

**CORNERSTONE MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – VIRTUAL AND INPERSON
TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2023 – 6:00 P.M.**

Board Members Present: Jean Melancon, Jess Goff, Julaine Roffers-Agarwal, Carolyn Ganz, Alyssa Schwartz, Tyler Bouwens, Sarah Stocco, Maisah Outlaw

Board Members Absent:

Other Attendees: Chris Bewell, Cynthia Crooks, Jayahasnan Bakthavatchalam, Joe Aliperto from Dieci Finance (6:10)

Meeting called to order by Julaine Roffers-Agarwal, Board Chair, at 6:03 pm.

AGENDA

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

- Cynthia Crooks, ELL teacher at CMES
- Jayhasnan has visited CMES and is interested in learning more

Consent Agenda

- 415 Purchase of Group Health Insurance Policy
- 701 Purchasing Policy
- 701.1 Purchasing Procedure
- 702 Fixed Asset Policy
- 702.1 Fixed Assets Operating Procedure
- 705 Financial and Cash Management Policy
- 705.1 Receipts Procedure
- 706 Acceptance and Administration of Gifts Policy
- November 2022 Meeting Minutes

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

Board Member	Aye	Nay
Bouwens	x	
Ganz	x	
Goff	x	
Melancon	x	
Outlaw	x	
Roffers-Agarwal	x	
Stocco	x	

Approval of Agenda & Declaration of Conflict of Interest

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

Board Member	Aye	Nay
Bouwens	x	
Ganz	x	
Goff	x	
Melancon	x	
Outlaw	x	
Roffers-Agarwal	x	
Stocco	x	

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

Board Education – Cynthia Crooks, English Language Learner Teacher, CMES

- Cynthia has been at Cornerstone since the second month! It’s been interesting to watch the school and the children grow over time.
- She works with children K-6.
- When first meeting child, formal assessment – reading, spoken, written
- Social language often part of children’s work – from offering water to supporting a problem-solving
- Reading and oral language growth is primary part of ELL work
- Teaches mainly as a pull out
- Lots of chances to talk, tell about weekend, etc, fill in vocabulary blanks
- Try create a rich environment with lots of opportunities for more language and background knowledge
- Great pleasure to watch children graduate after working with them for so many years
- Questions – interaction with families? (books to share, photographs to share what they’ve been working on) Biggest challenges? (time!)
- Translators for conferences, Cynthia speaks some Spanish and does her best to share that too
- Discussion about sparking interest in reading
- About 80% of ELL children have spoken Spanish. Other languages have spoken Oromo, Somali, Hmong.
- We have Spanish language materials available for children who do read Spanish already to keep those skills strong.

Treasurer’s Report – Joe Aliperto, Dieci Finance

- We are looking at two months of financials because we didn't have a meeting in December.
- We are at 141 ADM and we are staying at that number for budgeting and the state is paying us at 141.
- All looks in line with expectations – lease aid payment came in, there's the expected holdback, expenditures seem in line with expectations, etc
- With budget revision, going through grant monies – ESSER (summer school) etc. CMES has also received a \$20,000 grant from the O'Shaughnessy Foundation, as well as \$30,000 from the St. Paul & Minnesota Foundation for Summer School. This grant has been recognized as Deferred Revenue as it is specific to programming that will occur starting in July.
- Strong fund balance, cash on hand
- There were 2 donations for the month of November. One for \$327 from MightyCause and one for \$57 from Amazon Smile. This brings our year to date donation total to \$481.
- There were 2 donations for the month of December. Both were from MightyCause. One for \$1,750 and the other was the golden ticket for \$500. This brings the year to date donation total to \$2,981.
- There will be more money from state repayment coming than typical in the second half of the fiscal year.
- Overview of budget – all looks good, keeping eyes on things, but nothing the finance committee needs us to spend more time on right now.

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

Board Member	Aye	Nay
Bouwens	x	
Ganz	x	
Goff	x	
Melancon	x	
Outlaw	x	
Roffers-Agarwal	x	
Stocco	x	

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

Board Member	Aye	Nay
Bouwens	x	
Ganz	x	
Goff	x	
Melancon	x	

Outlaw	x	
Roffers-Agarwal	x	
Stocco	x	

SARAH MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE NOVEMBER DONATIONS OF \$327 FROM MIGHTYCAUSE AND \$57 FROM AMAZON SMILE. TYLER SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:

Board Member	Aye	Nay
Bouwens	x	
Ganz	x	
Goff	x	
Melancon	x	
Outlaw	x	
Roffers-Agarwal	x	
Stocco	x	

MAISAH MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT DONATIONS IN THE AMOUNTS OF \$1750 AND \$500 FROM MIGHTYCAUSE (GIVE TO THE MAX). CAROLYN SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:

Board Member	Aye	Nay
Bouwens	x	
Ganz	x	
Goff	x	
Melancon	x	
Outlaw	x	
Roffers-Agarwal	x	
Stocco	x	

Update about Employee Retention Credit

- Everything has been submitted to IRS and we're waiting to hear – it probably will take at least 4-6 months.
- Any credit over \$250,000 is subject to an audit – not a concern because application was thorough and detailed

Questions: How does money get released for equity work or special work? What's the process and how does budget get revised? – go through finance committee, Chris, Alyssa, etc

Head of School Report -Alyssa

- School operations
 - o Community events (Stone Soup, Screenagers viewing and discussion, Equity Review presentations to staff and families)
 - o COMPAS visits being replaced with visits from Urban Roots – different experience than COMPAS, change in pace, etc, less expensive
 - o Parent handbook committee – group with experience at all levels, good suggestions and conversations for handbook revisions
- AMI Global visit – big honor to be hosting them at MCM (and CMES) in February after the Refresher Course – February 22-24
- Questions: when other schools visit, how do they find us and what draws them to us? AMI trainees need to visit AMI trained teachers, we sometimes have visitors from other schools (Rochester, Iowa, etc), probably drawn to MCM connection as well

Director of Business Operations – Chris Bewell

- Enrollment hasn't changed – stable
 - o some applications for this year, but no openings.
- Application for next year will go live online in February 1st to the end of March
- Because of Snow Days we are obligated to revise calendar – the two days need to be reflected while they don't change anything else (still enough contact days and hours) - board needs to approve and new calendar will be submitted to MDE.

