

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

**Virtual Meeting: [meet.google.com/fcv-mjvy-utv](https://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
- Diego Alvarez, 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
  
- 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 and started the recording at 7:04pm.

2. Welcome/Introductions **7:02 - 7:05 p.m.**

Tara introduced all members present. See above for attendance.

3. Community Comments **7:05-7:10 p.m.**

There were no Community Comments this month.

#### 4. Consent Agenda Items

7:10-7:12 p.m.

- [June/ July 2022 Evote Report](#)

Meggan Sombat read Evotes from June 2022 into the record. There were no Evotes in July 2022. See link for details.

#### 5. Member & Committee Reports and Updates

7:12-7:30 p.m.

- MMCI President Report - 5 minutes (Tara Dunsmore)

Tara said that she had a productive leadership meeting with Dr. Lippy this month, and received answers to PPA and Pre-K funding questions. Follow up meeting with Leslie Pellegrino to discuss PPA. Diego can summarize during the Treasurer's Report.

Marilyn Horan added that at BOE Meetings, we need to remember that we are a public school, and we need to use charter school vs traditional school language.

Tara said that we should add that language to the talking points on the BOE Meeting sign up sheet.

**FOLLOW UP - Add charter school/traditional school language to the talking points on the BOE Meeting sign up sheet. (Tara Dunsmore / Molly Carlson)**

Tara also mentioned that she recently met with Allison Rizzo regarding Charter School Advocacy. Allison has formed a group with leaders of each Frederick County Charter school. As a group, we should aim to agree on a handful of focused advocacy points. Allison mentioned to Tara that the implication that FCPS isn't being equitable with funding is not being well-received by BOE Members. Use alternate language. Facility funding comes from the state, therefore we could use the term *equitable access* to facilities funding, rather than equitable funding.

**FOLLOW UP - Add alternate language to talking points regarding equitable access. (Tara Dunsmore / Molly Carlson)**

Marilyn added that she wishes people from the MVM community would participate. Tara agreed and mentioned that the notice went out to the MVM Community before the last meeting, and that some MVM community members had sent letters.

Amy Dorman said that people were panicked by the request to get involved in advocacy, and asked for more context in future communication.

Marilyn highlighted that it is important that we are asking the Board to join us in advocating for charter school facility funding at the State level.

Meggan said that for the benefit of anyone watching the meeting later that the

community is welcome to attend the meetings and participate more in the process, so that a request for participation in advocacy will not be so alarming. It is an ongoing effort.

Amy Sullivan said that the majority of the funds we are talking about come from the county, and suggested that county level advocacy might be ideal.

Tara agreed, and said that there may have been different allocations this year, and we should inquire about the rules for charter school facilities funding. Tara will share more about the Advocacy group as it progresses.

- **BOT Treasurer Report - 5 minutes (Diego Alvarez/ Amy Sullivan)**

Diego Alvarez reported that the financials for June are standard, but we can expect more content for July with more transactions. He stated that the meeting with FCPS was very enlightening. The calculation for PPA is easier than what we expected it to be. It was a high-level explanation without some details. However, Diego explained that all schools pay for in-kind services. The bulk number for all FCPS services is divided by the number of students in the county, then they discount the buybacks. There may be options with buybacks, because we could decide to use or not use some of the buybacks.

Diego said that FCPS has no control over inflation because the state determines how much they include. The biggest impact in PPA was technology services with increasing salaries and number of personnel. We can expect this to happen across other departments in the future, which will be a challenge.

Amy Sullivan said that a large part of PPA is taken as an in-kind service for special education. She said that special ed is controlled by FCPS because they are taking the legal and financial responsibility for special education. Amy Sullivan asked if we have looked at the legality of what FCPS is claiming?

Marilyn stated that we do not want to take on special ed. ever, especially because staffing would be a challenge.

Amy Sullivan asked if we would want more control or a more detailed accounting of how the special education money is spent, and suggested a further discussion.

Tara said that FCPS handles staffing or share of staffing for incremental positions. The biggest benefit is in having FCPS handle the legal liability.

Amy Sullivan said that there aren't many areas that we could argue that we are being underfunded. Perhaps Capitol debt is another area for further discussion.

Michael Beth Edwards stated that previous BOT Treasurer Kevin Wilfong did research on Special Education costs at one point and found that it would cost more.

Tara said that this research is likely in the Treasurer files.

