

# MINUTES

Monocacy Montessori Communities, Incorporated (MMCI) Board of Trustees  
(BOT) Wednesday, March 30, 2022 @ 7:00 p.m.

**BOT Members Present:** Nikki Burgee (CCM GC Chair, non-voting member), Molly Carlson, Nichole Dowlearn, Tara Dunsmore, Michael Beth Edwards, Elise Goodwin, Jeff Koehler, Jen Kuhn, Kathleen Lutrell, Jen Mayo, Tori McCarthy (MVM GC Chair, non-voting member), Meggan Sombat, Amy Sullivan

## Regular Meeting Agenda

### 1. Call To Order

Meeting called to order at 7:09

### 2. Welcome/Introductions

Tara introduced the board and principals.

### 3. Community Comments

One Community Comment (included at the end of the agenda)

### 4. Consent Agenda Items

- **Evotes**
  - **3/4/22 Approval of February BOT Minutes. 10 aye, 2 did not vote.**
  - **3/4/22 Approval of February Special Voting Meeting Minutes. 11 aye, 1 did not vote**
- Advance Reports and Committee Updates (To be included in minutes)
  - MVM GC Chair Update (no advance report received)
  - MVM Principal update (included at end of minutes)
  - CCM GC Chair Update (no advance report received)
  - MMCI Lottery Committee Update (no advance report received)
    - CCM had 1800 - 400 more than ever before and only 35 spots
    - MVM had 1885
  - MMCI Facilities Committee Update (see later agenda items)
  - MMCI HS Expansion Committee Update (this will now be a GC

- level committee)
- MMCI Financial Report 2/2022 (*access restricted*)
- MMCI Finance Summary 2/2022 (*included at end of minutes*)

## 5. BOT Member Reports

MMCI President Report *Tara Dunsmore*

*All updates included as agenda items.*

MVM VP Report *Ellie Landru*

*Not present*

CCM VP Report *Michael Beth Edwards*

*Marilyn has been working on advocating for Montessori certification to count for Maryland state teacher certification. Michael Beth Edwards gave an update on her experience at the AMS conference.*

BOT Treasurer Report *Jeff Koehler*

*Advance report sent, included at end of minutes. Jeff has started to see both schools communicating about budgets and the goal is to have fully formed budgets by early summer so that when PPA comes out any changes can be made and they can be voted on by the GCs and BOT and sent to the BOE on time.*

*Tara will discuss what things are covered by FCPS for insurance purposes and what we should be covering at the next meeting with Dr. Lippy .*

## 5. Updates

MVM Principal update *Amy Dorman*

*Advance report sent, included at the end of the minutes. Ms. Dorman shared that Scott Blendel met with the MVM crew of trained emergency responders to review the MVM process and to give suggestions on emergency plans. He reassured MVM that the current plan is in good shape and he gave suggestions on how to make it even better. 8 MVM staff members attended the AMS conference and each level was represented. Staff will be sharing knowledge with other staff and the community.*

CCM Principal update *Marilyn Horan*

*The keynote speaker was very inspiring at the AMS conference. Only 3 went from CCM and Michael Beth joined them. There was a well rounded variety of sessions. A poet laureate from Baltimore visited CCM last week. It cost \$2000 but was covered through the Maryland Arts Council. CCM is preparing for testing schedules. There is not a lot of instructional time left this school year. CCM 6th graders are planning a camping trip. CCM is celebrating their 10th anniversary and a class is planning a play to celebrate.*

## 6. Action Items/Follow-up

- **Check-in:** Annual Fundraising Calendars and plans (GC Chairs)
  - No updates
- **Followup:** MMCI Staffing Discussion - schedule work session (Tara Dunsmore)
  - Tara is keeping this on her radar and had a conversation with the new representative for Maryland Alliance for Public Charter Schools, and has suggested an employee whose primary responsibility is fundraising and raises not only their salary but also enough to support both schools.
- **Followup:** Robert's Rules Training Opportunity (Tara Dunsmore)
  - Tara needs to follow up and get this scheduled. Meggan Sombat offered to get this scheduled.
- **Followup:** Montessori Teacher Training (Molly Carlson)
  - The group met on March 9th and there was a mix of staff and parents.
- **Followup:** BOT Evote Policy (Jeff Koehler)
  - Jeff sent an email to the BOT today with information and due to a full agenda he will send to the BOT with a call for discussion and vote.

## 7. New Business: Discussion and votes

- **Discussion:** Parent Trustees to rotate as meeting moderators
  - At the end of the meeting we will decide who will be the moderator
- **Discussion:** CCM Facilities Update (Tara Dunsmore/Molly Carlson)

CCM is aware of an HVAC replacement necessary so they have been working on an estimate to help form their counter offer that will help cover the HVAC. A new letter of intent should be submitted by the end of the week.
- **Discussion:** MVM Facilities Update (Tara Dunsmore/Ellie Landru)

Later on the agenda is the MVM Lease Extension. MVM has an offer from the landlord for a one year lease extension. MVM did make an offer and are still negotiating a contract. MVM sent a draft and the seller made changes and it has been going back and forth. Since this project is not final MVM is continually looking at other options to make sure there are several plans.