JEAN MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE REVISED CALENDAR. TYLER SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS SOME DISCUSSION OF WHEN WE WOULD HAVE TO ADD DAYS OR HOURS. MDE REQUIRES 165 DAYS AND CHRIS CAN SEND OUT DETAILS OF REQUIRED HOURS AS WELL. BECAUSE WE HAVE LONGER DAYS, WE WOULD BE FINE EVEN IF WE WENT DOWN BELOW 165 DAYS. ALYSSA POINTED OUT THAT WE REALLY NEED TO WORRY ONLY ABOUT HOURS AND WE ARE WAY OVER HOURS FOR ELEMENTARY. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:

Board Member	Aye	Nay
Bouwens	x	
Ganz	x	
Goff	x	
Melancon	x	
Outlaw	x	
Roffers-Agarwal	x	
Stocco	x	

Equity Task Force Update – Sarah

- Thanks to Carolyn for work of summarizing and condensing.

- We are at a spot that we really weren't anticipating. When we originally contracted with Equity Alliance, they did lots of different kinds of work and we expected that we would probably be able to continue to work with them. They then dissolved right as they were finishing our report – but there's no real plan outlined for moving forward.
- This is our next step!
- Task Force – has taken so much time, we keep working on equity but not moving farther
- We received a proposal from Embracing Equity, which is an online-only equity firm based in Austin, Texas, after meeting with them in 3 separate meetings (Alyssa, Sarah, both) to go over our background and needs
 - o Embracing Equity was founded on Montessori principles, and they've worked with many Montessori schools/organizations, including Indigenous Montessori Institute in New Mexico, and Sunny Hollow in St. Paul
 - o They've specifically worked with at least 2 organizations in similar circumstances to CMES/CMS where there are two different organizations with similar missions but differing boards/structures – this seems important as it has become increasingly clear that our organizations are in slightly different places
 - o Equity work is expensive – just know that up front.
 - o They recommend that we partner over two years in two main tracks
 - Spring 2023: Leadership Residency -or- Equity Centered Coaching (EE strongly suggests Leadership Residency over Equity Center Coaching)
 - 2023-2024 School Year: Anti-Racism Cohorts, Affinity Spaces, and Community Workshop
 - Pricing: they are offering us special pricing based on our budgetary constraints and status as a school:
 - For Leadership Residency (which includes 2-4 people): \$9,600.
Equity Centered Coaching: \$7,200
 - o Pricing valid through January 31, 2023
 - For 2023-24 school year, Anti-Racism Cohort: \$22,000 (up to 40 people); Affinity Spaces: \$10,500; Community Workshop: \$2,700
 - o Pricing valid through March 15, 2023
 - Willing to work with us on splitting payments between fiscal years/budgets. A good faith deposit that would at least cover the spring 2023 work would be a good start, but they are very willing to work with us.
 - o We have not yet discussed with MCM. It would be unfortunate (but not impossible) to do this without them. We would like to work together but also - we need to look at what we need and keep moving.
 - o Some discussion of pricing, discounting in their offer, next steps.
 - To move forward, would we take this to finance committee to talk about budget revisions and/or grants?
 - Can we find a way to join in the spring? Meaning, we would need to approve some money for down payment tonight and figuring out how the other money/steps happen?
 - o Discussion:

- No reason to reconvene task force, this makes sense to get started, but we have to be really careful about how/when we vote to use money
- Could we reach out to Embracing Equity to let them know we are sending it to the Finance committee and then we can vote on money mid-February? We need to have time to review how it fits into our budget.
- We need more support to help find grants – this should also be a board commitment.
- It’s good to share our steps with families, but not to open the door for more suggestions.
- We can definitely look at PD funding, what we already budget for equity work, etc
- Lots of support for moving forward responsibly.

Expansion Task Force – Jean Melancon

- UST indicated that to add space at a second location for grades covered in our current charter will require an expansion application
- Application deadline of June 2023 for fall 2024
- Gathering information for different enrollment/expansion scenarios and future financial impact of each

Board Chair Report

- CMES Board strategic planning discussion retreat
 - February 25 is best for scheduling, beginning at 9:30
- CMES/MCM joint board meeting
 - Aiming to schedule in March 2023
- Carolyn has agreed to serve as HOS Evaluation Committee Chair

JEAN MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT CAROLYN AS THE HOS EVALUATION COMMITTEE CHAIR. MAISAH SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:

Board Member	Aye	Nay
Bouwens	x	
Ganz	x	
Goff	x	
Melancon	x	
Outlaw	x	
Roffers-Agarwal	x	
Stocco	x	

Suggested Agenda Items for Next Board Meeting

- Potential budget revision for approval

Feedback – what went well, etc?

Adjourn

MAISAH MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:49 PM. CAROLYN SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:

Board Member	Aye	Nay
Bouwens	x	
Ganz	x	
Goff	x	
Melancon	x	
Outlaw	x	
Roffers-Agarwal	x	
Stocco	x	

***The next CMES Board Meeting is Tuesday, February 21st, 2023, 6 p.m.
Respectfully Submitted by Jess Goff, CMES Secretary.***