Marilyn added that legal fees for special education could potentially be very high. Regarding the grant for PreK, Diego urged the GC's to be careful on how to decide to spend the PreK money, because more than likely it won't be there next year. He said that we need to start capturing income data from families (300% over the

federal poverty level). This raises a concern on how we capture sensitive info from families. Diego said that the money is not a long-term part of the budgets.

Tara stated that for the PreK funding, FCPS gave us the funding this year, however our charters only allow for funding starting at K. So, both schools will need to do a charter amendment for next year. More than likely funding will only be available for full-day PreK. CCM will need to make a decision on continuing full-day, and MVM will need to start having the discussion about moving to full-day. Tara stated that there is currently no deadline, and FCPS will contact us to detail their request.

**FOLLOW-UP - Discuss and Vote on PreK full-day and Charter Amendments (Jen Kuhn/ Nikki Burgee)**

Marilyn stated that we received funding for all students this year, however the change next year is that we will only receive funding for students who are at 300% above the Federal poverty level, and 600% for partial funding. The question is can we go back to last year and ask for retroactive money? Do we need to make income information a requirement for PreK enrollment?

Tara said that we should potentially ask for that info from all students, for grants and other funding opportunities.

Marilyn said that may not be beneficial because the last time the data was collected CCM had a higher percentage than MVM, but it was still not a majority of students.

**FOLLOW UP - Establish/revisit procedure for obtaining income data for PreK students. (Diego Alvarez/ Jen Kuhn/ Nikki Burgee)**

Diego stated that FCPS (Leslie) was going to check the funding based on the number of students, and if our students were included we will receive the money. We do need to get the information from families.

**FOLLOW UP - Follow up on last year's PPA (reimbursement). (Diego Alvarez)**

Diego said that it was a great meeting, and that it's important to handle the relationship with diplomacy going forward.

Tara agreed that it was great that they met with us, and those meetings should be happening at least once every new Treasurer term.

Amy Sullivan mentioned that the bottom line is that our problem is a Facilities funding issue, and that's what our advocacy needs to focus on.

- [MMCI Financial Report 6/2022](#) (access restricted)
- [MMCI Finance Summary 6/2022](#)
- [MMCI Facilities Committee Update](#) - 5 minutes (Tara Dunsmore/ Molly Carlson/ Elizabeth Landru)

Tara stated that Molly sent an update (linked above). Both schools are in process. Architects

are doing test fit on Toll House property for MVM and zoning is in progress, meetings are happening and the zoning application is being processed. Our next step is to answer questions regarding the site plan and engineering study.

Tara stated that CCM also has a zoning meeting tomorrow evening. Lisa Graditor has asked for someone from MMCI to attend, and we also need a CCM leader to attend the hearing to answer specific questions. Also, CCM is waiting for a response on the most recent LOI. Also, financing questions are outstanding, and we are working on reviewing financial advisors, and will vote in the coming weeks.

Amy Sullivan asked about the site plan. Tara said that there is a formula for what kind of site plan is needed. There are questions regarding expansion vs portables, and what requirements may be. Tara will follow up with Lisa to summarize the info from the meeting. We may need to make decisions with the site plan in mind.

**FOLLOW UP - Provide summary from Lisa Graditor re: site plan. (Tara Dunsmore)**

Amy Dorman asked if the architect has a timeline?

Tara said that there is a test fit meeting scheduled for the 15th of August, and we should have an update after that date. They are aware of the 90 day Due Diligence Deadline of September 24th.

- [MMCI Lottery Committee Update](#) - 1 minute (Tara Dunsmore)

Tara shared that Lottery Committee volunteers are needed. A position description is linked above. The time commitment varies throughout the year.

- MMCI Grants and Fundraising Committee Update - 1 minute (Meggan Sombat)

Meggan stated that we need to meet to discuss edits to the policy before we are ready to vote on it.

**ACTION ITEM - Set up a meeting with Diego, Amy S, Meggan, to discuss edits for Grants policy/ bring to August Meeting for a vote. (Meggan Sombat)**

- MMCI Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee Update - 1 minute (Tara Dunsmore/ Jennifer Mayo)

Tara said that the next step is to advertise for participation in the DEI Committee. Jennifer Mayo said that she will put together the email to request volunteers from both CCM and MVM communities.

**ACTION ITEM - Create communication for DEI Committee volunteers. (Jennifer Mayo)**

- School Updates: **7:30-7:40 p.m.**
  - [MVM Report](#) - 5 minutes (Amy Dorman/ Elizabeth Landru/ Jen Kuhn)

Amy Dorman submitted a report (linked above) and added that hiring has been tough, there are no candidates for special ed positions at the moment. Also, the staff is working on professional development and preparing for teachers to return.

