

Monocacy Montessori Communities, Incorporated (MMCI) Board of Trustees (BOT)
Wednesday, January 25, 2023 @ 7:00 p.m.

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

Regular Meeting Agenda

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

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

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

Voting Members

- ~~Diego Alvarez, Treasurer~~
- ~~Najlaa Richard, CCM Parent Trustee~~
- ~~Julie Clark, CCM Parent Trustee~~
- Nichole Dowlearn, MVM Parent Trustee
- ~~Tara Dunsmore, BOT President~~
- ~~Michael Beth Edwards, CCM VP~~
- ~~Elise Goodwin, MVM Parent Trustee~~
- ~~Elizabeth Landru, MVM VP~~
- ~~Jessica Lawrence Wujek, MVM Parent Trustee~~
- ~~Kathleen Luttrell, Friend of Ed~~
- ~~Jennifer Mayo, CCM Parent Trustee~~
- ~~Kelli McIntosh, BOT Assistant Treasurer~~
- ~~Meggan Sombat, BOT Secretary~~

Non-voting Members and Principals

- ~~Nikki Burgee, CCM GC Chair (Non-voting Member)~~
- Amy Dorman, MVM Principal
- ~~Marilyn Horan, CCM Principal~~
- Bob Weiland, MVM GC Chair (Non-voting Member)
- Brandon Sowers, MVM Assistant Principal

Tara introduced BOT Members and the Secretary took attendance, as above.

3. Community Comments

7:05-7:10 p.m.

Tara asked for Community Comments. There were no Community Comments this month.

4. Consent Agenda Items

7:10-7:12 p.m.

- [EVOTE for Approval of MMCI Lottery/ Enrollment Policy](#) - closed on 12/28 - **MOTION PASSED with 8 Aye and 5 did not vote.**
- [EVOTE for Approval of December 2023 MMCI BOT Meeting Minutes](#) closed on 01/20/23 - **MOTION PASSED with 8 Aye and 5 did not vote.**

Tara read the Consent Agenda Items.

5. Member & Committee Advance Reports and Updates

7:12-7:37 p.m.

- MMCI President Report - 5 minutes (Tara Dunsmore)

Tara said that updates will be covered later in the agenda. A Leadership Meeting was held with Dr. Lippy, and those updates will be covered during Action Items.

- BOT Treasurer Report - 5 minutes (Diego Alvarez)
 - [MMCI Financial Report 12/2022](#) (access restricted)
 - [MMCI Finance Summary 12/2022](#)

Diego Alvarez said that the financial reports are fairly standard, most of our expenses are facilities related, most of which are reimbursable through our financing. Diego said that he is starting the process of the new bank account for MMCI.

Tara said that the timing is good because we are soon going to be getting FCPS to release the surplus funds, which will go into those new MMCI held savings accounts.

Tara said that Rick Daniels, an attorney who specializes in Charter School Law, is working with the FCPS attorney on that topic. Tara also said that we are getting a lot of pressure from the financing team and MAPCS to reconsider our preference of having FCPS hold our funds, for ease of cash flow with facilities purchases. Tara said we are the only charter schools in the State of MD who do it the way that we do, and we are going to be looking at options, and will discuss at a future meeting. Tara said that the decision should be made ahead of the start of the next fiscal year.

Elizabeth Landru said that one of the problems with our current method is that bills get paid in many different ways, and there is potential for error (such as the water bill at 217 Dill, that is paid by FCPS, and was overpaid because no one from MMCI had access to it).

ACTION ITEM - Set up a Finance Committee Meeting (Diego Alvarez)

- MMCI Facilities Committee Update - 5 minutes (Tara Dunsmore/ Molly Carlson/ Elizabeth Landru)

Tara said that the MMCI Facilities Committee submitted a report. Both schools are working toward conducting due diligence and entitlement period work to determine costs for financing. For MVM, the cost has changed many times. MMCI is pursuing the option to do the two projects as one single financing event, and it is looking that the timelines will line up. The financial advisor has recommended that we scale back the meetings to reduce costs. Because the project is stretching longer, and is more complicated, the costs are rising. With Campanile, both projects were supposed to be straightforward, however we may reach the cost cap for Campanile. Additional costs may need to be approved, and will be prorated per school.

