



## Board Meeting 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 9:30 a.m.**

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

### **2.0 Approve Agenda**

**2.1** Co-chair White added a discussion on insurance to the Reports section. The agenda was approved unanimously.

### **3.0 Approve Previous Meeting Minutes**

**3.1** Board meeting and workshop minutes from April 15, 2017, were approved unanimously.

### **4.0 Community Comment**

**4.1** None.

### **5.0 Reports**

**5.1 Financial Report:** Member Dettmann reported that the current balance is about \$13,000 down from \$16,500 due to some paid bills. Additional bills due are expected soon.

**5.1.1 Meeting with TAG on May 23<sup>rd</sup>.** A meeting with the financial advisor (The Anton Group) is scheduled for May 23<sup>rd</sup>. MACS budget will need to be approved in June. Chair Smitten thanked Steve Suby for his help with the financials.

**5.1.2 Federal Non-Profit Status:** was received! We will now be able to accept donations as MACS rather than using a fiscal agent. Co-chair White is working on a Razoo account.

**5.1.3 Fundraising needs, volunteer grant writers.** Member Dettmann noted the importance of fundraising. Chair Smitten noted three big areas of fundraising needs: 1) capital improvements to become code compliant; 2) technology needs; 3) educational programming. Anyone with experience in fundraising and/or grant writing, please contact Kristina Smitten or Lisa White.

Community member/volunteer Becky Potthoff will be organizing a

fundraiser for Millstream Day tomorrow, May 21, noon-4pm. There will be a bake sale, Tshirts for sale, and representatives on hand. Community member/volunteer Megan Lapos also announced sign-up sheets for parent organization committees, such as library and fundraising. Director Dochniak asked whether donated books can be stored at the Grove location; Chair Smitten noted that a space-planning meeting will be held to discuss ideas.

Director Dettmann asked about budgeting and knowing how much is needed for the three big areas of fundraising needs. Chair Smitten responded that the amount for technology is known and depends on the parameters set of 1 student: 1 device (or 2:1). The CSP grant will cover part of the technology costs. Expected capital improvements costs will become known through a bid process.

**5.2 Staff Hiring:** Chair Smitten announced that 7 teachers and our school administrator were hired. Contract negotiations are underway. The team is currently discussing curriculum, etc. We hope to post the special ed teacher position soon. Indigo will be helping write the position description.

### **5.3 Facility Status**

**5.3.1 Fire Inspection Code Compliance matters:** Chair Smitten emailed the fire inspector, asking about the timeline for code compliance. The inspector replied that the important thing is that he is able to inspect before students occupy the facilities. Chair Smitten suggested late July or early August.

**5.3.2 Bids for walls removal, electrical permit:** Chair Smitten noted that 3 licensed contractors have been identified that we hope to get bids from, but if there are other local licensed contractors interested in the work please contact MACS.

Director Mills asked if there is a minimum dollar amount at which MACS needs to solicit bids. Chair Smitten responded that it varies and is described in the procurement policy; anything purchased with CSP funds requires bids. Co-chair White added that the procurement policy specifies anything over \$3000 requires bids.

**5.3.3 Washington Co. Health Dept. review:** Volunteers Jill and Andy Wilson and Co-chair Lisa White met with the Wash Co Health Dept. They toured the kitchens in the Grove Commons building. Co-chair White noted that required changes don't look big.

**5.3.4 Safety Plan:** Director Mills will be reviewing and updating the safety plan. It will be required prior to the lease being signed.

**5.3.5 Insurance:** Co-chair White received insurance coverage prior to the Open House. MACS is covered by general liability at \$2 million per occurrence, \$4 million aggregate; an umbrella policy of \$1 million; board liability insurance (also covers employees) of \$1 million per occurrence, \$3 million aggregate; and many broadening endorsements. The policies are available for public review.

