

**CORNERSTONE MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
AUGUST 20, 2024, TUESDAY – 6:00 P.M.**

**Board Members Present:** Jess Goff, Julaine Roffers-Agarwal, Jean Melancon, Alyssa Schwartz, Jeremy Miller, Carolyn Ganz, Rachel Droogsma

**Board Members Absent:** Rohan Chougule, Sarah Stocco

**Other Attendees:** Chris Bewell, Joe Aliperto (6:17 – 6:43)

**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.

- Olive Goff, alum of Cornerstone, just visiting, may be in and out

**Consent Agenda**

- Annual Motions
- June 2024 Meeting Minutes
- July 31, 2024 Meeting Minutes
- 2024-25 Employee Handbook
- 2024-25 Parent Policies Handbook
- 2024-25 Parent Program Handbook
- 2024-25 Crisis Management Plan
- Policy 524 Internet Acceptable Use and Safety

**JEAN MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE CONSENT AGENDA. CAROLYN SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS A COMMENT OF APPRECIATION ABOUT THE EMAIL THAT ALYSSA SENT OUT DRAWING ATTENTION TO THE CHANGES. THERE WAS NO FURTHER DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:**

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

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

**CAROLYN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE EVENING’S AGENDA. JESS SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS A QUESTION ABOUT A CHANGE IN THE AGENDA TO ADDRESS DONATIONS FOR THE TREASURERS REPORT WHICH WILL**

**BE DISCUSSED DURING THE TREASURERS REPORT. NO FURTHER DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

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

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

**Treasurer's Report – Joe**

- One donation in June, none in July.
- 

**CAROLYN MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE DONATIONS FROM PAYPAL GIVING OF \$903.73 IN JUNE. JEAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:**

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

**New charter for Finance Committee**

- Revised Finance Committee Charter
- Funding Request Procedure

**RACHEL MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE REVISED FINANCE COMMITTEE CHARTER AND FUNDING REQUEST PROCEDURE. JEAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS DISCUSSION OF PUTTING THE CHARTER ON THE WEBSITE AS TYPICAL, BUT A QUESTION ABOUT WHERE THE FUNDING REQUEST PROCEDURE WOULD BE. IT'S ATTACHED TO THE CHARTER DOCUMENT SO WILL BE POSTED WITH IT ON THE WEBSITE. THERE WAS NO FURTHER DISCUSSION. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:**

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

### June financials

- 137 students, ended up at 138.63 ADM, above budgeted ADM of 138 so that's good
- We have good cash balance and money in CDs as well
- Continuing to work on spending ESSER funds which will expire September 30.
- Donations total for the year was \$10,021.44
- Overview of financials on reports
- Ended the year with fund balance well above what we need
- Everything looks good over all, strong, healthy
  - Gaining interest on invested money
  - Joe explained end of year percentages for spending and income
- Currently, wrapping up auditing, should be able to report on that in September.

### Food Service fund

- Some unexpected info that we spent more this past year – Joe and Chris went through month by month to see discrepancy
- Bigger gap than in previous years
  - Related to all students eat free
  - Reimbursement is based on meals served - but matching meals ordered and meals served is more challenging
  - Needed to make sure we always had enough food on hand
  - Joe has seen this in other schools as well
  - Meals are ordered from CKC – deadlines are about a week in advance, Chris can adjust but we often have to overorder to accommodate unknowns – if we order to much, we have to pay for it, but do not get reimbursed
  - Joe and Chris are working on a more responsive system for this year
  - We had more overordering than we want – so we have several ways to be more aware and careful this year

**CAROLYN MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE JUNE FINANCIALS. RACHEL SECONDED THE MOTION, THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:**

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

### **July financials**

- Overview of budget – see reports
- Grants have been spent – some left on ESSER II that expires 9/20/24
- Holdback payments will start to come in at the end of August

**CAROLYN MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE JULY FINANCIALS. JEAN SECONDED THE MOTION, THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:**

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

### **Head of School Report – Alyssa**

- Preparing for upcoming school year
  - 2 days until licensed staff return, 3 days to all staff, 2 weeks until children
  - Some shifting in the elementary as we are still working to hire in early childhood – we are in good shape, but a couple more positions in the works still

Upcoming events Board members are welcome to attend – great opportunities:

- August 28 3:00-6:00 Back to School Night
- September 13 4:30-6:00 Fall Festival
- September 20 11:00 (tentative) International Day of Peace
- September 23 5:00-6:30 Parent Partnership
- No Cornerstone Café in September
- Contact Alyssa to schedule a time to observe in an environment

Head of School Evaluation

- Head of school is evaluated yearly and submits reports based on goals.

**JESS MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE 2023-2024 HEAD OF SCHOOL EVALUATION DOCUMENTS. RACHEL SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:**

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

**Director of Business Operations – Chris Bewell**

- Total enrollment looks like 141 right now – things are always still moving a little at this time, but things look good
- Julaine: Thanks to Chris for all the work on the audit

**Board Education – Jess**

- We discussed the idea of community agreements for ourselves – are there systems we should put in place to support our board member participation? Jess led us in a discussion of relational and operational agreements. Notes from discussion below.

