

MINUTES

**Monocacy Montessori Communities, Incorporated (MMCI) Board of Trustees
(BOT) Wednesday, March 24, 2021 @ 7:00 p.m.**

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

1. Call To Order

Molly Spence called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

2. Welcome

Molly S. welcomed the community.

3. Community Comments

None

4. Consent Agenda Items

- *February BOT Minutes approved on 3/22/21. Jen K motioned and Molly Spence seconded. 7 aye, 6 did not vote.*

5. Reports

MMCI President Report

Molly Spence

Regularly scheduled leadership meetings for MVM and CCM were held with Dan Lippy this month. The MVM Annual Report was rescheduled to April 14 with the BOE. Molly worked with CCM to extend the lease for CCM for an additional year. It was a smooth interaction. It was the second of three automatic renewals that is written into the lease. Molly is continuing to include Tara on all of the things she can so that she is ready to take over the role of President when her term begins in July.

CCM VP Report

Christopher Chandler

Chris discussed that the 1 year lease renewal was a logical option and allowed the needed flexibility. There has been a lot of activity with the lottery and questions from families who entered the lottery. CCM is continuing to look into an all day PK4 option.

MVM VP Report

Ellie Landru

MVM is about to start their lease negotiations for a lease renewal and determine the necessary terms. The MVM GC will begin discussing this. Last night a town hall was held regarding a high school expansion. A lot of good feedback was received. MVM is considering a priority option for CCM because the law has changed in the last few years to allow sister school priority (the order would be staff priority, MVM sibling priority, then sister school priority). Ellie reached out to CCM to see if they have interest in learning more about the high school expansion she is happy to collaborate. MVM has a lot of fundraising going on which includes a pay it forward campaign.

BOT Treasurer Report

Jeff Koehler

Advance report sent (included at the end of the minutes). Amy O'Connor gave input that when we review budget we should review insurance. She provided links for different insurance policies and prices. It was discussed last year to evaluate the MMCI admin fees for the upcoming year and making sure that all of the expenses are balanced, including how much reserve we want to keep at MMCI. Tara added that these have been discussed but no decision has been made. She mentioned that the costs are misleading because they either get paid to MMCI as admin fees, or the schools pay it directly. Tara shared that it really should be what is easiest for budgeting purposes. Jeff would like to push to update the policies this year as this has been discussed for years. A few weeks prior to the May meeting Jeff and Tara will prepare the BOT for the topics and then it could be reviewed through June. Jeff recommended that we add the policy topics that have been discussed needing changes but not approved like the Ethics policy.

6. Updates

CCM update

Carrie Jean Rathmell / Marilyn Horan

Carrie Jean - Advance report sent (included at the end of the minutes). Carrie Jean added that if BOT members are interested in seeing lease changes it was in the report. The new full time FCPS custodian started March 16. CCM now has their full custodian staffing. The air purifiers are in classrooms and being used. CCM has replacement filters ready for when they are needed. Carrie Jean shared that with COVID funding CCM has decided to make PK4 all day for next year for a trial year and this will be covered by grants. This gives CCM a chance to try this while it is covered by Covid grant funding.

Marilyn - Marilyn shared that the process for working through the grants was complicated. Many Montessori requests were misunderstood and had to be resubmitted. The request for PK4 was easily understood and approved. The all day Covid PK4 grant will last until December. The SR2 grant will be used for the remainder of the year. It has not been an issue with the BOE because it is currently a temporary one year change covered by a grant. CCM will be bringing in additional Hybrid students the Tuesday after break instead of waiting for the term which will then have 55% of the students in the building. CCM is waiting for a chromebook order for kids

that do not have them and will be using 10 that they have currently. There were 1062 applicants last year and 1400 applicants this year. There is some movement expected over the summer. There are 18 PK3 and 13 PK4 openings and 1 2nd grade that will be included in the lottery tomorrow. CCM is working on 8th grade activities and has talked to the Sky Stage which they had paid for last year and didn't use. CCM has scheduled 8th grade pictures. CCM is working on move up day and has started to look at field day. One staff member was on a work Visa which has not been approved due to Covid even though she submitted. Two staff members who were out for ADA have returned.

