

APRIL BOT MEETING MINUTES - FINAL

**Monocacy Montessori Communities, Incorporated (MMCI) Board of Trustees
(BOT) Wednesday, April 27, 2022 @ 7:00 p.m.**

**Virtual Meeting: meet.google.com/fcv-mjvy-utv
Join by phone: +1 346-808-1766 PIN: 378 965 061#**

Members Present:

- Molly Carlson, CCM Parent Trustee, Facilities Chair
 - Julie Clark, CCM Parent Trustee
 - Nichole Dowlearn, MVM Parent Trustee
 - Tara Dunsmore, BOT President
 - Michael Beth Edwards, CCM VP
 - Elise Goodwin, MVM Parent Trustee
 - Jeff Koehler, Treasurer
 - Ellie Landru, MVM VP, Facilities Chair
 - Kathleen Lutrell, Friend of Ed
 - Jennifer Mayo, CCM Parent Trustee
 - Meggan Sombat, Interim BOT Secretary
 - Amy Sullivan, BOT Assistant Treasurer
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- Nikki Burgee (CCM GC Chair, non-voting member)
 - Amy Dorman, MVM Principal
 - Marilyn Horan, CCM Principal
 - Jen Kuhn, (MVM GC Chair, non-voting member)

Regular Meeting Agenda*

1. Call To Order **7:00 p.m.**

Tara Dunsmore called the meeting to order at 7:05pm.

2. Welcome/Introductions **7:02 - 7:10 p.m.**

Board Member introductions were omitted in the interest of time. See meeting attendance above.

3. Guest Speaker - Lem Wheelles

7:10- 8:10 p.m.

Tara Dunsmore introduced guest speaker, Lem Wheelles of Anchorage, AK. Lem was referred to us by former MVM GC Member Eddie Benites, as an authority on Robert's Rules of Order. Lem provided a one-hour training session for our BOT on Parliamentary Procedure. There were 26 people in attendance, including members of both schools' Governing Councils.

Lem began the training at 7:07pm.

Notes on Robert's Rules Training are available in the BOT Shared Drive.

ACTION ITEM: Check our bylaws on how we reference Robert's Rules. (Tara Dunsmore/ Meggan Sombat)

Lem logged off at 8:17pm.

MOTION: Tara moved to recess until 8:25pm Ellie seconded. Motion passed by majority.

*Regular Meeting Agenda and Google Meet Recording to begin at 8:10 p.m.

Meeting resumed at 8:25pm / Recording began at 8:25pm

4. Community Comments

8:10- 8:15 p.m.

There were no Community Comments this month.

5. Consent Agenda Items

8:15-8:20 p.m.

- **Evotes**

Tara read the Consent Agenda Items.

- **4/5/22 - Appointment of Interim BOT Secretary (Meggan Sombat) - MOTION PASSED - 8 Aye, 1 Abstention, 2 did not vote.**
- **4/14/22 - Summer Drama Camp at MVM - MOTION PASSED - 8 Aye, 3 did not vote.**
- **4/18/22 - Approval of March Meeting Minutes - MOTION PASSED - 9 Aye, 2 did not vote.**

Tara stated that she was going to take a moment to make a statement as the BOT President. Hre full statement is linked below (President's Update).

Tara stated that our community is a safe space. Maria Montessori believed that young children should study the similarities and differences between communities around the globe, to build an early and growing awareness of our diverse, interconnected world. And our schools are the safe space we give them to do this important work.

Tara stated that this must be a shared commitment in managing our charter schools. The principles of Montessori education do not stop at the classroom doors; it is our

responsibility to demonstrate these principles at home. Our children learn from us. Tara stated that she would not go into any details, but said that we have had incidents in our schools and communities recently where our schools have not been safe spaces. She reminded attendees that it is the mission of MMCI to provide all Frederick County children with a quality montessori education, and that we can't do that without supporting the teachings of Maria Montessori and creating and maintaining safe spaces. Tara mentioned that later on the agenda she would be sharing a statement affirming MMCI's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and said that the statement is the first step in what will be ongoing work.