**Closed Session:** To consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto (Tara Dunsmore)

**Tara motioned to go into closed session. Michael Beth seconded. Aye 10**

Closed session time: 8:20-8:32 p.m.

- **Discussion/Vote:** MVM Lease Extension (Tara Dunsmore)
  - MVM has an offer from the landlord to renew the lease with a 2% increase for one year for a total of \$264,980 which is less than MVM budgeted. **Tara motioned to approve the MVM lease extension for 1 year with a 2% increase. Molly Carlson seconded. 11 aye.**
- **Discussion/Vote:** Attorney invoices. (Tara Dunsmore/Amy Sullivan/Jeff Koehler)
  - The BOT approved up to \$5000 a few months ago. Purchasing a building and real estate requires a lot of legal fees. Tara would like to first approve the outstanding amount of \$3759. Tara will share the invoice once the necessary information is redacted. **Tara motioned to approve the bill for \$3759 to McCurdy Dean & Graditor for attorney fees. Jeff seconded.** Amy O'Connor clarified the fund that the money should come from. Tara said to pull from the operating budget and once it goes above that to start using funds from the MMCI Facilities Account. Amy O'Connor verified that \$10,000 for legal services was budgeted for the year and once the current bill is paid we will be over that amount at roughly \$10,600. **11 aye.**
- **Discussion/Vote:** Future attorney fees (Tara Dunsmore/Ellie Landru/Molly Carlson)
  - Tara mentioned that with both schools working on major building projects additional legal help will be needed. Jeff asked if there is an estimate for each school. Tara estimated that for each school they will have several months of legal needs but it will decrease at some point. Molly Carlson shared that while MVM is using more right now, CCM's needs could increase in a few months and this is something that we should use grace and courtesy with each other. Meggan suggested voting approving up to a certain amount. Amy O'Connor shared that the bill is combined with MVM and CCM usage from the lawyer. Tara felt that those meeting with the lawyer could probably divide this out. MMCI currently has \$262,795 in Facility Reserve. Tara felt that as ultimately MMCI is legally responsible it made sense for MMCI to cover legal expenses. Tara recommended that we set an amount of \$20,000 for each school for a total of \$40,000 and if we reach that amount it will come back to the BOT to review and determine if they should approve additional funds. Amy O'Connor recommended that she can keep track of each school separately but if we make it for up to \$40,000 it will provide more flexibility. **Tara made a motion to approve up to \$40,000 in attorney fees for ongoing facility negotiations for both schools to be paid out of MMCI facility reserve. Jeff seconded. 11 aye**
- **Discussion/Vote:** Update Financial Policies (Amy Sullivan)
  - MMCI Procurement Policy
  - MMCI Grants Policy
  - MMCI Credit Card Policy

- MMCI Finance Policy
- MMCI Reserves & Surplus Policy
- 6 months ago MMCI held a workshop on Financial Policies and Amy Sullivan and Amy O'Connor have been working to get them finalized. Amy Sullivan shared that the policies have been worked on with Amy O'Connor and with auditors to make sure they are where they need to be and asked for questions. Tara requested an update on the Credit Card Policy. Amy O'Connor said that we were able to find a company that works with Tax ID not with personal social security numbers and has not yet pursued credit cards because they wanted to have the policy finalized first. Amy Sullivan went through the purpose and major changes to each policy. Tara questioned the MMCI emergency funds at \$1000 without approval as there was recently an emergency expense that was \$3000. Amy O'Connor suggested that there be another layer of approval that for over \$1000 perhaps it takes 2 votes. Tara said that she was concerned that this limits the GCs. Tara recommended that the BOT give the GCs the decision making power to remove the amount or make it higher. Tara suggested that this policy have some changes before the BOT votes. Meggan Sombat questioned some parts of the Grants policy and suggested that an Executive Member be the Point of Contact for Grants. Jeff offered to work with Meggan on why some of the things are specifically in the policy.
- The Finance policy has been reviewed line by line with the auditors and Amy O'Connor. They read the policy and verify that it is being followed. This policy has been thoroughly reviewed and needs no updating. Tara shared that the Reserves & Surplus Policy started when she was Assistant Treasurer and there was discussion over operating expenses and emergency funds. It was decided that MMCI should have reserves to cover small expenses but each school should have their own reserve for other emergency expenses that MMCI wouldn't be responsible for paying. The operating reserve was decided to be \$100,000. The remainder went into the MMCI Facility and Capital Assets Reserve. Tara discussed the Admin Fee surplus. If the Operating Reserve dipped below \$100,000 the Admin Fee surplus would be replenished and any extra would go back to the schools. *We will pause on Procurement and Grant policy for further review.* **Tara motioned to approve the MMCI Finance Policy, MMCI Credit Card Policy, and MMCI Reserves & Surplus Policy. Seconded by Molly Carlson. 11 aye.**
- **Discussion: DEI Committee membership**
  - Tara moved this to April. Any BOT members that are interested in joining the committee can email Tara. Amy Dorman, Molly Carlson, and Jen Mayo volunteered to participate.