MVM update

Tori McCarthy/Amy Dorman

Amy - MVM found out today that their SR grant was approved. One of Amy's priorities is to address learning loss. There was positive feedback on the tutoring that was offered previously and MVM will be offering an Acceleration Academy to the lower levels and tutors for older students. There will be an influx of STEM materials for middle school. Since it is unknown what school will look like in the fall MVM will make sure students have access to computers. This will help also with progress testing. MVM is adding 60 computers. MVM is still working out the 4th semester. This will put MVM at just over 50%. There are 4 staff members currently out with ADA.

Tori - Advance report sent (included at end of minutes). MVM has doubled participation in the Annual Fund in 5 days with their pay it forward campaign. It is a high participation low donation amount fundraiser. MVM has an opening for a Friend of Ed. The opening is through December 31, 2021. There are also openings on committees for parents that are interested in getting involved.

Fundraising Committee

Tara Dunsmore

Tara has been providing logistical support for the MVM fundraisers that are going on. Tara has reached out to help CCM with a similar pay it forward fundraiser.

Lottery Committee

Melissa Najera/David Henry

Amy Dorman shared that over 1000 applied. MVM has 31 seats to fill. Molly S. shared that the lottery will be run tomorrow. Two new members are being trained for the lottery committee since David and Melissa have children that will be aging out and Molly thanked them for their contributions.

Facility update

Molly Spence/Molly Carlson/Kathleen Lutrell

Molly Carlson shared that zoning puts MMCI in a tight spot as does the budget. We must stay within 17% of our PPA. There are 10 properties that we have questions about and 34 that we have ruled out. Shared campus projects include the Jefferson School and Ballenger Center. We are in contact weekly with Jefferson School and it continues to move forward but still has no firm commitment. Jefferson School is a board driven process that requires agreement and commitment from a group. Ballenger Center would only be an option to lease and the obstacle is that other

tenants are throughout the building. Other options are financed building options, revisiting properties that were too much, and scanning for new properties. CCM's options include renegotiating a more favorable lease which is possible for a long term option but not a permanent option. CCM intends to put a proposal in for Sabillasville when it comes open. CCM still has one more option to continue the lease by one year. MVM is continuing a search. For 2021-2022 MVM can look into renegotiating their lease. Kathleen is less optimistic about the Ballenger Creek property as there are tenants with long term leases and they are spread all over the building. There doesn't seem to be a practical way to make it work for security. There is also interest in another purchaser. Because of the zoning issues there is not a lot to consider. There are some buildings that would work well but have the wrong zoning. For a long time the priority has been purchasing but there is not a lot opening. The market is starting to favor leasing so we may want to reconsider this. There is a developer interested in purchasing the Dill Ave location but hasn't made an offer. The interested party has contacted MVM and is interested in MVM extending the lease for one year if they purchase. This could be beneficial for both parties. A builder has contacted us and has discussed purchasing land and Kathleen thinks it would be worth at least pursuing to see how much this would cost. Molly S. mentioned that she did get a request about interest in Sabillasville and she has requested more information about what they would like in the proposal and will follow up with the BOE. Tara suggested that nothing should be off the table and we should pursue every opportunity. At a certain point we will need to decide if we want to pursue our dream facility or do we want to know that we are secure. Should we compromise any items for our list? Are there any must haves that should be considered as nice to haves? Molly C. shared that the Facilities Committee has considered everything they can and everything they are currently considering has features that aren't their first choice. Kathleen shared that getting a lease will probably be the easiest option currently.