Members, including Amy Dorman and Jen Kuhn, offered words of support and affirmation in the chat.

Tara reminded members that we would not be taking time to read Advance Reports this month, but that they were linked on the agenda.

- **Advance Reports and Committee Updates (To be included in minutes)**
 - [MVM GC Chair Update](#)
 - MVM Principal Update (no advance report received)
 - CCM GC Chair Update (no advance report received)
 - CCM Principal Update (no advance report received)
 - [MMCI President's Update](#)
 - MMCI Lottery Committee Update (no advance report received)
 - [MMCI Facilities Committee Update](#)
 - [MMCI Grants and Fundraising Committee Update](#)
 - [MMCI Financial Report 3/2022 \(access restricted\)](#)
 - [MMCI Finance Summary 3/2022](#)

6. Action Items/Follow-up

8:20-8:25 p.m.

- **Follow-up:** Decide who will act as rotating Virtual Meeting Moderator/ Backup Moderator at next meetings. (Parent Trustees)
Elise Goodwin and Ellie Landru offered to serve as Virtual Meeting Moderators in May.
ACTION ITEM - Send MMCI Meetings account info to Elise and Ellie (Tara Dunsmore/ Meggan Sombat)
- **Follow-up:** Insurance policies and needs (Jeff Koehler/ Tara Dunsmore)
Jeff reported that there had been some email movement on this question, and said that the main issue is what other coverage do we need given FCPS coverage. Tara said that we would vote on this in May
ACTION ITEM - Prepare insurance information for a DISCUSSION/ VOTE in May (Jeff Koehler)
- **Follow-up:** Attorney Invoices (Tara Dunsmore/ Jeff Koehler/ Amy Sullivan)
Tara said that Amy O'Connor put together and is working on updating a spreadsheet for spending tracking for both schools

ACTION ITEM - Complete and share Attorney fees spreadsheet (Amy O'Connor/ Tara Dunsmore)

7. New Business: Discussion and votes

8:25 - 9:35 p.m.

Closed Session: To discuss the evaluation of an appointee(s) to the board.

- **DISCUSSION/ VOTE: BOT Treasurer** - 5 minutes (Tara Dunsmore/ Meggan Sombat)

Tara stated that we will appoint the Treasurer via EVOTE in the coming month. The candidate, Diego Alvarez, was not present.

- **DISCUSSION/ VOTE: CCM Parent Trustee** - 10 minutes (Tara Dunsmore/ Meggan Sombat)

Julie Clark introduced herself as a CCM Parent of a 6th grader, and a high school alumni. She has been involved since the beginning as a CCM Founder, and loves the Montessori model. She said that she appreciated what Tara had to say in her statement about working together.

Another candidate (CCM Parent Talia Mase) was not present.

MOTION: Tara moved to go into closed session *to discuss the evaluation of an appointee(s) to the board*. Ellie Seconded. Motion passed by majority.

Closed session started at 8:40pm.

(Closed session minutes redacted.)

Closed session ended at 8:49pm.

MOTION: Molly moved to appoint Julie Clark to the position of CCM Parent Trustee for the term ending 12/31/23; Jeff seconded.

DISCUSSION: Molly said that Julie Clark was a founder and we would be lucky to have her as a board member.

Michael Beth mentioned that we are thrilled to have anyone run for a BOT position and will seek roles for other interested members who are not appointed tonight.

Tara stated that MMCI elections are every November and that the GC's and committees need volunteers too.

Ellie said that Julie Clark is amazing and has great communication and leadership skills.

MOTION PASSED Unanimously with 11 Aye.

ACTION ITEM - Request BOT email access for Julie (Meggan Sombat)

ACTION ITEM - Notify other candidate and provide volunteer contacts/ info (Meggan Sombat/ Michael Beth Edwards)

Closed Session: To consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto.

