

Marine Area Community School
Board of Directors Meeting
February 18, 2020 – 6:00 PM
River Grove Commons

MINUTES - DRAFT

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. Meeting called to order at 6:03pm
 - 1.1. Roll Call –Jackie Henschen, Bre DeCorsey, Marcy Ost, Dan Miller, Lisa Dochniak, Angie Hong, Jessica Hansen. Also in attendance, School Director Drew Goodson.
2. Approve Agenda
 - 2.1. Motion by Ost, second by Henschen, approved unanimously.
3. Approve Minutes January 2020
 - 3.1. Motion to approve by DeCorsey, second by Henschen; approved.
4. Community Comment
 - 4.1. River Grove Community Updates
 - 4.1.1. Board Member Driven Initiatives
 - 4.1.1.1. Member Hong reported that she has been reaching out to local elected officials. She is setting up a tour on 2/28 with Washington County Commissioner Fran Miron, State Representative (District 39B) Shelly Christensen, May Township Board Chair Bill Voedisch, and others. Other dates may work for Representative (District 39A) Bob Dettmer. Member Hong also met with Marine on St Croix Mayor Glen Mills, and also Win Miller who represents the Marine on St Croix residents' effort to begin another charter school.
 - 4.2. Citizen Comments -- none
5. Cindy Murphy, Executive Director, and Deirdre Kramer, Board Member, Minnesota Guild (River Grove Authorizer)
 - 5.1. The Minnesota Guild representatives introduced themselves and mentioned the role of a charter school authorizer. Ms Murphy also discussed the previous expansion policy, which addresses when a charter school that has been approved to serve certain grade levels wants to expand. She added that the policy stated a new school needed to have completed 4 years of operation before expansion eligibility. The MN Guild board has changed the policy so that a school can apply to expand after 3 years of operation. The application process will still take viability and stability into account.

Member Hong asked whether any changes to the school's mission statement needs authorizer approval. Ms Murphy responded that it depends on the significance of the change but that generally, the mission statement is not considered to be a material condition of the contract. If the change in the philosophy or scope of the school, that would require authorizer approval. If bylaws are altered, which impacts governance, the authorizer approval is required. So, if the mission statement is in the bylaws, the authorizer would have to be involved prior to a board vote.
6. Reports and Discussion

6.1. Director's Report – Drew Goodson

Currently 192 students enrolled.

Enrollment for next year is underway. We continue to track returning students (30 nonresponses so far), and have emailed offers to enroll for available positions to new students. About 60% of 5th graders have indicated they will be returning for 6th grade.

Kindergarten roundup planning for end of March or early April is underway. We have 40 applicants at this time for K.

One of our marketing goals is to fire up the Instagram account and show off our campus.

Site planning is underway for next year.

Trollhaugen Day for the whole school is coming up.

Our partnership with the YMCA/Forest Lake Branch is coming together, headed up by Kit Swanson. He will help us with an after-school fishing/archery program (funded by the DNR grant); during the day on Thursdays for outdoor education and recess; and team building with the staff.

We held a PTO-sponsored Community Day on campus with a great turnout and even a few new families.

The teachers met for a professional development day on 2/17/20. Member Hansen and Director Goodson reported that the teachers broke into committee groups to discuss literacy, environmental education and the school's partnership with Big River Farm and how to fill the gap left by the closing of Warner Nature Center, facilities and classroom spaces, assessments, campus beautification, contracted specialists and scheduling specialists for next year, school culture and team building.

6.1.1. Teacher Contract Renewal Timeline

Director Goodson will send out an Intent to Return Survey to teachers by Friday 2/21. This is due on 3/16, with contract renewals by 4/6.

Teacher evaluations are also about to get underway, with a self-evaluation rubric going out on 3/2 which is based on Minn Dept of Education guidance. Goodson is doing 2 short visits per classroom, with longer observations the week of March 16. Parent-Student Surveys will be sent out on 3/6. Smart goals and personal development plans will be made in mid April through May.

6.1.2. New Teacher Recruitment Timeline

Director Goodson will begin the new teacher recruitment process on 2/28 for any vacancies; resumes will be due on 3/20 and interviews the following week. Board Chair Miller mentioned that the Board Personnel Committee could assist with the process, with Goodson suggesting teachers and perhaps parents also be involved.

6.1.3. PTO Report: Katherine Hardie, PTO Co-chair

Donation by the PTO to the school of \$5000 was made.

Community Day went well. Could expand a bit next year to be a mini-carnival or something small.

Read-a-Thon going well; \$1000 online donations so far, waiting to see what cash donations are made.

Planning a field day for the spring with Katie Bruns, PE Teacher. Also planning a Fun Run on campus, similar to last year's Color Run, although it won't be on the last day of school because of all the activity on that last day. Board Chair Miller mentioned that we could make more use of the campus trails.

Staff appreciation plans still underway.

Planning a pancake breakfast to raise money for the 6th grade Camp Widjiwagan trip.

The PTO is working on expanding recycling on campus and will work with staff to implement more recycling.

The PTO is also working on a spring cleaning plan and will work with staff on that as well.

Lisa DeMars reported that the school has \$2500 in "Scholastic dollars" which we could use on books for the school.

