

MINUTES – Approved

Mission

Marine Area Community School will utilize the natural resources, history, arts, and civic stewardship of the community as a foundation for the study of language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, physical education, art, and other curriculum subjects. The place-based learning environment will be student-centered, designed by teachers, and reinforced and supported by the local community.

1.0 Call to Order 9:35 a.m.

1.1 **Roll Call:** Lisa White, Kristina Smitten, Lisa Dochniak, Glen Mills, Jon Dettmann

2.0 Approve Agenda

2.1 The agenda for the meeting was accepted.

3.0 Minutes from August 13, 2016

3.1 Regular meeting minutes approved as submitted.

4.0 Community Comment

4.1 **Citizen Comments:** None

4.2 **Authorizer Comments:** Brad Blue, representing the MACS authorizer, Minnesota Guild of Public Charter Schools (www.mncharterschools.org), was invited to speak. He briefly spoke about the Guild's history and charter school history, and commended the MACS organizers on their transparency, diligence, and tenacity.

Mr. Blue discussed the Guild-MACS contract, and said it will be for 5 operational years (MACS is now in a preoperation phase) and it authorizes MACS to be a district in itself.

5.0 Reports

5.1 **Facilities Report:** Director White toured the former Concordia Language Village/Wilder Forest facilities with representatives from Wilder Foundation and board of Manitou Fund (current owner of adjacent Warner Nature Center, and purchaser of some acreage of Wilder Forest). They are looking for ways that the property can be used and would like to continue to utilize it as green/open space and are interested in having charter school as a tenant.

They have a variety of buildings, many of which would be suitable and/or adaptable to housing a charter school (the number, extent, and quality of buildings and campus in a forest setting was noted). Some buildings already have sprinkler systems and accessible restrooms – needed for schools. Director White noted that the Manitou Fund is amenable to reconfiguring spaces/walls if necessary. The dining hall has commercial kitchen. Extra dining hall downstairs.

Board Director Smitten noted that MACS is looking at different facilities because it is not known whether the current Marine school building will be vacated in time. First preference is Marine Elementary building. 2nd option is Wilder buildings. 3rd option is

Christ Lutheran Church in Marine, which has agreed to work with MACS if need be. Board Chair Smitten has contacted two architects who may be able to help with code compliance issues related to each facility. Has received proposal from one and expects to hear from the other: HMM Design Collaborative and Rivera Architects Incorporated.

The next step will be a board visit to the facilities and a walk through with selected architects to better understand how the facilities could provide programmatic and functional needs. Goal is to select a facility in January 2017.

Director Dochniak asked about student capacity at the Wilder site. Chair Smitten responded that the larger dining hall can accommodate 150 at a single sitting.

Chair Smitten also noted that next door is the MN Food Association and may be an interesting partnership opportunity.

- 5.2 **Federal CSP Update:** Director Dochniak reported that MACS has applied for a grant (of up to \$225,000 for 3 years) to help with start-up costs that are not covered by per-student state funding. Upon first application, MACS did not get the grant due to minor tweaking of terms in the application. MACS is awaiting the opportunity to re-apply (exact date not yet known for when submission period will be open again). Brad Blue clarified that the grant is \$175,000 for up to 100 students per year for target enrollment, and for 100-200 target enrollment the grant would be for \$200,000.

A member of the audience commented on QComp funding for teacher salaries and having a teacher evaluation system in place in order to receive that money. Brad Blue responded that 3 things are relevant: 1) The MN legislature opened up QComp funding to new schools in the previous session 2) It is a statutory requirement for all schools including charters to have a teacher evaluation system 3) MACS applications and model align very well with QComp guidelines, and the school is a strong candidate for the funding.

- 5.3 **Financial Report:** Director Dettmann reported that as of September 9, 2016, MACS has received just over \$20,000 in contributions mostly from the Marine community. There has been a little over \$3,000 in expenses thus far, some of which has gone to consulting, authorizer fees, and administrative costs. Legal and other costs are expected.

Sue Logan from the audience asked about contributor acknowledgments. Director Dettmann mentioned he will be creating a finance committee, part of whose function will be to formally acknowledge donors. Board Chair Smitten added that most donors have been sent thank you notes and tax-reporting information.

- 5.4 **Governance Update:** Director Mills reported that the League of Minnesota Cities provides a boiler plate conflict of interest policy. Board Chair Smitten asked whether the board wants an attorney to review the policy. The board discussed that various sources were used to create the draft policy and that the relevant state statute about disclosing potential conflicts of interest is fairly brief. Mr. Blue added that the authorizer will provide board training for policies and compliance.