Molly stated that a Closed Session was not needed. The discussion remained open.

- **DISCUSSION: CCM Facilities Update - 5 minutes** (Tara Dunsmore/Molly Carlson)

Molly stated that CCM has issued a LOI, and CCM's lease needs to be renewed by Saturday, 4/30, if the LOI isn't accepted by Friday. The CCM GC has agreed that this is in their best interest.

- **DISCUSSION/ VOTE: CCM Lease Renewal - 5 Minutes** (Molly Carlson)

MOTION: Molly moved that if there is not a favorable response to the most recent CCM LOI letter of intent by Friday, April 29, the MMCI Board of Trustees approve the CCM GC's decision to exercise a one-year lease renewal at 7215 Corporate Court, Frederick.

The initial term of the 2016-2020 lease (originally signed in October 2015 and renewed in 2020 for one year) will be extended for a third time for one year, until June 30, 2023. The option period is subject to the same terms, covenants, and conditions set forth in thand, as specified in Section 4.1, the base rent for the year 7/1/2022 through 6/30/2023 will increase by 3% from the current year cost.

Ellie seconded. Tara restated the motion.

DISCUSSION: Jeff asked, if the LOI has a favorable response, can a decision to extend the lease be brought up at a later point? Tara replied that there would be zoning and other requirements. and said that we need to renew the lease anyway.

Molly stated that she asked the attorney if CCM would be locked in for a year, and it was also discussed at the facilities meeting. The answer is likely yes. Molly agreed that the lease would need to be renewed anyway. The question remains: are we going to commit for a year, are we locked in?

Josh Rathmell agreed that even if we do get a favorable response, we do need a lease in place. He said if we approved the offer, we would need to vote on that.

Ellie suggested that the motion might be too specific because the contract could be negotiated to close sooner than the lease is up, so it could be purchased sooner.

Tara stated that any purchase contract would state that the lease would terminate upon purchase date. Molly clarified/ brought up a point of order. She said this is a one year option, and that CCM has not worked with the attorney to draft different terms. She said a purchase contract would have to be renegotiated.

Ellie suggested to amend the motion to say approve for a third time, one year until June 2023, or until CCM purchases the property.

Tara stated that when we vote to approve the contract, the vote will override tonight's vote with the new contract terms.

AMENDMENT: Tara moved to amend the motion to approve the CCM GC's decision to exercise a one-year lease renewal at 7215 Corporate Court, Frederick.

Carrie Jean clarified that it's not in fact a lease renewal, it's technically exercising the third one-year option that's in CCM's current lease. Three one-year options were built into the current lease.

AMENDMENT: Tara moved to amend the motion to approve the CCM GC's decision to exercise a one-year lease extension option at 7215 Corporate Court. Ellie seconded. **AMENDMENT PASSED unanimously with 12 Aye.**

VOTE: Tara restated that the motion on the table is to approve the CCM GC's decision to exercise a one-year lease extension option at 7215 Corporate Court, Frederick. **MOTION PASSED with 11 Aye.**

- **DISCUSSION: MVM Facilities Update - 5 minutes** (Tara Dunsmore/Ellie Landru)

No update provided.

- **VOTE: BOT Evote Policy - 5 minutes** (Jeff Koehler)

Tara stated that the board held a work session earlier this evening, and came to the conclusion that the Email/ Evote Policy should be part of a larger SOP. She stated that this will be an action item, open to volunteers to work on the SOP - Carrie Jean volunteered.

ACTION ITEM - Create a draft BOT SOP (Carrie Jean Rathmell)

ACTION ITEM - Follow up with Carrie Jean re: BOT SOP (Tara Dunsmore/ Meggan Sombat)

- **DISCUSSION - DEI Committee Plan and MMCI DEI Statement - 10 minutes** (Tara Dunsmore/ Jennifer Mayo)

Tara stated that she met with Jennifer and Meggan in April, and they discussed a proposed structure for the DEI committee and began work on a statement to affirm MMCI's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. She suggested that as a board, we start with the statement, and open the floor for nominations for our community members to participate in the work and be on the committee.

