

MINUTES

**Monocacy Montessori Communities, Incorporated (MMCI) Board of Trustees
(BOT) Wednesday, June 30, 2021 @ 7:00 p.m.**

BOT Members present: 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 called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

2. Welcome

3. Community Comments *none*

4. Consent Agenda Items

- *6/28/21 Approval of Insurance Policies for Fiscal Year 2022. 9 aye, 4 did not respond.*
- *Ellie made a motion to amend the agenda and add a Discussion/Vote item to approve a lease amendment for 217 Dill Ave for MVM. 7 aye, 0 nay.*

5. Reports

MMCI President Report

Molly Spence

Tonight is Molly's last meeting. Tara will be taking over starting tomorrow and she will have control of the president's email account and all that goes with it. Molly encouraged individuals to feel free to contact Molly for any future needs. Molly shared it was an honor to serve the community and has been with it for 13 years and will still be here for 2 years. Molly thanked those who have helped her. She appreciated the dedication of those around her that run this organization that educates hundreds of kids. Molly also thanked Melissa Najera, Kathleen Lutrell, and David Henry and presented them with plaques. Tara Dunsmore presented Molly with a plaque and thanked her for her service.

CCM VP Report

Christopher Chandler

No update

MVM VP Report

Ellie Landru

There has been much movement with facilities but it will be covered later. A lot of work has been done on the lease which will also be discussed later.

BOT Treasurer Report

Jeff Koehler

Advance Report sent, included at end of minutes. Amy O'Connor is getting ready for the audit so there may be some questions going out. Both schools are working on budgets. FCPS puts out PPA numbers in late July/early August and we should be able to modify the budget at the August meeting and have those out to FCPS. Tara gave a heads up that the negotiations with the BOE have stalled and this may delay the PPA calculations. Molly reminded the board that we have an Assistant Treasurer role that is vacant and to reach out to Tara for details. This is eligible for any parent at either school .

6. Updates

7:35-7:55 p.m.

CCM update

Carrie Jean Rathmell / Marilyn Horan

Carrie Jean - Advance Report sent, included at end of minutes. No additional update.

Marilyn - CCM is working to fill their staff positions. There are two more positions to fill. CCM is looking forward to having the SSR money soon. CCM has purchased many books, with a focus on diversity. 6 copies of each book were purchased for younger grades and 35 copies for middle school. Yesterday teachers were already setting up their classrooms. CCM is looking at what PK4 all day will look like. For example, there is not currently room for 20 students to have lunch at the same time. Kindergarten students will start August 9th. This will just be to prepare them for the next school year and will not include specials and special education services. PK 4 will have rest time while kindergarten has rest time. CCM held their 8th grade celebration. 16 students had been with the school since it started. Next year 16 6th graders will be taking Spanish 1. Marilyn shared that she plans to review the carline routine and entrances that are used. Ellie asked about how they were identifying children that may be behind. Marilyn shared that they will be providing the resources and giving children space. Children are not behind, they are where they are. CCM will be supplementing some special education programs and providing resources for SEIAs to go into classrooms and provide resources for students that may not have been identified for special education but could use assistance.

MVM update

Tori McCarthy/Amy Dorman

Amy - MVM received a large delivery of materials from a school in Baltimore. The school had decided to close down their Montessori children's house. Many materials were brand new. Many volunteers coordinated to bring in the materials and next they will be inventoried. Ms. Dorman has been focusing on using grants that were received. There will be novels. Middle school will have Year A and Year B cycles. In Upper El Mr. Craig requested novels and most of these were purchased. The library had a request list and those books were purchased. They represented diverse perspectives and there was a focus on first story accounts and stories that would engage the children. MVM will welcome K on 8/9 to get established and PK

4 on 8/18 and PK3 on 8/19. Families will receive this information in the mail. There is a deep cleaning going on. Stickers have been removed for the Fall and masking will be optional. At some point volunteers will be able to come back in the building. Ms. Dorman is hiring for open positions and the process is slow. Next week they will be interviewing for the Middle School IA and then they will determine how to handle Spanish. The class placements are mostly finalized. The end of the school year was lovely. Kids went to Baker Park. Renee the secretary brought her food truck and kids got snowballs. 8th grade promotion was at Thorpewood and it was student led and a good closure. In the fall tutoring was very much appreciated and well received. Ms. Dorman reiterated what Marilyn said that when the whole world is now behind it's hard to define behind. She is not looking for gaps and deficits, but who would benefit from additional assistance. For younger students she is planning to offer an acceleration program on Saturdays and for older students to highlight 3 days a week after school.

