and we decided to reach out to Boys & Girls club and other organizations. Ellie said that she took fliers to the Asian American Center and Centro Hispano. Ellie will reach out to these organizations again this year. Tara suggested that we come up with standard groups to reach out to each year. Shemica will reach out to the Boys & Girls Club and shared a concern that there is not enough diversity among teachers. Molly would like to reach out to the communities to determine what are the barriers that are preventing individuals from applying. Shemica shared that we have certain parameters of our schools that create obstacles for families. Molly shared that we need more data about why families will not be a part of our communities. Molly C. shared that part of the CCM work group looking into a full day 4 program and eliminating 3s has been equity of access.*

*Jen Kuhn thanked Carrie Jean for holding the role of Virtual Meeting Moderator for the last 10 months and for Shemica Shepperd stepping up for this role starting in March.*

#### Announcements:

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

- March 24\*
- April 28
- May 26

\*The March meeting is being held one week earlier than normally scheduled due to Spring Break.

*Meeting adjourned at 9:57 p.m.*

### **Advance Reports:**

- *Treasurer Report*
- *Lottery Report*
- *Advocacy Report*
- *CCM Report*

### **Treasurer Report**

#### *MMCI Accounts*

- *Unrestricted cash balance in checking account \$21,051*
- *Current Reserve Fund Savings balance \$367,462*

#### *CCM Accounts*

- *Projected Facility Fund Savings balance \$383,070*
- *Projected end-of-year PPA surplus \$895,278*
- *Unrestricted cash available in checking account \$112,602*

#### *MVM Accounts*

- *Projected Facility Fund Savings balance is \$793,745*
- *Projected end-of-year PPA surplus is \$124,761*
- *Unrestricted cash available in checking account is \$46,558*

#### *Expenses*

- *Expenses paid over \$2,000 threshold:*
  - ▷ *MSMC/Mr. Morelli (MVM rent) \$129,892.00*

#### *Employer*

- *The State of Maryland has significantly raised the State Unemployment Insurance (SUI) rates for 2021. Previously, MMCI was at the lowest rate of 0.3%. The new rate for 2021 is 2.2%.*

#### *MVM*

- *The check for MVM's rent payment for February – July 2021, per the second lease amendment, was delivered via FedEx to the landlord on 1/22/2021.*

#### *Fundraising Current fundraising totals:*

- ▷ *CCM donations \$6,786*
- ▷ *MVM donations \$14,020*

## **Lottery Report**

*As of today, 2/17/2021, there are:*

- *Total Applications: 1689*

- CCM: 861
- MVM: 828

*Last year (2020/21) to date: 2050*

## **Advocacy Report**

Meeting with BOT presidents and VPs:

Next week I'm meeting with Molly, Tara, Ellie, and Chris to firm up advocacy plans. I'm hoping this is an on-going check in.

CCM presents at BOE:

CCM presented their annual report to BOE. They did a great job and the response from BOE members was outstanding. Expect a memo on how we can follow up.

MVM will present at BOE:

MVM is set to present their annual report to the BOE. I've sent information to MVM leadership on the BOE response to CCM's report presentation (A FNP article) and asked for bullets to use in pre-drafting a press release. There will also be a memo on post-presentation follow up.

Lottery Committee addresses:

I received a file with student addresses. Thank you! Next step is adding information regarding legislative representation. Expect a short presentation on our population soon.

Others:

I reached out to the two principals because one of the Frederick County Commissions met with FCPS and other organizations about developing composting. The Commission received minimal response. Are either schools interested?

We have some amazing teachers, support staff, and community members. I'm working with staff at both schools to identify these individuals and nominate them for local, regional, and national awards. I'm developing a document with annual nomination dates so that we can get ahead of these processes.

## CCM Report

### 1. Annual Report Presented to BOE Feb 10

- a. Video is available at <https://fcpsmd.new.swagit.com/videos/112801> Item 1.18 Carroll Creek Montessori Public Charter School Annual Report.
- b. The Annual Report was well received by the BOE with recognition for the improvement in scores and responding to the feedback and action items from last year's charter renewal.
- c. Questions and comments focused on
  - i. Equity and access
  - ii. Demographics reflecting the demographics of Frederick County: especially FARM and ELL
  - iii. Transportation and transportation funding
  - iv. Clarification of the evolution of the Spanish program from the original vision to the current format
  - v. How can we help mitigate barriers
  - vi. Do we track data as students move on into High School
  - vii. Are students having technology instruction?
  - viii. Encourage sharing of strategies that are working. See wonder at Montessori Middle School that tends to disappear in traditional Middle Schools. How can we rub shoulders and share what's good with each other?
  - ix. Dr. Alban: shout out that Marilyn is an amazing "shoulder rubber." She takes every opportunity to advocate for spreading Montessori throughout FPCS.
  - x. Made plan, communicated our plan, and grew results.
  - xi. Most interesting for Ms. Barrett was presenting the growth between our 1st and 2nd graders on DIBELS. From lowest in our group and below FCPS in 1st to well above FCPS and the highest in our group in 2nd grade.
  - xii. Do the Spanish teachers have Montessori training?
  - xiii. Hope to see you in a new facility soon.
  - xiv. Are you ready for hybrid reopening?
  - xv. Do you have the PPE for reopening?

