

River Grove Elementary
Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, February 16, 2021 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Virtual

DRAFT MINUTES

1.0 Dan Miller called the meeting to order at 6:02pm.

1.1 Roll Call. Members present: Hong, Beck, Dochniak, Ost, Hansen, DeCorsey, Miller. Also in attendance, Drew Goodson and Ele Anderson.

2.0 Motion to approve agenda by DeCorsey. Second by Beck. All in favor. Agenda approved.

3.0 Miller noted that the minutes had a typo and were listed as November instead of January. Motion to approve January 2020 minutes with change of date from November to January by Beck. Second by Dochniak. All in favor. Minutes approved with recommended correction.

4.0 Community Discussion

4.1 River Grove Community Updates

4.1.1 Board Member Driven Initiatives - no updates

4.1.2 Authorizer Comments (if in attendance) - authorizer not in attendance

4.2 Community Comments - no comments were shared

5.0 Finance Reports & Actions

- Kyle Knudson presented financial reports to the board. He noted that the revenue projections look alarming, however, the State caught up on SpEd revenue just after the report was printed.
- The working budget tentatively includes \$30K to provide additional stipends for staff this spring. The board will eventually need to decide whether or not to approve this expense. We also need to plan for additional funds to update our CUP with May Twp. This would mean potential deficit spending this year.
- We need to use up our first PPE payment before we can get our second.
 - 5.1.1 January 2021 Approvals. Motion to approve by Hong. Second by Ost. Roll call vote. All in favor. Financial reports approved.
 - 5.1.2 Audit RFP Responses and Approval
 - River Grove is required to get bids for our audit process once every three years. Our current auditor, Clifton, Larson, Allen came in as the low bid. Dochniak moved to approve CLA as the auditor. Second by Beck (?). Roll call vote. All in favor. Motion approved.
 - 5.1.3 Staff Stipend Goals
 - Goodson and Miller are recommending waiting until April to make a decision on whether or not we can afford to provide stipends to the staff. There are a lot of unknowns right now in terms of legal and consultant expenses.
 - Ost - could this be tied into the contract renewal process for next year?

- Goodson - the stipends would recognize staff for their extra effort this year but also help with retention for next year. He will provide more info to the board next month as to how this might affect our budget.

5.1.4 Bell Bank Letter of Credit for Annual State of MN Holdback Coverage

- Seeking board approval for Grove to apply for a line of credit from Bell Bank for gaps that may occur when the state temporarily holds back funding. Motion by DeCorsey. Second by Beck. Roll call vote. All in favor. Motion approved.

6.0 Director's Report - Drew Goodson

- Our original budget was for 205 students. We have a working budget of 200 but are now down to only 195 students, so this has affected our budget.
- Enrollment for next year looks great. 84 total new enrollments and 150 returning students expected. So far all of the kindergarten students offered a place for 2021-22 have accepted.
- It will be very important for us to solidify our CUP soon so that we know for sure how many students we can expect next year.
- Wilder has completed a roof replacement in the commons.
- Staffing: Grove currently has a shortage in SpEd but slightly over-staffed in general ed. This is to ensure adequate coverage if staff are out for COVID related reasons.
- Team-building: PTO sponsored event last month included a hike on campus.
- Edvisions grant: teachers have requested \$18K for curriculum development and team-building. The funds will allow for outdoor education kits that classes can use and fund a leadership team to further develop our outdoor education programming over the summer.
- NWEA/DIBELS second round of testing is coming up and will help to target interventions for students that may need extra help to catch up. There is the possibility of summer learning for some students if funding becomes available.
- MCAs will still be happening in the spring. Schools have advocated against testing this spring due to the disruption that's been caused by COVID. There may be a federal mandate to waive testing this spring.
- So far, the first week of back-to-school for K-2 has gone well. Board will need to decide whether to move to a 5-day model after spring break.
- Board conversation:
 - Dochniak - how many teachers are interested in teaching this summer?
 - Goodson - three general ed and one SpEd teacher have expressed interest. The school will encourage students who need extra help to attend. It would not begin until July so kids will still get June off.
 - Ost - would this be a fee-based program? Will grant funds cover bussing and lunch? Is this the only kind of summer programming we'll offer or could there also be fun/enrichment camps? Can grant funds also be used for non-academic programming during the summer?
 - Goodson - Esser funds should be able to cover the majority of costs so it won't be fee-based.
 - Knudson - there is no hard line on whether grants are used for enrichment vs remedial instruction.

- Beck - how will distance learning kids take the MCA?
 - Goodson - MDE has told the school that kids would be required to come in person to take the test. MDE is working on a policy to address the concern that families who are distance learning may not be comfortable coming in person for a test.
- Miller - are any of the general ed paras willing to become SpEd paras? Is one position easier to hire than the other?
 - Goodson - all para positions are difficult to fill but the SpEd positions are full-time and offer some benefits. Currently, paras are needing to be somewhat flexible to help fill staff absences for vaccines and quarantine. Some charter schools have had to remain closed because of staffing concerns.
 - Hansen - urged caution if paras are going to multiple classes for health-related reasons. We have had one parent step up and become a general ed para.
- Goodson - all staff have been offered vaccinations (not everyone has chose to get one) and most are on their second shots. CDC recommendation is that teachers don't need to quarantine after COVID exposure if they have been vaccinated.
 - Miller - could we, as a board, choose to follow the CDC recommendation instead of the MDE recommendation if MDE does not update their quarantine guidelines?
 - Goodson - yes. And likely, MDE will update their guidelines soon, as they have been mostly following CDC guidance.
- Miller - are any families considering enrolling this spring to ensure a spot for the fall?
 - Goodson - one family has mentioned that as a possibility.

