

**CORNERSTONE MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
JANUARY 16, 2024, TUESDAY – 6:00 P.M.**

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

Board Members Absent: Tyler Bouwens

Other Attendees: Chris Bewell, Joe Aliperto (6:17-6:34)

Meeting called to order by Julaine Roffers-Agarwal, Board Chair, at 6: 06 pm.

AGENDA

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

- No guests present

Consent Agenda

- November 2023 Meeting Minutes
- December 2023 Meeting Minutes
- HOS 2023-24 Annual Goals
- HOS 2023-24 Professional Development Plan
- 203.6 Consent Agenda Policy
- 206 Public Comments at Board Meetings Policy
- 509 Enrollment Policy
- 609 Religious Accommodation Policy
- 704 EFT Policy

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

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

Approval of Agenda & Declaration of Conflict of Interest

CAROLYN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE EVENING'S AGENDA. JESS SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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

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

Head of School Report

- Upcoming events Board members are welcome to attend
 - Cornerstone Café, 1/19 8:45-9:45
 - Stone Soup, 1/27, 4:30-6:00
 - Parent Partnership (CH/LE only), 2/5, 5:30-6:30
- Federal setting 3 program
 - More intentional about staffing, best possible experience for children
 - Prairie is now that space for fed setting 3
 - As we move forward in general, very deliberate about staffing and apace
 - Setting 3 – students out of classroom 60% or more
 - Question: correlation between setting level and funding – more intense staffing – more funding? Not sure – ask Joe
 - Definitely not \$ for space/building concerns – but funds for curriculum that is special for those children
 - Questions have come up around impact on staff – mixed – ratio is smaller but also very intense – trying to split time between staff to share that responsibility
 - Does relieve some of the pressure from the classrooms that were supporting children with very high needs within the classroom – more appropriate to have this additional structured space and support
- UST site visit successfully completed December 12, quarterly report submitted.

ROHAN MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE QUARTERLY REPORT TO UST. CAROLYN SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:

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

Treasurer's Report – Joe Aliperto

- November donations – November 2023 donations: \$1030 from Mightycause, \$3,350 from GiveMN
- Generally pretty routine, everything in good shape, nothing standing out
- Enrollment around 140,141 – ADM just below 140 – tracking where we anticipated and budgeted – pretty steady
- This is the year we will exhaust the ESSER funds, have to be used by June 2024
- December 2023 donations: \$1,641 from Mightycause, \$500 personal check
- Working on revised budget
 - o we will see it in February for approval
 - o don't anticipate too many changes - this will be a slight adjustment in charts and graphs and numbers on reports
- Overall, much unchanged and tracking as expected, no concerns

CAROLYN MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE NOVEMBER FINANCIAL STATEMENTS. JEAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:

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

SARAH MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE NOVEMBER DONATIONS OF \$1030 FROM MIGHTYCAUSE AND \$3350 FROM GIVEMN. JESS SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:

Board Member	Aye	Nay
Bouwens	A	

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

CAROLYN MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE DECEMBER FINANCIAL STATEMENTS. ROHAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:

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

SARAH MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE DECEMBER DONATIONS OF \$1641 FROM MIGHTYCAUSE AND \$500 PERSONAL CHECK. JEAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:

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

Director of Business Operations – Chris Bewell

- ADM as of 1/12 was 140 children. As of today, 142! There is another family leaving, which will put us at 140 again.
- Some discussion of enrollment changes. Families are moving away (not because of the school) and joining because excited about Montessori.

Governance Committee – Rohan

- On going research on cybersecurity insurance
 - In order to file a claim, all CMES-managed devices must be compliant with specific security controls
 - Alyssa and Chris will work with Steve, CMES IT contractor, to ensure that all CMES-managed devices meet security requirements
 - Need work for full compliance for device security
 - Multi-factor authorization and backing up data – this will also affect board member emails
 - Steve will offer recommendations, Chris and Alyssa will put them into place
 - Any needed policies will come back to governance

Board Education – Julaine

- Reminder about Scott Flemming session next Tuesday – attend in person if at all possible
 - We will talk “North Star” and topics specific to us, helping to implement the strategic plan – success and story of what he did he had at Global Academy
 - Good resource and connection for us – Chris already knows him well, will be good for us to all be together in this session

Expansion Research Update - Jean

- Boys Totem Town (BTT)
 - Updated Jean Kruger, Ramsey County Property Mgmt Director
 - Feb: decision to release CMES name for Jean K to share with other interested party
 - Meantime, Jean K will contact us if any other interest in property
- Plan to vet companies for possible consulting on property search, preliminary requirements being developed
 - JB Vang, Ingensa, TenSquare
 - Others available to consider for future work
- Present recommendation to February board meeting
 - Top company could present to board before board approves
 - Continue discussion with MCM on space needs
- ABC status
 - Currently IRS plans to have application review completed by end of February
- Align school’s growth and relocation strategy to CMES’s vision & mission (SOAR submission)
- Questions about timelines – does this seem early/fast?