Shemica thanked the principals for including diversity in the education curriculum.

Tori - Monday the MVM GC met to begin discussing the budget. The GC voted to move the July and August meetings specifically to be able to work with the budget and they moved their July and August meetings to better accommodate this process to July 26 and August 30th.

Molly Spence added that the MVM Annual Report to the BOE went really well and was well received. There were some ideas with advocacy and getting into more diverse communities.

Ms. Dorman added that our Middle School was featured in the newspaper and received a thank you from the mayor of Frederick.

Molly shared that Thorpewood really enjoyed the alliance and supporting the non-profit and was interested in allowing use for retreats and future graduations.

Fundraising Committee

Tara Dunsmore/TBD

Tara recently connected with somebody from the Maryland non-profit alliance and they shared that they do retreats and training for non-profits. As far as fundraising, today Shemica and Tara participated in a webinar for Teacher Diversity Funding. They do not work directly with charter organizations but encourage charter's to work with collaborations with larger groups like FCPS or other charter organizations. The application is due August 3rd. It is a lot to come up with quickly but there are other opportunities and MMCI can continue to try to work with them. Shemica added that there is a possibility but we have to be creative and specific and still give them what they are asking for to receive the grant. Tara will come up with a description for the Fundraising Chair.

Facility update

Molly Spence/Molly Carlson/Kathleen Lutrell

Kathleen shared that we are constantly scanning for additional opportunities. There are two current properties that show promise that we are looking into feasibility studies. One is the FISC property and the other is the Clover Hill property.

Advocacy Committee

Eddie Benites

Eddie shared that this month MVM had the annual meeting and now there is follow up from that. Eddie would like to meet with the BOT and determine needs. Letters were sent to encourage increased zoning options. One response was received right away that the alderman was in support. Marilyn asked Eddie about the Montessori bill. Eddie said the session has currently ended so it will need to be reintroduced in January.

Molly moved the discussion item for the first two items to prior to the closed session.

7. Discussion/Action Item

8:25 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

- **Discussion/Vote:** *Appoint David Henry as Special Advisor to MMCI Lottery Committee, per the MMCI Bylaws, Section IV.8.g: Advisory Committee, for a period of up to six months. (Tara Dunsmore)*
David generously offered to step up to help the process in an official capacity to help make sure the lottery is smooth.
Tara made the motion to make David a special advisor to the Lottery Committee ending December 31, 2021. Ellie seconded. Ellie added that it is important for volunteers in this particular role to be supported for an entire cycle. Molly shared that this will allow the process to be smooth. She has seen him step back and the new leaders step up. This will allow him to keep access to his email and provide support and she sees no downside. 9 aye, no opposed.
- **Discussion/Vote:** *Elect Kathleen Lutrell as Friend of Ed (Tara Dunsmore)*
Tara discussed that her recommendation was to vote to remove Kim Sexton from her role as Friend of Ed and to place Kathleen in this position which will end 12/31/21. If she would like to then run for Friend of Ed she is able and if she would like to step back she is also able. Tara asked Kathleen to share her vision for the role. Kathleen shared the amount of work that she has been doing for the past 5 ½ years. She has put so much into the effort and feels that she is not done moving the project forward. 6 months may be all that is needed. The high school expansion team is a passion project idea. Kathleen is currently working on a 30 page narrative with a 150 page supporting document for a grant for the new high school. She feels this is what MMCI and MVM is all about. A grassroots movement to create something out of nothing. Kathleen shared that she hopes that the BOT will elect her and allow her to continue.

8. Closed Session

Start 8:30 p.m. End 9:20 p.m.