Elizabeth Landru shared that MVM is working through some complications that have arisen from the news that Banner School is leasing Dill Ave. next year. While this is not ideal, we have already identified several alternative plans for next year. Ellie and Tara are also meeting with reps from the Banner School next week to talk about their plans and better understand their timelines, and address any potential obstacles.

Elizabeth shared that the Zoning approval is scheduled for Thursday, February 2, 2023 from 7-9pm, and BOT and GC members are welcome to attend. They learned in December that a site plan will be required. Elizabeth said that MVM is waiting on reports from engineers on expected costs.

Tara said that our attorneys and the seller's attorney met today and discussed timelines and the need to amend our contract, as the site plan will push our closing date by 6 months.. The seller's attorney assured ours, that Dr. Nathan is committed to the project.

Elizabeth said that the MVM Facilities committee meets biweekly on Tuesdays, and they are working on carline flow at Toll House Avenue, fittings for the classrooms, as well as a Gantt chart for timeline and project management.

Michael Beth Edwards said that CCM is not as complex because they have been in the building for 10 years already. CCM's Zoning is slightly different, and moving forward, Tara reached out and secured a sponsor at the county level. The Due Diligence period ends tomorrow, and CCM will roll into their entitlement period.

Michael Beth said that CCM held town hall meetings this week, and that their Phase 1 environmental study was done.

Tara asked if there were any questions regarding facilities. Jessica Lawrence Wujek asked if she could help with Facilities Committee. Elizabeth answered that Programming is a need related to bond financing and would benefit both schools. Tara encouraged the Parent trustees to reach out to VP's and get involved in school level

facilities committees.

ACTION ITEM - Discuss Programming Committee/ Facilities Financing (Elizabeth Landru / Jessica Lawrence Wujek)

- [MVM High School Grant and Planning Update](#) - 5 minutes (MVM HS Committee)

Tori McCarthy submitted an update. Tara said that the High School Committee met this week, and she and Ellie joined the meeting this week to get involved with the committee. Subcommittees (Staffing - positions were posted this week; Facilities committee - details related to moving; Grants - Tori, MSDE reporting; Community relations - Tara is chair; Lottery - working on website and outreach; Curriculum and instruction - Amy Dorman). Tara said that anyone interested in joining a High School Committee subcommittee, please reach out to Elizabeth Landru.

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

Jennifer Mayo said that she has spoken to Vanessa, and they have reviewed interested committee members. The committee plans to schedule an initial meeting soon.

FOLLOW UP - Follow up to schedule DEI Committee meeting (Jennifer Mayo / Vanessa Deugarte / Meggan Sombat)

- MMCI Nominating Committee Update - 1 minute (Meggan Sombat)

There was no Nominating Committee Meeting update this month.

- MMCI Lottery Committee Update - 1 minute (Tara Dunsmore)

Tara said that as of the 19th of January, the waitlist for each school is well over 1,000 students. This may be a record year.

Marilyn Horan asked to clarify that it is 35% of open spots for CCM Students, and then there is another chance in the general Lottery. Tara said yes, and that year over year, Sibling Priority will bump some students, and free up spots within the 35%.

Tara said that the Lottery will be run on or around March 21, 2023. Admissions announcements will go out the week of April 4.

- MMCI Grants and Fundraising Committee Update - 1 minute

No update provided. Tara said that we will reschedule the work session as soon as possible.

- [BOT Book Club Update](#) - 1 minute (Julie Clark)

Tara said that the book club was so much fun, and she enjoyed seeing members in person. We are looking forward to the next meeting, and plan to choose a DEI focused title.

Julie Clark said that 8 BOT members had a great discussion on Conversational Capacity. Julie said that it's a gift to work together, in such a dynamic time. Julie thanked everyone, and asked us to save the date for the next Book Club Meeting in May.

School Updates:

7:37-7:47 p.m.

- CCMPCS - 5 minutes (Marilyn Horan/ Michael Beth Edwards/ Nikki Burgee)

Michael Beth said that the biggest updates are facilities related. Marilyn agreed and added that being in the building they are purchasing is a benefit, because they can visualize the proposed changes. Marilyn said that three of CCM's founding families attended the town hall, and that it was wonderful to have them see the progression for CCM over the last 10 years.

