

Monocacy Montessori Communities, Incorporated (MMCI) Board of Trustees
(BOT) Wednesday, March 22, 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

Voting members present: Julie Clark, Michael Beth Edwards, Elizabeth Landru, Jessica Lawrence Wujek, Meggan Sombat, Jennifer Mayo, Kathleen Lutrell, Elise Goodwin, Kelli McIntosh (9)

Non-voting members present: Amy Dorman, Marilyn Horan, Nikki Burgee, Bob Weiland

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

The recording was started and Michael Beth Edwards read the meet recording consent.

Elizabeth Landru called the meeting to order at 7:11pm.

Moment of Silence (Elizabeth Landru/ Michael Beth Edwards)

Elizabeth requested a moment of silence for the loss of a mother of two of our MVMPCS students. Lauren Elizabeth Putnam, who has two boys at MVM, passed away and our community expresses sadness for the family.

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

Board members introduced themselves, and attendance was taken.

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.

Meggan Sombat read the summary of February and March Evotes.

February 2023

- **EVOTE: On February 20 Meggan Sombat moved to Approve the January 2023 MMCI BOT Meeting Minutes.** The Motion was Seconded by Tara Dunsmore. The Motion CLOSED on February 22, and PASSED

with 9 Aye and 4 did not vote.

- Approval of January 2023 MMCI BOT Meeting Minutes (Responses) - Form R...
March 2023

- **EVOTE: On February 28 Meggan Sombat moved to Approve the Revised MVMPCS FY23 Budget.** The Motion was Seconded by Elizabeth Landru. The Motion CLOSED on March 6, and PASSED with 9 Aye and 4 did not vote.

- Approval of Revised MVMPCS FY23 Budget (Responses) - Form R...

- **EVOTE: On February 28 Meggan Sombat moved to Approve the MVM Montessori Teacher Training Reimbursement Policy.** The Motion was Seconded by Elizabeth Landru. The Motion CLOSED on March 6, and PASSED with 9 Aye and 4 did not vote.

- Approval of MVM Teacher Training Tuition Benefits Policy (Responses)

- **EVOTE: On February 28 Meggan Sombat moved to Approve Tuition Reimbursement for *Brandon Sowers*, MVM Assistant Principal.** The Motion was Seconded by Elizabeth Landru. The Motion CLOSED on March 6, and PASSED with 9 Aye and 4 did not vote.

- Approval of Tuition Reimbursement Request for MVM Assistant P...

- **EVOTE: On February 28 Meggan Sombat moved to Approve the CCMPCS Charter Amendment.** The Motion was Seconded by Elizabeth Landru. The Motion CLOSED on March 10, and PASSED with 11 Aye and 2 did not vote.

- Approval of CCMPCS Charter Amendment 2023 (Responses) - Fo...

- **EVOTE: On February 28 Meggan Sombat moved to Approve the MVMPCS Charter Amendment** The Motion was Seconded by Elizabeth Landru. The Motion CLOSED on March 10, and PASSED with 11 Aye and 2 did not vote.

- Approval of MVMPCS Charter Amendment 2023 (Responses) - Fo...

Michael Beth asked about having exact language in the Evote report, and asked if we should include Brandon Sower's name.

Elizabeth agreed that it is important to be mindful of our language and talk about positions instead of using staff members' names.

Marilyn Horan said that votes have typically had names attached.

Meggan added that the language in the Consent Agenda has been printed per the language of the vote, and agreed that we've used staff names for reimbursement requests in the past. We can come back to the discussion, and strike the name from the March minutes if needed.

Elizabeth asked Amy Dorman to reach out to Brandon Sowers for consent to print his name.

Marilyn suggested that we discuss and write a policy, and Elizabeth agreed that a policy is needed.

ACTION ITEM - Discuss including names of staff members in votes for tuition reimbursement re: above EVOTE. (Meggan Sombat) Research - and create policy. Talking about positions vs. people in votes. Amy Dorman will ask Brandon.