___Maryland Open Meetings Act reasons for closing the meeting:

- *the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of an appointee, employee, or official over whom it has jurisdiction*
- *consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related to the acquisition*

9. (RETURN TO OPEN MEETING) Discussion/Action Items

- *Molly motioned that the board remove Kim Sexton as a friend of education due to inactivity and elect Kathleen Lutrell to fill the position which ends 12/31/21. Tara seconded. 9 aye, 1 did not vote.*
- ***Vote:*** *Approval of funds for attorney (Ellie Landru) Ellie recommended that as we are entering conversations with any properties being considered we have an attorney available. We have a parent at MVM who has offered pro-bono help but for a limited hours. Ellie motioned to approve legal representation for any MMCI contract agreements for a total of up to \$2000 in attorneys fees to represent MMCI's interest with regards to facilities projects with the law firm of McCurdy Dean and Graditor, LLC. Tara seconded. 11 voted in favor, 0 opposed.*
- ***Discussion/Vote:*** *Financial Policies (Tara Dunsmore/Jeff Koehler) moved to work session*
- ***Discussion:*** *New Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policies (Tara Dunsmore/Jeff Koehler) moved to work session*
- ***Discussion:*** *Clubhouse Kids Update (Tara Dunsmore) Tara spoke with Aimee and Chris last week and they are intending to operate as normal next year at both schools. They have sent a notice to families at each school that have participated previously that they will need to have a reduced capacity due to staffing and encouraged families to enroll right away. The information will go out to both communities for any additional slots. Carrie Jean asked if there is information we can share. Tara said that we can share the information that is on the website with both schools.*
- ***Discussion:*** *Potential Return to in person meetings (Tara Dunsmore) The BOT discussed that there are benefits to provide the flexibility to have hybrid meetings. Molly advocated for some in-person meetings or work sessions because there are some things you can do when you are in the same room that you cannot do when everybody is virtual. The group agreed that allowing the opportunity to participate virtually helps principals who already work long hours, volunteers with families, and other scenarios, but also saw the benefit of determining ways to meet in person to allow better collaboration. Tara said she will continue this discussion in the coming months.*
- ***Discussion:*** *MAPCS Membership at MMCI Level (Ellie Landru) Ellie wanted*

to discuss the Maryland Alliance for Public Charter Schools. MMCI previously discussed this but didn't have cohesive points to discuss at that time. Key points are advocacy. This gives MMCI a seat at the table at the state and local level. It is a long term investment. We may not see the benefits right away. MAPCS can advise us on key strategies, expansion, staffing, and funding impact decisions. Also, opportunity to collaborate with other charters. We have two grants that we are working on that would benefit from this relationship. This does not have a huge impact at the GC level but it does have a benefit ability at the MMCI level. It should be done at the MMCI level not at the GC level as previously discussed. It is \$5/PPA receiving level. Carrie Jean said that at the GC level they felt it was not appropriate but they fully supported it at the MMCI level. Tori shared that this was the same reaction at the MVM level, that this should be a MMCI level decision because that is where our advocacy is focused. Tara recommended that the information is resent and discussed at an email level.

- *Discussion/Vote - MVM Lease Amendment (Ellie Landru) Ellie sent the amendment of the lease agreement to the BOT. It is currently in negotiations. It is not due to expire until the end of July. Ellie recommended that the discussion be moved to email to make sure we are advocating for all of the things that we need to be looking at for the lease negotiation. Ellie would like to meet with John Garza to discuss anything that comes out of changes so that this can be wrapped up as soon as possible. Ellie shared that she would verify how much we have used that is budgeted to make sure that we are in budget.*

Tara shared with the BOT that she will be on vacation 7/5-12.

Meeting adjourned at 10:06 p.m.

Advance Reports:

- *Financial Reports - Jeff Koehler*
- *CCM Report - Carrie Jean*
- *Friend of Ed Application*

Financial Report

MMCI Accounts

- *Unrestricted cash balance.....\$27,437*
- *Current Reserve Fund Savings balance.....\$348,498*

CCM Accounts

- *Projected Facility Fund Savings balance.....\$383,041*
- *Projected end-of-year PPA surplus.....\$974,889*
- *Unrestricted cash available in checking account...\$109,104*

MVM Accounts

- *Projected Facility Fund Savings balance.....\$793,703*
- *Projected end-of-year PPA surplus.....\$388,162*
- *Unrestricted cash available in checking account....\$55,045*

Expenses Expenses paid over \$2,000 threshold:

- *Barrie School (CCM teacher tuition) \$5,207.50*

Audit

The audit has been scheduled for the week of August 23, 2021.

Fundraising Current school fundraising totals:

- *CCM \$7,822*
- *MVM \$24,331*

CCM GC Report for MMCI

Submitted by Carrie Jean Rathmell

- *June CCM Leadership meeting not held because of scheduling issue for Dan Lippy. Trying to get summer schedules to align to reschedule.*
- *CCM GC discussed at June meeting and decided to continue to hold GC meetings in*

the virtual model because it eliminates late night commutes home from the meeting, allows participants to be home with families right up until meeting time including for dinner, allows participants to be at the meeting and cover childcare for their family at the same time, and is more flexible for participants who need to drop in and out of the meeting because of other commitments.

