

River Grove Elementary
Board of Directors Meeting
Friday, March 31, 2023 4:00 pm
River Grove Commons
DRAFT MINUTES

1.0 Call to Order: Jessica Hansen called the meeting to order at 4:03pm

1.1 Roll Call: Jessica Hansen, Angie Hong, Eric Olsen, Lisa Dochniak, Annie Beck, Katie Bruns, Greg Beaumont. Drew Goodson was sick and not able to attend.

1.2 Mission Statement: Hong read the River Grove mission statement

1.3 Conflict of Interest Statement: Hansen read the conflict of interest statement and asked board members to verbally affirm that they have no conflicts of interest. All members indicated no conflict of interest.

2.0 Approve Agenda: Hansen introduced proposed changes to the agenda to strike items 5.0 and 7.0.

Motion to approve amended agenda by Olsen. Second by Beck. Amended agenda approved.

3.0 Approve Minutes

3.1 January 2023 Minutes Approval

Motion to approve minutes by Bruns. Second by Dochniak. Minutes approved.

4.0 Community Discussion

4.1 River Grove Community Updates

4.1.1 Authorizer Comments - not in attendance

4.2 Community Comments - no community members were in attendance.

~~5.0 PTO Report~~

6.0 Finance Report & Actions - Eric Olsen

6.1 January 2023 Financial Packet

6.2 February 2023 Financial Packet

The finance committee is discussing possible upcoming expenses related to a lease extension, including security deposit and additional funds that may be needed for maintenance and capital repairs. The projected fund balance is currently at 6%. Insurance costs are going up. If we intend to create an ABC (affiliated building company) we'll need to have our finances in good order. Olsen motion to approve the January and February financial packets. Bruns second. All members voted yes.

~~7.0 Director's Report~~

~~7.1 School Events~~

~~7.2 Enrollment~~

8.0 Old Business

8.1 School Property

8.1.1 Lease Negotiations

Over the past three months, Hansen has spoken numerous times with Kelly Urista from Wilder, as well as Tim Healy and Pat Regan from the Minnesota Catholic Youth Partnership (MCYP) regarding a one-year lease extension for River Grove. On Tuesday, March 28, Hansen, Hong and Olsen met with representatives from Wilder (Kelly Urista) and MCYP (Pat Regan and Mark Schoenfelder) to negotiate the terms of what that lease extension might look like. Wilder and MCYP have said they hope to have a revised lease extension for the River Grove board to review and consider approving in two weeks.

Considerations:

- The MCYP hopes to begin construction and remodeling this summer and continue into the fall. So, there is the potential that some classes might need to move temporarily during the school year while that is happening. MCYP indicated they will give us a construction schedule soon to help us plan around it. They are planning to do a full inspection of the property, including buildings, septic, roofs, wells, etc within the next two weeks. They do not yet have building permits or a conditional use permit from May Twp. but plan to go back to the Township in May.
- The main sticking points in the proposed lease extension relate to additional costs that Wilder would like to pass through to River Grove. This would include River Grove assuming almost all costs for maintenance and capital repairs that will be needed during the year, in addition to providing a \$50-100k security deposit. Wilder would continue paying the property insurance, which would cover catastrophic repairs (ex. Tornado, fire) but River Grove would be responsible for the \$10k deductible. River Grove is very appreciative of Wilder's willingness to offer a lease extension and yet, obviously, would like to minimize the potential costs to our school as we are a small public school with a very limited budget.
- Wilder and MCYP have indicated that they plan to bring us a revised lease soon, which we will also ask our attorney to review.

Questions/conversation from River Grove board members:

- Beaumont: What happens if the sale falls through and MCYP doesn't buy the land?
- Olsen: If there is another interested buyer, Wilder could sell to them instead. Otherwise Wilder has said they intend to close down the property at the end of the lease extension.
- Beck: What is our long-term plan? Do we have certainty that we'll be building a new school and able to move in by fall of 2024?
 - Hong: As soon as the ink is dry on this lease extension we need to immediately pivot to planning for the new build.
 - Olsen: The property committee has talked about Dec. 2023 or Jan. 2024 being a date to have an architectural plan ready for the 2024 school year.
- Beck: Do we have any other alternatives for the coming year, other than signing this lease extension?
 - Hansen - at the moment, no. We have explored numerous other options and all would be very difficult given the short timeline for building, the need to have a tornado shelter, and the need to get permits for any remodeling, new construction, portable classrooms, entry roads and parking lots, etc.
- Bruns: What can the board do now to reassure staff that it will be worth it to stick around for next year? Do we have a sunny future to look forward to after this lease

extension?

- Dochniak: Thinking long-term, we need to get moving on planning for the new build to give families and teachers something to get excited about.
- Hong: And we don't just need Manitou to move forward in planning, we also need to start holding community engagement meetings for people to provide input on the new school, get excited, and feel a sense of ownership in the process.
- Hansen: After building a relationship with Manitou, she feels very confident that they will be a good landowner who supports our school and helps us to succeed. They had to delay construction planning in the fall while waiting for May Twp to make a decision on proposed changes to their Conservancy District but are very committed to our school.
- Hong: Thinking toward next year, we should also talk about how many classes we will have so that we can maximize the number of students we're able to enroll, within the constraints of how many classrooms and teachers we have available. If we had 11 classes with 20 kids each, that would get us close to our CUP cap without having any under-sized classes. If we are potentially losing teachers for next year, that could minimize the number of new staff we have to hire. But it would require having two of those be multi-grade classes. Would be good to see application numbers and talk about what that might look like.
- Olsen: The staff at River Grove are so good. His kids' teachers have all been excellent.
- Beaumont: His son actually cried once when they went on vacation because he didn't get to see his teacher that day.
- Hansen: Feels so appreciative of the board, the teachers, and the parent volunteers in this school. We have something so special here.
- Hong: Everyone worked so hard to create this school, from the very beginning. It has been a community effort.

8.1.2 Calendar Considerations

- Extensive conversation about the calendar for next year. Considerations include whether or not to add an extra 15 min to the school day and whether to continue having half days on Fridays once a month.
- Our lease extension states that May 17 will be our last day of school and then we'll have one week after that to move out

9.0 New Business - the board was unable to discuss these items due to Goodson's absence.

9.1 Affiliated Building Company

9.1.1 Articles of Incorporation

9.2 Bylaws revision

9.3 Enrollment policy revision

9.4 Employee Handbook Revision-PTO Policy - Goodson will bring forward a proposal to let paraprofessionals use snow days as PTO days.

10.0 Next Board of Directors Meetings: Monday, April 24, 2023

At the April meeting, the board will (hopefully) review and consider approving a revised lease extension. Other business items will include the calendar for next year, teacher contract renewals, enrollment and class sizes.

11.0 Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 6:08pm.