5. Member & Committee Advance Reports and Updates

7:12-7:37 p.m.

- MMCI President Report - 5 minutes (Tara Dunsmore)

No President Report received.

- BOT Treasurer Report - 5 minutes (Diego Alvarez/ Kelli McIntosh)
 - [MMCI Financial Report 01/2023](#) (access restricted)
 - [MMCI Finance Summary 01/2023](#)
 - [MMCI Financial Report 02/2023](#) (access restricted)
 - [MMCI Finance Summary 02/2023](#)

Kelli McIntosh said that things are normal. Diego Alvarez has continued to do research into resources and grants that we could qualify for, however we do not qualify for the loss of revenue grant because we did not lose the required percentage of revenue. Also, Kelli has received emails about an employee retention credit, and Diego will continue to research these opportunities. Kelli asked if anyone knows of other opportunities for reimbursement grants, please reach out to the Treasurer.

Michael Beth said that she would like to look into the State of MD policy for where education funds come from; how charter school funding works, what is the policy that FCPS relies on for PPA distribution. Michael Beth asked if Elizabeth could reach out to our financing lawyer for review of questions related to our PPA funding and State law. She said that a single day to count enrollment for a charter school does not work when turnover is constant, and we practice due diligence with enrollment. Michael Beth recommended that MMCI write a revised policy with FCPS for PPA.

Marilyn said that the State requires two count dates, and that the second verifies the first. Kelli asked to clarify that CCM will not receive PPA for their full count of 315 students, and Marilyn and Michael Beth confirmed.

Meggan asked to clarify that this topic came from a discussion in September/October 2022 about our September 30 counts, and recalled that Marilyn had a verbal agreement from Dan Lippy that the expectation was that we would have some grace for that count date. MVM was at 299, which is why the Board Evoted this month to approve the MVM budget revision, but CCM's count was 315.

Marilyn said that CCM's Administrative Secretary recalls and is looking for a written agreement from FCPS.

Elizabeth asked about Sue Johnson's response to the recent letters sent by MMCI regarding the September 30th counts for 2022, and Michael Beth clarified her interpretation that CCM will not receive PPA for the 315th student who started the following school day, "because of state law".

ACTION ITEM - Craft a response to FCPS re: PPA and continue to advocate (Elizabeth Landru and Michael Beth Edwards)

ACTION ITEM - Review State PPA policy and policy language (Michael Beth Edwards - DUE DATE June 30)

ACTION ITEM - Kelli to follow up with Diego for scheduling a finance meeting (Kelli McIntosh) (Michael Beth, Elizabeth, Diego, Kelli, Amy O, Josh, and Rachel, Tara)

Elizabeth said that MVM was off because a student needed extra support with transportation, and she offered help, however the student ended up not committing to MVM, which is why the count was off. We work very hard to overcome transportation and language obstacles. There are nuances behind the numbers; there is a human component. Amy Dorman agreed that we do work hard to fill the spots.

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

Elizabeth said that Molly Carlson submitted a report.

Michael Beth added that the CCM zoning process is coming along slowly at the County level, and they are working on other things alongside zoning (blocking plans, cost analysis, bids out to builders, and 4th bid coming to Legacy this week).

Elizabeth said that further negotiations were required and have been ongoing for the MVM property at Tollhouse Avenue, and they are waiting for the structural engineers report, as well as for the seller to agree to pull permits for exterior work. The primary goal is to occupy the property as soon as possible. The committee is also working on developing contingency plans.

- **MVM High School Grant and Planning Update - 5 minutes (Amy Dorman)**

Amy Dorman said that we are moving forward with the HS grant, sending reports and spending funds as appropriate. They will soon be working on the materials list, staffing, and getting the consultant in to plan for the Montessori High School.

High school planning is very exciting. Half of the academic positions are now filled, and they are still looking for history and spanish teachers, as well as a school counselor, and potentially a secondary special educator.

