

**CORNERSTONE MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
APRIL 18, 2023 TUESDAY – 6:00 P.M.**

**Board Members Present:** Jess Goff, Julaine Roffers-Agarwal, Carolyn Ganz, Alyssa Schwartz, Sarah Stocco, Tyler Bouwens, Jean Melancon (arrived at 6:09pm), Maisah Outlaw (arrived at 6:15pm)

**Board Members Absent:**

Other Attendees: Chris Bewell, Joe Aliperto from Dieci Finance (6:05-6:33)

**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**

- Draft March 2023 Board meeting minutes
- Policy 210.1- Conflict of Interest Statement
- Policy 223- Ongoing Board Training

**CAROLYN MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE CONSENT AGENDA. JESS 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        | A   |     |
| Outlaw          | A   |     |
| Roffers-Agarwal | x   |     |
| Stocco          | x   |     |

**Approval of Agenda & Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

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

| Board Member | Aye | Nay |
|--------------|-----|-----|
|--------------|-----|-----|

|                 |   |  |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Bouwens         | x |  |
| Ganz            | x |  |
| Goff            | x |  |
| Melancon        | x |  |
| Outlaw          | A |  |
| 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 – Alyssa**

- Self Evaluations with staff in motion at the moment
- Summer Programming: decided not to fund summer programming, so using the foundation money to pay for the kindergarteners staying over the summer, and then pay for before and after care, which is currently a special education program. Sad to miss a summer of successful programming, but glad to be able to fund other programs.
- Calendar update needing to get approved. Worked on matching SPPS as much as possible. Biggest change this year is that the Wednesday before Thanksgiving is added as a day off since so many families are usually absent.

**MAISAH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE REVISED CALENDAR FOR NEXT YEAR  
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   |     |

### **Director of Business Operations – Chris Bewell**

- Current enrollment has changed slightly because students have moved, but still in line with current ADM that we are being paid for by MDE
- Enrollment for 2023-24 has begun! Letters sent out to children from the lottery and already receiving some acceptances.
- Need a motion to approve Alyssa as the IOWA for the state – this is an annual action.

**CAROLYN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE ALYSSA AS THE IOWA (IDENTIFIED OFFICIAL WITH AUTHORITY). 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   |     |

Staff Benefits (Health Care Coverage, etc)

- Health benefits changes: Health Partners is the best rate with the same coverage. The finance committee recommends going with Health Partners, with an 11.4% increase in costs to CMES (as opposed to an 18.4% increase with renewal of current plan).
- There are two policy options for employees. Staff can choose whether they would like an HSA option or not. This changes the employee's costs, but doesn't change much for CMES (CMES covers 75%).
- Dental benefits have increased to \$1500, with CMES paying 50%, an increase from last year.
- Vision benefits will continue through Met Life at current rate (100% employee)
- AD&D, Short and Long Term Disability Coverage will continue through MetLife at the current rate, Premium 100% Employer (CMES)
- Discussion:
  - How many staff take advantage of the benefits (about 50%).
  - What about retirement benefits? Not part of package, though all public school employees pay into state retirement plans with matching funds from the school.
  - What about covering 100% benefits? What about the size of our "pool" of covered employees? There was some discussion about what we could do to provide better benefits for staff.

**JEAN MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE RECOMMENDED BENEFITS PACKAGE. 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 |  |

**CAROLYN MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT BENEFITS CHANGES. 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   |     |

**Treasurer's Report – Joe Aliperto, Dieci Finance**

- ADM 143 right now, tracking with budget of ADM 141, so in line with what we anticipated
- Healthy fund balance, no concerns
- 75% of the way through the year – \$168,000 due to us from the State - 62% State funding - all makes sense
- Grants – no changes, nothing currently in the works
- Donations
  - \$3149 to date
- 4% increase in state funding on the docket
- Grants: extended Prairie Care and O'Shaughnessy grants
- Projected over 30% fund balance
- Deadlines:
  - lease aid application coming up
  - special education funding in June
  - title applications due in September
- Deferred revenue from summer grant
- Federal funding: could draw down on federal grants

- Special Education from the state: no concerns; from federal gov't: we can draw down on those grants
- Generally, all is tracking with what we expect.
- Lag in funding for meal payments from the state, but not expected to be a problem
- Funds for AMI & Embracing Equity training: much of the amounts will have been spent by the end of June but the prorated portion for the trainings occurring during the 2022-23 school year will go in this year's funding budget and expenses. The remaining prorated amount for training occurring in the 2023-24 will be accounted for in next year's budget and expenses.