6.1.1 Learning Model Transition

6.1.2 PTO Report - Katherine Hardie

- Pat McCarthy joined the PTO as volunteer coordinator. PTO is planning several events for the spring, including a trail clean-up. This may also include planting gardens outside the classrooms.
- The merchandise store will become a perpetual store that people can order from at any time. They will add some additional items and colors.
- The Read-a-thon is happening soon. All donations will be collected online. There will also be a service project - Books for Africa - as part of the event. Katherine will pre-record a video for the students about hte Read-a-Thon.
- They are planning a Spirit Week for the first week of March.
- There will also be a plant sale in the spring. PTO is working with Gertens; pre-ordered plants will arrive in May.
 - Ele Anderson - are there any local nurseries we could work with instead?
 - No. Abrahamson's doesn't have a program like that. Gerten's is a Minnesota company and offers a lot of variety.
 - Dochniak - Gerten's sales are very popular.

- PTO will be sending out an email to families this week with information about all of these events and offerings.
- PTO will also send out a follow up email about the May Twp CUP with suggested actions and will be submitting a letter to the editor to the Country Messenger.

7.0 Old Business

7.1 2021-2022 School Calendar - Goodson

- Goodson presented a draft 2021-22 calendar for review and approval. There are a few variations from the District 834 calendar.
 - Proposed start date: Wed., Sept. 1. (Aug. 30 and 31 will be welcome and orientation days)
 - MEA break: Oct. 20-22 students will be off. Oct. 20 will be a teacher in-service day.
 - Requesting a day off school on Mon., Nov. 8 after parent-teacher conferences.
 - Grove's calendar will also include a teacher in-service day on Jan. 18, the day after MLK holiday.
 - The teachers will have a summer curriculum retreat in early August.
 - We will have 168 instructional days, which allows for 4-5 snow days
- Dochniak - what are grading days and conference prep days? There is a grading day scheduled for Mon., Feb. 21 that is not connected to conferences or other activities.
 - Goodson - this would be a catch-up day. It could be called an in-service day instead.
 - Dochniak - could this just be a day off for teachers? Would prefer to see conference prep days before any conferences.
 - Beck - we have a lot of initiatives so maybe we should make Feb. 21 a teacher in-service day.
- Hong motion to approve proposed calendar with updates made by Goodson during the meeting. Second by Dochniak. Roll call vote. All in favor. Calendar approved.

7.2 May Township Conditional Use Permit Updates

- Since the last board meeting, River Grove has been to one May Twp. planning commission meeting and one township board meeting. Over 60 Grove families attended the meetings or reached out to the township board in support of the CUP update. Board chair Bill Voedisch is very supportive of our request.
- River Grove will come before the May Twp. planning commission again on Feb. 25 for an official decision and the township board will be reviewing and voting on March 4.
- The May Twp. attorney is still expressing reservations about our CUP amendment request but we appear to have support from the planning commission and township board members.
- Washington County Parks has proposed to purchase land along Square Lake from Wilder and that could potentially lead to that portion of the road getting paved.

- River Grove will hold a special board meeting on March 5 to discuss adding a second kindergarten class, based on the outcome of the March 4 township board meeting.
- Katherine Hardie - is the school planning to hire additional staff or retrofit any of our existing buildings if we end up adding a second section?
 - Goodson - maybe but it depends on a lot of factors, including whether or not COVID is still a concern and whether or not we continue to do mixed grade classes.
 - Miller - cautious to continue with mixed-grade classes without further conversation with families, especially after all of this year's changes.

7.3 2021-2022 Class Size and Sections

- Our current approved class sizes are:
 - 20 for K (2 sections)
 - 22 for 1st (2 sections)
 - 23 for 2nd (2 sections)
 - 22 for 3rd (2 sections) *smaller due to available classroom size
 - 24 for 4th
 - 25 for 5th
 - 26 for 6th

8.0 New Business

8.1 Teacher and Staff Eval Planning

- Goodson - most schools are taking a different approach to evaluations this year, due to COVID. Most are asking teachers to do personal reflections and think about their teaching-style fits with the school's mission.

8.2 21-22 Staff Contract Timeline Planning

- Contracts for next year will be offered in April

9.0 Next Board of Directors Meetings:

9.1 Special Meeting scheduled for Friday, March 5, at 4pm to discuss adding a second kindergarten class, based on the outcome of the March 4 township board meeting.

9.2 Regular Board Meeting on Tuesday, March 16, 2021

10.0 Meeting adjourned at 8:16pm by Chair Miller.