Diego said that we should support hiring and recruiting as BOT Members.

Michael Beth said that there have been multiple special ed vacancies, and that people are leaving special ed and fewer coming into the profession.

Tara suggested that we share the link to apply for the FCPS positions.

Amy Dorman shared: <https://www.applitrack.com/fcps/OnlineApp/>. Certain positions are specific to our charter schools, and some are not.

Michael Beth stated that Maryland is adopting the BluePrint for Education and this will have an impact on recruiting and hiring in FCPS and our schools. She suggested that we remain aware of this in our advocacy efforts.

Tara agreed and said that we should add this to the list for advocacy priorities. She asked if anyone has ideas on what advocacy priorities should be, especially our Board members who are educators, please send Tara an email.

**FOLLOW UP - Add charter school recruiting/hiring topic to advocacy discussion. (Tara Dunsmore/ Michael Beth Edwards)**

- **CCM Report - 5 minutes (Marilyn Horan/ Michael Beth Edwards/ Nikki Burgee)**

Marilyn Horan said that CCM recently hired an exceptional new Lower EI teacher. Marilyn is also excited about some diversity in hiring with two new IA's. She is happy to have diversity in a candidate pool. She reminded everyone that the lottery is happening, and they are working to make sure the classrooms are full. She mentioned that when families wait until the last minute to decline spots it creates extra work and stress in the office.

She said the Kindergarten starts on 8/8/22 (for CCM only) and teachers start on 8/10. Teachers are working on material making for Kindergarteners, and setting up classrooms.

Marilyn said that school counselors are needed across the district. CCM is looking for a part time (.7) Counselor.

Julie Clark asked about a survey for staggered start. Marilyn said that no changes were preferred.

Michael Beth Edwards said that facilities are progressing and will be discussed later.

## 6. Follow-ups/ Action Items

7:40 p.m - 7:55 p.m.

- **Follow-up:** Decide who will act as rotating Virtual Meeting Moderator/ Backup Moderator at next meetings. **(Parent Trustees)**

**ACTION ITEM - We need a volunteer for August. (ALL BOT)**

- **Follow-up** - Reach out to Tara to connect with Allison Rizzo re: charter school advocacy/ get involved with the BOT Advocacy Committee **(ALL BOT - Request**

for involvement)

- **Follow-up/ Action Item** - Follow up on facilities advocacy topics and have a rotation of speakers attend monthly BOE meetings. Contact Molly Carlson. **(ALL BOT - Request for involvement)**
- **Follow-up:** Staffing Discussion Hold (Tara Dunsmore)
- **Action Item:** DEI Committee Statement and Membership (Tara Dunsmore/ Jennifer Mayo)
- **Action Item:** BOT Book Club (Tara Dunsmore)
- **Action Item/ Follow-up:** Draft BOT SOP (Tara Dunsmore/ Carrie Jean Rathmell)
- **Action Item:** Update Grants Policy (Meggan Sombat)
- **Action Item:** Share Lottery Committee volunteer position description with the community. (Meggan Sombat)
- **Action Item:** 1. Schedule a call with MAPCS and 2. Schedule a meeting with Dr. Lippy regarding charter school funding and in kind services. (Tara Dunsmore)
- **Action Item:** Follow up with Amy O'Connor to create Facilities Projects budgets for both MVM and CCM (Tara Dunsmore)
- **Action Item** - Update 5 Year budget projections for MVM (Ellie Landru/ Jen Kuhn)
- **Action Item** - Follow up on scheduling a meeting with MVM budget team and Amy Sullivan and Amy O'Connor to work with the existing high school budget (Ellie Landru/ Jen Kuhn)
- **Action Item** - Update 5 Year Budget projections for CCM (Michael Beth Edwards/ Nikki Burgee)
- **Action Item:** Follow up on Draft of BOE Candidate Questionnaire (Tara Dunsmore)
- **Follow-up/ Action Item** - Create a community letter for facilities advocacy. Contact Molly Carlson/ Tara Dunsmore. **(ALL BOT - Request for involvement.)**

### [Follow-ups/ Action Items Report](#)

Tara stated that a lot of the Follow-ups are touched on elsewhere in the agenda. See link above for full report/notes.

Tara said that one thing to highlight is that **budgets for both schools are due to FCPS by August 31**, so schools should reach out to Amy O'Connor, Diego Alvarez, and Amy Sullivan with any questions or for support.