Marilyn and Michael Beth are working on the annual report. Marilyn said that the end game is not a third grade score on a test. By Middle School, the test scores are above average, and 81% of their students have a GPA or 3.0 or above in High School. CCM recently hosted 3 BOE members for a tour of the school, and she said that it was really heartening for them to vocalize what we see every day in our schools. Another BOE member is scheduled to come next week, and Marilyn said that the interest level and the timing is great, because they will have the children in mind, instead of just numbers, when we deliver our Annual Report.

Marilyn said that CCM is almost finished with iReady testing. The scores were not good last year across the district, but the district has stated that they are not valid. CCM's cultural survey results will also be in the Annual Report, and they are among the top in the district. Knowing that CCM families felt like they made space for them to come back to school and grow and be together was appreciated by all. The Annual Report tells the story.

Marilyn said that CCM's Middle School is the first class of students who started as Prek3. They are going through the process of Fundraising for a charity and will plan a dance.

CCM currently has 3 staff members in training, one of whom is an IA paying for their own training.

Julie Clark added that it has been wonderful having Marilyn over the last decade, that she has grown into the Middle Schoolers and embraced all ages as an educator.

Tara agreed that having this first class of 8th graders who've gone all the way through is a milestone.

Michael Beth added a thank you to MMCI for taking CCM's questions about the charter amendment back to FCPS leadership.

Michael Beth also added that the CCM GC recently updated a vote to provide all new staff with swag, such as a logo fleece, which makes staff feel welcomed and appreciated.

And Michael Beth said that they have established a strong transition plan for

Marilyn's retirement.

Michael Beth said that the Annual Report timeline is tight, and Tara said that the topic is on the agenda for later in the meeting.

- [MVMPCS](#) - 5 minutes (Amy Dorman/ Brandon Sowers/ Elizabeth Landru/ [Bob Weiland](#))

Tara said that Bob Weiland submitted a GC Chair Update.

Elizabeth said that MVM is working diligently on the Annual Report, and working on building teams to support the process. Elizabeth also reached out to the MVM Parent Trustees to support the annual report process.

Elizabeth said that MVM is working to finalize the MD EXCELS accreditation, and she is working with Primary teacher, Ms. Allie to ensure that everything goes smoothly with blueprint funding.

Elizabeth extended a welcome to new MVM's newest GC members, Carlos, Caitlyn, Bob as GC Chair, and Rachel as GC Secretary, and said that she is excited to work with them this year.

Elizabeth said that a lot of work at MVM is centered around High School planning and facilities. She said that MVM continues to have maintenance issues with their current building, and recently had some sump pump exploratory work done. MVM's Maintenance Technician, Mr. Rudy is monitoring any issues, and plumbing work is currently on hold.

Marilyn added that the MD EXCELS Accreditation that Elizabeth spoke about has been extremely stressful, and that evaluators were not looking at obvious examples of criteria.

Elizabeth agreed and said that evidence is often not required, but schools can still get dinged if evidence is not provided.

Marilyn said that even though the evaluators have acknowledged that the students know what to do, they have been marked down for not having posted rules or visual cues from the teachers.

Tara said that Marilyn noted that it would be helpful if the State sent evaluators who know Montessori. She agreed and said that both schools should advocate for that.

FOLLOW UP - Advocacy for MD EXCELS Accreditation. (Tara Dunsmore?)

6. Follow-ups/ Action Items

7:47 p.m - 7:50 p.m.

- [BOT Action Items & Follow Ups - January 2023](#)

Tara went over our highest priority outstanding action items:

FOLLOW UP - From December - Calculate the amount of loss of program income during the pandemic, and investigate if we qualify for a write off/ grant. (Diego Alvarez/ Kelli McIntosh - consult with Amy O'Connor)

- In Progress - need to investigate if we qualify for the Paycheck Protection Grant / a write off. Diego will follow up.

ACTION ITEM - Update financial process portion of Grants Policy/ remove SOP portion for vote in January 2023 (Meggan Sombat to draft)

- In Progress - Meggan Sombat will draft/ follow up.

ACTION ITEM - Both schools should add review of Lottery Policy revisions to next GC Meeting Agenda AND vote on decision making process for filling spots per level/classroom (Bob Weiland, Nikki Burgee) (Add Elizabeth Landru / Michael Beth Edwards)

- In Progress - Elizabeth and Michael Beth will follow up with GC's.

ACTION ITEM - BOT Needs to Vote/ Evote MVM Montessori Teacher Training Reimbursement Policy. (Elizabeth Landru)

- Elizabeth will bring reimbursement policy to BOT for Vote/Evote.