Regarding our consultants, they made great connections at the Montessori conference, and are working with two specialists for consulting.

MVM recently wrapped up the High School info sessions. They were very well-received, and it looks like we will fill all 60 9th grade seats.

Elizabeth asked about Lottery procedure as we are in the middle of hiring new staff members who may have students that they would want to enter into the Lottery for our schools. The Lottery will be run tomorrow, and Elizabeth asked to clarify when staff priority begins.

Marilyn said that the lottery will be run without any staff members who are currently in the application process, but as soon as the staff member has a signed contract, they will go to the bottom of the wait list according to priority.

Amy Dorman said that the new hires for the MVM HS will be working over the summer, so they will begin before July 1.

Michael Beth said that staff priority is a draw for educators to accept positions at our schools because of our hours and locations, etc. Michael Beth said that she would recommend using the contract date, because teachers would not go back on a contract once it's signed; a contract means that a commitment is made.

Meggan agreed that staff priority begins upon their hire date, and asked if a hire date is the same as a contract date.

Marilyn said that a contract begins when paperwork is submitted, and then the commitment is made. Marilyn recommended that MVM should consider adding a staff member's child to a different grade, especially for the current circumstance of hiring staff for the High School.

Amy thanked Marilyn and agreed that we do need to take care of our staff in any way that we can.

Marilyn said if we have incoming staff members with children eligible for the Lottery, we should hold the spots. Amy agreed, but said that she isn't certain of staff interest.

Kathleen Luttrell said that historically we have used the date that paperwork has been completed and returned from FCPS as the point at which the student was added to the waitlist according to priority.

Elizabeth agreed that staff could register children and be added at the end of staff priority.

Kathleen agreed that staff priority takes preference over any other priorities.

Marilyn said we should have known sooner, but Amy was waiting for the acceptance of offers.

Meggan asked to clarify when the Lottery reopens, and said that the real question is what happens if staff is hired in those 2-3 weeks between close of Lottery and the Lottery draw.

Marilyn said if we knew an offer was made, we could save an opening to protect staff and save their spot.

ACTION ITEM - Follow up with Jen Swafford re: staff priority for new hires (Elizabeth Landru)

- MMCI Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee Update - 1 minute (Jennifer Mayo/ Vanessa Deugarte)

Jennifer Mayo reported that we had an open discussion DEI Committee meeting on March 13th, where we came together and discussed ideas, potential events, and how we wanted to structure the committee. We want our committee to be an open and safe space for all. We began by throwing out ideas and talking about our relationship with FCPS, as charter schools.

Julie Clark and Jennifer are going to meet about the upcoming Book Club and plan to introduce a DEI title to the community.

Michael Beth said that Ibram Kendi was the keynote speaker at the Montessori conference, and was the most engaging speaker. Marilyn said that they have many of his books in CCM's school library.

Meggan added that the DEI committee meeting was exciting, and thanked Jennifer for getting this started. Meggan encouraged all BOT members to come to the next DEI meeting if able to

attend to support their work, observe, lend ideas, and ask questions.

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

Meggan said that we have some open positions - one BOT Friend of Education; MVM GC positions; 3 CCM Friends of Education.

Meggan would like to keep the Nominating committee consistently active, and ready to reach out to volunteers for open and upcoming positions throughout the year. We should have a plan for what happens when we have open positions in the middle of the year, and take a look at how we recruit Friends of Ed. etc. It is important to be actively trying to fill positions.

Bob Weiland said that the MVM GC will begin to fill additional positions in June/July 2023 and will reach out to MMCI with a succession plan.

ACTION ITEM - Reach out to potential BOT Friend of Education (Meggan Sombat)

ACTION ITEM - Share succession plan for MVM GC with Nominating Committee (Bob Weiland)

- **MMCI Lottery Committee Update - 1 minute (Jen Swafford)**

Elizabeth Landru shared the Lottery Committee Report, and numbers for the MVM High School. The Lottery pull is tomorrow, March 23, 2023.

