

**CORNERSTONE MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
OCTOBER 15, 2024, TUESDAY – 6:00 P.M.**

Board Members Present: Jess Goff, Julaine Roffers-Agarwal, Jean Melancon, Alyssa Schwartz, Rohan Chougule, Sarah Stocco

Board Members Absent: Jeremy Miller, Carolyn Ganz, Rachel Droogsma

Other Attendees: Chris Bewell, Joe Aliperto (6:09-6:35)

Meeting called to order by Julaine Roffers-Agarwal, Board Chair, at 6:05 pm.

AGENDA

Public Comment Period: Comments limited to 3 minutes per person.

- Emma Cornwell – SPED teacher at Cornerstone, just visiting

Consent Agenda

- September 2024 Meeting Minutes

JEAN MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE CONSENT AGENDA. SARAH SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS NO FURTHER DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:

Board Member	Aye	Nay
Droogsma	A	
Chougule	x	
Ganz	A	
Goff	x	
Melancon	x	
Miller	A	
Roffers-Agarwal	x	
Stocco	x	

Approval of Agenda & Declaration of Conflict of Interest

SARAH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE EVENING’S AGENDA. JEAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE NO DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Board Member	Aye	Nay
Droogsma	A	

Chougule	x	
Ganz	A	
Goff	x	
Melancon	x	
Miller	A	
Roffers-Agarwal	x	
Stocco	x	

Julaine asked whether, given the approved agenda, there were any conflicts of interest. None were disclosed.

Treasurer’s Report

- No donations in September.
- Allotted \$5000 for READ Act training is for "teacher compensation during training and materials". There are currently 6 teachers in training related to that.
- We re-invested our \$200,000 CD at NE Bank that matured on October 3 in a six-month CD at an interest rate of 3.8%
- Joe went over September financials
 - o ADM of 132 currently. Budgeted at 138 so we are working on budget revision, which will be presented to Board soon.
 - o There is some new funding from grants that wasn’t in the original budget: \$19,966 Prairie Care and \$30,000 St. Paul and Minnesota Foundation
 - o Cash and fund balance continues to be strong and healthy.
 - o ESSER grants are done as of September 30th. Paper work for those are being wrapped up.
 - o Overview of financials in reports.
 - o Question about miscellaneous income line – Joe will get back to us about that.
 - o Nothing surprising or concerning about spending at this point.

ROHAN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 2024 FINANCIALS. SARAH SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS NO FURTHER DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:

Board Member	Aye	Nay
Droogsma	A	
Chougule	X	
Ganz	A	
Goff	X	

Melancon	X	
Miller	A	
Roffers-Agarwal	X	
Stocco	X	

Audit Report – info from Carolyn, presented by Julaine, supported by Joe

- Most important, we received a Clean Opinion – this means record-keeping, compliance, etc all in order.
- The Audit shows what we knew: that we ended last year with about a \$62,000 operating deficit
- The Audit presentation (video) stressed the year over year consistency they observed in terms of enrollment and financial management – very positive feedback.
- A new audit requirement has to do with how the lease gets presented; this can make the financial statements in the audit a bit confusing.
- Also recall that the auditors allocate a portion of the State retirement funds for teachers and staff to Cornerstone; this shows up as an unfunded liability which also can look confusing. Note that this is not something CMES can do anything about but it is a presentation requirement.

JESS MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE 2023-2024 AUDIT REQUIREMENTS, JEAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS DISCUSSION THAT WATCHING REPORT WAS BOTH ECONOMICAL AND HELPFUL FOR US AS OPPOSED TO TAKING TIME DURING THE MEETING. THE VIDEO ALSO WAS INTERESTING IN THAT IT SHOWED A CONTRAST BETWEEN STATE AND FEDERAL SOURCED FUNDING – OTHER COMPARABLE SCHOOLS WERE SHOWN TO HAVE MORE FEDERAL FUNDS. JOE DISCUSSED THIS WITH US, CONNECTING TO FREE AND REDUCED POPULATION, ESSER FUNDS, TITLE FUNDS. THERE WAS DISCUSSION ABOUT FOOD SERVICE FUNDING AND THE COMPLICATIONS OF THE LUNCH FOR ALL PROGRAM, ORDERING, STAFFING, ETC. THERE WAS NO FURTHER DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:

Board Member	Aye	Nay
Droogsma	A	
Chougule	X	
Ganz	A	
Goff	X	
Melancon	X	

Miller	A	
Roffers-Agarwal	X	
Stocco	X	

- Reminder that Give to the Max day is at the beginning of November. Please keep your eyes out for information.