## 7. New Business: Discussion and Votes

7:55 - 9:00 p.m.

**Closed Session:** To discuss personnel matters with regard to one or more individual appointees, employees, or officials over whom this board has jurisdiction.

**MOTION:** Tara moved to go into closed session.

Julie Clark Seconded.

**MOTION PASSED** with 8 Aye, 4 members not present.

Closed session started at 8:15pm with 8 members present.

Closed session ended at 8:50pm.

- **DISCUSSION/ VOTE: MMCI Employee Compensation (Tara Dunsmore/ Amy Sullivan)**

Tara stated that during the closed session we reviewed a proposal from our Bookkeeper, and talked about Action Items, to include a review of the bookkeepers job description and reporting structure, as well as creating a policy for frequency of reviewing employee compensation and cost of living adjustments, as well as annual performance reviews and expectations.

**ACTION ITEM - Conduct a review of Bookkeeper Job description, and create a policy to address frequency of reviewing employee compensation and cost of living adjustments, as well as annual performance reviews and expectations. (Tara Dunsmore/ Amy Sullivan)**

**MOTION: Tara moved to approve the bookkeeper salary and benefits package as proposed and discussed during closed session.**

Amy Sullivan seconded.

Tara gave the following background information: In 2020 Amy O'Connor became full time and MMCI provided a health spending account to offset the cost of her Health Insurance premium. No benefits or salary review was done in 2021. This was due to budget and timing, not performance.

We feel that it was reasonable for her to come to us with a proposal for an annual process and competitive compensation. Amy is an incredibly valuable employee.

Amy Sullivan asked to amend the motion to include back pay from July 1, 2022.

**MOTION AMENDED: Tara moved to approve the Bookkeeper salary and benefits package as proposed and discussed during closed session, and to backdate changes to the beginning of the current Fiscal Year of July 1 2022.**

Tara restated the motion, and members voted in the chat.

**MOTION PASSED with 8 Aye and 4 not present.**

**FOLLOW UP - Send Vote Info to Amy O'Connor. (Amy Sullivan/ Meggan Sombat)**

- **DISCUSSION/ VOTE: Financial Services Provider (Tara Dunsmore/ Ellie Landru)**

Tara said that this topic will be tabled and will likely become an Evote this month after the Facilities Committee has had a chance to review.

Michael Beth asked if there was an update, and Tara said that there are no updates, and we are pending a decision on the provider.



- **DISCUSSION/ VOTE: Agent Commission Agreement (Michael Beth Edwards)**

Michael Beth stated that we have a basic boilerplate commission agreement for Ken, Agent of Clagett Enterprises, for the Corporate Court Purchase, which is currently moving through the LOI process. Ken is a long-term collaborator.

Tara added that 1% of the sale price is significantly lower than his normal fee, and he has agreed to offer this lower rate because he recognizes our efforts.

**MOTION: Tara moved to approve the commission brokerage agreement as presented.**

Michael Beth Seconded.

There were no further questions.

**MOTION PASSED with 8 Aye, 4 not present.**

Michael Beth gave a shout out to Ken, he has been diligent and committed to helping our schools. Tara agreed.

- **DISCUSSION/ VOTE: [Procurement Policy](#) (Amy Sullivan/Diego Alvarez)**

Tara said that we reviewed the Procurement Policy several months ago, and that she felt that the current language is contradictory regarding the emergency approval of expenses without a vote. The policy states that the GC's are permitted to establish their own policies for expenses not to exceed \$1000, and then goes on to describe circumstances for approval of expenses up to \$5,000.

Amy Sullivan asked what constitutes an emergency.

Tara said that in the rare case of an emergency, if someone on the GC and the MMCI executive committee signs, that should provide a check.

Meggan asked about evotes, and Tara said that the Evote Policy requires 36-48 hours, which may still be too much time in an emergency.

Tara said that our policy allows each school to set their own policies within limits set by MMCI.

Tara said that emergency votes are rare and hard to define, but if the elected leadership has to make a decision, such as had to be done at MVM earlier this year, this policy serves to document the guidelines in the case of a future emergency expense at either school.

**MOTION: Tara moved to approve the updated procurement policy as presented.**

Michael Beth seconded.

**MOTION PASSED with 8 Aye and 4 not present.**

- **DISCUSSION: Conflict of Interest Policy/ Form (Tara Dunsmore)**

This topic was skipped and returned to after votes, per the meeting recording.