**5.4 Transportation: Community volunteer** Jim Maher reported that one option is unlikely: having our own busses. That leaves us with district-provided or contracted transportation. Chair Kristina Smitten and volunteer Jim Maher met with the district. At this time the district is still offering a starting bell time of approximately 10:00, and ending of 5:00 or later, which is not satisfactory for Grove students. Grove's goal for morning bell times is between 8:45 to 9:15. Director Dettmann asked if there are any

guidelines or rules that the district needs to follow for determining bell times. Jim responded that they did talk to MDE about this, who responded that they are not able to enforce bell times because there is nothing in the statutes as most districts understand reasonable bell times.

They are also getting bids from contractors. Some state funding will go to busing: approximately \$300 per student, which is not enough to cover all estimated costs (which may be double that). Chair Smitten noted we did allocate money in our budget for transportation. Volunteer Maher estimated that we will need 3 - 4 buses; possibly more if a second 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class is added.

MACS will try to stay within the district's board approved bus ride length parameters of 1 hour. The committee is also looking at convenient and safe drop-off sites at the school.

Chair Smitten noted that if we work with our own contractor we have more flexibility in terms of routes and pick-up spots. Having designated pick-up spots likely will not reduce the number of buses needed but it may improve drive times.

The final recommendation will be at the June meeting. We will have to inform the district by July 1st of our decision. Also contractors will need time for planning.

5.5 **Food Service:** Volunteer Jill Wilson has been researching options for food service. She noted the exceptional quality of the facilities at Grove, which offer the possibility of doing scratch made meals and incorporating nutrition services into the curriculum.

Jill has contacted many resources such as the kitchen manager at Camp St. Croix, River Market, and Webster Elementary as a potential model for family style service. Options include bringing food in from a provider or caterer, or going on our own with a scratch kitchen. Whether we want to go for federal reimbursement dollars is another decision for the board.

Jill provided the board with a spreadsheet that compares the financials of a catered lunch vs. a scratch kitchen, both with and without federal reimbursement funding. The participation numbers used are based on numbers at Marine Elementary: 79% participation rate in school lunch, approximately 12% free and reduced. She estimated labor at 2 people, and lunch prices of \$3.50 (based on cost at St Croix Prep and quote from catered lunch).

Director Dettmann asked about the personnel effort involved in getting a scratch kitchen ready by August. Jill responded that it may be a matter of finding the right kitchen manager who is certified. He also asked about the fundraising appetite and community support. Jill responded that she's gotten a very good response from parents, and if we can become a part of the USDA program there's lots of funding opportunities there.

Co-chair White noted that they would be able to better gauge the budget for a scratch kitchen after Tuesday's meeting with the financial advisors. Chair Smitten noted that the budget will be approved in June.

Concerns from the audience included the rise in cost. Currently we pay \$2.40 per lunch. Another concern is food waste.

5.6 **Technology:** We have filed our E-rate application and are waiting to hear back. We are working with a consultant who are helping us make decisions about everything from installing fiber from Paul Ave to the buildings, to trenching in between buildings, to phones, iPads and Chromebooks.

We have three funding categories for technology: General budget, CSP Grant, and E-rate funds. The reimbursements from the CSP take 30 days, but from the e-rate program the reimbursements take a year.

The fiber company we will probably contract with is Midco, who quoted \$500 upfront and \$1,500 a month for access for a three-year contract. That includes installation.

- 5.7 **Music:** Director Lisa Dochniak reported on the music curriculum research. Several volunteers are helping, including Stephanie LeGros, and Donovan and Katie Corbett, and others. The committee's goal is to have music education 2 times a week for 30 min, or 1 time a week for 45 min under the guidance of a paid or volunteer music education expert/consultant/instructor (and perhaps alongside classroom teachers). One priority includes setting up band and orchestra soon so that it is in place for the start of school. The committee has identified at least one person who is interested in teaching band and orchestra during the school day, and they have identified vendors who could help families with instruments.

At a minimum, classroom teachers could use published curriculum to teach music basics and music exposure. The committee needs to have a conversation with the teacher about what kind of music specialists they want in their classrooms.