Board Chair Smitten asked for a motion to adopt the Sept 12, 2016, Conflict of Interest Policy. Director Dettmann so motioned, and Director White seconded. The motion carried with no further discussion.

Director White noted that the MACS attorney is continuing to work on the 501(c)3 nonprofit status application, and that the application was not yet submitted. Brad Blue noted that the timeline has been running about 9 weeks from submission to approval.

6.0 New Business

- 6.1 **Open Enrollment and Lottery Draw:** Board Chair Smitten noted that the open enrollment period opened and closed, and a lottery was held. General enrollment remains open. Director White added that the open enrollment period was from August

13-25. The lottery was held on August 29. MACS has received 139 applications to date. Current number of students in each class ranges from 14 to 28, with most at about 20. Board Chair Smitten noted that all of the applications were ranked because they have not yet selected the facility nor class sizes. Facility and class sizes will be determined in January 2017.

All those who submitted applications received a confirmation that the application was received. MACS follows up with another confirmation of ID number and ranked placement, which is visible on the website. Applicants are able to monitor any movement on the ranked list by keeping track of their ID numbers.

General enrollment will remain open, with a larger marketing effort beginning in February in conjunction with hiring an executive director, rolling out a new website and brand, etc.

In response to an audience question about sibling preference, Director White noted that all of the students who applied during the open enrollment period have been ranked. Those rankings will not change unless a student from that class chooses not to attend MACS. For anyone who applied after the open enrollment period closed (i.e., after August 25), the ranking may change due to a sibling preference. Older grades are admitted first. Board Chair Smitten added that the complicated enrollment policy is on the website.

- 6.2 Community Volunteers:** There has been a sizable number of community volunteer offers. Committee structures will be put into place, and the board will be asked to adopt committees and roles and responsibilities at the next meeting. Committees will include finance, on which Kathy Ferrin and Steve Suby have volunteered to serve with Director Dettmann as the Finance Committee Liaison. Ele Anderson has agreed to volunteer on the marketing and community relations committee along with others. Mark Kruzinski has volunteered to be the facilities coordinator, helping with contractors, logistics, etc.
- 6.3 District 834 Partnership:** MACS board members continue to hope to have a positive working relationship with District 834. Per the last meeting, Board Chair Smitten followed up with Superintendent Pontrelli on August 22, asking for and obtaining confirmation of 834 board member receipt of the letter from the Voice834 attorney Fritz Knaak to ISD 834 board attorney Mikhail.

As a result, Board Chair Smitten sent an email to 834 board members, copying Superintendent Pontrelli, asking for meetings and conversations about partnership. Confusion resulted because the 834 board members did not receive a copy of the letter that Ms. Pontrelli said they got. As a result, the MACS board will wait for action from District 834 as to how to proceed. District 834 Board Chair Hoepfner indicated an interest in the MACS board coming to an 834 learning session. MACS Board Chair Smitten expressed the hope for a unified, positive working partnership with District 834, and will take action on a meeting with the two boards as the opportunity happens.

- 6.4 Local Business Partnership Opportunity:** On October 15, 1:00pm, at Caramelpalooza, Marine-based St Croix Chocolate will be unveiling a special creation meant to benefit MACS on a long-term basis. Donations will be handled by the Marine School Association, the MACS fiscal agent, on a temporary basis.

7.0 Old Business

- 7.1** Ele Anderson will be helping to create individual board member email addresses so that all MACS board business can be funneled through those email addresses.
- 7.2** MACS will be beginning the process to hire a group to help with financial services as well as the hiring process for an executive director in February.

Brad Blue added that the Guild has five charters that are waiting for the federal

CSP grants. He suggested that these schools, including MACS, go through the fair and open process of hiring of special financial/accounting firms as well as special education services and potentially executive director search firms prior to securing of the CSP grant, which may strengthen the CSP application.

- 7.3 **Branding:** Director Dettmann mentioned that he is working with the firm Ultra Creative in coming up with a name, logo, and brand for MACS hopefully by mid-November. The name of the school may change, although “Marine Area Community School” will be a part of the name.

8.0 Other

- 8.1 **Next meeting:** Next Board of Directors Meeting is October 15, 2016 at 9:30AM at the Marine Town Hall.

9.0 Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 10:33 am.