**JEAN MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE MARCH FINANCIAL STATEMENTS. 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   |     |

#### **Investment Discussion:**

- Joe shared some information about higher yield CD options for our fund balances. We could be earning over 3.5% interest rates, much more than we are getting now. This would be through Northeast Bank.
- There are longer term CD's available (3.9% for a year), but short term (13 weeks) makes more sense initially.
- Minimum is \$250,000 investment. Probably best to start with the minimum, then wait until we receive the rest of our holdback from the state to reassess.
- The policy is that the Board can approve investments, and everything is above board.
- Questions: what risk is there? There is no risk with these investments as they are completely covered/insured. "Prior to having the excess cash at Northeast Bank, we earned less than \$200 per year in interest. This year, we are projected to earn over \$3,600 with how funds are currently. By moving \$250,000 into a CD, we could be earning approximately \$2,100 over a 13 week period with a rate of 3.5% and then can renew the CD at the end of that period at the current rates at that time."

**CAROLYN MADE A MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE TREASURER TO INITIATE AN INVESTMENT \$250,000 OF OUR CURRENT CASH BALANCE IN A 13 WEEK CD. TYLER**

**SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS NO FURTHER DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED WITH JESS ABSTAINING SINCE SHE MISSED MOST OF THE DISCUSSION.**

| Board Member    | Aye | Nay |
|-----------------|-----|-----|
| Bouwens         | X   |     |
| Ganz            | X   |     |
| Goff            | A   |     |
| Melancon        | X   |     |
| Outlaw          | X   |     |
| Roffers-Agarwal | X   |     |
| Stocco          | X   |     |

**Governance Committee- Julaine**

- Policy 515 Protection and Privacy of Student Records
- Policy 523 Gender Identity
- Policy 612.1 Title I Parent Involvement
- These have been revised mostly for pronouns, are in the cycle for regular policy review.

**JULAINÉ MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE REVISED POLICIES. 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   |     |

- Proposal to change the Board make up to include more people. This would change the years that the community members get elected. Proposal to add another community member by having Jean run for a 2-year term.

**MAISAH MADE A MOTION TO ADD ONE MORE COMMUNITY MEMBER TO THE BOARD. TYLER SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:**

| Board Member | Aye | Nay |
|--------------|-----|-----|
| Bouwens      | X   |     |
| Ganz         | X   |     |
| Goff         | A   |     |
| Melancon     | X   |     |

|                 |   |  |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Outlaw          | x |  |
| Roffers-Agarwal | x |  |
| Stocco          | x |  |

**CANDIDATES:**

- Carolyn Ganz- Community member, 3 year term
- Jeremy Miller- Community member, 3 year term
- Sarah Stocco- Parent member, 3 year term
- Jean Melancon- Community member, 2 year term

**MAISAH MADE A MOTION APPROVE THE SLATE OF CANDIDATES. TYLER SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:**

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

- Discussion of expanding our charter to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade
  - Julaine and Alyssa met with Terri from UST about expansion. Since we need a new site, we would need to have a site chosen before the application was approved. Also asked about a pre-K expansion: would that be another application? Terri is checking on that
  - Approval process is mainly through MDE and NOT the authorizer. Our scores would need to be at least at the district level. Our math scores are currently not at that level. Approximately 50% retention, at the most, from 6th to 7th would be expected.
  - Not exactly the best news, but it is realistic information for us to move forward with.
  - Jean suggested the Head of School and/or staff to tell us at a future board meeting: what can the Board do to help you improve math scores? At what point are the scores “faulty”? Maybe the Board can write down questions for a future board meeting. How can we help the children be more successful?
  - Alyssa: great questions. Terri comes from the perspective of seeing an expansion gone wrong. She was a good resource for us to realistically think about what we could get out of expansion.

**DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (Tyler)**

- Most of Tyler’s time has been spent revising the charter, moving to focus

- Community Centered Fundraising
- Met with Jennifer the grant writer to clarify our needs and hopefully get some momentum with grant writing again.
- The charter will not require members to be Board Trustees, so if anyone knows folks in development and advancement, please let Tyler know.

**TYLER PROPOSED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE CHARTER (REPLACING THE DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE CHARTER). MAISAH SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS DISCUSSION IN FAVOR OF THE IMPROVEMENTS. 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   |     |

### **BOARD CHAIR REPORT**

- 5-year contract with UST. Several forms will need to be signed by board members, including one that needs all our signatures
- Chris will help coordinate signing so please be responsive when she contacts you
- Sending out self-evaluation reports
- Election will be immediately before the next board meeting.
- Next meeting also includes our annual Board meeting, so we'll begin at 5:30pm

### **Feedback – what went well, etc?**

Jean: we covered all of the agenda items in a timely manner!

Jess: thanks to Sarah for taking notes, and thank you for technology so that she can get to the meeting while also at the doctor's office with son!

### **Adjourn**

**CAROLYN MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:34 PM. 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 |  |

***The next CMES Board Meeting is Tuesday, April 18th, 2023, 6 p.m.***

***The Annual meeting will precede this on the same day at 5:30pm.***

***Respectfully Submitted by Jess Goff, CMES Secretary. (with [Sarah Stocco](#))***