Goals for K through 2: to create a culture where students engage, explore, and create by making music; experience leadership and mindfulness in listening and playing; learn elements of music; learn how to hold and play different instruments; conduct a musical performance.

Grades 3 through 4: continue to explore and engage in creative exploration of music; build on prior knowledge of elements and apply this to playing percussion instruments including the keyboard; choir experience; conduct a musical performance.

Grades 5 through 6: add band and orchestra. Perhaps include the possibility of additional piano and guitar lessons. Also perhaps expand on choir, and opportunities for kids to participate in musical instrument maintenance. Conduct a musical performance (6th grade play).

Chair Smitten noted that it would be beneficial to Grove students, as future 834 students, to align the curriculum with Stillwater's (Essential Elements). She also noted the possible collaboration possibilities in music/community education.

Director Dettman voiced that he would like to continue the 6th grade play tradition from Marine. Director Dochniak responded that many area community members have volunteered to participate (accompanists, directors, etc.), and noted all of the music expertise in the community. The production side of the play could utilize Grove's maker space.

The committee will have more information after the budget meeting.

Committee members suggested the possibility of having a music festival/fundraiser, although capacity restrictions may prevent that. Other locations were also mentioned, such as Big Marine County Park.

## 6.0 **New Business:**

- 6.1 **Request to approve contracts: The Anton Group, and Indigo Education:** Director Dettmann noted some of the dates and other minor changes were made to the contract, which was reviewed prior to the receipt of the CSP grant. At financial meeting on Tuesday, the board will ask about the start date being adjusted to allow

usage of CSP funds. Director Dettmann moved to approve contingent on discussions with The Anton Group regarding the start date. The motion was approved unanimously.

Director Dochniak reviewed the contract briefly, but requested a bit more time to review dates. Chair Smitten suggested that the contract be approved at the meeting on Tuesday, and noted that The Anton Group reviewed and approved of the contract. Terms of the contract changed to one year.

Chair Smitten requested an additional clause with language about any possible closure of the school, that MACS is not obligated to the contract or the contract is voided. She requested that this clause also be a part of The Anton Group contract. Director Dettmann suggested the previous approval of The Anton Group contract be rescinded, and made a new motion to approve the contract with both the prior contingency and this new school closure/termination clause. The revised motion was approved unanimously.

**6.2 Teacher Powered Ignition Grant Submitted April 30, 2017:** Director Dochniak and Chair Smitten participated in the interview for the second round of this grant proposal. We will find out toward the end of the month. The grant would be used for training and professional development for the teaching team. If MACS doesn't get the in on this grant, future opportunities will exist.

**6.3 Decision about Adding a Section for One Grade Level in 2017-2018:** Co-chair White discussed the enrollment process, which was initially opened in August 2016. The lottery was held at the end of that month; the children after the first 25 were then waitlisted, and applications were added to the list in chronological order. Official enrollment began a few weeks ago, and ended last week. 70% of the initial invitations were accepted. Co-chair White then began sending invitations to students on the waitlist according to enrollment policy (such as sibling priority). Currently, about 140 students have officially enrolled as of this meeting: 6<sup>th</sup> grade 9 open spots, 5<sup>th</sup> grade waitlisted, 4<sup>th</sup> grade 3 open spots, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade waitlisted with 28 students, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade waitlisted with 12 students, 1<sup>st</sup> grade waitlisted with 7 students, kindergarten 4 open spots. Families have until Friday May 26 to respond to the second round of invitations before new invitations are sent. We received approximately 262 applications total to date.

The families who decided not to enroll gave reasons such as their kids wanted to be with their peers and transportation reasons -- nothing negative about the school.

Co-chair White discussed the topic with The Anton Group. The current budget is based on 175 students, and asked them to compare revenue and cost projections based on 195 students. They adjusted everything across the board (buses, textbooks, testing, one more teacher, revenue sources, etc.). The Anton Group recommends the school to build up a fund balance, so that after the end of the start-up CSP grant period, reserves exist. With 175 students, at the end of fiscal 2020-21, MACS's fund balance is projected to be \$150,000. With 195 students, the fund balance is projected to be \$430,000 at the end of 2020-21.