Relational Agreements – how we want to interact

- Honest
- Respect\*
- Patience
- Flexibility/seeing various perspectives
- Listen more than you speak
- Listen \*
- Respectful of time\*
- Responsive
- Clarity – direct – asking for what you need
- Civility
- Open – giving opportunities for all to have input
- (\* = mentioned more than once)

Operational Agreements – systems to support

- Systems of accountability
    - Help prioritize time (and respect)
    - Regular/yearly review of roles, agreements? August? September?
  - Committee – produce minutes to share with board chair for the packet – timely
  - All board members have the responsibility to read packet
    - Board materials out earlier for more time?
  - Chain of command – role of board = governance
  - How to share information we come across? – from ESABA, MACS, etc
  - Figuring out our own time – sharing plans to support each other? Respecting time
  - Appropriate mechanisms of contact
    - Preferred contact might differ for each
  - Email
    - Can we agree on number of days/hours to respond?
    - Should we have out of office messages for board email addresses?
- Next steps: Jess will type up and bring a first draft of summary agreements that we will work on next month.

**Governance Committee**

- 506 Behavior and Dismissal Policy – updated

**JEAN MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT POLICY 506: BEHAVIOR AND DISMISSAL. RACHEL SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:**

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

- Survey coming soon to assess availability for Board Retreat in September/early October

**Marketing Task Force (Jeremy)**

- Continued to meet biweekly – Rohan, Jeremy, Chris
- Reached out to Julie Richards – we won’t be hiring her to work with us, but had helpful conversations

- Goal: Build collaborative relationships with high priority organizations.
  - o Ames Lake Community Center
  - o American Indian Family Center
  - o Conway Community Center
  - o Roosevelt Community Center
  - o Early Childhood Montessori Schools (Alyssa)
  - o Possibility of adding CLUES
- Next Steps
  - o Identify four individuals to be CMES Representatives to engage with the four high-priority community organizations (e.g., Board members, parents, staff)
  - o Representatives commit to one-year term to be the relationship liaison with the organization.
  - o Identify an individual to be the overall coordinator for the outreach effort for CMES Representatives to ask questions, maintain accountability
  - o It may be good to have two teams of two each take two community centers. Team approach would make it more comfortable to work together.
  - o Eventually, one individual could be responsible for one community center.
  - o Determine reporting requirement to keep the Board updated and maintain accountability.
- CMES Representative Role Objectives:
  - o Maintain an ongoing collaborative relationship with a key contact at the assigned organization. This will vary by organization, ex. could be the Executive Director, Child Care Director, etc.
  - o Learn about the organization, its mission, and how it serves its members.
  - o Attend 1-2 events at the assigned organization to meet others within the organization and the members it serves.
  - o Likewise, invite your key contact to CMES events that may be relevant to the organization (ex. Friday CMES events, parent education, etc.)
  - o When appropriate, introduce your key contact to the CMES Head of School. This could be, for example, to have a tour of the school, answer questions about the Montessori program, etc.
  - o Inform the organization of the annual lottery timeframe and distribute flyers as appropriate.
  - o With permission, add your key contact to appropriate CMES newsletters (ex. weekly Stepping Stones, Friends of the School newsletter, etc.)
- Marketing accomplishments:
  - o Chris placed ads in the back-to-school edition of the St. Paul Publishing papers (Downtown St. Paul Voice and the La Voz Latina).
  - o Website refresh happening this month – seems like it’s helping a lot
  - o Formal documentation of marketing strategy

### **Strategic Plan – Jean for Rohan**

- Strategic plan template
  - o Most committees returned it
  - o Advancement, HoS, and Governance by 8/30/24

- Consolidated submission of Committees and Task Forces will be presented to the board during September monthly board meeting
  - o The consolidated document will serve as the 2024-25 and beyond goals/guidance for the committees and task forces
- Working on a simplified CMES Strategic plan document
  - o Request the board for any questions or discussion regarding Simplified Strategic plan document – feedback at September meeting
  - o If no further questions and discussion on Simplified Strategic document during September’s board meeting, then next step will be to publish the revised strategy document on school's website as a public document.

**Advancement Committee**

- Tyler has resigned as a Board member for personal reasons so we are in need of a new Advancement Committee Chair. Please contact Julaine with any suggestions.
- We have signed an as-needed contract with a new grant writer – Heather Kamia – had productive first meeting, good possibilities
- Alyssa submitted applications for funding to
  - o Bigelow Foundation (general operations)
  - o Mardag Foundation (general operations)
  - o ALDI (food insecurity)

**Board Chair Report – Julaine**

- Tyler Bouwens resigned from the Board as of August 19, 2024 for personal reasons
  - o Thank you to Tyler for his service and time. We will miss you.
- Please sign up for time at the Board table at Back to School Night on Wednesday, August 28, 3-6 pm
- Let Julaine know if there is anything to add to the agenda for next month’s meeting.

**Feedback – what went well?**

- Thanks to Jess for the Agreement conversation

**CAROLYN MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:57 PM. RACHEL SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:**

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



***The next CMES Board Meeting is Tuesday, September 17, 2024 at 6 p.m.  
Respectfully Submitted by Jess Goff, CMES Secretary.***