- *CCM revised arrival and dismissal procedures for next year based on experiences with multiple doors this year during the pandemic. For 2021-2022 CCM there will no longer be a park and walk in option at CCM. CCM will use 2 doors: one for primary and the other for all other students. Families with students in both primary and other levels will need to make a stop at both locations.*
- *GC compiled an end of the year checklist of important information and dates with families and distributed in ParentSquare and on the website*
- *GC compiled a checklist of to dos and items to revisit and make sure are in place for the 2021-2022 school year. Especially things that we need to do a status check to see where things stand after the pandemic.*
 - *One of these includes: Status check on on-site Clubhouse Kids at CCM for 2021-2022 school year. Carrie Jean was tasked with checking in with MMCI about CHK status for next year. In a typical year, enrollment information for the next school year would be distributed before the summer break.*
- *CCM renewed the subscription with ParentSquare for the 2021-2022 school year.*
- *CCM is creating a Summer Work Group to revitalize volunteering with a launch ready for the new school year.*
- *The GC is looking at the .7 P.E. Staffing and possible changes and strategies to address frequent turn over in the .7 position which has often been seen as a good first position and then our teachers move on to a 1.0 position at a different school after gaining a few years of experience.*
- *Marilyn can provide information about end of the year:*
 - *Arrival of the chromebooks ordered in August*
 - *8th grade celebration at Skystage*
 - *Staffing openings and hiring*

Friend of Ed Application

Greetings to the Board of Trustees of MMCI,

My name is Kathleen Lutrell and I and my family moved to Frederick from Bowie, MD in 2012 specifically so our son Aaron could attend MVMPCS starting in the first grade. We knew that we wanted the educational philosophy and opportunities that a Montessori environment provides, so we are proud and grateful to be a part of this vibrant, culturally diverse community. I believe in actively participating and giving back to the community and as such, I served as MVM's Vice President on the Board of Trustees of MMCI and as a member of the MVM Governing Council from January of 2016 to July of 2020. I have found both the Governing Council and the Board of Trustees to be an ethical, determined and extremely talented group of people to work with. I am amazed at the depth and scope of the projects we have worked on, all for the betterment of both schools and the advancement of free, public Montessori education in Frederick County! Although

my son has proudly graduated from 8th grade at MVMPCS I would love to continue to serve the community as a Friend of Education on the MMCI Board of Trustees by filling a currently vacant FOE position. Thank you for your consideration.

My educational experience includes degrees from the University of Maryland in microbiology and biochemistry. My research experience at the University of Maryland spanned several areas of molecular biology, the ecology of the Chesapeake Bay, and the study of pathogenic microbes in commercial fisheries. I was a member of the Maryland Secretary of the Environment's Science Advisory Committee helping to determine the direction of Maryland State policy to preserve the ecology of the Chesapeake Bay and its watersheds. This was followed by many years as a research associate in viral oncology at the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, MD. Later, I owned and managed our family's businesses for 12 years, both an insurance agency and a premium finance company. I have also worked in several areas of real estate, as an investor, in sales and in property management. I have been a licensed Realtor for more than 20 years. Community service has been an important part of my life and I have been privileged to work with amazing groups on diverse projects. I founded and served as president of a citizen's association that was able to stop construction of an incinerator and landfill expansion in the DC area, helped write and pass legislation specifying the siting, buffer and liner requirements for future landfills in the State of Maryland and helped rewrite the Prince George's County developer landscape requirements in order to save old growth forest and expand wetland habitat. I have been a board member on the non-profit Port Towns Community Development Corporation, working on large scale real estate development projects for a historic riverfront locale near DC. Since joining the MVMPCS community I have participated on many committees including the Library committee, Strategic Planning committee, MVM Building Search committee, the Charter Renewal committee, the Nominating committee, the Lottery committee and most recently, the MVM High School Charter Expansion committee. I feel privileged to have been one of MVM's representatives before the BOE for multiple Annual Reports as well as our recent 10 year Charter renewal. I am hoping for an opportunity to continue to use my skill set and experiences to continue to benefit MMCI and MVMPCS by helping to maintain and improve our fabulous school!