Chair Smitten circled back to the last meeting's discussion of what is best for the school overall, and mentioned that adding a second section for third grade in this year needs to fit in the overall vision for the school. In her discussions with teachers, she learned that two sections per grade is desirable – allowing more differentiation, teamwork and collaboration, social benefits for kids, etc. She reiterated her desire

that MACS remain a small school overall because of the benefits for kids who need that environment. She also voiced her concern about sustainability and being able to attract enough students for 2 sections per grade throughout the school.

Co-chair White agreed with the benefits of a two-section school, and said she is comfortable with adding a second section for third grade without immediately committing to two sections throughout (in the future). She raised concerns about facilities in the long-term.

Director Dochniak noted the high level of interest especially in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades. She agreed with the long-term potential of two sections per grade. She also noted the possibility of needing to reduce the number of sections at times because of demographics.

Director Dettmann suggested the board discuss the overall enrollment minimum with The Anton Group to get a clearer picture of financial sustainability related to enrollment, a “break-even point.”

Director Mills noted concerns and suggested we move ahead very cautiously.

Director Dettmann asked Chair Smitten what kind of formal board action needed to take place. Chair Smitten responded that the board needs clarity about whether to invite additional students to enroll, and that the community is looking for direction. Adding an additional section in K-6 does not expand the program nor do we need MDE approval: Chair Smitten discussed the topic with the authorizer and the new School Administrator, both of whom were supportive of the idea especially from a financial viewpoint, noting that a number of school costs are fixed.

The board accepted community comments. Lisa DeMars noted that families are now touring schools, trying to decide, and only 6 days remain in the school year. Other people mentioned that many kids and families are anxious about where they will be going to school next year, and there is an incredible amount of community support for Grove. Megan Lapos noted the opportunity of a great, very dedicated parent community. Stephanie LeGros noted that we haven't yet done an extensive marketing program, and district-wide busing to Grove will increase enrollment. Other community members voiced similar opinions and observations.

Director Dettmann added a concern that enrollment may drop after this first year, affecting the school's finances, and posted the question “What would that impact?” Co-chair White noted that enrollment changes and drops could happen in any grade, not just the second section of 3rd grade.

Chair Smitten echoed the difficulty of predicting next year's enrollment. She added that she is appreciative of MACS's autonomy. The board had the ability to make decisions, with the community's input and guidance. She reiterated that this is a community school, and we get to work and made decisions together even if future decisions are difficult.

Director Dettmann motioned to add a second section to the third grade, with the request that the board takes another look at finances with The Anton Group. The motion was approved unanimously.

**6.4 Volunteers needed to research before and after school club options:** Please respond to the MACS board if you are interested.

**6.5 Space planning:** Edina schools contacted MACS to see if we want to buy used furniture. The teaching team will be conducting a space-planning workshop on Sunday May 21, 4-6pm, and we can think about furniture then. Other space planning

topics might be the library, maker space/project room, art room, music space, etc.

**7.0 Old Business:**

- 7.1 **Federal CSP Grant:** was received! \$175,000 for the first year – This is a 30-day reimbursement program; funds need to be spent before the end of September.
- 7.2 **District 834 Partnership:** Chair Hoepfner of District 834 wrote to say they are not able to collaborate with MACS at this time.
- 7.3 **Community Cleanup and Open House Wrap-up:** Thank you to everybody! More events will be in the planning, such as a back to school event or a summer gathering/potluck after July 1 when the fiscal year starts.

**8.0 Other**

- 8.1 **Board governance training is due for remaining board members.**
- 8.2 **Next Board of Directors Meeting: June 17, 2017, at 9:30AM at Wilder Forest**

**9.0 Adjournment:** 11:56 am.