Marilyn said that there was a question recently about income verification for PreK students. She said that the income verification process is seamless with FCPS, and required by the State Blueprint grants.

Jen Swafford mentioned that this year we've had more applications than ever before, over 2K per school. Jen recommended that the MVM High school send an FOF for recruitment as soon as we reopen applications. She said that her concern is if people sign up and don't commit, especially in the fall, and said that it is often harder to fill spots for older students.

Jen added that there are three great potential Lottery volunteers at CCM, and Jen is looking to step back next year, and have them take over the chair position.

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

Meggan said that she will continue to work on pulling the SOP details from the MMCI Grants Policy, and should have a draft by the April Work Session.

Lynn from CCM reached out with CCM parents who are interested in working on grants, and that soon there will be an introductory meeting. At both schools, we want to reorganize this process, especially with building purchases. If anyone is interested in working on grants or has questions, please reach out to Meggan at secretary@mmcimd.org, or grants@mmcimd.org.

- BOT Book Club Update - 1 minute (Julie Clark)

Julie Clark said that we have a date set for Wednesday, May 17 at 6pm for our next book club. We will choose a DEI related book, and titles are being discussed. Julie said that everyone in the MMCI community is invited to attend the book club, to meet board members and socialize. Julie will send info and reminders, and reading the book is not required.

School Updates:

7:37-7:47 p.m.

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

Amy Dorman reported that 9 staff members attended the AMS conference, with every level represented. Everyone came back with so many great ideas, and they are planning a staff gallery walk to share their favorite workshops. The MVM drama production is coming up soon. Amy gave shout outs to a student who won a competition for writing an original song, students who had their art on display downtown, and MVM's Science Olympiad team who placed in the top 6 in 22/23 events at the regional competition, and will be headed to the State competition. Bob Weiland said that the MVM GC is planning to hold a town hall for facilities change in the next school year, possibly in the beginning of May. Bob reiterated that the GC is also working on a succession plan for filling new GC positions.

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

Marilyn Horan said that MCAP scores came back and CCM is a 4 star school. They did well in expected areas, and are working on areas that need improvement. CCM has children affected by earthquakes and some with family in Russia and Ukraine, so the students have made crafts and done a book donation within their Micro-economy to raise money for donations as well as school events. Marilyn said that there are lots of field trips, and that they are doing school at CCM.

Michael Beth said that she has spent most of her time recently on facilities, and the CCM Annual Report.

6. Follow-ups/ Action Items

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

- [BOT Action Items & Follow Ups - February/March 2023](#)

Meggan Sombat reported that most of the Action Items we needed to review have already been discussed and updated, and asked everyone to take a look at the current items and update as needed. A new Action Items list will be sent after this meeting.

**Amy Dorman added re: her new Action Item, that Brandon Sowers replied to her message, and said it was fine to leave his name in the Evote Report/ Meeting Minutes.*

7. New Business: Discussion and Votes

7:50 - 8:40 p.m.

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

MOTION: Elizabeth Landru moved to go into Closed Session to consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto.

Seconded by Julie Clark.

The MOTION PASSED with 9 Aye.

The Closed Session Began at 8:31pm.

The Closed Session Ended at 9:02pm.

- **DISCUSSION/ VOTE: Approval of CCMPCS Annual Report** (Michael Beth Edwards)

Michael Beth said that the Annual Report is a 15 minute report to the BOE, and the slides contain data about CCM, as well as the narrative of the school. This will be our first presentation to Dr. Dyson. The biggest work this year was deleting the remaining covid-related language. Alumni High School data has also been added, which is impactful. Marilyn added that there is also an important slide about CCM's Spanish assessments, and Spanish program.

Meggan complimented the photos of the students that were added to the presentation, and asked when the presentation will be given.

Marilyn said that the presentation will be Wednesday, April 5th at the 3pm BOE meeting. They are also going to attend the 6pm BOE meeting and a 6th grade HS Spanish 1 student will give her version of the I Have a Dream speech in both English and Spanish.