### 2. Update Landing Page after student login from FCPS hosted media center resources page to MMCI hosted CCM media resources page

- a. Landing page after student sign in is the fcps hosted media center resources page that is no longer being updated by CCM <https://education.fcps.org/ccmpcs/mediacenter>. We need assistance from FCPS staff to change the landing page to the CCM media resources page on the current MMCI hosted CCM website



<https://carrollcreekmontessori.org/programs/resources/>. Kate Chasse reached out for this assistance on Feb 8 and got a response late last week. Work is in progress.

3. **Clubhouse Kids information published to staff and families through Parent Square**
  - a. Information was distributed to families through ParentSqaure with instructions to contact Aimee and Chris Dunn directly for more information
4. **Custodial Staffing**
  - a. 1.0 FCPS Custodian was posted, interviews were held, working through the HR process to make offers.
5. **Montessori Training**
  - a. Staff member approved to begin Montessori Training with the October CGMS cohort that was delayed to the January cohort because of low enrollment for CGMS decided not to begin with the January cohort.
6. **Family Information Night (Google Meet) - Tour Alternative - Wednesday, February 24 @ 6pm**
  - a. CCM has a Google Meet Informational Night scheduled for prospective families for Wednesday, February 24 @ 6pm. This is in place of our usual tours when the building is open. Info night information is posted on the CCM website and Facebook page and a Find Out First notice has been requested but not posted.
  - b. [https://fcps.ezcommunicator.net/edu/frederick/preview\\_message.aspx?app=0&id=98603&type=notice&source=ViewNews#googtrans\(en\)](https://fcps.ezcommunicator.net/edu/frederick/preview_message.aspx?app=0&id=98603&type=notice&source=ViewNews#googtrans(en))
  - c.
7. **Hybrid Reopening (Marilyn will speak to this in more detail).**
  - a. Marilyn has been communicating with families in preparation for hybrid reopening through ParentSquare
  - b. Information session was held through Google Meet on Wednesday, February 10
  - c. The Continuous School Improvement Team has been working and reworking plans to be ready for reopening.
  - d. Dan Lippy visited Feb 10 and reviewed the set up and plans for reopening.

Added:

Qty	Air Purifier	Replacement Filter	Total Cost	
CCMPCS	11	\$ 7,315	\$ 1,837	\$ 9,152
FCCS	26	\$ 17,290	\$ 4,342	\$ 21,632

MVMPCS	18	\$ 11,970	\$ 3,006	\$ 14,976
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The air quality at CCM is much better than MVM which accounts for the lower number of units between the two schools. We are putting the units in every room that has students returning. FCPS only put them in rooms that would have 10 students or more in them.

We also ordered 1,000 masks that cost close to \$900.00. That is not enough for every staff member for every day, but it is a good start and I don't really have room to store more than that since we have been told to keep them in a secure place which happens to be my office with all the student masks.

FNPN article regarding Annual Report:

[https://www.fredericknews.com/news/education/schools/public\\_k-12/charter/carroll-creek-montessori-improves-scores-after-being-placed-in-probationary-period/article\\_e2dc015e-eba5-5b63-942f-0207edca8dc5.html](https://www.fredericknews.com/news/education/schools/public_k-12/charter/carroll-creek-montessori-improves-scores-after-being-placed-in-probationary-period/article_e2dc015e-eba5-5b63-942f-0207edca8dc5.html)

Staff update for hybrid reopening:

I think maybe we should add that we have three teachers and two assistants working virtually. An additional assistant had to take FMLA leave so she is not working virtually but will come back as her family situation permits.

FOF Posted for Info Night on Feb 24

[https://fcps.ezcommunicator.net/edu/frederick/preview\\_message.aspx?app=0&id=98603&type=notice&source=ViewNews#googtrans\(en\)](https://fcps.ezcommunicator.net/edu/frederick/preview_message.aspx?app=0&id=98603&type=notice&source=ViewNews#googtrans(en))

To see a Google translation of this message in Spanish, please use the "Spanish" link at the top of this message:

Utilice el enlace "Spanish" en la parte superior de este mensaje para ver la traducción de Google en español:

Carroll Creek Montessori School will be hosting a prospective family information night February 24 at 6 p.m.

Information about the lottery process will be shared. School officials will also discuss basic information about Carroll Creek Montessori.

Please join us for this Google Meet session by following this link:

<https://meet.google.com/idf-wuog-mhs?hs=122&authuser=0>

New ESSR Grant Submitted by 4pm deadline today:

[Application narrative](#)

[Budget spreadsheet](#)