Advocacy Committee

Eddie Benites

On April 14th there will be the MVM Annual Report but Eddie will not be able to assist. Eddie worked with Ellie and Chris to discuss the Advocacy options. Eddie is working on the Annual Report. Eddie tries to send monthly emails about what is going on at MMCI with links to news articles, opening for Friend of Ed, it would be great to include full day preschool at CCM. Eddie asked Chris or Marilyn to send wording. Marilyn shared that CCM was featured in a Montessori Public publication. Marilyn has been asked to contribute in a research article. Tara mentioned that she would like to reach out about social media and sharing these things. Eddie recommended Twitter, Linked In, and Facebook. Linked In would be great as MMCI tries to find new teachers and they look into our schools. Eddie said she would be happy to help admin the social media sites and Tara said she would help get the login information.

7. Discussion/Action Item

- **Discussion:** MVM High School Expansion Proposal (Nichole Dowlearn/Ellie Landru) Ellie asked the BOT what questions they have for the committee. Molly S. asked their

next steps and what support they need from the BOT. Ellie shared that they are looking for all of the constructive criticism. Any potential flaws so that they can have the most robust proposal possible and they would like to address any community concerns. The next step is at the GC meeting on April 8th the GC will need to vote if they are ready to send to the community. If so, they will pay for the voting software and send the vote to the community. Ellie asked the BOT to decide if they anticipate an additional vote outside of the Annual Meeting because then it would make more sense to get an annual subscription. If it passes the community it will then go to the BOT for approval and after BOT approval it would go to the BOE. Ellie discussed that our current charter is PK-8 and since this would expand past that it will require a charter amendment. Ellie clarified that if it was a new charter school then it would be a vote to both CCM and MVM, but as it just impacts the MVM charter it will only be an MVM vote. Kathleen included that in addition to the charter amendment they would also like to request the sister school priority option. Jen Kuhn asked if this would be for all grades and Kathleen clarified that her intention was high school because it was a program that CCM did not offer. Ellie shared that she was not sure that there was a distinction in grades if MVM requests sibling school priority. Tara encouraged the BOT to focus on the questions that apply to the BOT. The program expansion is up to the MVM GC. We are responsible for the budget, lottery, and upholding the charter with the BOE. If it gets to the BOT it means the program itself is hashed out. Tara requested 5 and 10 year projections about how it impacts MVM and MMCI, a plan for how to fund the first year, a plan for the lottery and how it will work this year. How will they plan to fill openings in 9th grade? How will they address the fact that MVM does not have a facility when the BOE has previously told us they will not grant an expansion without a facility. Kathleen said that the proposal will include all of these answers. Kathleen assured Tara that the program will be self sustaining. Amy Dorman mentioned that she has spent 17 of 21 years in high school. Dan Lippy has been in communication with her and putting her in contact with individuals in FCPS and supports the idea. Ms. Dorman reached out to Dr. Koe who has had a high school for 23 years and has been supporting the idea. Debra Williams has rolled out a similar program in DC and has been very supportive of helping us with this idea. Ms. Dorman's biggest concern is the long term facility solution. Kathleen mentioned that the Maryland Alliance of Charter Schools has offered mentoring for the proposal. Kathleen mentioned that there are solutions for the facility if MVM does not get a long term solution outside of Dill Ave. The committee has discussed renting space at Hood or renting a house in walking distance from MVM.

- **Discussion: MVM Key Policy (Molly Spence)**

Molly Spence mentioned this has been discussed. The MVM Secretary used to keep track of keys but as there is turnover of secretaries it is not clear if this is being tracked. There are keys that were not returned and there are individuals that need keys that don't have them. Ellie, the VP of MVM, needs a key in order to access the building for repairs and meetings. Molly S motioned for Ellie Landru, MVM VP to be granted a key in order to handle maintenance and repairs. Tara seconded the motion. Ms. Dorman asked if the concern was student records and it was clarified this would not give access to the MMCI office or the MVM office with student records and MMCI records. Kathleen shared the history but said as long as the need exists for the MVM