ACTION ITEM - From July - 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/ Kelli McIntosh)

- Note from December 14 - We should develop a system where we are aware of what projects Amy O'Connor has in the queue, and how the board can efficiently prioritize her time.
- Kelli to proceed / consult with Tara

7. New Business: Discussion and Votes

7:50 - 8:45 p.m.

Closed Session: To consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto, and to consult with members about pending or potential litigation.

MOTION: Tara moved to go into closed session to consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto, and to consult with members about pending or potential litigation.

Seconded by Michael Beth Edwards.

MOTION PASSED with 11 Aye.

Closed session began at 8:11pm.

Closed session ended at 8:49pm.

Tara thanked anyone still present for waiting.

- **DISCUSSION/ VOTE: FCPS Charter Amendments (Tara Dunsmore)**

Tara said that Dr. Lippy sent the revised Charter Agreements this week, and addressed our concerns with Pre K Full-day language. Tara will send the Agreements out to all, and both GC's and then the BOT will vote.

ACTION ITEM - Send revised Charter Amendments to BOT, and both GC's - DEADLINE 1/26 (Tara Dunsmore)

ACTION ITEM - Both GC's need to add Vote for Charter Amendments to agendas. (Bob Weiland / Nikki Burgee)

ACTION ITEM - BOT needs to Evote Charter Amendments (Tara Dunsmore)

- **DISCUSSION: Charter School Advocacy Day (Tara Dunsmore)**

Tara asked any interested board members or parent volunteers to attend the Charter School Advocacy Day in Annapolis on February 1. MAPCS's advocacy focus for this year is equitable funding for facilities, and the current ask is \$2,000 more in PPA per student. Tara said that this funding would make a huge difference for our facilities projects.

Tara asked members to reach out to Allison Rizzo if interested in representing MMCI that day.

- **DISCUSSION: Annual Report Updates (Elizabeth Landru/ Michael Beth Edwards)**

Tara asked both schools about the timelines and said that Dr. Lippy gave us a 2/22 deadline for submission.

Michael Beth said that the report has been more time consuming than expected, but that her gut feeling is to keep the dates, because the March presentation date is crucial for us in asking for facilities support.

Elizabeth said that she would prefer to have extra time, because the data came in so late, it is more difficult to compile the report, especially with complicated data. She added that there are also going to be additional facilities questions this year.

Michael Beth said that this was a weird year because a lot of the narrative needed to change due to virtual and hybrid instruction the last two years, so the reports will be more work.

- **DISCUSSION/VOTE: Special Voting meeting for Annual Report (Tara Dunsmore)**

Tara said that a special voting meeting would be tough to get on the schedule, and if we ask for a 2 week extension, that will allow for more time and reports to be voted on at regular GC and BOT meetings.

ACTION ITEM - Request Annual Report Deadline extension to March 8. (Tara Dunsmore)

- **DISCUSSION:** Google Drive Training (Tara Dunsmore)

Tara said that MMCI uses Google for all of our work, and that new GC and BOT members could likely benefit from Google Drive training. Tara would like to offer training for anyone who is interested.

ACTION ITEM - Schedule Google Universe training for BOT, GC's on 2/22/23 from 6-7pm (Tara Dunsmore)

- **DISCUSSION/ VOTE:** Change Date of May BOT Meeting from Wednesday, May 31 to Wednesday, May 24, 2023 (Meggan Sombat)

ACTION ITEM - Follow up with Marilyn regarding May BOT Meeting date change/ CCM Promotion Ceremony. (Tara Dunsmore/ Michael Beth Edwards)

Tara said that our next regular meeting is February 22.

Kathleen Luttrell mentioned that she will not be here next month.

MOTION: Tara moved to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by Elizabeth Landru.

MOTION PASSED with 11 aye.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10pm.

Announcements:

1. Upcoming MMCI Business Meetings (usually held at 7PM the FINAL Wednesday of each month): *meetings will be virtual unless otherwise noted.*
 - Wednesday, February 22, 2023
 - Wednesday, March 29, 2023
 - Wednesday, April 19, 2023 (Quarterly Work Session)
 - Wednesday, April 26, 2023
2. Minutes and Agendas may be found online at <http://mmcimd.org/calendar/>