At the next meeting Tara would like to revisit virtual meetings now that the mask mandate is lifted.

Tara motioned to close at 10:00. Michael Beth seconded.

## Consent Agenda Items

- Community Comment
- MVM Principal Update
- MMCI Finance Summary

### Community Comment

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1p63fgPnGNJJli\\_X5wuDZrI8YTCb770vijvzpcPaUdx8/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1p63fgPnGNJJli_X5wuDZrI8YTCb770vijvzpcPaUdx8/edit?usp=sharing)

### MVM Principal Update

*Submitted March 30, 2022 by Amy Dorman*

1. Parents have been invited to observe in their child's classroom on Wednesday mornings since mid-March. So far only a few parents have come to observe (2 primary / 5 lower elementary / 3 upper elementary / 0 middle school) and there were no requests for follow up information. This is an ongoing opportunity for parents; sign up in advance is required.
2. The Parent Engagement night scheduled for March 31st was postponed due to a shipment delay of materials. The new date is Wednesday, April 13, from 6:30 - 8:00. The event will be in-person and middle school students will offer child care. So far this year, attendance has been relatively light at Parent Engagement events (there have been 2; 2 more are planned).
3. Eight staff members attended the American Montessori Society (AMS) Conference in Nashville last month, and two more participated virtually. In all, ten teachers were able to select from a host of workshops focusing on best practices in Montessori education. Staff will give a presentation of their learning as the final Parent Engagement offering this school year. This professional development opportunity was made possible by ESSER grant funds.



4. Dennis Anderson, MVMS maintenance mechanic, will be celebrated by the staff with a breakfast gathering and gifts of appreciation on his last day with MVMS on Thursday, March 31.
5. MCAP, MAP, and DIBELS tests begin this month and continue into May. Testing data helps staff to make informed instructional decisions and allocations/recommendations of resources.

Here is a breakdown of the upcoming tests:

- a. MCAP tests are the Maryland state assessments that all FCPS students take. MCAP measures student performance on state curriculum standards in reading and math and additional content areas depending upon grade. They contribute to our overall standing/rank as compared with FCPS and other Maryland public school students.
- b. Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) shows student growth in reading, language, and math. MVMS uses MAP instead of Performance Series Scantron, and it is one of our measures for the School Improvement Plan. Many teachers will meet with students to discuss their individual learning profiles and to help them identify growth goals in each subject.

- c. DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) is given to measure development in early literacy. Teachers also use this information to guide instructional decisions (such as which skills to focus on, how often to conduct progress monitoring) and to measure student progress. This data is also part of our SIP.
6. On Wednesday, March 30, Amy Dorman, Regina Chadwick, Kim Cowles, Cindy Green, and Dennis Anderson met with Scott Blundell to receive feedback on MVMS' school emergency plan. He also walked the building with us and provided additional recommendations. This information will be shared at our next staff meeting.
7. The MVMS Science Olympiad team participated in the Regional Competition on March 12th. They qualified to move on to the MD State Tournament.
8. Middle School will hold a dance on Friday, April 1 at the Downtown Community Room in Frederick. Last year's 8th grade students were invited to join this year's 7th and 8th year students.
9. Staff is donating first aid supplies to support humanitarian aid for Ukraine. They will be delivered to [St. Michael the Archangel Ukrainian Catholic Church](#) in Baltimore.
10. Middle School students are continuing fundraising efforts to defray the cost of their end of year trip to the Chincoteague Bay Field Station. Information was shared in the monthly school newsletter.
11. MVMS had excellent attendance at the recent drama club presentation of *The Snow Queen*. Shannon Vendemmia, music teacher, does a wonderful job working with students to create an enjoyable and quality production!

## **MMCI Finance Summary**

*Submitted on March 29, 2022 by Jeff Koehler*

### **MMCI Accounts**

Operating Funds \$41,057

Operating Reserve \$100,000

Facility Reserve \$262,795

### **CCM Accounts**

Current Facility Fund Savings \$383,120

PPA surplus in FCPS Reserve \$931,498

PPA surplus in FY22 budget \$83,454

Unrestricted checking account cash \$115,947

### **MVM Accounts**

Current Facility Fund Savings \$793,865

PPA surplus in FCPS Reserve \$825



PPA surplus in FY22 budget \$459,450  
Unrestricted checking account cash \$64,422

**Expenses paid over \$2,000 threshold**  
McCurdy, Dean, & Graditor \$2,945