VP to access the building when issues arise it creates a huge obstacle to not have access to the building. Ellie mentioned that a system was created with the MVM secretary about who was allowed a key and who was allowed to check a key out and sharing was not allowed. Molly S mentioned that we should consider having Amy O'Connor managing the keys and Tara felt this could work well. Tara shared that there are times that the building is used for MMCI purposes. CCM shared that no parents have key access to CCM. Ellie and Tara shared that by having a key they have sponsored parent volunteers. Ms. Dorman shared that this was a concern in the past that teachers would come into classrooms and find things moved. Tara clarified that volunteers should only be in pre approved spaces. Ellie suggested that the key policy be updated to include responsibilities. Molly ended the discussion and the vote was 9 aye, 1 abstain. Molly S. will send an email to Amy O'Connor, Amy Dorman, and Renee Holt to ask for the MVM VP to be provided a key.

Finalizing the key policy will be added to the April agenda to address who should have access to a key and how they should be used. Molly felt it should be added for at least one representative of MMCI to have a copy of the CCM key as holders of the lease as the principal is not a lease holder.

- **Discussion:** Lottery Equity - Marketing & Communications efforts (Tara Dunsmore) Move to next month and put under Molly. Molly to pursue board members for feedback and discuss next month.

Molly voted to end the meeting at 9:16 p.m. and Tara seconded. All voted in favor.

Announcements:

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

- April 28
- May 26
- June 30

Advanced Reports

- Treasurer Report (Jeff Koehler)
- CCM Report (Carrie Jean Rathmell)
- MVM Report (Tori McCarthy)

Treasurer Report

MMCI Accounts

- Unrestricted cash balance in checking account \$18,100
- Current Reserve Fund Savings balance \$367,471

CCM Accounts

- Projected Facility Fund Savings balance \$383,050
- Projected end-of-year PPA surplus \$895,278
- Unrestricted cash available in checking account \$113,577

MVM Accounts

- Projected Facility Fund Savings balance is \$793,705
- Projected end-of-year PPA surplus is \$133,209
- Unrestricted cash available in checking account is \$49,629

Expenses Expenses paid over \$2,000 threshold:

▷None in February

Insurance

- The final refund check from the Bitner-Henry Insurance company's policy re-write and overcharge was received. The final cost of insurance for the year is \$22,510.

Fundraising Current fundraising totals:

- CCM donations \$6,959
- MVM donations \$14,788

CCM Report

CCM GC Report to MMCI BOT

March 2021

Submitted by Carrie Jean Rathmell

1. One-year option exercised on lease at Corporate Ct for 2021-2022 school year

- a. CCM GC elected to exercise the second of 3 one-year options available in our current lease at Corporate Ct to extend our lease with the same terms and conditions with the only difference being a 3% increase in base rent
- b. MMCI BOT approved. Molly Spence is in the process of submitting letter to the landlord.
- c. Here is a summary of rent over the course of the lease:

Year	Base Rent (3% increase per year)	Additional Rent (fixed = 25,350 sq ft x \$5)	Total Annual Rent = Base Rent + Additional Rent	Rent Increase from 2016-2017 original rent
2016-2017	\$278,850	\$126,750	\$405,600	\$0
2017-2018	\$287,216	\$126,750	\$413,966	\$8,366
2018-2019	\$295,832	\$126,750	\$422,582	\$16,982
2019-2020	\$304,707	\$126,750	\$431,457	\$25,857
2020-2021 option	\$313,848	\$126,750	\$440,598	\$34,998
2021-2022 option	\$323,264	\$126,750	\$450,014	\$44,414
2022-2023 option	\$332,961	\$126,750	\$459,711	\$54,111

2. Additional Full-time FCPS Custodian new hire began working on March 16

- a. CCM now has 1.5 FCPS custodial staffing
- b. During hybrid reopening the .5 custodian was working increased hours until the new hire started.