- This allows for advance planning and research
- Two pronged approach that these companies can help us with their expertise to understand what stage we are at and how we might grow
 - o First - maturing K-6 system, sustainable, max capacity, etc
 - o 7-8 grade
- This has come up because of BTT possibility – which brought up the need for more info – wouldn't have pursued this route at this time necessarily – but this is a lot of processes in parallel instead of in sequence
- Comment/discussion: Are we looking for firmer timeline, benchmarks? Can we identify a turning point that would help us be sure this is the right move at this time? This seems like it would help us understand the difference between looking at possibilities and making a commitment.
- Comment: support for us moving forward with more information gathering, etc that is not just internal – we keep thinking and talking in circles because we are struggling to define our directions and possibilities
 - o More focused on the conceptional and not on the property?
- Lots to think about in terms of what we need and want – and maybe that's exactly why looking at outside firms would be helpful
 - o Maybe helpful to hear what these firms want to know from us?
 - o Would maybe be helpful to have more explanation of what “value add” working with a firm would offer us
 - o All want to be in the same place about knowing what the goal of this process is.

Marketing Task Force Update – Jeremy and Rohan

- Task force has interviewed five different third-party marketing firms over the past three months to determining the best fit for CMES marketing needs.
- Each firm was evaluated on the following criteria:
 - o Montessori and charter school experience, experience with diverse populations, years of experience, etc
 - o Ability to help develop a 3-year detailed marketing plan
 - o Creativity and graphic design capabilities
 - o Website/social media/digital advertising
 - o Consultation fees/cost
- Two firms rise to the top to continue to consider (Nido and CEL)
- Slides with phases – working on phase one now – but other phases will take more time – some of the quotes have been extreme – working in finance committee to put a dollar number on phase 2 – not in current budget
- Questions – better to wait until after completion of phase 1 to know how the work goes? Could phase 2 be in next year's budget?
 - o No outside firm working with phase 1 because we are too close to the deadline at this point.
 - o But the open enrollment period is from February 1-March 31 – this might be just the time to have help for Chris to advertise
 - o Discussion of direct targeted marketing – is this a possibility?

CMES Strategic Planning

- SOAR Slides – info still coming in at last minute – more to share – need to give board time to read over submissions before
 - KPI– key performance indicators
 - After board reads over, step 2 is open up to school staff and to parents for further information
 - Possible step 3 is alum, past board members, key partners
- Two groups asked to give updates on strategic goals and plans each meeting
 - 1. Governance update on Strategic plan (see slides)
 - Feedback – like the format and broad view
 - 2. Head of School Strategic Initiatives (see slides)
 - Clarification slide
 - Concerns about Montessori appropriate supplement – is this for teacher collaboration?
 - Julaine will send out an email

Next month: updates from Equity, Advancement, Finance, HoS

Board Chair Report – Julaine

- MCM board chair relationship is stronger – Regularly scheduled phone calls with Kelsey Echols
 - She would like to revisit MOU, discussion of shared goals with MCM
 - MCM is starting their strategic planning process shortly
 - I have brought up our need for space and that we will need to move if we do not increase our space
- Discussion: Is MOU high priority – hasn't seem like it but trying to use this as an opportunity - seems good communication
- Comment: MOU is not a requirement from MDE or anything – just a thing we have with our landlord (so has been low priority)
- Question: So is it worth getting rid of the MOU?
 - Feels outdated – focus has definitely been lease, shared services and space agreement, and new communication document
 - We will continue to think about our relationship with MCM and what we want it to be
- MOU is not necessarily legally binding document
- Seems like Kelsey's goal is to strengthen the relationship not redefine how we work together in a practical sense.
- Will be good to see what their strategic plan is

Next Meeting

- Revised budget

January 2024

Feedback – what went well?

- Shoutout to Alyssa for huge reports – lots of information – lots of time – worth looking at it – nice work

JEAN MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:06 PM. SARAH SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:

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

The next CMES Board Meeting is Tuesday, February 20th, 2024, 6 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Jess Goff, CMES Secretary.