Tara said that the COI Forms submitted in May were required for our MSDE grant, and will be sent out annually. Tara said that the conflicts of interest can be inevitable, and the COI Policy is not going to prevent someone from serving in a leadership position, but the important thing is that board members disclose it. The point is to put it out there to show that there are no hidden motives. Examples of potential conflicts include: employment by FCPS, businesses owned. We may also want to list what grades and what classes our children are in. Everyone must use our own best judgment for what to disclose on the COI form. And, we must potentially recuse ourselves from any votes where a conflict may arise. Tara said that Committee Chairs and Members of Fundraising Committees should also submit COI Forms. Forms will be signed every July and January, and/or when we have a new member.

**ACTION ITEM - Send updated COI Form for July. (Meggan Sombat)**

- **DISCUSSION: BOT Book Club (Tara Dunsmore/ Amy Dorman)**

This topic was skipped and returned to after votes, per the meeting recording.

Tara asked if there is interest in doing a BOT book club, and suggested we begin with a quarterly title. The first book could be the Montessori book that Amy Dorman suggested. The second book could be a title that focuses on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion. We could have our first meeting in October 2022.

Michael Beth suggested that it might be better to after we get our facilities in a different spot. Julie Clark volunteered to help organize the Book Club, and will follow up with the GC's to gauge interest.

**FOLLOW UP - Send link for book choice to Julie Clark. (Meggan Sombat)**

- **DISCUSSION/ VOTE: Change of Resident Agent and Principal Office for MMCI Articles of Incorporation (Amy Sullivan)**

Amy Sullivan said that the problem is that in our Articles of Incorporation, both the Resident Agent and Principal Office for MMCI are invalid. Amy S. explained three proposed motions related to this issue: Changing the Principal Address, Changing the Resident Agent, and Securing a Resident Agent.

Amy Sullivan said that Amy O'Connor did background info and presented options for Resident Agent. Amy S's recommendation is to select a Resident Agent with local offices.

Meggan asked what would be the benefit to having a local office, and if there is a different level of service?

Amy Sullivan prefers a local location, but isn't set on a particular vendor.

Tara said that this seems straightforward, and would advocate for going with the least expensive

option for everything.

**MOTION:** Tara moved to approve changing the Principal Address in the Articles of Incorporation for MMCI from Leslie Mansfield, 7611 Yale Court, Frederick MD 21702 to 217 Dill Avenue, Frederick MD 21701; changing the Resident Agent address in the Articles of Incorporation for MMCI from Leslie Mansfield, 7611 Yale Court, Frederick MD 21702 to the address of the professional Resident Agent selected by the BOT; securing a Resident Agent for MMCI in an amount not to exceed \$150 per annum and to approve submitting the Principal Office and Resident Agent change forms to the State of Maryland at a cost of \$25 with funds to be drawn from the MMCI Checking Account.

Amy Sullivan seconded.

**MOTION PASSED** with 7 Aye and 5 not present.

**FOLLOW UP - Send Vote Info to Amy O'Connor. (Amy Sullivan/ Meggan Sombat)**

- **DISCUSSION/ VOTE: Hot Spot Equipment Purchase for MMCI Bookkeeper (Amy Sullivan)**

Amy Sullivan said that Amy O'Connor's hot spot is dying and she needs a replacement. Amy O'Connor researched and found options around \$150.

**MOTION:** Amy Sullivan moved to approve purchasing a new mobile hotspot for Amy O'Connor to use in her role as bookkeeper. The amount for the purchase is not to exceed \$200 with funds to be drawn from the MMCI Checking Account.

Tara Seconded.

**MOTION PASSED** with 7 Aye and 5 not present.

**FOLLOW UP - Send Vote Info to Amy O'Connor. (Amy Sullivan/ Meggan Sombat)**

- **DISCUSSION: Schedule August Work Session (Meggan Sombat)**

Meggan will send a doodle poll for an upcoming work session.

**ACTION ITEM - Schedule Work Session for review of BOT SOP (Meggan Sombat)**

Tara said that the August BOT Meeting may need to be moved to a week earlier, which is August 24th.

**ACTION ITEM - Initiate EVOTE to move the August meeting. (Meggan Sombat)**

**MOTION:** Tara moved to adjourn the meeting 9:37pm

Julie Clark seconded.

**MOTION PASSED** with 7 Aye, 5 members not present.

Announcements:

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

- ~~August 31, 2022~~

- August 24, 2022
- September 28, 2022
- October 26, 2022

2. Minutes and Agendas may be found online at <http://mmcimd.org/calendar/>