3. Air purifiers have arrived and are in classrooms!

- a. Replacement filters have also arrived and are ready for scheduled replacement

4. **Expanding PreK4 to full-day for 2021-2022 school year with COVID grant money**
 - a. Grant proposals/submissions are still being finalized with FCPS. If approved, CCM will offer Full-day PreK4 for the 2021-2022 school year to address reduced learning opportunities for this population in 2020-2021 when they were PreK3 due to COVID.
 - b. Marilyn can speak on this in more detail at the BOT meeting
5. **Virtual Talent Show in planning stages**
 - a. CCM will host a virtual talent show with video submissions of student acts
 - b. Videos will be compiled into one video that will be shared with the audience by sharing screen in a Google Meet.
 - c. Audience will purchase “tickets” to purchase the link and access code for the Google Meet to watch the live stream.
6. **End of the year possibilities are on the RADAR**
 - a. 8th grade celebration - sky stage date is reserved
 - b. Field Day
 - c. 8th grade pictures
 - d. Etc.
7. **Volunteer Recruitment for Current and future Openings in key positions**
 - a. Sherry Quinones squinones@carrollcreekmontessori.org or fundraising@carrollcreekmontessori.org is leading a team at the GC level to revitalize efforts at CCM to connect with the community for nominating, recruiting, training, and apprenticing parents for key volunteer positions.
8. **Fundraising Documents from MMCI** - updates were made to the fundraising/events documents in early 2020 right before COVID hit. The original updates were made as MVM documents, [Tara Dunsmore](#) is in the process of making CCM versions, particularly of the Fundraising and Events Proposal form and the GC Funds request form. [Current 2020 updated versions are available here](#). CCM will transition to the new forms once
9. **Landing Page after student login is now [CCM Media Resources Page](#)** Now after students log in to their [my.fcps.org](#) google account the next page that loads is the [CCM Media Resources Page](#). Thanks to [Kate Chasse](#) for working her magic to reach out to FCPS staff to successfully accomplish this task. Also thanks to Katie Mosquera and [Kate Chasse](#) for their work in updating this resource page to continue to provide access to these resources for students and staff at CCM.
10. **Virtual Info Night was held on Feb 24** for families interested in CCM and entering the lottery. 186 attendees.
11. **Inactive email addresses:** involvement@carrollcreekmontessori.org is no longer an active email account for the involvement and Communications Chair. communications@carrollcreekmontessori.org is the active committee chair email address which is also forwarded to Anna’s address, aspencer@carrollcreekmontessori.org. Also regarding inactive email addresses, reminder that VP-elect is no longer active for Chris Chandler, Chris’s active email address is vp-ccm@mmcimd.org
12. **CCM Participating in the Frederick MOMS Club Preschool Booklet** GC decided it was worthwhile to participate in the preschool booklet even though the booklet is published after the close date of the lottery. Decision that it was good to be part of the preschool conversation in Frederick County. No cost for inclusion in the booklet. This year there is no fair due to COVID,

only the booklet is being produced. The Booklet is only available on Facebook this year <https://www.facebook.com/frederickpreschoolfair/>. Since the booklet is alphabetical, CCM is 3rd :)

MVM Report

Principal updates and reminders:

- Plans are underway to accommodate requests for additional students to return to in-person learning for term 4. We are doing our best to keep student groups together and with their teachers. In instances where this can't be done, other options are being considered -- such as switching classes, for example.
- Our second FCPS walk-through (with Dr. Linda Chambers and Meg Lee) yielded lots of positive feedback. If anyone has a Twitter account and follows FCPS, you may see some of the highlights from that visit come across social media.
- Grants Information
 - The ESSER 2 grant had to be revised several times and was finally (re)submitted Friday, March 19. We will receive word this week on whether it was accepted in its latest form.
 - The preK/Kindergarten enhancement grant was accepted.
 - Grant requests included funds for tutoring, assessment and progress monitoring programs, Montessori materials, and additional tech (Chromebooks). Funds for the Outdoor Learning Environments were denied.
 - When both grants are green lighted, there will be comprehensive communication to follow for families to take advantage of several opportunities for addressing learning loss for students.
- Plans are in discussion for 8th grade graduation celebration.