Head of School Report – Alyssa

- We are about 6 weeks in and settling.
- Closed this Thursday and Friday for professional development.
- Conferences coming up
- UST site visit yesterday – Terry was here, talked to lots of folks, all went very well.
- Annual report will be in November Board Packet
- Upcoming events Board members are welcome to attend
 - Parent Partnership – October 28
 - November 1 - Cornerstone café
 - Conferences are November 7-8. We ask parent community to support feeding teachers and staff. Board members are welcome to contribute to this.
 - Contact Alyssa to schedule a time to observe in an environment

Head of School Evaluation – professional development plans

- Plans for development this year
- Waiting until after the retreat to finalize goals.

SARAH MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE 2024-2025 HEAD OF SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN. ROHAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:

Board Member	Aye	Nay
Droogsma	A	
Chougule	X	
Ganz	A	
Goff	X	
Melancon	X	
Miller	A	
Roffers-Agarwal	X	
Stocco	X	

Director of Business Operations – Chris Bewell

- At 132 ADM with no waiting list. We are ok, but curious about how to figure this out.
- Enrollment is also down everywhere – we heard from Terry during the UST visit
- MACS meetings also have discussed this and the issue of thinking enrollment numbers were higher until school started and there were no shows.
- We are not alone in projections being off this year – where are they all going?
- Curious about homeschool populations – maybe these numbers are higher right now. We do have 3 children who left for homeschooling who would otherwise be in our school still.

Governance Committee – no report this month

Marketing Task Force (Rohan and Jean)

- Building collaborative community Relationships
 - Identified the individuals from key community centers to build relationships with Alyssa’s help
 - Next Step: Jean to create an outreach plan for the individuals – in process, we will hear more as we get ready to take on this work in teams
- Reviewed historic ADM trends data shared by Chris
 - Chart with enrollment trends and growth
 - Peak is 2019-2020 school year
 - Overall, we look pretty steady with an expected dip after COVID
- Outreach and advancement strategy
 - Discussion during October Fall Retreat
- Terry (UST) mentioned that we might want to do a Market Study – looking at target families and nearby population
 - Also, could we work with other charter schools for the same data to make this process cheaper? It could be shared data. This data is also required prior to expansion if we ever wanted to do that. It wouldn’t be a marketing plan, but it would be data about the realities of where we are and who is here.

- Terry also addressed the issue of expansion in this plan – looking at what’s around might help make that decision more clear. Discussion of cost, providers (MDE, private, etc)
- Also thinking about other UST schools that wouldn’t be competition, but could there be some collaboration?

Retreat Agenda - Strategic Plan – Jean for Rohan

- Strategic Plan review (SP review)
 - Homework: Read the simplified SP for discussion.
 - November board meeting agenda – motion to accept the Strategic Plan – then it will replace the one on the website
- Financial Review
 - How do various enrollments affect budget
 - Desired fund balance %? Reserve usage?
- Outreach 3-year plan
 - Advancement Committee goals
- MCM Partnership
 - MCM working on strategic plan with help of outside consultant
 - Possible scenarios for early childhood management

Board Chair Report – Julaine

- Reminder: MN Montessori School leaders training with Marc Frankel November 1, 9am-12pm (online, will be recorded)
- CMES parent/teacher conferences will be on November 7-8. Contact Julaine if you would like to contribute to a food donation for the staff on those days.
- UST visit was really lovely.
- Anything to add to next month’s agenda, please let Julaine know.

Feedback – what went well?

- Thank you all for coming.

JEAN MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:08 PM. SARAH SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:

Board Member	Aye	Nay
Droogsma	A	
Chougule	X	
Ganz	A	
Goff	X	
Melancon	X	
Miller	A	
Roffers-Agarwal	X	
Stocco	X	

The next CMES Board Meeting is Tuesday, November 19, 2024 at 6 p.m.

The Board Retreat is 1-5 pm on Saturday, October 26th.

Respectfully Submitted by Jess Goff, CMES Secretary.