MOTION: Michael Beth Edwards moved to Approve the CCM FY22 Annual Report as submitted.

Seconded by Kelli McIntosh.

The MOTION PASSED with 10 Aye.

ACTION ITEM - Michael Beth will send the report to FCPS and cc: Tara, Elizabeth, and Meggan. (Michael Beth Edwards)

- **DISCUSSION/ VOTE: Approval of Legal Fees for McCurdy, Dean, & Graditor LLC** (Elizabeth Landru/ Michael Beth Edwards)

Elizabeth Landru said that Lisa Graditor is a parent at MVM and does legal work for MVM and CCM, and some of her hours are recorded as volunteer hours. She is very dedicated to the work for our schools. Michael Beth added that the reason the zoning went as quickly as it did is because of Lisa Graditor's skillful negotiation.

Elizabeth said that the work that Lisa does is important because of her legal advice, and the conversations she has on our behalf.

MOTION - Elizabeth Landru moved to approve up to an additional \$40,000 in legal expenses for MVMPCS and CCMPCS, to be paid out of MMCI facility reserve.

Seconded by Jessica Lawrence Wujek.

Julie Clark asked how much have we allotted for attorney fees for facilities for our schools, in general. Meggan answered that since March 2022 we have spent approximately \$45,000. In March 2022, we voted to pay invoices for approximately \$3,700, and voted for \$40,000 for future expenses for facilities legal fees, and currently we have approximately \$2,000 in invoices.

Julie asked if we are looking at spending another \$40K in the next year.

Elizabeth said that both schools should own buildings within the next year, and we should not need this amount of legal expenses in a year's time.

Meggan added that the amount spent by each school is being tracked by Amy O'Connor, and has been reported in monthly financial summaries. This was decided in the original vote. Meggan said that of the current invoices, MVM's is much higher than CCM's, so this statement is for context for anyone new to the board, or who may be questioning the split.

The MOTION PASSED with 10 Aye.

ACTION ITEM - Send Vote info to Amy O'Connor (Meggan Sombat)

- **DISCUSSION: MMCI Staffing - Executive Director (Tara Dunsmore)**

Elizabeth moved this discussion item to the next meeting. Meggan added that this topic will be discussed at our next quarterly Work Session on April 19th.

- **DISCUSSION/ VOTE: Reschedule May 2023 BOT Meeting (Meggan Sombat)**

Meggan said that May 31, 2023 is the evening of CCM's 8th Grade Promotion. Meggan checked with MVM staff for conflicts, as four of our board members have 8th Graders at MVM, and there were none.

MOTION: Meggan Sombat moved to reschedule the May 2023 MMCI BOT Meeting to Wednesday, May 24, 2023.

Seconded by Elizabeth Landru.

The MOTION PASSED with 10 Aye.

ACTION ITEM - Update BOT website and calendars (Meggan Sombat)

- **DISCUSSION: Charter School Advocacy Update (Elizabeth Landru)**

Elizabeth said that MMCI are members of MAPCS, which she advocated for a couple of years ago. MAPCS has a pulse on other charter schools in the state and does advocacy work at the State level. Elizabeth recently met with MacKenzie Allen and the other charter school operators of Frederick County, and had a productive discussion. Also, as a community we recently worked on a bill to provide additional funding for facilities for every public charter school student. The bill did

not make it out of committee, so work on the bill was set aside and will be picked up again in the fall.

MOTION: Elizabeth Landru moved to close the meeting.

Second by Michael Beth Edwards.

The MOTION PASSED with 9 Aye.

The March MMCI BOT Meeting adjourned at 9:34pm.

Announcements:

1. Upcoming MMCI Business Meetings (usually held at 7PM the FINAL Wednesday of each month): *meetings will be virtual unless otherwise noted.*
 - Wednesday, April 19, 2023 (Quarterly Work Session)
 - Wednesday, April 26, 2023
 - Wednesday, May 24, 2023

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