Tara stated that the purpose of the DEI committee would be to guide the BOT, and therefore that the majority of committee members should be non-BOT members. The committee will ideally be a group of parents and staff, and potentially students, making recommendations to the board and holding the board accountable for the work.

The committee should be a group who represents our community, and its members will not be hand picked, but should be a good cross-section of our community. It is important to have representation from as many community members as possible; diverse representation. The DEI Committee will be accepting nominations, and planning members will come back to the board in May with a structure and membership, and will ask the board to approve.

Tara restated that the DEI statement for the board to approve is the first step.

Tara screen shared the draft statement written by CCM Parent Trustee and DEI Committee Chair, Jennifer Mayo, and commended Jennifer for her beautifully crafted statement.

Many members joined in expressing gratitude for, and offering compliments on, the work that Jennifer put into the draft.

Jennifer stated that she has always had a passion for bringing diversity to our schools and bringing focus to representation in our community and what we stand for. She said that she researched other schools' DEI statements, and sought to craft something that fit our community and who we are, and what Maria Montessori believed: teaching language, welcoming all, and power of words. She invited board members to reach out to her with any questions about the draft statement.

Tara suggested that both schools' VP's send the draft statement out to their communities, because it represents our entire community, we want feedback and input and we will vote at our May BOT Meeting.

Ellie suggested that it should be a discussion at each GC level, and then sent out to the communities.

Jen Kuhn asked for the request for volunteers to come from MMCI since it's an MMCI level committee. She said she had already added this to the agenda for the next MVM GC meeting, and said she would share community comments with the board.

Tara asked and members confirmed that the MVM GC Meeting is on Monday, May 2, and the next CCM GC Meeting is on Wednesday, May 4.

ACTION ITEM - Craft a communication for both schools - DUE 5/2/22 (Tara Dunsmore/ Jennifer Mayo)

Tara said that we welcome feedback on the actual committee structure also. She said she feels we have a solid recommendation for structure, but would like input.

Vanessa Deugarte (MVM parent) asked if GC's could vote down the DEI committee or the statement? Tara said no, but that the BOT could, but because this is a priority, she would continue to bring it back.

Michael Beth shared a link for a DEI certification in the chat, and suggested that anyone who is interested, look into this: <https://learn.amshq.org/abar-certificate-program>

Member stated that MVM Staff went to some sessions re: DEI topics at the AMS conference and are excited and very interested in exploring and expanding DEI at MVM. It is a priority.

Tara stated that we look forward to forming a dynamic group who is committed to the ongoing work, and that we want the community to have buy-in for this work.

Tara then reminded the board that this is a safe space to share opinions, even if they are different than others, or different than the majority.

Tara stressed that we would proceed with grace and courtesy, and continue to be polite and respectful, even if we disagreed. She reminded attendees that grace and courtesy starts at home and carries over to school and the board room. She said that expectations are set for behavior in our meetings; everyone's viewpoints are welcome but we won't ever allow things to get out of hand.

- **DISCUSSION - In-person/Virtual/ Hybrid BOT Meetings - 5 minutes (Tara Dunsmore)**

Tara stated that in the fall we voted to maintain virtual meetings until the mask mandate was lifted at the FCPS level, and that when that happened, we would reevaluate. FCPS lifted the mask mandate in February, therefore it is now time to reevaluate.

Marilyn Horan appreciates the meetings being virtual because her days are so long.

Ellie is not comfortable with any in-person meetings until her baby can be vaccinated.

Julie Clark said that she would like to have hybrid meetings because she works August-May. However summer in-person meetings would be okay for her.

Michael Beth stated that if we are trying to focus on inclusivity, in-person meetings make it really difficult for parents of young children to get involved. People can drop in to virtual meetings for a short time.

Molly advocated for hybrid meetings, and said that she might not be able to stay in her position(s) if all meetings were in-person.