- Plans are in discussion for volunteer celebration.
- Yearbook pictures have been scheduled for mid-April; this will be communicated to families. Students attending virtually will sign up for a time slot and come to the building if they wish. Students attending in-person will be taken to the photographer by their teachers.
- Staffing needs were recently communicated to the Hiring Committee; next step is to ask FCPS to post the positions and begin interviewing.
- Materials were distributed to students during the week of March 15, 2021 for use during virtual lessons.
- Our Montessori Specialist, Amanda Bodden lead a Virtual Parent Engagement Session on March 17, 2021. The focus of this session was “Montessori Q&A”. The session was followed by a virtual Community Coffee hosted by our Hospitality Committee.

Updates and reminders on the movements of GC and Committees:

- The MVMPCS GC has an opening for a Friend of Education (FOE) to complete Kevin Kusmider’s current term through December 31, 2021. Kevin has been a great asset to the MVMPCS GC and his thoughtful participation and outside perspective will be missed. Notification of the open position has been made to the MVMPCS community and additional information can be found here:

<https://mvmpcs.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/FOE-Position-March-2021.pdf>.

We ask that MMCI BOT members reach out to any individuals in the greater community that may be interested in serving as a FOE on the MVMPCS GC.

Applications are due to GC@mvmpcs.org by March 31, 2021.

- Our fundraising committee is finishing out the year strong with several upcoming fundraisers including a virtual variety show hosted by parent volunteers, sales of tickets to Tree Trekkers outdoor aerial adventure and zipline park, and several dine-out dates for Mod Pizza.
- The MVMPCS Annual Fund Team kicked off the Pay it Forward campaign on Friday, March 19, 2021. Pay it Forward allows community members to make a

small donation to the Annual Fund on behalf of a fellow Meerkat, and then an email will be sent to that person letting them know of the donation and asking them to pay it forward. This is our annual small donation/high participation fundraiser and we're shooting for 100% community participation. The Pay it Forward campaign runs through Friday, March 26, 2021, and additional information can be found here:

<https://mvmpcs.org/2021/03/19/pay-it-forward-mvm/>

- Our Hiring Committee is in search of MVMPCS parent volunteers. The Hiring Committee is a team of parent and staff volunteers who work to identify candidates for staff openings at the school. If you are interested in learning more about the Hiring Committee and/or what the role of parent volunteer entails, please contact the committee Chair, Laurie Gibbons, at hiringchair@mvmpcs.org.

- During the March GC Meeting, a group of community members presented a proposal for the expansion of MVMPCS to include grades 9-12. The meeting recording and link to the slides presented were emailed to BOT members and additional information from the proposal team can be reviewed here:

<https://mvmpcs.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/COPY-FOR-ENEWS-High-School-Propo-sal-Information-Resources-2.pdf>. A Town Hall Meeting will be held

virtually on Thursday, March 23 @ 7:00 pm, BOT members are encouraged to attend to learn more about this proposal.

Votes Completed:

- February 17, 2021, ESSER 2 Grant application approved via eVote.
- February 21, 2021, MVM Virtual Variety Show approved via eVote.
- March 1, 2021, April 2021 meeting moved to Thursday, April 8th due to the school being closed on the first two Mondays of the month.
- March 7, 2021, Tree Trekkers ticket sales fundraiser approved via eVote.
- March 12, 2021, February 2021 GC meeting minutes approved via eVote.
- March 19, 2021, Mod Pizza dine-out fundraiser approved via eVote.

Upcoming Worksessions and Meetings:

- Tuesday, March 23, 2020, @ 7:00 pm, High School Expansion Proposal Town Hall Meeting.
- Thursday, April 8, 2021, @ 6:30 pm, Monthly GC Voting Meeting to be held virtually. Note: this meeting was moved from its scheduled time via a vote at the March 2021 GC meeting.