6.2. Board Member Reports

6.2.1. Financial Report – Marcy Ost

The Finance Committee met on Friday. Enrollment is at 192. The approved budget is for 205 students, but the School Director is running the school based on actual enrollment. Therefore, the debt reserve is not being funded as much (operations expenses are not affected very much). Many small steps are being taken to save money. Contracted expenses look elevated due to snow removal. Capital expenditures are up because of old Admin building renovation. At the last board meeting, Kyle Knudson of The Anton Group expressed the opinion that school is financially stable; we have not had

to draw on our line of credit and don't plan to. Board Chair Miller said official budget revision is expected in the spring.

IRS 990 Form Approval: Fiscal Year ending July 2019. Motion to approve by Ost; second by Henschen; approved unanimously.

Check Registry and Credit Card Statement Approval. Motion to approve by Dochniak; second by Henschen; approved unanimously.

6.2.2. Operations & Facilities Report – Dan Miller

Employee Handbook update: School Director and Board Member Ost, with HR contractor Kraus-Anderson review, made updates to the section regarding progressive employee corrective action. Board Member DeCorsey reported that she reviewed the minutes from the Nov 2019 meeting, and noted that Member Hong suggested changes to the employee corrective action section of the handbook. The handbook was approved as amended at the November meeting.

Bylaws update: Board Chair Miller talked to attorney Laura Booth, who has done a lot of charter-school work. Ms Booth recommended that the MACS Board highlight areas in the bylaws that may need updating, and she will look at them with an eye toward Minnesota compliance. Miller will create a subcommittee that includes Members Ost and Hansen, School Director Goodson, and Teacher Annie Beck, to review the school's bylaws and amend them before the school's annual meeting, when board elections take place. The main area for consideration is the role composition of the board, such as "community member," "teacher," and "parent." The authorizer will also need to approve the bylaws.

May Township CUP (Conditional Use Permit) Amendment update: At the last meeting, the Board approved the engagement of an attorney to review the CUP amendment for long-term planning. The CUP specifies a cap of 235 people to be on the campus at any one time. Attorney Jay Squires was hired, and he attended the most recent May Township board meeting along with Goodson, Ost, Hong, and Miller. Kou Vang, an advisor, also attended. The school has agreed to conduct a traffic study, which may cost \$7000-\$9000. The school will also engage a civil engineer to discuss a site plan. The attorney will help the school understand clearly what should and should not be included in a CUP. Member Hong asked if anyone had sought advice from other area charter schools; noted that even if the number of kids at the school remained as is, there are concerns with area roads; and noted that when Marine and Withrow schools closed, the May Township Board wrote letters to the 834 district opposing the closing and supporting their residents. Community member and May Township resident Hannah Bredahl spoke to the need of a school that serves local residents. PTO Co-chair Hardie said they could help organize a group of May Township parents to represent the school at a planning commission or township board meeting.

7. Old Business

7.1. Grant Writer Proposal Follow-Up – Bre DeCorsey

Member DeCorsey and Chair Miller have been meeting with Cass Erickson, who is working on a proposal and outline for grant writing. An outstanding question is how much money does the MACS Board want to invest in pursuing grants. DeCorsey shared the proposal and resume.

7.2. Strategic Planning Process – Angie Hong

7.2.1. Updated Timeline and Goals – Outstanding questions include subcommittee framework and makeup. Student learning assessment is one of the teachers' main interest areas; also grade configuration of K-5, K-6, or K-8 or other, the decision timeline, feasibility, and how to make the decision.

7.2.2. Teacher-Board Workshop is planned for Feb 21. Members Dochniak and Hong will attend along with the teachers.

8. New Business

8.1. Board Reporting to the River Grove Community – Bre DeCorsey

Member DeCorsey suggested that there be a vehicle for communicating Board highlights to the parents, and also the teachers and staff. Member Hong suggested that she as Board Secretary draft the highlights for Director Goodson to forward and Ele Anderson to put in the newsletter. Member Ost also suggested Board members take turns.

8.2. Class Sections for 2020-21

Board Chair Miller noted that the two current 5th grade classes will probably go to one 6th grade class for

next year and there is a relatively large waiting list for next year's 3rd grade. There is a good amount of space in the Old Admin building that the special education department could use, but the space needs to be renovated more. Therefore, existing space could be reconfigured to accommodate additional classrooms. Special education teacher Molly Kaliher noted that the amount of space for special education is based on the percentage of students in the programs; our Special Education Kori Ryan would be able to help with recommendations for space needs.

8.2.1. Kindergarten Section(s)

School Director Goodson noted that there are 40 applications for kindergarten. Last year at this time we had 37 applications. Goodson recommended that there be two sections of K for 2020-21. Board Chair Miller requested a motion to have two sections of kindergarten with 20 students each max. Motion by Hansen; second by Henschen. Approved unanimously.

8.2.2. Third Grade Section(s)

School Director Goodson noted that the current second grade is large, with a large waiting list. Space accommodating a second section of 3rd is a consideration. Because previous years' applicants for this class were not accommodated, there may be families interested in re-applying. Board Chair Miller requested a motion to expand to two sections of third grade for 2020-21. Motion by DeCorsey; second by Henschen. Approved unanimously.

8.2.3. Other

School Director Goodson noted that a rough budget number for a minimum class size is 15-18. Member Ost noted there are a lot of associated costs with additional students, such as busing, curriculum, classroom support, administrative support, and furniture. For first grade, we have 27 returning students plus 9 new applications, so both sections of first will remain. We currently have two sections of first, so we will maintain two sections of 2nd.

9. Next Board of Directors Meeting: March 24, 2020 at 6:00PM

10. Adjournment – Motion to adjourn by Hong; second by Henschen. Meeting adjourned