Nichole stated that it would be difficult for her to attend in person.

Jen Kuhn said that she feels there is much more community involvement with the virtual option, and that she sees more people check in or drop in and out of meetings, with both the MVM GC and the BOT.

Jen and Marilyn reminded everyone that they tried hybrid meetings in school and it was complicated, especially with acoustics.

Carrie Jean agreed with Jen and Marilyn on acoustics. She thinks we should stick with virtual and not try hybrid. She also stated that experiences are not equitable between in-person and in-person. She mentioned supporting social events for meeting in person.

Jeff agreed with Carrie Jean. He said he liked the idea of a virtual in-person kick off meeting at the beginning of the school year. He also brought up vaccine concerns, and suggested some other type of social event for seeing people face to face, perhaps outside.

Tara stated that hybrid would be a good solution in a perfect world. She has equipment at work that allows for hybrid to work, and we don't have that type of technology at MMCI. MVM did livestreamed meetings before the pandemic, and we didn't have the necessary equipment. She suggested that virtual equipped conference space could be a goal for new facilities.

Tara proposed that the 2022 Annual Meeting be held in person, with the option for the community to watch via livestream. She suggested that this could work because it is a presentation and not a discussion meeting, and that this could happen in the sanctuary at MVM this November.

Tara also suggested that we have an outdoor social event once per year, perhaps in the summer. Meggan suggested May 2023.

Tara stated that the goal is that we stay virtual until we come up with a better plan.

Molly suggested that committee meetings could happen in-person and supported in-person social events.

Marilyn said that since the pandemic, we have learned that we can do things differently, and asked what is the purpose of meeting in-person?

Tara stated that community engagement is the purpose, and said that she feels it's important for leadership to be present in the community and to attend events.

Tara would also like the opportunity to get the group together in person to form connections and get to know each other. She stated that forming connections can make it easier for people to work together.

Ellie said that she sees the value in meeting in-person to make meaningful connections, and said that she has to make an extra effort to understand the CCM community if she is going to be voting on their behalf. She said that she would like to meet in person at some point in the future.

Member suggested that BOT members can and should attend both schools' events.

Meggan asked if we were going to vote on holding the Annual Meeting in-person, and Tara said that we could wait for another couple of months to make that decision.

FOLLOW UP - Agenda Item for August - Annual Meeting format/ location (Tara Dunsmore/ Meggan Sombat)

MOTION: Tara moved to adjourn the meeting. Ellie seconded.

Marilyn paused to add one thing for the record. She stated that the governor of Maryland recently signed a bill that says that a Montessori Certificate is equal to being a certified teacher in the state of Maryland. She stated that this was 4 years of work.

Tara thanked Marilyn for her work on that. There were many other expressions of celebration and gratitude in the chat, including from Amy Dorman.

Tara rescinded the motion to adjourn; she also had one more announcement.

Tara stated that traditionally, Classical Charter School has done a questionnaire for BOE candidates regarding charter schools. This year, Allison Rizzo wanted to make that survey more inclusive of all charters in Frederick County. She said that Allison Rizzo will send a draft and Tara will pass along to the board for review.

ACTION ITEM - Follow up on draft of BOE Candidate Questionnaire (Tara Dunsmore)

MOTION: Tara moved to adjourn. Ellie seconded. MOTION PASSED Unanimously with 12 Aye.

Meeting adjourned at 10:05pm

Recording stopped at 10:05pm

Announcements:

1. The Maryland Alliance for Public Charter Schools (MAPCS) Annual Conference will be held virtually on Wednesday, May 11th from 11am-5pm, open to operators, board members, operations and administrative staff, and educators. RSVP [here](#).
2. Upcoming MMCI Business Meetings (usually held at 7PM the FINAL Wednesday of each month): *meetings will be virtual until further notice*
 - May 25, 2022
 - June 29, 2022
3. Minutes and Agendas may be found online at <http://mmcimd.org/calendar/>